

Theatres of Migritude: Towards a Dramaturgy of African Futures

Mwenya B. Kabwe

Thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy Centre for Theatre Dance & Performance
Studies University of Cape Town, Faculty of Humanities

I, Mwenya Beverly Kabwe, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorise the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature: Date:

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

I've been to a couple of places, and I'm on my way to more. Home can only stop feeling like home if it has felt like that before. This city cannot home me. (Luhumyo, 2017:260)

At times, home is nowhere. At times, one knows only extreme estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal and fragmentation as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become, an order that does not demand forgetting. (hooks, 1990:148)

Dedication

To my lineage of migrants, movers, rebels and refusers.

And to my fore-cestors, may your paths be open.

Abstract

The thesis aims to contribute to the genre of black migrant cultural production called *migritude*, developed largely in African diasporic literary circles and tracing its evolution from the *Négritude* movement. It will mobilize Shailja Patel's significant work to shape a new *migritude* that stands in continuation and contestation with the older version of this artistic project. The research question at the heart of the thesis is, what does it mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance making? The thesis explores an approach to thinking about how a relationship between migration and Africanfuturism can be put towards a dramaturgical practice mobilized in the direction of possibility, potential and a more hopeful future. The quest undertaken is to find out what alternative understandings of African migrancy exist in the spirit of the five case studies, namely *Migritude* by Shailja Patel, *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* by Magnet Theatre, *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey* by Mojisola Adebayo, *Afrogalactica Deep Space Scrolls* by Kapwani Kiwanga and *Astronautus Afrikanus*, devised by a group of students at Rhodes University under my direction. By analysing each of these performance texts through a different lens, the thesis aims to develop a pliable dramaturgical framework for a migrant attitude which leverages some of the aesthetic features of *migritude* artistic work as noted by Vanita Reddy (2020). These include defining Africa by movement, linking the concept of migrant with the concept of colonial history and the diasporic refusal of return. Here a migrant attitude also includes Thomas Nail (2015) and Veejay Prashad's (2010) contentions that the migrant is central to a project of social re-imagining, as well as Mark Fleishman's

(2015b) notion of a dramaturgy of displacement where movement and migration form a core part of both the form and content of the work.

Acknowledgements

This PhD thesis has not exactly been written in an ashram, in the quiet seclusion of natural wonder where inspiration has flowed smoothly into coherent articulation. Instead, it has been written in fits and starts, within the clattering of part-time work and full-time parenting, of full-time work and part-time parenting, between creative projects and alongside the daily turmoil of migrant life. There are many people to thank for a project that has not had a smooth journey and has taken so long to complete. I would like to start by thanking my formidable supervisor for his incisive critical feedback, unwavering steady support and encouragement and essential reminders that this is not my life's work, but another creative project along the way. Thank you, Mark.

I am indebted to my dearest friends who provided desks, writing companionship, creative conversation, inspired collaborations, and parenting support over the years including Gina Walsh, Ana Ferreira, Terri Ella, and Vanessa Frost, Tegan Bristow, Jenni-Lee Crew, Sara Matchett, Nikki Pilkington and Iman Isaacs. I thank the friends who over the years have kept the wolves of insecurity at bay and beat them back when they camped outside my door. I thank those who have offered literal and proverbial shelter from the clatter to provide, moments, hours or days in a row where I could catch the thoughts floating in from the periphery and then work to contain them in this written form. I thank those in my world who have led the cheerleading in overt and subtle ways and sometimes unconsciously, in particular the formidable womxn of the Pan Galactic Womxn's Joy Collective who are my chosen and given kin and my Feminist Hype-Crew including Mazuba Haanyama, Clara Vaughan, Lindiwe Matshikiza, Kyla Davis, Ndoni Khanyile, Joni Barnard,

Elisa Purfürst, Nikki Pilkington (again), Alex Halligey, Anthea Moys, Hayleigh Evans, Frances Merek, Namatshego Khutsoane, Khutjo Green, Elsa Mbala, Alice and Tasha Kabwe. I give thanks to Gogo Dee Mohoto wa Thaluki who has led by the example of her serenity, fortitude, and sheer force of will to keep going. I thank Kate Quarfordt for the continued sustenance of a friendship that sustains across time and space and for ushering me towards the summoning world. I thank those who have guided me towards this finish with their invaluable input including the gracious editorial care of Tracey Saunders.

I am deeply thankful for the lifeboat of my beloved family who have witnessed this journey from the beginning and have intimately known the borne the relational effects of this mammoth project, and still stuck around. To KWL my No1 cheerleader and champion who has continuously pulled me through the deepest moments of reluctance and insecurity with copious offerings of love, time, space and companionship. I thank my parents who have always waited so patiently for me to find my own way and here acknowledge the migrant lineages of Phiri's and Kabwe's who have cleared that way.

Finally, this project could not have been achieved without the support of the African Pathways Scholarship Programme. The financial assistance of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, in collaboration with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NIHSS and CODESRIA.

Contents

Dedication.....	3
Abstract	4
Acknowledgements.....	6
Contents	8
PART I	10
CHAPTER 1: A Series of Introductions	11
Committing to the Potential	12
Theatres of Migration	16
Figuring The Migrant.....	19
From Négritude to Patel’s migritude	24
Speculative Futures.....	30
CHAPTER 2: Methodology.....	34
Introduction	35
Wayward Archiving	38
Decolonial Attitudes.....	44
Dramaturgy as a Reading and Making Practice.....	49
From The Future Anterior to the Possibility of Living Unbounded Life	50
CHAPTER 3: Modes of Thinking/Making/ Doing – A Review of the Literature.....	55
Material, Utopian, Dramaturgical & Diasporic Thinking	56
Dramaturgical Thinking	60
A Mode of Being in theWorld	69
Spatiotemporal Considerations.....	76
PART II	79
CHAPTER 4: Migritude	80
Backstory:.....	81
Introduction	83
Ambi.....	87
<i>FemmeMigritude</i>	90
Conclusion.....	103
CHAPTER 5: <i>Every Year, Every Day I am Walking</i>	108
Backstory.....	109
Introduction	110
Props, Objects and Things, Re-Enchanted:.....	114

A thick performance aesthetic	122
Hosting a world of passing beings.....	127
Conclusion	134
CHAPTER 6: Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey	137
Backstory:.....	138
Introduction:	140
Refusal	142
May:	144
Passing	149
Conclusion	165
CHAPTER 7: Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls	170
Backstory:.....	171
Introduction:	173
Chronotopic Acts:.....	176
Female Postcolonial <i>Counterfutures</i>	183
Prepossessing the Future	189
Conclusion	191
CHAPTER 8: Astronautus Afrikanus.....	196
Backstory:.....	197
Introduction:	199
The African Futurist Antihero.....	203
Acts of Immersive Decoloniality.....	205
Space Invasions and Countermemories	213
Conclusion	221
A List of Concluding Questions	226
Bibliography	240

PART I

Introductions

Methodology

Review of the Literature

CHAPTER 1: A Series of Introductions

Every culture on Earth has primary and foundational myths, legends, and stories which understand that in order to find yourself, you have to leave your own country and your own people and go to a distant land where you will be challenged, amazed, and transformed and where, in adversity, you will meet your hidden heroic self and find friends you never imagined you would have. It has long been understood across cultures and across civilizations that none of us are who we appear to be to our immediate family and friends and that it is only in a far-away place that we begin to discover other selves, other possibilities that lie within us. (Sellars, 2014: ix)

All freedom movements are guided by utopian aspirations [...]. (Bloch, 1996:6)

Committing to the Potential

One is not born a migrant but becomes one. (Nail, 2015:3)

As a theatre maker, I have a keen and long-standing interest in African women's migration and mobility, and over the past few years, I have developed an interest in exploring aspects of the futuristic in my work. This has been an organic, unfolding process of following migratory routes into the future based on a hunch that notions of migration and notions of Africanfuturism¹ share common territory, and that this relationship between migration and Africanfuturism might be productive to put to work in a dramaturgical practice. The performance experiments that fall under this practice form part of what I call my African Futures Project. These creative impulses stem from my biography as a South African resident of Zambian and Zimbabwean extraction, who has lived and been educated in England and on the east coast of the United States. This biography has troubled easy notions of origin, belonging, home and family, and has generated an interest in the migration narratives present in the artistic work of other Black African women². I have found that my own artistic practice as a theatre maker has been a productive place to reflect on, work through and mobilize various personal meanings and manifestations of migration, mobility and movement. It has been and continues to be a place to rehearse various

¹ The term Africanfuturism was coined by Nigerian-American science fiction author Nnedi Okorafor in 2019 to distinguish her work from Afrofuturism. She defines Africanfuturism in her blog (<http://nnedi.blogspot.com/2019/10/africanfuturism-defined.html>) and the statement is reprinted in the opening of the 2020 publication of Africanfuturism: An Anthology. The use of the term Africanfuturism in the thesis follows Okorafor's desire to centre an African futuristic discourse and is elaborated upon in chapters to follow.

² The terms 'black' 'African' and 'woman' are all deployed tactically throughout the thesis. I note, following the writing of Carole Boyce Davies on black women, migration and identity, that these descriptive adjectives have long political histories with different articulations emerging from different resistance movements across the world (Davies, 1994).

formations of community and to be in the practice of theatre as a technology for experiments in social engineering. In this case, my interest is in the practice of being a migrant, forced or otherwise, and the kinds of habits, ways of being and attitudes that migrants develop and bring to bear on the social. As a way of acknowledging and keeping central my own migrant subjectivity, I am sensitive to the racialized and gendered nuances of migrant lives and seek ways for migrants to be legible beyond the damaging tropes of the migrant as homeless, nostalgic, and disruptive. Instead, this thesis is a project that aims to use migrant tropes as catalysts for speculative thinking and *venturing beyond*³ in the Blochian sense, and I have found that the territory of Africanfuturism facilitates this work of alternative legibility. This project is also an attempt to gain clarity about the impulses that drive my dramaturgical practice through an exploration of a series of performance works by other people and one work made by myself. In Bloch's words, this is not an exercise of "merely contemplative reason which takes things as they are and as they stand, but of participating reason which takes them as they go, and therefore also as they could go better" (1996:4). The analysis of these works present an approach to thinking about how migration and Africanfuturism can be leveraged as a dramaturgical lens that not only disrupts stayed migrant narratives, but also mobilizes them in the direction of possibility, potential and a more hopeful future. The research question at the heart of the thesis is, *what does it mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance making?* The thesis aims to respond to this question by contributing to the genre of black migrant cultural

³ In *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch (1996) equates thinking with venturing beyond. This is different from living in the future which Bloch reminds us that everybody does by striving. Venturing beyond, is a process of thinking formed by a world-based principle of hope that works against ingrained habits of thinking in which the future that one strives for is not the foreclosed kind, but the "processively open kind" (1996:8). As such, it is useful to consider the theatre as a laboratory for venturing beyond.

production called *migritude*, developed largely in African diasporic literary circles and tracing its evolution from the Négritude movement. It will mobilize Shailja Patel's significant work to shape a *new* *migritude* that stands in continuation and contestation with the older version of this artistic project. As will be discussed,

Patel's seminal gesture of opening up the routes of *migritude* to include East African Asians puts the concept to work in the service of new geographies of movements, histories, and entanglements, beyond an Africa-Europe and South-North unilateral trajectory of the early concept of *migritude*. (Coly, 2020:70)

Shailja Patel's one-person performance poem, also titled *Migritude* (Patel, 2010), inaugurates this contemporary anticolonial, philosophical meditation on contemporary experiences of African migration. The term *migritude* will also be used through the thesis as shorthand for the migrant attitude that will be developed as a dramaturgical framework. This research project suggests a dramaturgical approach to theatre and performance⁴ work that identifies *migritude* as an aesthetic system. It deploys Vijay Prashad's description of Shailja Patel's *Migritude* as "[...] a philosophical meditation on what it means to live within the concept of Migrant" (Prashad, 2010: iv) and develops what can be understood as a

⁴ In my use of the term *theatre and performance* throughout the thesis, *performance* relates to what Janelle Reinelt writes as an avant-gardist "rejection of aspects of traditional theatre practice that emphasized plot, character, and referentiality: In short, Aristotelian principles of construction and Platonic notions of mimesis. The rejection of textual sovereignty, or authorial or directorial authority" (2002:202). It is also informed by Mark Fleishman's (2009) framing of performance as a noun made up of a set of events and occasions that includes theatre, dance, ritual, political rallies, and funerals; a verb composed of a set of non-representational embodied practices; and an epistemology, a way of 'knowing with, through or by means of' performance which proceeds from the body (2009:133). The term theatre then is used in line with Josette Féral and Ronald Bermingham's description of theatre as a particular instance of performance where a distinct fictional space is created (2002:99) and where an audience is invited into the imaginary world, in which the body of the actor is a central element and where there is a distinction between the actor and the character. They explain that in the context of theatre, "acting is the result of a performer's decision (as actor, director, designer, or playwright) to consciously occupy the here-and-now of a space different from the quotidian, to become involved in activity outside daily life" (2002:101). The combined term *theatre and performance* then relates to the particular objects of study in the thesis in the form of works that have been both devised and scripted and exist on a spectrum of live artistic production.

migrant attitude towards making contemporary African theatre and performance work. It will be argued that the aesthetic logics of African futurity extend migrature's investment in a spatiotemporal past and present, forward into an unknown, yet desired future. In other words, beyond a here and now and towards a *then and there* (Muñoz, 2009). Through the following chapters, I search through five performance texts, looking with migrant eyes for signs, clues, and hints of migrant potentiality that will contribute to the expression of a migrant attitude. This is an attitude that is put to work in service of making theatre and performance that has a decolonial emancipatory agenda and seeks to respond to a current historical moment in which issues of migration have taken centre stage, as it were. I determine that being on the move creates a particular epistemological lens that can be used productively towards identifying a set of strategies to make theatre and performance works which materialize Bill Ashcroft's reading of Ernst Bloch's philosophy of utopian thinking which he explicates in *The Spirit of Utopia* (2000). For Ashcroft, "the utopian impulse in human consciousness does not rely on utopia as a place (unless we understand freedom as a metaphoric place). Rather the dynamic function of the utopian impulse is a dual one: to engage power and to imagine change" (Ashcroft, 2009:13). This engagement of power and imagining of change in equal measure, expresses "a basic desire to live life otherwise" (Halberstam, 2011:2). This notion of freedom as a metaphoric place aligns with practice as research endeavours for which performances or productions are a non-arrival. They mark a convergence of energy along a processual, iterative often personal journey, but they are more orientation points than end points, towards an ever-elusive freedom.

A migrant attitude attempts to name an alliance between the aesthetic and the political that is mobilized from a diversity of black women's migrant experiences channelled

through their theatre making. Ultimately the thesis proposes that a migrant attitude is in fact an open set of orientations one might take in relation to empire, nationality, sexuality, race, and gender, that interrupt *the colonial matrix of power* (Mignolo, Walter & Walsh, 2018) while advancing other possibilities of knowing/thinking/making. This is my attempt at taking the project of decoloniality seriously as an ongoing practice that I can commit to working on through my theatre making, and it is premised on the migrant's non-arrival, on potentiality as a motivating factor. While it follows Judith Halberstam's lead in seeking a "way out of the usual traps and impasses of binary formulations" by developing a "grammar of possibility" (2011:2) to put to the use of theatre making, Jose Esteban Muñoz presents a brief and persuasive argument for the use of 'potentiality' instead. He says succinctly, "Unlike possibility, a thing that simply might happen, a potentiality is a certain mode of nonbeing that is eminent, a thing that is present but not actually existing in the present tense" (2009:9). What is not existing in the present tense is presumed to exist on a continuum between a past and a future tense, hence the mobilizing of notions of futurity here which underlies a commitment to the potential. This commitment operates under the assumption that the past is not a spell cast on the future and that the future is informed but not obstructed by the past.

Theatres of Migration

Here the multiple registers of migritude provide an ideological point of entry which centralises the migration narratives of African women theatre makers who position themselves transnationally⁵ and across different African Diasporas⁶. It asks how stories, themes, images, ideas, metaphors and politics of migration and movement are woven into the form and content of the selected works, as well as how these dramaturgies expand to

include references to other worlds and otherworldliness. The interplay of the real and imagined movements of African people is harnessed here for theatre making that is concerned with, “the possibility to live unbounded lives” (Ruth Wilson Gilmore in Camp, Tina, 2017:32). As articulated by Alpha Abebe,

The tensions between belonging and exclusion, loss and discovery, tradition and reinterpretation, and the real and imagined are highly productive when it comes to the arts, and people who connect with a diasporic experience are often hypersensitive to these boundaries and straddle them on a regular basis. (2019:57)

The thesis analyses a selection of *theatres of migration*, a shorthand phrase coined by Emma Cox “for a range of theatre and performance that is responsive to different contexts of migration” (2014:6). These performance works with overlapping themes exist in fluid dramaturgical conversation with each other, however, each is analysed separately to extract the particular contribution that each production makes to a migrant attitude. The thesis is divided into two parts, each made up of a collection of chapters. Part I contains a series of introductions, my methodology and a review of the prominent literature and these attempted to excavate a particular component of an *attitude of migration* from each production by looking for the marks of migrant potentiality. The first three productions, *Migritude* by Shailja Patel (2010), *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* (2006) by Magnet

⁵ My use of the term transnational throughout the thesis acknowledges the terms history in the corporate and political science spheres (Tololyan, 2007) but is deployed here in line with Carole Boyce Davies determination that “If we see Black women’s subjectivity as a migratory subjectivity existing in multiple locations, then we can see how their work, their presences traverse all of the geographical/national boundaries instituted to keep our dislocations in place” (1994:4).

⁶ As noted by Alpha Abebe, “‘Diaspora,’ as a categorical and theoretical term, is elusive by design. It describes social groups and phenomena that are inherently fluid and ambiguous” (2019:55). As will be discussed in more detail later in the thesis, by different African Diasporas I am alluding to the notion of Africa as a site of both arrival and departure in the form of the vast numbers of Africans who migrate between African countries and those who arrive from outside of the continent and form diasporic communities, as well Black Atlantic diasporas which are more traditionally understood as having formed outside the African continent. My use of the term African Diasporas is intended not only to be inclusive, but also to destabilize notions of The African Diaspora and all the accompanying connotations of extraction from the African continent.

Theatre and *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey* (2006) by Mojisola Adebayo, provide the context for the argument to take migration literally as complex and contingent physical movement of bodies within and across spaces (Ahmed, 1999). The works that follow, *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls* (2015) by Kapwani Kiwanga, and one of my own works in the African Futures Project titled *Astronautus Afrikanus* (2015), engage ideas of African speculative futures, and African oriented positions on technology and therefore consider migration more metaphorically and key to the understanding of the interplay of the past, present and future. The five works are in conversation with each other, and it will be argued that all evidence an aesthetics of migritude, which serves to use the *concept of migrant* to expose oppressive prevailing ideologies, norms, and practices, while the notion of African futures serves to pitch desirable, viable alternatives. Each of the case study chapters contributes to developing a migrant attitude and as such they are not intended to be read in a linear, cause and effect manner. Instead, they are more like a gathering of loose but distinct threads that combine to support the argument for a re-framing and re-articulation of the migrant as an agent of potentiality. A migrant attitude then combines the work of migritude and of African futures to name the kind of hopeful *venturing beyond* that I try to practice in my theatre making. Ultimately, all five case studies are examined for their commitment to the potential, through their different investments in both a critique of a past and present and also in pointing towards something else. The thesis does not lead towards a definitive schematic structure, but instead suggests a dramaturgy of process and concludes with a list of questions emerging from the collective case studies that one might ask as a way to adopt a migrant attitude towards reading and making performance work.

Figuring The Migrant

The twenty-first century will be the century of the migrant. (Nail, 2015:1)

This dehumanization of nomads, travellers, searchers who are equipped with the courage and tenacity to leave everything that is comfortable behind and to venture against all odds into the unknown looking for change and willing to sacrifice everything for it – the dehumanization of the very flower of humanity demeans the species. It lowers all of our sights, blunts and tempers the courage of all of us, and shrinks our native generosity into a sad space of selfishness, fear and mistrust. (Sellars, 2014:ix)

The current geo-political climate seems exceptionally bleak, marked in particular by how migration is featured. As Claire Gallien has simply stated, “[...] hardly a day goes by without the ‘problem,’ ‘issue,’ or ‘crisis,’ of migration being mentioned in the news [...]” (Gallien, 2017). In the opening lines of the introduction to the fifth edition of *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, the authors write that “Migration and the resulting ethnic and racial diversity are amongst the most emotive subjects in contemporary societies. While global migration rates have remained relatively stable over the past half a century, the political salience of migration has strongly increased” (Castles, S., Haas, H.D. & Miller, M.J. 2014:1). Outright public opposition to migration is clearly evident all over the world in the shaping of narratives of migration as threat or as crisis, as invasion needing to be vigilantly combated and controlled with stricter and stricter enforcement of restrictive state legislated border controls (Castles, S., Haas, H.D. & Miller, M.J, 2014, 2020). In his opening chapter of *Conscripts of Migration: Neoliberal Globalization, Nationalism and the Literature of the new African Diasporas*, Christopher Ian Foster tracks the various global migration crises that have led to the twenty-first century being characterised as ‘the age of migration.’ Among his examples are “the Syrian refugee crisis, the volatile United States-Mexico border, humanitarian crises in Haiti and elsewhere precipitating displacement, [and] the criminalization of Palestinian movement by the Israeli

government” (Foster, 2019:3). He goes on to write that “[...] the precipitous spike in hate crimes since Trump’s inauguration represent an extreme expression of anti-immigrant, Islamophobic, and white supremacist policy, practice, and rhetoric *already* in place in the United States and Europe” (Foster, 2019:4). Real fears of deportation force migrants to work under exploitative conditions and women migrants, often employed as domestic workers, are particularly vulnerable (Castles, S., Haas, H.D. & Miller, M.J. 2014.) All this signals a dystopic historical moment for migrants, refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers, and yet, at this juncture when global travel is ubiquitous, desperate, hopeful, pragmatic and brutal, displaced people are moving like never before. The COVID-19 pandemic has of course put all of this into sharp relief. As Peter Sellars remarks, “Our new era of borders and hyper-legal immigration and deportation superstructures has criminalized one of the most basic human yearnings, one of the most basic ways in which human beings complete themselves, one of the most basic ways worlds open, yes open, and hearts open” (2014:ix). The anti-migrant narrative around the world is that people on the move are threatening, they are referred to as aliens and their deportations as removals. In that light this project is interested in the potential that migrants open up for alternative ways of seeing, understanding and making theatre that does not satisfy this global narrative, and yet uses it as a critical provocation. The history of humanity after all is a history of human movement, whether torn from home by the dark tides of war and slavery or in search of a new future (Moffett, 2017).

Philosopher Thomas Nail has developed a political theory of the figure of the migrant from a Western perspective (2015) that demonstrates the ways in which human mobility is not only a defining characteristic of the twenty-first century, but how creating the concept of the migrant as a political subject allows us to understand migration as a *regime of social*

motion (Nail, 2015:3, italics in the original) in which we are all participants. In developing this theory of what he calls 'kinopolitics' or the politics of movement, he starts from the premise that "[t]he history of the migrant is the history of social motion [and that] the migrant is defined by two intertwined social motions: expansion and expulsion" (2015:21). For Nail, a political theory of the migrant necessitates looking at the migrant, not *as a failed citizen* (2015:3, italics in the original), but according to the migrant's own defining characteristic which is movement. It is this defining feature of the migrant which this thesis seeks to mobilize by seeking to identify what kinds of theatre is made by African women in a contradictory, globalized moment of disjuncture between the easing of the international passage of goods and capital, and the increased tightening of national border controls for the passage of people. It asks questions about how African women's narratives of migration, feature in their theatre making practices, taking Emma Cox's lead when she says that,

[...] whether it is thought of in terms of individuals (immigrant, expatriate, temporary worker, exile, refugee, itinerant, cosmopolitan nomad, et cetera) or collectives (colonial settlement, diaspora, slave or convict transportation, trafficking, displacement), migration is, at its heart, about encounters with foreignness – with foreign people, and with foreign places. These are, it may be supposed, ingredients of good storytelling. (Cox, 2014:3)

The storytelling of migrants is often told from the perspective of both states and stasis, as Nail points out, so that the migrant is "[...] perceived as a secondary or derivative figure with respect to place-bound social membership [...] which is assumed as primary" (Nail, 2015:3). Nail outlines how the history of states has tended to marginalize or ignore migrant social organizations in favour of more totalizing grand narratives which determine who does and does not belong under its territorial protection. Instead, he invites us to rethink migration from the perspective of movement instead of stasis and from the perspective of the migrant instead of the state. This shift in perspective focuses on migrants'

capacities for resistance and subversion due to their unpredictability and turbulence as far as the state is concerned (Gallien, 2017). The notion of society as constantly in movement is also a useful one here, as it restates the fact that ideas of fixity and stability are indeed illusions, albeit seemingly persuasive ones around which migration controls are created, legislated and enforced thereby creating migrants in the first place. As Nail remarks simply in an interview about his book: “The stricter the immigration laws, the more migrants are in violation of them; thus, criminal statistics reveal the ‘need’ for harsher laws because of the ‘increase’ in immigration violations” (Settle & Nail, 2016). This clearly demonstrates the ways in which migrants become criminalized and are at the mercy of structural judicial mechanisms created to facilitate the expansion of societies. As Nail explains, “[t]he kinetic theory of expansion by expulsion [...], all hitherto existing societies have been able to expand – territorially, politically, juridically, economically – only on the condition of some kind of degree of prior expulsion. The migrant is the figure of this expulsion” (Settle & Nail, 2016).

In describing his rather formulaic framework of how migrants become expelled, or dispossessed of their social status, Nail names the nomad as the migrant expelled from territory, the barbarian as the migrant expelled from citizenship, the vagabond as the migrant expelled from judicial order and the proletariat as the one expelled from the processes of economic control (Settle & Nail, 2016). For Nail and the theorists he draws upon, including Karl Marx, the process of social expansion necessitates the deprivation or social expulsion of some, creating a process by which “social expulsion is the condition of social expansion” (Settle & Nail, 2016).

Of particular interest for this thesis is what Nail describes as “migrant counterpower”

(2015:229) to name the ways in which migrants have historically resisted dominant power in organized ways. That history is written by the victors and that this creates a privileging of written texts, contributes to a deficit in narratives of migrant counter-power and resistance. In Nail's formulaic analysis, each figure of the migrant develops its own tactics of counter-power whereby "[...] the "nomad is associated with the development of the raid; the barbarian, the revolt; the vagabond the rebellion; and the proletariat, resistance" (Settle & Nail, 2016). Each of these tactics works against the dominant forces of the time, and also produces material alternatives to social expulsion and possibilities for social transformation (Settle & Nail, 2016). Here I find Ernst Bloch's utopian project to confront power and imagine chance as similar to Nail's theory where Nail places the migrant at the centre of the re-imagining project. Through the analyses of the creative works to follow, my formulation of migrant attitudes will draw on the notion of the constructive disruptions of migrant counter-power, with a focus on where this counter-power reaches forward toward alternative possibilities.

From Négritude to Patel's migitude

Since Migitude is an emerging area of discourse and practice, its definition is constantly shifting and expanding. Rather than attempt to define the term and concept it represents, which is in some ways to limit and therefore do epistemological violence to it, we leave *migitude* ultimately as defining, or in transit. (Ali, A., Christopher, I.F. & Nair, S.M. 2020:55)

In speaking of how transnational diasporic identities are constructed by Africans, Pius Adesanmi (2005) and Désiré Wa Kabwe-Segatti (2009) refer to Jacques Chevrier's coinage of the term *migitude* to describe African literature produced by "the children of the post-colony" (in Wa Kabwe-Segatti, 2009:83), a fourth generation of Francophone African novelists. Liz Gunner, in her preface to *The Changing Face of African Literature* (Gunner, 2009) frames the collection of contributions to the book as work that discusses this fourth generation. In this light, early-twentieth century writers such as South Africa's Sol Plaatje would be in the First Generation; writers of the nation state and its anticipation such as Chinua Achebe would be in the Second Generation; writers of postcolonial disillusion such as Ama Ata Aidoo would be in the Third; and the likes of Ben Okri and Yvonne Vera, in the Fourth. It is this Fourth generation of writers, that Gunner describes as representing "[...] an era of migration and multiple belonging" using their literature to traverse contemporary migrant worlds (Gunner, 2009:x) in ways that mark them as participants in migitude cultural production.

Adesanmi describes a particular group of Black migrant writers based in France, who have not been to the African countries of their parents' upbringing and as a result do not form transient immigrant identities composed of clear recollections of a home-place to which they may or may not return. Instead, as French-born Black people of African parents, they negotiate a relationship to Paris for instance, which resolves to claim the city as home

in spite of, and in the face of the brutality of French police in dealing with issues of immigration (Adesanmi, 2005). Emerging out of the Black Paris of the 1920s to 1940s that birthed the Négritude poets and poetics, these earlier migritude writers are so named for their encapsulation of *negritude* and *immigrant* and for an aesthetic that “is not based on nostalgia for some idyllic African past” (Wa Kabwe-Segatti, 2009:83). Instead, migritude resists the project of return that defines negritude and traverses a complex and expansive immigrant/emigrant discourse beyond France and its African colonies. In response to the suggestion by Jean-Paul Sartre that Negritude represents the “being-in-the-world of the black man (Sartre, 1988), Migritude works to inaugurate a fluid third space between ‘home’ and ‘host’ which foregrounds the entanglement of colonialism and immigration as it [...] narrate[s] the being- in-the-world of the migrant” (Ali, A., Christopher, I.F. & Nair, S.M., 2020:55).

This thesis is in dialogue with other works in a larger project to expand representations of African migrants and uses Shailja Patel’s *Migritude* (2010) as a guiding text and first case study for this work. In his review of Patel’s work, Stefan Helgesson aptly describes *Migritude* as “just one part of the transmedial, postcolonial project Migritude” (2012:331), and the productions examined here contribute to shaping the parameters of this project in the medium of theatre and performance. *Migritude* (2010), is a poetic response to Patel’s lived experience as an African migrant of South Asian heritage, told through the unpacking of a trousseau of saris gifted to her by her mother. It is also a meditation on the processes of globalization that have produced the racialized, gendered and economic systems of inequality that we continue to operate within. Other linguistic associations and resonances of the word ‘migritude’ that land in Patel’s work are noted by

John Chung, who articulates how it is that her use of the term comes to represent a defiant, creative call to action:

It's also powerful because it has the arresting, coruscating, academic lustre of a freshly minted neologism, but also has harsher/oppressed undertones of 'nigger', 'meagre/maigre', 'magreb/maigreb (North African colonies)'. It starts out (in French) with a tonal and somatic sense of contraction followed by an elongated, large, expansive, inclusive reprieve. 'Tude Attitude. Gratitude, Latitude, Beatitude. (in Reddy, 2010:153)

In her paper titled, *No African futures without the liberation of women: a decolonial feminist intervention*, Akona Nkenkana supports Maria Lugones (2008) in a call "to enact critique of racialized, colonial and capitalist heterosexual gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social" (Nkenkana, 2015:1). *Migritude* enacts such a critique from the point of view of African migrant women. Leveraging this intersectional perspective towards a *transformation of the social* means taking active interest in challenging or at least complicating discourse about African migration dominated by states and civil society, in which the narrative is one in which migrants are figured as an inconvenience at best and a threat at worst, but a problem, nevertheless, to be dealt with in various strategic ways. This larger post-colonial artistic and political project of migritude which encompasses study of the performance works here, is to engage in this transforming of the social, and is guided by the understanding of performance-making as a socially engaged public practice. As phrased by Jill Dolan, the question at the heart of the study is "How can performance model – not just in content or form or context but through the interaction of all three - ways of communicating in a public sphere that might encourage us to take mutual responsibility for reimagining social behaviour" (2005:28).

Emerging out of the literary art forms Vanita Reddy outlines how migritude cultural production can be identified by its aesthetic and political features. She notes that where “Africa is defined by movement,” where the “concept of migrant is irrevocably tied to colonial histories,” and where there is “a diasporic refusal of nostalgic return” (Reddy, 2020:70), the work can be read as belonging to the project of migritude. For the current purposes, belonging to the project of migritude is equated with having a migrant attitude. Through this research project, I supplement migritude’s defining features, taken from Thomas Nail’s contentions above, with the migrant as central to a re-imagining project if the migrant’s “gesture towards freedom” (Prashad, 2010:12) is mobilized in the direction of making work for performance. Essential to this formulation is Fleishman’s conception of a dramaturgy of displacement, where movement forms a core part of a production’s dramaturgy (Fleishman, 2015b). As will be discussed, some insight into the migrant attitude in the works under investigation, indicates an interest in different *dramaturgies of displacement*. Here, theatre makers are dealing with stories, themes, images, ideas, metaphors and politics of migration and movement. The thesis probes each work for its migrant attitude and argues that each of the performance works selected for study reflects instances of migritude theatre making and as such, demonstrates critical strategies with which to critique present realities and imagine future potentials. This project interrogates where *dramaturgies of displacement* expand to include references to other worlds and other worldliness in stories, ideas, images, and metaphors of Africanfuturism. From an African geo-political position, it will argue, as Stephen Shukaitis has, that “[w]ithin the imaginal space created through the imagery of space travel one can find an outer space of social movement, a smooth space of exteriority made inhabitable through a labour of collective imagination” (Shukaitis, 2009:99). The *labour of collective imagination* in this case

is the making of work for theatre and performance by African women who position themselves transnationally and across inter-African Diasporas and who “practice art as a means of imagining a world of greater possibilities for themselves and their communities” (Richards, 2015:1). The migrant performances documented and discussed here circulate within a set of practices that strive “to envision and activate new social relations” (Muñoz, 1999:5).

In relation to the notion of immigration, Vijay Prashad notes in his preface to Patel’s *Migritude*, that:

So much good has come from modernity: freedoms of the mind, and of the stomach. [...] And yet, with the modern came some brutal social forms, one of which was the linkage of blood to belonging. ‘Immigration,’ as a concept, is born in the era of imperialism. ‘Immigrants,’ in this context, are not just those who cross boundaries, but are those who pointedly enter the advanced industrial states from the lands of dusky skin. Immigration is always already about mobile capital and immobile race. (2010: ii)

The *era of imperialism* which birthed notions of (im)migrant marks a foundational point of departure for the development of counter-imperialistic discourse and practice. As will be discussed in detail in the chapters to follow, Patel’s *Migritude* is a systematic indexing of the experiences of mainly women migrants, which provides a gendered orientation to conceptions of *mobile capital and immobile race*. The multiple registers of migritude explored here cohere in the selected works to form a dramaturgical strategy for playmaking. Characteristics of plays that align with the migritude project include embodied storytelling by women, a confrontation with African diasporic histories and the gendered politics of migration; a subverting of sets of traditional binaries including local/foreigner, citizen/migrant, male/female, theory/practice, past/future; and an ethical commitment to create critical strategies for critiquing the present. Each play and production offer a different proposal for how migritude might be coded in performance – as a confrontation of history

in the future, as upheaval and escape, as freedom, loss, disguise, sacrifice, rebellion, environmental activism, as epic adventure and as death. My contention is that these offers also come together to suggest that there is an attitude towards making theatre that can be called migrant, and that this migrant attitude creates a particular kind of process for and of making. All the productions selected here trouble the underlying norm that “free movement has become alienated from individuals and communities just as institutions policing movement are perceived as natural or essential” (Foster, 2015a:118). Each work also points to the limits of verbal language in depicting the narratives of migration, and as a result, highlights the unspeakable.

In the coming chapters each production will be investigated at a particular level of materiality to look at an instance of how migration is in operation dramaturgically. The term *migritude* is conceptualized here as a way to not only indicate how tropes of migration are woven into the work under investigation, but also how the politics of migration and border crossing are inscribed by the performance makers. The elasticity of boundaries, borders, territories, and places are tightly bound up with the geopolitics of a continent with inherited demarcations. These boundaries are literally and imaginatively stretched, crossed, transcended, and negotiated on a daily basis by its internal diasporic communities. In this case, migration consists of the processes of adaptation, re-appropriation, acceptance, rejection and the formation of new fluid communities, which are as much a part of a theatre-making process as they are of a process of migration.

Speculative Futures

The inquiry undertaken here is based on an interest in the speculative practice of how Africa is imagined in and into the future. As an African Futures Project, the territory of the thesis covers a broad aesthetic terrain known variously and contentiously in literature, film and fine and digital art as African speculative fiction (spec/fic) or futurism, Afro(politan) futurism, African science-fiction (s/f), AfroSF⁷, Africanfuturism, or post-African futurism, to name but a few of the more and less appropriate designations. Jane Bryce contends that what in literature is known as speculative fiction,

has its roots in African modes of storytelling that draw on myth, orality, and indigenous belief systems that lend themselves to the invention of personal mythologies, the re-writing of history in the light of future realities, and the use of extra-realist or magical phenomena as part of the everyday. (2019:1)

These contentions are mapped through the African diasporic authors and artists who have proposed and counter-proposed them through their work including Namwali Serpell, Tegan Bristow, Nnedi Okorafor, Wangechi Mutu, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, Wanuri Kahiu Kapwani Kiwanga, Julia Raynham, Mohale Mashigo and Jepchumba. This names but a few of the extensive list of African-identified creative practitioners for whom gender “is a determinant in the projection of imagined futures” (Bryce, 2019:1), and who share a common artistic and political agenda of attempting to distinguish themselves from an aesthetic genre known as *Afrofuturism*.

While the specificities of the ‘distinctions’ between Afrofuturism and something else called Africanfuturism will be elaborated later in the thesis, Ulrike Küchler, Silja Maehl and

⁷ *AfroSF: Science Fiction by African Writers* (2012) edited by Ivor Hartmann, is the title of the first anthology of science fiction by African writers.

Graeme Stout note that where the science fiction genre as a whole is familiar territory for migration discourse:

Fictions of travel, migration and transnationalism as well as science fiction deal with varying degrees of otherness: whereas science fiction imagines a complete other along with a possible future world, the foreigners on Earth are temporary strangers (e.g., guests and tourists), precarious peoples (e.g., refugees or settlers), or permanent outsiders on the inside (e.g. resident aliens), they seek acceptance and integration or demand otherness to be recognized as such. (2015:2)

The idea of a dramaturgy of African futures considers the notion that acts of migration at various scales include elements of the speculative. That 'other worlds' hold imaginative wealth is well established by science fiction authors, filmmakers and graphic novelists and the appeal includes "the potential to reveal a good deal about the societies in which they are conceived" (Küchler, U, Maehl, S. & Stout, G. 2015:1). Since science fiction thrives on figuring 'others,' on foreignness and unknown worlds, it is concerned with alienating, border crossing, traversal, estrangement and world-making in ways that parallel migrant concerns with the very same things. Both concern the negotiation of what is known and unknown, multiple and often simultaneous ways of identifying, and as such, "The hypothetical encounter with the extraterrestrial [then becomes a] means of working through terrestrial encounters between peoples" (Küchler, U, Maehl, S. & Stout, G., 2015:1).

Embedded in the exploration of the links between migration and Africanfuturism is the proposal, that central to what could be called *a dramaturgy of African Futures*, is the interplay of real and imaginary border crossings. The more obvious shared concerns between migration and the artistic genre of futurism, are those of the stranger in a strange land. The figure of the alien as migrant is a featured trope of the futuristic genre and this

figure comes to signify all kinds of otherness. The image of the strange distant (undiscovered) land across which these aliens traverse, comes to signify the diasporic movement of migrants (Langer, 2011). Other considerations explored here are about how gendered questions of African futurity nuance the grammar that is bound up with questions of the impact of imperialism and colonialism, which African women migrants bring to the fore. Led by Tina Campt (2017), a question asked here may then be, what is the grammar of black (migrant) feminist futurity? In her introduction to Hans-Thies Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre*, Karen Jurs-Munby reminds us that feminist, queer and postcolonial theatre scholarship has repeatedly pointed out that performance has the capacity to unsettle the spectator's construction of identity and the 'other' (2006a). Re-phrased for the medium of theatre, the Campt-led questions might be, what is the look and feel of the content, form and context of a Black feminist futurity located in the feminization of African migration, without making any claims to a collective black woman, migrant experience? What is the grammar of this dramaturgy and what is the shape of a theatre making practice that is built on the political imperative to imagine a different future? As Robin D.G. Kelley reminds us, "[...] the history of Black people has been a history of movement – real and imagined" (2002:16). It is this interplay of the real and imagined movements of African people, that is harnessed here for theatre making that is concerned with African futures. The operational premise is that in the interplay of migration and futurism "there is a possibility for creating a tactile site that will disturb the postulates of an oppositional discourse" (Kobialka, 1999:4) towards a productive site for theatre making.

Jon McKenzie describes a 'liminal-norm' for the field of performance studies, "a mode of activity whose spatial, temporal, and symbolic 'in-betweenness' allows for social norms to be suspended, challenged, played with, and perhaps transformed" (2004:27). The insistence on immediate and multiple points of engagement; the capacity to activate private and public pressure points; to bring history and contemporaneity into furious confrontation that is mediated by our imaginations, all speak to the suitability of performance practice for the closer examination of some of those aspects of the human condition that are marked by transience, migration and in-betweenness. This study hopes to contribute to the value of theatre as a site and method of research, both in its artistic objects (plays and productions) and in its practices (ways of making). It also hopes to be of value as a contribution to the archive of documentation on theatre and performance work by women whose identities flow through the African continent, and why and how these theatre-makers are choosing this medium to express, expose and deal with their own life narratives of migration. Finally, the project tests the potential for migration and African futurism as a productive dramaturgical pairing for contemporary African theatre-making.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

I came all this way because no matter how carefully I looked, I could not see my home town. It was too close; everything was right there in my face. (Luhumyo, 2017:253)

Introduction

If there is one thing we can say with certainty about dramaturgy, it is that it is movement itself, a process. (Van Kerkhoven, 2009:7)

The subtitle of this thesis, *Towards a Dramaturgy of African Futures*, implies a hope that the various pieces of the project will lead to some kind of articulation of a particular dramaturgical process. This project works with a broad understanding of dramaturgy as “a particular process of work that is common to all artistic production (whether ‘experimental’, ‘traditional’, ‘new’, or ‘old’), and that sheds light upon the ways in which encounters, work, and the creation inside (and possibly also outside) the artistic frame happen” (Georgelou et al. Georgelou, K., Protopapa, E. & Theodoridou, D. I., 2017:15). As the area of focus in terms of performance lies in the compositional elements of productions that are thematically and aesthetically concerned with migration, the intention is to engage with the dynamic, contextual and political dimensions of dramaturgical practice (Turner & Behrndt, 2007:4). Considering the many historical contested uses and interpretations of the role and function of dramaturgy in making live performance works, and the ensuing challenges of definition, (Georgelou, K., Protopapa, E. & Theodoridou, D. 2017 and Trencsényi & Cochrane, 2014), the term will be understood here as a *practice* that is embedded in each stage of the project. As an area of inquiry, the interest here is in how performance works come to be, as a consequence of a particular process, and in this case a process that involves various notions, tropes and images of migration as expressed by women in dialogue with people, materials, media, bodies and space towards identifying an aesthetic overlap. Georgelou and Theodoridou, speak of “a ‘dramaturgy of process’ in works that are oriented towards the construction of possibilities and not the establishment of clearly definable and repeatable schemas” (2017:12). While I am also interested in the compositional logics of the process

and events of the works studied, and how connections are made between dynamic theatre making elements to form organic wholes (Turner, 2015), the thesis works towards the idea of dramaturgy as a practice. This is a practice that is embedded in the theatre making process but that stretches beyond the phase of creation to disrupt, destabilize, illuminate, a current socio-political context in a continuous loop. Jill Dolan captures this well when she reminds us of the potential of performance to “inspire moments in which audiences feel themselves allied to each other and with a broader, more capacious sense of a public, in which social discourse articulates the possible, rather than the insurmountable obstacles to human potential (2005:2). On this, Robert Porter notes that,

There is nothing elusive, dramatically heroic or other worldly about the creation of a new form of political subjectivity [...] and the assumption of a new form of political subjectivity can be as small (and as big) as a shift in subjective attitude and thinking, a different take on the social and political world that one inhabits, and a corresponding shifting in the meanings we then attribute to the very concepts of the ‘social’, ‘political’ and ‘world. (2009:4)

This quote by Porter is useful in highlighting what I am attempting to do here by naming a shift in my *subjective attitude and thinking*. The definitions of dramaturgy that resonate with my particular approach to theatre making are those that are more processual than structural, more collaborative than directorial, more intuitive than bound by rules, and those that maintain a non-hierarchy of theatrical materials, where the text, if it exists at all, is an element amongst many others. As such, in formulating a dramaturgy of African Futures, I have borrowed widely from the rich and ongoing debates and deliberations on dramaturgy’s meanings, conceptualizations and functions in the making of works for theatre⁸. Dramaturgy is also at work in several layers of this thesis, and this chapter attempts to identify where those layers reside and how they speak to each other. As Barba has noted, “[...] dramaturgy is not *a single* technique but merges the different techniques of

the theatre. And, finally, dramaturgy identifies with the person who does the merging, with his or her biography” (2010:215).

As noted earlier, my interest in migration stems from my own biography, and performance works that resonate with my own theatre making inclinations, are those that have a rich visual aesthetic, are as poetic as much as they are political and that make expansive use of theatre materials. These are productions that feature outside something that might be called ‘Refugee Theatre’⁹, or perhaps in response to it. While it is essential to attend to “how theatres of migration differ depending on whether they are made by migrants, or by locals, or by some combination of these subject -positions” (Cox, 2014:22), this discussion in relation to the productions chosen is outside the scope of this thesis. While the productions here have certainly been ‘analysed’, there is a useful distinction to note between ‘performance analysis’ and ‘dramaturgy’ even though they are often used interchangeably. Analysis implies a sense of taking apart or unravelling, dramaturgy is linked to ideas of composition and implies a bringing together of parts to view them in relation to each other (Turner & Behrndt, 2007). This speaks also to the method employed here of identifying specific elements in each production that are extracted and then woven together to create a new dramaturgical palette. The productions examined here use migration dramaturgically. That is, not only thematically and metaphorically, but in their particular compositional logic; in their relationship between subject matter, framing and contexts in

⁸ These include, but by no means limited to: *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy* edited by Magda Romanska (2015); The 2017 book *New Media Dramaturgy: Performance Media and New-Materialism* edited by Peter Eckersall, Helena Grehan and Edward Scheer; The *On Dramaturgy* issue of the *Performance Research Journal of the Performing Arts*; *The Dramaturgy as Ecology* report from the 2014 Dramaturgies Project; *Dramaturgy and Architecture: Theatre Utopia and the Build Environment* by Cathy Turner (2015).

⁹ Here I refer to publications such as *Refugee Performance: Practical Encounters* by Michael Balfour and *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities* by Alison Jeffers.

which they are created (Fleishman, 2015b). My argument is that a dramaturgy of African Futures extends these migrant compositional logics spatiotemporally into an elsewhere. It takes the restlessness of migration to mean a constant seeking of what else is possible, more desirable. It locates a kind of utopian yearning underpinning the project of migration and it uses the dramaturgies of migration to imagine and materialize visions of African futures. It is a dramaturgy of migration that is gendered, geo-politically oriented and commits to the potential of African futures.

Wayward Archiving

Performances are ephemeral but for an ephemeral art, live performance can leave a lot of 'stuff' around. (McGillivray, 2011:12)

By gathering these case studies, I have made a collection of things, namely a collection of migration works by women who have Africa in their biographies. I have constructed an archive and the process of writing this thesis has been to extract from the archive answers to illusive questions that I have about my own work, that are dramaturgical and poetic. The experimental archive that has been made for this creative research endeavour contains material traces of performances in the form of video recordings and published play texts as well as immaterial traces such as my own memory of watching some of the productions. This archive also includes a production that I have devised, complicating my position as archivist as both internal and external to its contents. To claim that the collection of case studies forms an archive is to enter a politically contested arena of what has been and continues to be worth remembering, in what ways and by whom. To claim that my memory and experience of live performance works, their video recordings and also their play texts and my own work, can constitute an archive is also to challenge prevailing

definitions of archives as composed only of physical artefacts. In the context of this thesis, this manner of archiving points to how stories of migration are embodied and embodied by women across the African diaspora which as Holly A. Smith notes, is about “[...] the ways historically marginalized communities are not often present in written archives, from benign neglect to intentional erasure” (2020:19). To insist on the legibility of wayward figures is to evoke different histories of empire and displacement (Swanby & Frank, 2020). My work in and on this archive is to look for the ways in which these wayward figures, animate and inanimate, point to a desire for an alternative future. This is to make visible, not only certain subjects, but also certain ways of knowing. It is an intervention and a response. It is a position that is not set apart from that which I study (Fleishman, 2009).

Besides the two live productions that I have seen (*Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* and *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls*) and for which I will rely on my own somatic memory, as mentioned, I have also examined video recordings of some of the productions (*Every Year, Every Day* and *Moj of the Antarctic*), and note the various challenges of using video material of live performance for the analysis of visual material. Attempts to ‘save’ live performances will always fail and serve only to highlight the “unbridgeable chasm between the performance and a fixed, reproducible artefact” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:75). The multi-sensory experience of the performance gives way to the camera that determines the limit of what can now be seen and heard in a condensed and flattened manner. The crucial losses of the dynamics of spatiality including depth, scale and proportion as well as the sensing body of the audience (McKinney & Iball, 2011) render the video document wholly inadequate for ‘capturing’ the work, let alone the dynamics of the performance venue. While agreeing to some extent that performance cannot then be documented, for the moment I will favour Fischer-Lichte’s argument that,

such documentations rather create the conditions of possibility to speak about past performances at all. The apparent tension between its transience and attempts to fix performance through documentation on video, film, photographs, and as descriptions emphasizes ever more clearly the fundamental ephemerality and uniqueness characteristic of performance. (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:75)

She goes on to say that while the specific materiality of the performance disappears with the video recording, in this case, it is the documents themselves remaining after the performance that can be accessed, and it is only with the assistance of other media that the materiality of the performance can be made accessible. She notes that “[T]he performance brings forth its materiality exclusively in the present and immediately destroys it again the moment it is created, setting in motion a continuous cycle of generating materiality” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008:76).

In the theatre the issue of remains for archival purposes is complex, evidenced by some of the other positions taken up by performance studies theorists on the subject (Bennett, 1990; Phelan, 1993; Schneider, 2001; the authors of the 2002 special edition of the *Performance Research* journal, titled *On Archives and Archiving*; Taylor, 2003; as well as the following anthologies: McGillivray 2011a in *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden Archives of Performance* (2011); and Borggreen & Gade 2013 in *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance*, 2013; Fleishman, 2015b; and Pinto, 2015). For Schneider, the theatre resists remaining according to the logic of the archive as traditionally known, but in fact recomposes its remains while refusing to conform to a certain status of object, and therefore “remains differently” (2001:101). To claim to have made an archive is to argue that live performance, as Fleishman notes in his piece of the same name, is “beyond capture” (2015a:1) to the extent that performance remains while threatening the terms of captivity dictated by the archive (Schneider, 2001). Diana Taylor’s work also reminds us that

the debates about the ephemerality of performance are profoundly political, as she asks, “Whose memories, traditions, and claims to history disappear if performance practices lack the staying power to transmit vital knowledge?” (2003:5). These are the same archival logics that make determinations about the value of some bodies (of knowledge) while rendering others as discardable. At the levels of both content and form then, the archive constructed for this project operates to make visible that which has been deemed invisible and unvaluable (Belle, L.V., Khan, Z., Smith, H.A. & Singh, J. 2020), challenging narratives of the erasure and disappearance of black migrant bodies as well as marking the ways in which the performing arts necessarily expand notions of archive. My immersion in the very archive that I am studying is also to counter the traditional Western anthropological gaze of ‘us’ (on the outside) studying ‘them’ on the inside. I share Diana Taylor’s investment in performance studies as deriving “less from what it *is* than what it allows us to *do*” (Taylor, 2003:16 italics in the original). In this case, including my own work in the circulation of knowledge about performance studies allows me to engage in a decolonial practice that takes the performing arts “seriously as a system of learning, storing and transmitting knowledge” (Taylor, 2003:16), necessarily expanding what we mean by knowledge in the first place. This archive is a “collection of subjectivities” (Belle, L.V., Khan, Z., Smith, H.A. & Singh, J. 2020:20) including my own, and it produces its own prompts for how to engage with it. My proximity to this archive conforms with creative research practices in which artist-academic hybrids (Lam, 2020) work with their own artistry all the time. In the art making practice of theatre and performance there is an understanding that the work is somehow bigger than the makers, it is already excessively articulate and when it is released into the world for an audience, the makers relinquish any last measures of control over it. It can then be approached anew as an ‘object’ by the same makers who ushered it into being, from a

perspective that is both inside and outside. This version of archival work aims to be capacious, decentralized, accessible and experimental in the sense of not knowing what will emerge from its exploration (Belle, L.V., Khan, Z., Smith, H.A. & Singh, J. 2020). This archive is not one that is relegated to a specific time and place and is more akin to a field of currents that cross geography and history. As Rebecca Schneider has said,

[...] performance becomes itself through messy and eruptive reappearance, challenging, via the performative trace, any neat antimony between appearance and disappearance, or presence and absence – the ritual repetitions that mark performance as simultaneously indiscreet, non-original, relentlessly citational, and remaining. (2001:103)

In this messy, eruptive, reappearing archive that does and does not disappear, the point is not to ‘capture’ ‘documents’ that are supposedly resistant to change. The theatre does not let us down by ‘disappearing’. It changes mode, it becomes stealthier, but the ideas that it has put into the world cannot be retracted, they cannot be disappeared. These ideas are released and continue to unfold the moment someone says to her collaborators, “I have an idea for a show!” The recipients of this important information are the show’s first audience (Bogart & Gay, 2015) and this simple exchange begins a process which joins other forces that bring form into being (Ingold, 2011). There is no doubt a curation of materials and a concentration of energies at the performance event itself, but my contention is that this moment sits on a continuum of collecting, spreading, cohering, expanding, and exploding of ideas that remains unfinished. In this case, my proximity to the archive here is to acknowledge that the performance work that I have made and included in the archive exists separate from me to a significant extent, and in a swirl of already existing ideas about Africa, migration, women and futurism. To reiterate, this is not a physical archive. It is an intuitive assembly of material and immaterial artefacts composed of materials that are entirely too wayward to be housed in a physical archive. As the objects in it vary from

productions that I have watched, those that I have made, play texts that I have read and video recordings that I have examined, there are multiple forms of critical interpretation that have been engaged including watching, reading, looking (Fensham, 2009) and making. Through each of these interpretive modes the focus has been to wa(o)nder through and with the works, not knowing what this will yield, but allowing this wa(o)ndering to shape and determine my evolving route. This wayfaring through the amorphous archival terrain, has been guided by Tim Ingold's rule of thumb (After Deleuze and Guattari (1987) ¹⁰, to "*follow the materials*" (2011:213 italics in the original). Both theatre and migrants are characterized by non-arrival, by defying finality or fixedness, and as unstable entities, they are well suited to each other. I have therefore essentially determined that an archive made of wayward artefacts about wayward subjects requires a wayward approach. This following of materials has been done by isolating an interaction at play between some of the theatrical materials in each work that can be read through a migrant lens. These readings reflect and respond to the working formulation of migritude for theatre making by building a migrant attitude. And it is the application of this migrant attitude that I am calling a Dramaturgy of African Futures.

¹⁰ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987a:409)

Decolonial Attitudes

Each case study has a particular way of ‘thinking’ about migration, an artistic point of view, a stance, a mood, an approach, an orientation, an interpretation, a feeling, a disposition – an *attitude* if you will. A migrant attitude to be more precise, and how Shailja Patel’s work *Migritude* inspires this formulation, will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. In operation here are two definitions of the word *attitude*: *a settled way of thinking or feeling about something* and *a position of the body indicating a particular mental state*. The first part of this definition points to this project as a process of arriving at a way of thinking and/or feeling through looking at the work of others, making, writing and researching. The second part of the definition points to the particularity of theatre-making as an embodied practice, shifting positions of the body in relation to other materials that suggest not only a mental state but also an emotional and political one.

In Shailja Patel’s autobiographical performance poem, *Migritude*, she explicates a migrant attitude that is about *a critical mode of being in the world* that signals to uneven relations of power, the endurance of colonial socialization in Africa, and a particular orientation to history and geopolitics from a migrant perspective that centres on the enactments of empire on the bodies of women. It is a theatre of migration (Cox, 2014) that is concerned with transnational and intercultural politics. From this point of departure, I have taken the term *migritude*, to mean *migrant attitude*, assumed that this attitude comes in a multitude of forms (as attitudes do), and have extracted a series of conceptual positions, if you will, by looking for where and how else this attitude is expressed in the other case studies. Each of these productions are understood as a complex web of elements

and their migrant attitudes emerge from identifying where some of these elements connect and interact. These attitudes are aesthetic, “ideological, compositional, philosophical and socio-political” (Turner & Behrndt, 2007:33).

This formulation of a migrant attitude takes its lead from Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s work on Frantz Fanon. He makes a valuable distinction between attitude and method in relation to the decolonial turn in psychology, towards what he calls a decolonial attitude (2017). He states that,

The idea of method as a guarantor of truth and knowledge in the sciences emerged from a certain confidence about the capacities of the cognitive subject and the status of the object, method being that which allows the subject to produce and secure true knowledge about the object— that is, objective knowledge. (2017:442)

He goes on to explain how Fanon’s approach to attitude sought to counter “Western methodic knowledge [which] acquired normative status and led to the rejection or subordination of other forms of knowing” (2017:433). For Maldonado-Torres, and in opposition to claims of objective knowledge, Fanon’s work approaches attitude as no less than “the dimension of the subject by virtue of which the subject can seek to challenge [established] knowledge, power, and being” (in 2017:434). The primacy of attitude over method then marks not only a decolonial turn in psychology, psychiatry and the human sciences, but more generally in areas of knowledge, power and being (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). Fanon’s philosophical approach to attitude is not only a matter of opting for subjective intention or purpose over structural condition, but in the foundational role that attitudes play in relation to ‘being’, to the human experiences of embodiment, intersubjective contact, time and space (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). In the face of a colonial attitude with “its constant questioning of the full humanity of the colonized” (Maldonado-Torres, 2017:439), a decolonial attitude towards knowledge and being is fundamentally

political and ethical. Maldonado-Torres makes the point, that attitudes are also connected to action, “prepar[ing] subjects to act or not act, as well as to act or react in particular ways, including in the task of producing knowledge” (2017:434). This formative conception of a decolonial attitude which is not only political and ethical, but epistemological and aesthetic as well, (Maldonado-Torres, 2017) provides firm grounding for conceptualizing a migrant attitude in the service of reading and making performance works that are marked by “boundary crossings” (Davies, 1994:4) and have an emancipatory agenda.

As well as offering *migritude* as a conceptual framework, Patel’s *Migritude* is also the first case study in the archive to be examined. The attitude evident in this work is one that acknowledges and takes seriously the material reality of migrant life. It is not a conceptual attitude. It understands that reported and unreported violence, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, racism, and discriminations of all kinds, are all things that happen to bodies, where people experience harm as a result of their supposed ‘difference’ from a supposed ‘norm.’ As expressed by Sonya Renee Taylor, “*Injustice* is an opaque word until we are willing to discuss its material reality” (Taylor, S. R., 2018:4). This attitude keeps central the discussion of material reality, unapologetically in response to the countless ways that migrants are asked to apologize. These apologies range from not knowing local languages with enough finesse, distancing ourselves from reporting that exaggerates the responsibility of non-South African Africans for high crime rates and job losses for example, for the general prejudice written into popular understandings of nationality and for the many minor and major inconveniences our presence seems to cause. The migrant attitude in *Migritude* is unapologetic about the precarities that mark migrant lives and centralizes the global

historical processes that are always at play in relation to discussions about African migrants and their movement patterns.

In *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* by Magnet Theatre I have identified an attitude of vitality towards objects. This contributing thread to a migrant attitude places the movement of subject and object in new fluid configurations that gesture towards freedom. This attitude towards freedom is one that attempts to share principles of equality and justice with non-human players (Fleishman, 2015b).

In *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey* the migrant attitude is tactical and strategic, regarding the politics of race and gender using passing as a means of gaining acceptance into social groups other than one's own. It is the attitude of a trickster who is both seen and unseen, enabling shifts in social position and between public and private identities.

In *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls*, Kapwani Kiwanga creates a connection between events in Africa's history and an otherworldly African future. Hers is a migrant attitude that expands time and space, opening up not only a spatiotemporal continuum on which to (re)read African history, but also a portal through which to reclaim and reinvent that history through a futuristic lens.

The production *Astronautus Afrikanus* sought to make a critical spatial intervention into an institutional site's colonial history and context, at a time that was ripe for the reimagining of institutional culture. This piece of the migrant attitude centres around physical space as pliable and possessing transformative potential which is activated by an audience with mobile agency.

A dramaturgy of African futures then, is made up of these shifting puzzle pieces, its central guiding metaphor is the African woman migrant, and it is as much about history as it is about the future. This guiding metaphor ensures that the marginal and transgressive nature of migration, while inherently political, is not tokenized or valorised, and that hierarchies of gender, race and geopolitics are not ignored or erased.

The collection of productions in the archive here creates what Emma Cox calls a “mythopoeitics’ of migration – literally ‘making myth’ out of migration”, she goes on to describe this as “an accumulation of visions of foreignness that have collided in the globalised, bureaucratised present” (Cox, 2014:10). Cox reminds us that while migrants represent the new in terms of mobility and adaptability, these qualities may have everything or nothing to do with autonomy, choice or wealth, grounding the grand narratives of *exile, separation, journey, encounter and return* in the lived realities of migrants themselves. Migrants create a particular reading of the political present through this “*emotional legibility*” (Cox, 2014:9 italics in the original) or via the bureaucratic systems of belonging that formalize non-citizenship. As succinctly stated by Marianne Van Kerkhoven “[...] bureaucracy is power in its most stupid and probably most dangerous form” (2009:9). My hope is that this *emotional legibility* which prevails where migrant narratives are concerned, is expanded by activating the migrant’s representation of potential, possibility, and the future, lifting some of the mythic weight of migration narratives so that they are afforded more flexibility, lightness, and opportunity for expansion. This would enable a shift in focus of the “mythic cornerstones” (Cox, 2014:9) of migration. I contend that an individual’s dramaturgical practice is influenced by how they read the political present and using migrants and migration as an avenue through which to do this, is altered if migrants are

imagined as carriers of potentiality, as mobilizers of a future vision, and as a way to meditate on the impossible.

Dramaturgy as a Reading and Making Practice

Archaeology moves backward through the course of history, just as the imagination moves back through individual biography. Both represent a regressive force that, unlike traumatic neurosis, does not retreat toward an indestructible origin but rather toward the point where history (whether individual or collective) becomes accessible for the first time in accordance with the temporality of the future anterior. (Agamben, 2009:107)

A Dramaturgy of African Futures is conceived as both a reading practice and a making practice and maintains that these practices of creative research are not separate but sees processes of making, thinking, understanding, imagining, recognizing, writing, as what Paul Carter calls *material thinking* (2004). He contends that “If research implies finding something that was not there before, it ought to be obvious that it involves imagination” (2004:7). This is a reading and making practice which challenges the authority and coherence of dominant migrant narratives and contributes to a kind of clarifying, to a making conscious the fluid bounds of my theatre-making territory. It coheres with doing dramaturgy as a “conversation preparing for and infecting a coming conversation, namely with an audience” (Georgelou, K., Protopapa, E. & Theodoridou, D., 2017:143), in this case an audience that will read the thesis and a future audience that will receive the productions to come. In Carter’s words, “If it is claimed that what is found was always there (and merely lost), still an act of creative remembering occurs” (2004:7). My hope is that while this *creative remembering* has value for me as an artist, it also contributes to an already rich range of dramaturgical avenues for other artists. In this thesis I have attempted to maintain a kind of “archaeological vigilance” in the words of Agamben (2009:8), using these productions that have resonated with me on various personal, emotional, aesthetic levels to

“retrace [my] own trajectory back to the point where something remains obscure and unthematized” (Agamben, 2009:8). I have attempted to articulate these resonances with some clarity and then elaborate on them in order to claim a measure of originality (Agamben, 2009). Read through Michel Foucault, Agamben’s is a philosophical archaeology and while the acts of creative remembering entail a ‘looking back’ to works that have essentially been made ‘in the past’, it is not a looking back in search of an ‘original’ point of departure, but in Agamben’s words, is more like a “matter of following the threads back to something like the moment when knowledge, discourses and spheres of objects are constituted” (2009:84). He reiterates that this mode of philosophical archaeology, is “not properly a past, but a moment of arising” (2009:105). This following of the threads is akin to an act of re-tracing with my gaze set on the future by moving into the past to the points when the attitudes first arise in my work in order to make them more conscious. The works collected in the archive allow me to (re)trace and (re)discover the stages that have led me to make the work that I do, which orients itself to the future.

From The Future Anterior to the Possibility of Living Unbounded Life

This is not a study that is concerned with identifying a historical timeline, but instead is curious about what the future oriented *knowledge, discourses and spheres of objects* are that arise by looking at performance works that have already been made and in effect belong to a certain past. Agamben goes on to conclude that:

The moment of arising, the *archē* of archaeology is what will take place, what will become accessible and present, only when archaeological inquiry has completed its operation. It therefore has the form of a past in the future, that is a *future anterior*. (2009:105)

As I have attempted to articulate in the Archive section above, rather than a looking back to works that are preserved in some static way, here the 'looking back' is to things that are on the move gesturing both backwards and forwards, they are not left behind. These 'past' shows are simultaneously present while I argue that they also point towards the future. What has been does not overwhelm what is approaching (Bloch, 1996). Taylor's comments reiterate the temporal fluidity characteristic of art works when she says: "Performances travel, challenging and influencing other performances. Yet they are, in a sense, always in situ: intelligible in the framework of the immediate environment and issues surrounding them" (Taylor, 2003:3).

Moving from "an unconscious category of understanding" (Marcel Mauss quoted in Agamben, 2009:94), this thesis is set up as an inquiry (Foucault's archaeology) to identify features that have developed in my work, not to rediscover features that were pre-existing. This is not an exercise of recall or recollection, but of the kind of creative remembering which creates a (new) memory of how my work has come to be, and what will continue to shape it in the future. Again, not to redeem, but to create (Agamben, 2009). This future anterior reading and making practice emerges from looking towards an unknown, alternative future, while moving backwards into an unknown past towards "a moment of arising" (Overbeck quoted in Agamben, 2009:85). As mentioned earlier here, the discourse of African migration is dominated by trauma, despondency and dependency, by a figuring of African migrants as a problem, one to be taken care of, ignored or eliminated. What is found at the moment of arising however, is an alternative understanding of African migrancy existing in the spirit of all the productions. These are not works of performance that shy away from the traumas and complexities of migration, but my argument is that they also

put notions of potentiality and possibility back into a discourse of African migration, and it is this opening that a migrant attitude seeks to leverage.

As Agamben has noted,

[...] the future at issue in archaeology becomes intertwined with a past; it is a future anterior. It is a *past that will have been* when the archaeologist's gesture (or the power of the imaginary) *has cleared away* the ghosts of the unconscious and the tight-knit fabric of tradition which block access to history. Only in the form of this 'will have been' can historical consciousness truly become possible. (Agamben, 2009:106)

The tense of the future anterior is one of possibility. As indicated in the quote above, it is a future conditional tense that imagines what will have been before the event comes to pass – it is a wish projection. If the future anterior describes the method of dealing with a wayward archive of wayward objects about wayward migrant African women in order to project a wish into the future, then the particular position that these migrant African women occupy in this matrix is worth some additional consideration.

Borrowing from bell hooks, migrant women can be understood as occupying an “oppositional world view” by necessity, “a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty, and despair, strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity” (1984: ix). Here a migrant woman's positionality is mobilized towards a formation of a critical feminist consciousness. If the term feminist as articulated clearly by hooks as “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (hooks, 2000:1), is used as a modifier for African futures, then a grammar of black (African) feminist futurity must be identified by markers of feminist agency and resistance. What this might look like in a theatre-making practice is one of the goals of this research. Through the work of Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, Judith Butler and Athena Athansiou, Tina Campt identifies feminist agency and resistance as being

marked by the refusal of the premise and logic of white supremacy which reduces Black life to pathology. The refusal to stay in one's assigned place, as it were, is equated with a desire for freedom that Ruth Wilson Gilmore expresses as the possibility of living an unbounded life (Campt, 2017). This refusal to stay in place and the possibility of living free of boundaries is inhabited both in a Shailaja Patel's conceptualizing of *Migritude*, and also in notions of African futurity. For Campt, futurity, while very much attached to notions of aspiration, is less a question of hope and more a question of tense, asking "What is the 'tense' of a Black feminist future" (2017: 17). She answers her own question by saying that "[i]t is a tense of anteriority, a tense relationship to an idea of possibility that is neither innocent nor naïve. Nor is necessarily heroic or intentional" (2017:17). She goes on to offer a grammatically precise definition that is beyond the future tense as it is typically encountered as something that will happen down the line, and also beyond the future perfect tense as something that will have happened, before a future reference point, and instead aims for the future real conditional (2017) defined as,

[...] *that which will have had to happen*. The grammar of Black feminist futurity is a performance of a future that hasn't yet happened but must. It is an attachment to a belief in what should be true, which impels us to realize that aspiration. It is the power to imagine beyond current fact and to envision that which is not, but must be. It's a politics of a pre-figuration that involves living the future *now* – as imperative rather than subjunctive – as a striving for the future you want to see, right now, in the present. (Campt, 2017:17, italics in the original)

With this grammatical emphasis, feminist futurity is understood as that which is yet unrealised, not only imagined and hoped for, but demanded and expected. The tactics deployed in service of this kind of futurity are often, in Campt's terms, humble, strategic, subtle, discriminating, devious, exacting, quiet, opportunistic, dogged and disruptive (2017).

All these tactics are evident to a greater and lesser extent in the dramaturgies of the productions featured in this thesis project's alternative archive.

CHAPTER 3: Modes of Thinking/Making/ Doing – A Review of the Literature

The utopian function of postcolonial literatures is therefore located in its practice as well as its vision – the practice of confronting and transforming coercive power to produce an imagined future. (Ashcroft, 2012:12)

Material, Utopian, Dramaturgical & Diasporic Thinking

This section reviews some of the key literature that underpins this study. It aims to lay the theoretical tracks that run through this thesis marked by different modes of thinking/making/doing (praxis), and it keeps central notions of practice and theory as expressed by Georgelou, K., Protopapa, E. & Theodoridou, D. when they write:

Even when one speaks of the way that practice and theory complement each other, this implies a pre-existing separation and subsequent coming together of the two; instead, the kind of work that we identify as dramaturgical takes place in thinking, doing, making, and writing, in a way that does not privilege either theoretical thinking or performance making as the site of dramaturgical practice, but rather exceeds and makes irrelevant such distinctions. (2017:20)

Paul Carter offers useful articulations that guide the methodology of the research undertaken here. The first are his thoughts on material thinking as it occurs in the making of works of art as creative research (2004), and the second are his thoughts on migrancy as a poetic act (1992). To the first set of ideas, Carter offers a productive understanding of works of art as possessing “an excess of articulateness” (2004: xii). It is productive in the sense that my study, which involves the analysis and interpretation of both my own and other people’s creative processes, is immediately a reductive exercise in its presentation as words on a page. Lacking in appropriate vocabulary for the many parts in simultaneous operation in the production of live performance works, let alone the effects of the whole, an acknowledgement of this excess destabilizes the traditional hierarchy of written words to do all the necessary explaining. In Fleishman’s words, the theatrical works remain *beyond capture* (2015a). The recognition of the creative intelligence of theatrical materials including bodies, written texts, spaces, design elements and their dramaturgical composition, in a particular time and place also foregrounds an understanding of each work as a site of

research that offers many other points of entry and engagement besides the ones chosen here. In Carter's view, when artists ask, "What matters?" and "What is the material of thought?" (2004: xi) they are embarking on an adventure specific to the process of making creative work that cannot be reduced to an analysis of the artistic outcome. Carter understands the inevitable complexity in creative research as having the capacity to demonstrate how the process of material thinking allows us to think differently about what it means to be human. In his words, "to demonstrate the great role works of art can play in the ethical project of *becoming* (collectively and individually) *oneself in a particular place*" (2004: xii) has societal value at the level of expanding our understandings of how identities and relationships are actively invented and therefore susceptible to reinvention (Carter, 2004:xii). In addition, Carter proposes a "framework of thinking that makes the migrant central, not ancillary to historical processes" (1992:7) and argues for the condition of migrancy itself as being generative of new cultural forms. This necessitates a move away from understanding migrant identities as hopelessly displaced both physically and psychologically, and forever seeking to be reunified to an original (national) home. Instead, Carter argues for migration as not only a cultural and historical fact, but importantly for this project, migrancy as a poetic attitude. He writes,

The impulse to identify *poiesis*, or 'making,' with *place*-making is no doubt a widespread migrant tendency. As figures in whom distant, usually dissimilar, places are joined, migrants are walking metaphors. Creating the places, they make and the stories they tell by analogy, they instinctively grasp the notion that migration is a poetic act. (2004:2)

In a different text, Carter writes of coincidence as a feature of a migrant's place-making in a new country, when he says that, "In this situation casual coincidences may be the only means of getting on: pantomimic imitations of other people may be the best way of

bridging the gap, of fitting language to situation in a country where nothing as yet has fixed meaning” (1992:4). This understanding of coincidence as a poetic principle, speaks to “the double aspect of life in a new country, the way in which phenomena simultaneously point towards the past and the future, and as they do so, undermine the reality of appearances” (Carter, 1992:4). Carter’s migrant poetics are marked by the provisional nature of appearances, by acts of translation and decipherment, by continuous arrivals which each call for new sets of responses, and by different representations of the desire to make contact. These ideas are not only inherent in migrant experience but also translate well to understanding processes of theatre-making. He offers a valuable summary of the philosophical approaches that underpin this research project as a whole in weaving together a poetics of migrancy, material thinking and artistic processes, when he says:

Myths of immaculate origins and unnegotiable destinies are historical inventions, and one function of the artist is to show, by rematerialising these metaphysical myths in the creative process, how more sustainable artificial myths can come into circulation, displacing those that are no longer sustainable and brokering new relationships with degraded environments, displaced others and (their spiritual corollary) an impoverished imaginary. (2004: xii)

One proposal for nourishing an impoverished imaginary is to engage in utopian thinking. The interest here is not in imagining utopias (or dystopias) as locations necessarily, but in the hopeful potential of utopian thinking as articulated by Bill Ashcroft in his writing on Ernst Bloch, as “the energizing of the present with the anticipation of what is to come” (2009:9). Ashcroft explores this *anticipatory consciousness* as conceptualized by Bloch (1996), as a core ingredient of African anti-colonial discourse where the rhetoric of resistance was transformed into a positive anticipation of future freedom (2009). Ashcroft’s historical critique of utopias as tools for reimagining present African possibilities provides a useful framing for this project alongside the work of Stephen Shukaitis and his productive

articulation of *the outer space of the radical imagination* (2009). Stemming from this, discussions of post colonialism and science fiction are spread through the growing literature on the history and contemporary developments of what can be called African science fiction as well as the treatment of Africa in science fiction, as evidenced in collections such as the special issue of *Paradoxa* 25 titled simply *Africa SF* (2013), *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* (Thomas, 2000), *AfroSF: Science Fiction by African Writers* (Hartmann, 2012) and Mohale Mashigo's collection *Intruders* (2018).

The utopian logic of Ernst Bloch is also one that animates the thinking of Jose Esteban Muñoz (2009) who understands queerness as “essentially about a rejection of the here and now and an insistence on the potentiality or concrete possibility for another world” (Muñoz, 2009:1). This notion will become particularly useful in the analysis of the play *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey*. The overriding idea however that is resonant throughout, is what Muñoz describes as a “A Blochian approach to aesthetic theory [that] is invested in describing the anticipatory illumination of art, which can be characterized as the process of identifying certain properties that can be detected in representational practices helping us to see the not-yet-conscious” (2009:3). As a representational practice, theatre and performance is well placed to do the work of constructing possibilities. In a similar vein to Paul Carter's insights on the *excess of articulateness of works of art*, the utopian function, in the words of Muñoz, “is enacted by a certain surplus in the work that promises a futurity, something that is not quite here” (Muñoz, 2009:7). Hope as a critical methodology offers an alternative logic to the here and now that is resistant to the temporal and spatial logic of the present by enacting a backward glance which mobilizes a future vision (Muñoz, 2009).

Following Bloch's lead, I am arguing here that utopian feelings are indispensable to imagining transformation. In this regard, I am inspired by Jill Dolan's provocative questions:

How can performance, in itself, be a utopian gesture? Why do people come together to watch other people labor on stage, when contemporary culture solicits their attention with myriad other forms of representation and opportunities for social gathering? Why do people continue to seek the liveness, the present-tenseness that performance and theatre offer? Is the desire to be there, in the moment, the expression of a utopian impulse? (2005:36)

Dramaturgical Thinking

In their practice, artists are often doing many things at once, including deep introspection, social observation and commentary, expressing personal feelings, and ideas, and speaking and catering to an external audience. (Abebe, 2019:56)

Dramaturgy's (new) emphasis on the non-literary has created a proliferation of different descriptions of the practice including Visual Dramaturgy, Open Dramaturgy, Textual landscape dramaturgy and Fragmented Dramaturgy (Turner & Behrndt, 2008:31). Despite a non-committal relationship to any of these sub-categories, as a maker of new performance works, I am doing dramaturgy, a practice that I understand as the composition of a dynamic pattern in space and time (Barba, 2010) resulting from improvisation and collaboration. It is also a practice that I have come to understand as producing a grammar that emerges from my own biography as a migrant and is therefore inseparable from (my) politics. Eugenio Barba's understanding of dramaturgy as a particular way of thinking is useful here. He understands it as a technique to weave, shape, assemble, merge, multiply and overturn, demolish, disarrange in order to discover unforeseen threads to weave into a dense relationship (2010). He writes of "a potentiality of links and approaches different from those already existing, imagined and imaginable until then. Dramaturgy, in this case,

[means] the creation of a complex web of threads instead of simple links. It [is] also a particular way of thinking” (2010:11). Similarly, Cathy Turner and Synne Behrndt use the word dramaturgy to describe the composition of a script of performance work and “while it is the term for the composition itself, it is also a word applied to the *discussion* of that composition” (2007:4). The use of the term dramaturgy assumes there are theatrical parts (words, sounds, light, images, bodies, objects) that have been structured into a kind of whole to create an experience for an audience of a kind of landscape that has been dramaturgically mapped, to extend the migration metaphor. Based on the contention that maps are suggestive, subjective, coded, imaginative and processual, “If the dramaturg attempts to sketch a ‘map,’ perhaps this will always be in pragmatic and tentative relation to the territory of the performance event. Thus, there is a dynamic, contextual and, indeed, political dimension to dramaturgical practice” (Turner & Behrndt, 2007:4).

I concur with Marianne Van Kerkhoven when she says that for her, “Dramaturgy is [...] learning to handle complexity” (Van Kerkhoven, 2009:11). This is particularly so in relation to the making of the thesis where the dramaturgy has involved a constant movement from inside to outside and back, of feeding ongoing conversations, of building bridges, and being responsible for the whole (Van Kerkhoven, 2009). As Barba has said, “It is difficult to understand one’s own work, how it unfurls and functions, without falling into theoretical constructions which are both complicated and abstract, and whose innumerable details ramify in a thousand sub-sections like a cabbalistic architecture” (2010:9).

Nevertheless, the dramaturgical processes at work in the thesis began with an observation of a kind of evolution in my creative obsession with migration and with Africa as a sign, to one that includes science fiction and ideas of futurity. While migration is like a baseline of

my theatre-making/thinking, it is less that futurism has popped up suddenly as an interest than that it has risen to the surface more consciously to inflect the baseline with something else. The thesis follows a hunch that this *something else* is an ongoing conversation between ideas of African futurity and a sense of potentiality that is inherent in notions of migration. The thesis is an attempt to hear this complex conversation more clearly, to pay attention to what is whispered as well as what is declared and to clear space for it to happen more frequently and robustly. It seems like a process of thinking that is akin to eavesdropping on multilingual riddles, picking up snatches of conversation, and as is the nature of the labyrinthine science of creative thought according to Barba, proceeding by leaps, by means of sudden disorientations which oblige the thoughts to reorganize themselves in new ways (Barba, 2010). Barba goes on to specify that “Creative thought is *not* linear, *not* univocal, *not* foreseeable” (Barba, 2010:84, italics in the original), and the order and structure in which this thesis must be presented belies the labyrinthine nature of its dramaturgy. If the thesis were a devised production, then this would be the initial premise for the work. What has followed from this premise is the organic process of making an archive based on a series of hunches and inclinations informed by my biography and my politics. This would be similar to identifying the source material for the devised production. I then began a process of identifying a unique way of looking at each artefact in the archive, based on a sense that migration is doing deeper, more subtle work beyond theme. I have tied these explorations to the original hunch that African Futures and a migrant poetics of potentiality form the framework of my own dramaturgy. Rather than linear steps, these are porous stages that have been continually in operation, each stage influencing the thinking and imagining of stages before and after it. The production of this thesis then has been created out of its own dramaturgical process, a process which Barba aptly describes as a kind of “voluntary

disorientation which demands that all the energy of the researcher be set in motion, sharpening [her] senses, like when one advances in the dark” (2010:83). This process has involved a kind of weaving together of different components or threads (Barba, 2010) towards the articulation of a kind of aesthetic logic that can be identified in works and can be used as a framework for making new work. It has followed Barba’s lead, for whom dramaturgy is similar to ‘anatomy’, in that it names “a practical way of working not only on the organism in totality, but on its different organs and layers” (2010:9).

In his much-quoted article *The ‘diaspora’ diaspora*, Rogers Brubaker surveys the existing literature at his time of writing that discusses the different descriptive permutations of diaspora, including ‘classical’ in the case of Jewish, Armenian and Greek diasporas; ‘catastrophic’ and ‘victim’ in the case of the Palestinian diaspora; ‘trading’ or ‘mobilized’ diasporas in the case of the Chinese, Indian and Nigerian diasporas and ‘long-distance nationalists’ in the case of Albanians, Irish, Kurds and Tamils (Brubaker, 2005:2). He says,

As the term has proliferated, its meaning has been stretched to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted. This has resulted in what one might call a “‘diaspora diaspora’ – a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space. (Brubaker, 2005:1)

Brubaker goes on, in his essay to outline the various academic and social tensions in which these definitions and many others are embroiled, including those that reject the groupist formulations that continue to essentialize belonging as suggested by the preceding list of diasporic categories. I mention this here to illustrate how the “conceptually untidy” (Tololyan, 2007:648) origins of the term ‘diaspora’ now used to broadly signify “any combination of mobility, scattering beyond a territory of origin, and resettlement elsewhere,” has its roots in “the Greek word *diaspora* that Jews of Alexandria first used

around 250 BCE to signify their own scattering away from the homeland into *galut* or collective exile” (Tololyan, 2007:648):

Diaspora studies [...] emerged in a fragmentary fashion, without fanfare or theoretical self-consciousness, as earlier disciplines dealing with nation, ethnicity, race, migration and postcolonialism felt the need to adjust their methods and categories to the pressures of new transnational and global phenomena; ironically, they found a twenty-three-hundred-year-old concept, ‘diaspora,’ to be suitable to their needs. (Tololyan, 2007:647)

Brubaker notes that some discussions of diaspora “emphasize hybridity, fluidity, creolization and syncretism and offer an alternative to the groupist portrayal of diasporas as tangible, quantifiable, and bounded entities” (2005:11).

Janna Evans Brazier and Anita Manuor articulate the function of what can be called the nomadic turn in cultural and identity theory, in support of centralizing notions of migration for the reading of current cultural practice and identity formation:

Diasporic traversals question the rigidities of identity itself – religious, ethnic, gendered, national; yet this diasporic movement marks not a postmodern turn from history, but a nomadic turn in which the very parameters of specific historical moments are embodied and - as diaspora itself suggests – are scattered and regrouped into new points of becoming. (2003:3)

Avtah Brah also shares a useful conception of diaspora, that is used in this study as “an interpretive frame for analysing the economic, political and cultural modalities of historically specific forms of migrancy” (1996:15). The (geo)historically specific form of migrancy in the case of the thesis is that which involves the African continent and leans on Brent Hayes Edwards’ general formulation of diaspora in relation to Africa, as “a term [...] to express the links and commonalities among groups of African descent throughout the world” (Edwards, 2001:45). This expanded notion of African Diasporas is in use here as an inclusive term to refer both to communities of particular African nationalities living in

African countries besides those of their birth, as well as the more common reference to African Diasporas as those communities historically dispersed from Africa into the rest of the world.

The second quote above opens Alpha Abebe's more recent chapter on *Performing diaspora* in which she goes on to write about how the term 'diaspora' has been used expansively, albeit as a functional and crude demographic category by groups such as scholars, artists, policy makers "to describe countless population and social movements across and within geographic borders" (2019:55). Importantly she goes on to mention that these categories "may or may not align with the way people within these groups identify [...]" (Abebe, 2019:55), and that using people's own identifications and social practices, while admittedly messier is a more insightful starting point for analysis, as the term tends to mask the complex and fluid ways dispersed people create, interpret and instrumentalize relationships to their (idealized) homelands (2019).

In his discussion of the relationship of diasporas, migrants and transnationals in the context of Africa, Oliver Bakewell argues that "in this vast and rapidly expanding literature on African diasporas, very little attention has been paid to African diasporas within the continent" (Bakewell, 2008:2). He extracts the important questions arising from this dearth to ask, "whether a) there are diasporas in Africa which have yet to be the focus of research; or b) diasporas have not tended to be formed within Africa, which begs the further question, why not?" (2008:2). Bakewell also reminds us, it is not all migrants that become, or choose to identify as diasporans, and not all diasporans would consider themselves, or can be considered as migrants (2008). Tololyan is also quick to note that while "certain diasporic elites celebrate their mobility and certainly know how to take socioeconomic

advantage of it, the advantages and costs of mobility need to be more carefully examined [as] those who pay the costs are often not those who enjoy its advantages” (Tololyan, 2007:654). Transnational practices, therefore, not only complicate relationships to place, but also resurface a lack of terminology for the articulation of these particular ways of being and identifying. In the context of these discussions, this research project imagines, names and gives form to a highly populated liminal space between conceptions of nationality, citizenship and diaspora inflected by power. It must be noted that it was in the more traditionally constructed diaspora that “the construction of ‘Africa’ as homeland occurred” (Davies, 1994:10) as a strategy of resistance against European domination. This concurs with Toloyan’s valuable observations of the distinctions between diaspora and other kinds of dispersion that are worth capturing at length as they clarify and nuance the angles of diaspora in use in the thesis:

First, a diaspora that is born of catastrophe inflicted on the collective suffers trauma and usually becomes a community to which the work of memory, commemoration, and mourning is central, shaping much of its cultural production and political commitment. It is helpful to distinguish it from a dispersion that is the consequence of individual and chain migration, motivated by economic reasons; in such communities, nostalgia can be strong, but commemoration and collective mourning are less prominent. (2007:649)

A [...] salient characteristic of diasporas, especially those dispersed by catastrophic destruction in the homeland, is a rhetoric of restoration and return that, in practice, takes the form of a sustained and organized commitment to maintaining relations with kin communities elsewhere, and with the homeland, to which diasporans either return literally or, more commonly, “re-turn” without actual repatriation: that is, they turn again and again toward the homeland through travel, remittances, cultural exchange, and political lobbying and by various contingent efforts to maintain other links with the homeland. (2007:649)

A foundational premise of this project is that the societal vantage points of those who might be identified, and self-identify as diasporans in the form of migrants, nomads, travellers, outcasts, exiles and outsiders is a useful one for being able to see and describe with “detail, texture and meaning [...] themes that are both specific to their diasporic

experience and common to the human condition” (Abebe, 2019:56 & 57). Also foundational is that what can be called diasporic artistic practice, is any form of intentional creative expression through a number of mediums that facilitates the exploration of construction and expression of diasporic identifications without the need to make discoveries or conclusions (Abebe, 2019).

Brubaker argues for thinking about diaspora as an idiom, a stance, a claim, a project and a “category of practice” rather than a bounded entity or group (2005:12), and this is taken up by Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo who write persuasively about the ways in which “performance, as both concept and praxis, might extend current understandings of diaspora” (Gilbert & Lo Jacqueline, 2010:152). In their chapter titled *Diasporas and Performance* (2010), they provide a useful framework for thinking about the relationship between theatre and migration. They tell us that,

[A]s an aesthetic practice, theatre focuses attention on the ways in which diaspora is embodied, spatialized and temporalized through performance rather than simply inhering in sentiment or consciousness. As a social practice, theatre performs and activates a wide range of links with homelands and host lands, situating diaspora within specific cultural, political, geographic and historical contexts. (2010:151)

Migrants, as a particular category of diasporic subjectivity, bring borders into focus, and the fluid borders of the real and the imaginary are the organic territory of theatre and performance. Movement across, through and within this field of struggle, described variably as a crossing, an escape or a negotiation (Kobialka, 1999), marks not only the thematic interests here, but also the continued engagement with “a discipline in which the materiality of borders and border crossings is a physical, immanent threshold” (Kobialka, 1999:4). This coheres with the productive intersection of diaspora and performance studies

at the levels of “space, bodies and affect” noted by Gilbert and Lo, in which the capacity of performance to “hold together, in the one iteration, the physical and the material with the abstract and the affective – usefully enlarges and complicates empirically based views of living with, and in, diaspora” (2010:152). The embodied occupation of space is a core feature of diasporic subjectivity as well as performance and this dynamic interaction is one that is often flattened in empirical studies of migration. If as Gilbert and Lo write, diasporic subjectivity tends to be characterized by “imaginative (re)mapping” (2010:152), then the “zone of heightened affect” (Gilbert & Lo, 2010:155) of the theatrical space of performance is well suited to offering ways to think about movement patterns, agency and the material effects of the “arbitrariness of the border in determining who does/does not belong [...]” (Gilbert & Lo, 2010:153). For Gilbert and Lo, performativity “counter[s] the constraining agendas of aggressive nationalism” by offering a “challenge to the concepts of racial purity and cultural authenticity and undermines notions of diaspora as the contaminated parts of either/both homeland and host-land cultures” (Gilbert & Lo, 2010:154).

Boundaries and borders are revealed in the act of crossing them, and as Joseph Roach notes, “By thematizing notions of home, homelessness, migration, exile, and diaspora, [...] the contemporary theatre has repeatedly enacted the slippages between time and place by staging the border crossing as one of its predominant actions” (Roach, 1999:111). The exposure and subversion of both visible and invisible rules and procedures to ‘normalize’ becomes political work, and Michal Kobialka notes that, “The discourse on borders is initiated by an encounter with the real or the imaginary, the material or the immaterial borders that are set, specified, actualized, and made visible in the act of passage” (1999:17). The multiple meanings of what might constitute materiality in this

instance, include political situations, cultural movements, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and also what is seen heard, felt sensed or touched while approaching and crossing the border (Kobialka, 1999:11). How the materiality of borders is represented, fragmented embodied and multiplied in the practice of theatre and performance is among the interests of this project.

The existing and growing body of literature on migration and performance studies is broad and far reaching. It includes the 2009 edited collection by Gilbert and Lo titled *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross Cultural Transactions in Australasia*, authors on the subject of theatre and exile such as Yana Meerzon (2012, 2020) and Judith Rudakoff (2017); Alison Jeffers (2012) and Michael Balfour's (2013), work on Refugee Theatre as mentioned earlier here, as well as Steve Wilmer's (2018) work on performing statelessness in Europe and a more recent work centered on Australian refugee protection titled *Performance, Resistance and Refugees* (2022) edited by Suzanne Little, Samid Suliman and Caroline Wake. Where this project seeks to make a contribution, is in widening the geographical and socio-political scope of this existing territory to include detailed discussion of specific African contexts.

A Mode of Being in the World

A migrant can be a person who leaves one home and makes another, or one with multiple homes, or none, or a person who eschews geographical fixity altogether. Migrants can be individuals, families or political communities. They may move by choice or by compulsion. They may be made welcome or shunned. And each of these contingencies can bleed into another. (Cox, 2014:7)

[...] the practice of evading state-centered measures of controlling migration between the two countries is as old as the border itself. (Musoni, 2020a:2)

The dominant discourse of African migration supports a number of perceptions of why and how Africans migrate, who does this migrating and what effect it has on both the

'migrants' and the 'hosts.' Assisted by immigration policies, particular kinds of press coverage and the humanitarian/development industry, associations of hardship and trauma predominate when African migrants are represented, spoken for and about and generally featured as disturbances in the lives of the settled, local citizens. Theatre and performance works about African migration often also focus on the important need to raise awareness of the plight of migrants and the many injustices that they face on their journeys of seeking a different life for themselves and their families.¹¹ It is useful to look at African migration scholars including Oliver Bakewell and Loren B. Landau (2018) who remind us that the movements and settlements of migrants within African countries and communities are under-researched: "While the extent of African migration is relatively modest by global standards—less than ten per cent of the world's international migrants are African born—more than half of those Africans who do move do so within the continent" (Bakewell & Landau, 2018:4). Their scholarship reveals that research on African migration tends to focus on those leaving the continent, when the numbers of migrants leaving Africa in fact pales in comparison to the millions who move intra-continently, within their countries or regions (2018). In the introduction to their edited collection of essays titled *Forging African Communities: Mobility, Integration and Belonging*, they reinforce this point by saying,

Considering the significant ethnic, linguistic, climactic and political boundaries within many African states, these combined movements suggest we should be seeing a continent increasingly characterised by people apparently 'out of place.' Yet despite this oddity, intracontinental migration remains remarkably poorly researched. (Bakewell & Landau, 2018:4)

¹¹ A prominent example of this is the autobiographical one-person play, *The Crossing* by Jonathan Khumbulani Nkala in which he narrates his harrowing journey from his home in Kwekwe, Zimbabwe to Johannesburg (Nkala, 2009).

In contrast, Francis Musoni identifies a growing literature on Africa's borders and borderlands in which his own book titled, *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa* (2020) is a prominent feature. In it, Musoni challenges the common use of the terms used to refer to cross-border movement including 'illegal' 'informal,' 'irregular,' 'undocumented', 'unauthorized' and 'unpermitted', by noting for example that,

Although many such movements breach some countries' migration laws, scholars, policy makers, journalists, and the public sometimes use the term illegal migration in situations where existing laws do not specifically make such movements illegal. The use of this juridical term also implies that people who cross international boundaries without following official channels automatically become criminals who deserve detention, deportation, or other forms of punishment. (2020:4)

Instead, he opts for the non-pejorative term that those who live on and between the borders of Zimbabwe and South Africa as migrant workers and traders use to identify themselves and their acquaintances: 'border jumpers' (Musoni, 2020). As a scholar seeking to fill this gap identified by Bakewell and Landau, Musoni makes an important intervention into the historical discourse on border jumping by starting at the inception of the colonial boundary through British conquest "between what was then known as the *Transvaal* (now Limpopo province of South Africa) and what became Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the 1890s, to the early 2000s" (2020b:2). He challenges the prevailing discourse by geographers, policy makers, sociologists and political scientists who study this area and determine that 'illegal' migration is largely caused by insecure conditions in the 'home' country. Instead, his study focuses on the shifting dynamics of "contestations about the meaning of the border and attempts to control people's movements from Zimbabwe to South Africa" (2020:2). He argues that tightening border controls does not eradicate or control border jumping but in fact produces it and encourages more violent and risky methods of cross border movement when 'official' means of moving from one country to

another are denied. He argues that “researchers should seek to understand the motives, desires, and long-term goals as well as the agency and creativity of people who engage in this practice” (2020:12).

Seeking some additional insight into being African in a transnational context from a gendered perspective has led to this consideration of how forms and dynamics of migration by African women are articulated through their creative practices. In the context of migration research, the term *feminisation* has been used to highlight the ways in which women have and continue to, migrate independently of men. The term is used varyingly to refer to what is perceived as the rising numbers of women migrants between particular locations and/or time periods, to describe recent shifts in women’s participation in international labour migration, or to point to the gender composition of migration flows (Donato & Gabaccia, 2016). As reiterated by Olivia Espin, “Women’s experience of migration is a frequently neglected aspect of migration studies” (1999:2). However, recent scholarship on migration has acknowledged that there has been a historical focus on the migration of men (Creswell & Uteng, 2008) despite statistics released by the United Nations Population Division that reveal that women migrants in Southern Africa constitute almost half of all migrants in sub-Saharan Africa (Kihato, 2010). As noted by Avtah Brah:

The emergent new international division of labour depends quite crucially upon women workers. Indeed, whether working in electronics factories, textile sweatshops, performing outwork from their homes, or (rather more untypically) holding jobs in the commanding heights of the economy – women have become emblematic figures of contemporary regimes of accumulation. It is not surprising, therefore, that women comprise a growing segment of migrants in all regions and types of migrations. (1996:176)

The male bias in migration studies by and large understands female migrants as accompanying their male migrant spouses. The work to counteract this bias has led to an increased focus on the interactions of gender and mobility and to what has been termed the

feminisation of migration by scholars such as Amanda Gouws in the South African context (Gouws, 2010). The significance of gender in migration studies is a relatively recent acknowledgment. It is this newer migration scholarship that recognizes the autonomous migration patterns of women who are unattached, for instance, or the difficulty in the access to health services for largely immigrant women who do domestic work (Kihato, 2013). The field of migration studies is often dominated by numerical categories and faceless mapping of the movements of people, often for the purpose of attempting to assert some measure of control. Cultures of surveillance, suspicion and profiling in most immigration discourse are challenged by the personal, inter-subjective, face-to-face encounter of live performance. This counters the way in which African migration has been reported in the media since the early 1990s where stories of undifferentiated mass movement and group identity are favoured over individual thoughts, sentiments and experiences (Canut & Sow, 2014). This research study considers a series of contemporary performance works about Africa and migration that have been made by African women as a way to read and understand African women's mobility, seeking to engage with some of the "stories, conditions and experiences" (Cox, 2014:3) of African women and migration in light of their recognized absence in literature, and for that matter in theatre. Additionally, through the lens of differentiated African women migrants we learn that there is nothing natural or inevitable about "gender roles, male dominance, the overrepresentation of men in positions of power, or the tendency of men to use violence as a means to resolve conflict" (Kelley, 2002:6). Robin D.G. Kelley goes on to remind us that "[R]adical feminists of color, in particular, reveal how race, gender, and class work in tandem to subordinate most of society while complicating easy notions of universal sisterhood or biological arguments that establish men as the universal enemy" (2002:6). Migrants are inherently transnational.

Leveraging the expansive solidarities of migrant women, the way local struggles extend into other regions by way of their multiple belongings, means adopting a dramaturgical method that reflects complex ties to places and does not have a myopic view of a particular locality, by default. Extending the migrants' gesture to the elsewhere means complicating easy attachments to terms such as local/global and personal/political.

The migrant subjectivities embodied in the performance works selected, provide a way of "reading the complexity of African women's mobility in the twenty-first century" (Kihato, 2013:33). Migration is considered as a flexible conceptual tool and theatre and performance are posited here as a way in which ideas about migration are produced, disseminated and consumed (Huggan, 2001). Referencing Paul Carter's work in his book *Living in a New Country: History, Travelling and Language* (1992), Graham Huggan further writes that,

If 'migrancy' registers the speculative attempt to apprehend movement 'as a mode of being in the world,' it is surely not an answer to those who seek to control – meaning mostly to restrict – migrants' actual movements. The suspicion emerges that 'migrancy' might be a form of anti-essentialist essentialism which disguises the uneven relations of power between different migrant groups – including the power of course to decide who is, or is not, a migrant. (2001:124)

Jafari Allen's insights about how national belonging is reckoned and particular bodies are regulated by seemingly every state, is useful here (2012). He reminds us that there are "crucial historical and political-economic distinctions that condition and structure" these decisions that depend on "racialized heteropatriarchy (which is always also *classed*) to constitute and maintain [themselves] in the global hierarchy of states" (2012:220).

The contributors to Bakewell and Landau's collection (2018) also seek to challenge prevailing migration literature that tends to universalize Euro-American processes of migrant integration by emphasizing the role of state law and formal institutions. This leads

to a focus on legal status, citizenship and rights to state resources or labour markets in which migrants are compared to non-migrants. “Much of this work is infused with normative assumptions about the nature of host communities and their responsibilities to outsiders or a vision of state-centred political representation and membership” (Bakewell & Landau, 2018:5). They go on to note that,

[...] this research more or less explicitly relies on teleological presumptions about integration’s outcomes and the mechanisms enhancing conviviality that may resonate poorly with Africans’ experiences, interests, institutions and incentives. There is a need to complement such perspectives with ones less ontologically prescriptive, to decentre the state and analytically incorporate the informal, local, and deeply socio-political processes associated with joining a new community. (Bakewell & Landau, 2018:5)

Few African countries have overt migration integration policies and legal systems are relatively weak. Attention to migration within Africa reveals the multiple ways intra-continental migrants “contribute to processes of social change within the places in which they reside, those they move through and - albeit to a lesser extent - those which they have left but to which many remain closely connected through material exchange and imagination” (Bakewell & Landau, 2018:2). A glance at the often contentious, politically fuelled discussions about migrants from other part of the African continent, living in and moving in and out of South Africa for example, reveals some of the very specific socio-political effects and consequences of migrations into and within the region and which quickly blur the lines between who is and who is not local (Selasie, 2014). The dynamic social structures created between families that are spread across the region are shaped, more often than not, by local and regional aspirations and interactions. As we are reminded by Bakewell and Landau (2018), the forms that these consequences take may be illegal, morally questionable and physically dangerous, while others may embrace the normalized

discourse of rights and tolerance, while others yet reject the moral foundations of political community based on place. It becomes useful to see,

migrants, hosts, politicians and others as active, strategic and tactical actors at play within structural constraints and opportunities. Whether Burundians in Tanzania or Nigerian pastors in Johannesburg, everyone— migrants, hosts, officials—is working toward individual or collective ends. In many instances this may be only to create opportunities to move again or help others to stay put. (Bakewell & Landau, 2018:3)

Drawing attention to African migrant practices and strategies of reinvention, fabrication, representation and invisibility, as central to their experiences, starts to shift and nuance African migrant narratives that are typically dominated by trauma and despair. The dramaturgy of the productions under investigation, make these other practices and strategies evident while also sometimes engaging with evocative representations of trauma and despair that do not annihilate other possibilities of migrant representation. As Toloyan notes, “Diasporicity manifests itself in relations of difference. The diasporic community sees itself as linked to but different from those among whom it has settled; eventually, it also comes to see itself as powerfully linked to, but in some ways different from, the people in the homeland as well” (Toloyan, 2007:650). As will be discussed, these relations of difference are recognized in a newer iteration of migritude as a refusal of diasporic return and a refusal to internalize the global rhetoric of migration as a crisis or problem.

Spatiotemporal Considerations

Might not the thinking of temporality always implicate the thinking of the spatial along with it? (Malpas, 2015:25)

This thesis primarily focuses on the application of the chronotope as understood by Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981), but also references other scholars who have

considered space and time as inherently linked including the authors in the edited collection *Performance and Temporalisation: Time Happens* (Grant, S., McNeilly, J. & Veerapen, M. 2015), the authors in *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality* (May & Thrift, 2001) and Doreen Massey's *Space, Place and Gender* (Massey, 1994). A primary argument made here is that being on-the-move creates a particular epistemological lens which is chronotopic. In other words, which understands the past present and future as important spatiotemporal coordinates. Mikhail Bakhtin borrows the term 'chronotope' from Einstein's relativity theory, as well as the philosophy of Emmanuel Kant, and he repurposes the term from mathematics, physics and philosophy to literally mean time/space, and to allude to the ways the spatial and the temporal are conceptualized and represented in novels in particular, as a contribution to genre theory (Dentith, 1995).

Useful for this thesis project which deals with migration is that imaginations of the foreigner are easily extended to the alien foreigner and as a figure, the alien/foreigner as a member of society provides a mechanism for critical reflection by disturbing ideas of fixity and certainty in productive ways (Küchler, U, Maehl, S. & Stout, G., 2015:xiii) which will be leveraged in the chapters to follow (Clark, K. & Holquist, 1984).

In Part I of the thesis so far, I have attempted to outline the theoretical, contextual and conceptual territory which undergirds the research. Through these introductory chapters I hope to have oriented the reader to my interests in my subject matter and my particular approach to the question of what it might mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance making. Part II of the thesis to follow, contains the more practical work of engaging with the case studies, and mining each of them for their migrant gems, their marks of migrant potentiality. Each of these chapters will focus on analysing the case

study through a distinct lens to excavate how each one offers a different contribution to a migrant dramaturgy with an emancipatory agenda. This agenda is articulated by exploring a relationship between migration and Africanfuturism as a means to develop a dramaturgical practice that centres possibility, potential and a more hopeful future. By mobilizing the concept of migrant to expose oppressive ideologies and the notion of African futures to pitch desirable alternatives, the five works in the case study chapters are in conversation with each other about alternative understandings of African migrancy. These chapters are not to be read in a linear manner, but instead as contributors to a dialogue towards evidencing an aesthetics of migritude. These case studies are all at the kitchen table, and the topic of conversation is the migrant as an agent of potentiality. As will be explored, the features of this aesthetic include defining Africa by movement, linking the concept of migrant with the concept of colonial history and the diasporic refusal of return, the contention that the migrant is central to a project of re-imagining and movement as embedded in both form and content. Each of the case study chapters opens with a 'backstory' of how I came to know each work, so as to bring the reader closer to the more personal reasons for their selection (Küchler Maehl & Stout, 2015: xiii).

PART II

Migritude

Every Year, Every Day I am Walking

Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey

Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls

Astronautus Africanus

Conclusion

CHAPTER 4: Migritude

Everywhere I look, I see people who find that they cannot make a home here; people who are always on their way to better elsewhere; people on whom the city hangs like an ill-fitting coat. Here, people seem to have little use for the present. Instead, everything is held to ransom by the regrets of the past and the possibilities of the future. (Luhumyo, 2017:252)

Multiple histories are inscribed on and through the solo performer to effect an embodied hybridity that is both a locus of power/knowledge and a site for the articulation of difference and resistance. (Gilbert & Lo Jacqueline, 2010:154)

Backstory:

I have two copies of Shailja Patel's *Migritude*, both of them gifted to me on separate occasions. The first is an advanced reader copy given to me by the poet, Gabeba Baderoon, when we both lectured at the University of Cape Town in 2010. Gabeba had previously co-hosted The Nordic Africa Institute Guest Writer programme in Sweden, and Shailja Patel was named the 2009 recipient of the award. The second was many years later as a birthday present from artist/activist, Gabrielle Le Roux, who presented me with a signed copy of the 2017 Jozi Book Fair Festival edition which is also evocatively illustrated. I mention them both by name because it remains significant that what has become a seminal text for my thinking and making, came to me from two formidable feminist artists in their own right, who by gifting me *Migritude* not only recognized that it would be a resonant artistic work for me but also included me in a community of women who work/think/make towards social justice using our biographies as a starting point.

Gabeba's copy was delivered to me through the internal University mail channels and the note on the lined yellow Post-it inside the cover, still reads:

Dear Mwenya

Here it is!

Hope you enjoy Shailja's words and performance.

Warmest greetings, Gabeba

I recall reading it in one sitting. It was not an easy read, and it has stayed with me since. I was struck by the visceral activist poet voice that was at once rageful,

compassionate, sorrowful, ironic, defiant, lyrical and celebratory, and it was the first creative work that I had come across that hit so many nuanced emotional registers in response to moving through the world as an African woman migrant. It was a pivotal moment for me of feeling located, recognized and reminded that my negotiations of local/foreigner, citizen/migrant, national/alien were not mine alone. This poetic play text that weaved personal memory and family history with political history and traversed across Africa, North America and Europe, also resonated with my own autobiographical performance work, *Afrocartography: Traces of Places and all points in between*, and I would go on to write about how the two works are in conversation with each other as different kinds of migrant texts (Kabwe, 2015c). Where *Afrocartography* invites audiences into a migrant dream world, *Migritude* introduces readers and audiences to real people in real places whose histories have been erased. I find this contrast in our works compelling and am drawn to Patel's caustic, unapologetic approach to the experiences of African migrants. Rather than abstracting victims and perpetrators of atrocity, she is quick to remind us all of the kinds of injustices that play out directly on migrant (women's) bodies and gives us permission for these abuses to not be borne discreetly. As Sara Ahmed points out, "To abstract is to drag away, detach, pull away, or divert" (Ahmed, 2017:10) and Patel confronts us directly, insisting upon our disappointment at least, if not outright horror at the fact that we continue to be haunted by the ghosts of empire and the costs are borne daily as embodied experiences.

It seemed to me that both Patel and I had also made our works as a way of creating a witnessable life journey, a kind of order from chaotic and brutal history based on a deep desire to read the world from our migrant perspectives in ways that are not trapped in

notions of otherness or authenticity. *Migritude* engages with what it means to be African as a paradox of encounters characterized by threat, abuse, defensiveness, misunderstanding, fear in some instances and collaboration, expansion, alliance and synergy in others, experiences of being both drawn and repelled. Patel also establishes the parameters of a community of migrants with attitudes that are unapologetic in their refusal to hold on to things that diminish them, and their rebellion against things that do, and this embrace has been life-giving as a gesture towards possibility.

Introduction

Migritude breaks silences: personal, familial, global, historical. Each poem [...] was born of migrant journeys – my physical transcontinental migrations; my creative evolution from poet to performer; my internal shift from self-protective silence to political expression. (Patel, 2010:112)

In this chapter, I will place Shailja Patel's *Migritude* within the lineage of the political and aesthetic artistic genre known as migritude, that can trace its lineage from the Black migrant literature of the Négritude movement. Through this first case study, I will begin to answer the question of what it might mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance-making, by starting to flesh out the workings of migritude as a pliable dramaturgical framework. As noted earlier, the loose components of migritude that each of the performance case studies will give colour to, include, the figuring of Africa as defined by movement, the concept of migrant as being tied to the concept of borders and colonial history, a diasporic refusal of return (Reddy, 2020); movement as a core feature of a production's dramaturgy (Fleishman, 2015b); and the migrant as central to the project of social re-imagining (Nail, 2015). As will be discussed through this chapter, *Migritude*

illuminates Patel's contribution to this genre, with its particular focus on the entanglement of migration and colonial history. The chapter will also examine how Patel's work not only proceeds beyond Négritude, but also significantly expands *migritude's* existing territory. Alongside the dominant Black Atlantic discourse of diaspora, Patel contributes to the shaping of a Brown Atlantic diasporic discourse in which migration occurs into Africa during the colonial period and out of Africa during the postcolonial period (Reddy, 2020).

Migritude defies easy description, both as a performance and as a publication. It has been called fully embodied poetry, spoken-word theatre, text-based performance for stage, political theatre and documentary poetry (Patel, 2010). Rather than seeking to define what *Migritude* is besides "fluid, multifaceted, and constantly evolving" (Patel, 2010:138), I find it more informative to consider what it does, which in Patel's own words is, "An accounting of Empire enacted on the bodies of women" (Patel, 2010:96). As noted in the epigraph that opens this section, it also tracks the author's own "creative evolution from poet to performer; [her] internal shift from self-protective silence to political expression" (Patel, 2010:112). *Migritude* also mobilizes the historical and the personal to defiantly make a claim on the future, that must, of necessity ultimately transcend the North to South migrant discourse in which migrants are too often figured in abject ways. As in the feminist tradition established by Audre Lorde, Patel is writing "from the particulars of who she is" (Bereano, 2007:9) as a third-generation East African Asian. She also shapes her narratives using the three cross-continental migrations of her own heritage as sources, from "the early 20th century march of South Asians to East Africa; the mass expulsion and emigration of East African Indians to the Global North from the 1970s onwards; and her own emigration from Kenya to the United Kingdom and then to California" (Prashad, 2010: iii).

Migritude was first staged in 2006 as a commissioned spoken-word performance at the La Peña Cultural Centre in Berkley California, and then later reworked into an expansive book which includes poems that were not selected for the performance, interspersed with stories and letters, political and personal contextual writing, and reflections and insights on the poems and performance. As a publication, the work is divided into sections, first a foreword by Vijay Prashad, followed by the poems that compose the live performance and these are divided into a Prelude; Part I, centred around the years 1972-1989 in Nairobi, Kenya; and Part II focused on the years 1990 - 2004 in England and the United States. The second section of the book is titled *Shadow Book* and it gives an account of the political, historical and familial events surrounding each of the poems in the first section, like a backstage conversation (Patel, 2014) which offers context for the stories being told. The following section houses the poems that are not included in the production, titled *The Making and Other Poems*. *The Journey* is a chronology of historical, personal, and creative events in the life of the work. In the 2017 Jozi Book Fair Festival special edition it is titled *Migritude Timeline* and spans from the 6th century BCE when the earliest depictions of the pattern known as *ambi* were recorded, to 2010 when the book was published. This section also includes two interviews with Patel, one by Emanuele Monegato who encountered the publication of the Italian/English translation, and the other by feminist scholar, Vanita Reddy, who watched the live premiere of the performance. As a collection of texts in a single publication, its complete form is illusive and it provides comprehensive access to, and an archiving of not only the play text, Patel's reflections on the performance, but also some receptions of the work through the insights and questions of interviewers, as well as the surrounding, contextual thinking and making material that is usually relegated to process notebooks that are rarely made public. As a compilation it becomes a work of dramaturgy

and a model of how dramaturgical process for performance work can be presented in a way that gives a reader nuanced insight into an artist's process and reflections. This also helps to frame the project as a gathering of curated materials at particular points in time, in the long and multifaceted life of an artistic project with a range of access points and outcomes.

Migritude the performance and the publication also instantiates *migritude* the anti-colonial artistic project. Shailja Patel keeps company with other twenty-first century women writers who are shaping what Asha Ali and others refer to as “a new literary, cultural, and political genre, or body of work, called *migritude*” (Ali, A., Christopher, I.F. & Nair, S.M., 2020:55 italics in the original). These writers who include Nadifa Mohamed, Fatou Diome, and Cristina Ali Farah (Foster, 2015b) illuminate the material and psychic “being-in-the-world of the migrant within the context of globalization” (Foster, 2015:6).

In the foreword to the special edition of *Migritude* for the 2017 Jozi Book Fair Festival whose theme that year was *Women and Literature*, Maria van Driel writes,

In a time of neoliberalism and austerity policies, where work is elusive precarious and feminised; where women bear the burden of social reproduction, often in single women-headed families; where women (and men) are forced to migrate, leave loved ones and seek work elsewhere, Shailja Patel's *Migritude* provides meaning and dignity to the fragility of life and the will to believe that another world is possible. (2017)

Central to this pursuit of *another possible world*, is the claiming of the “oppositional world view” (hooks, 1984: ix) held by black African migrant women. Patel guides us through her personal formation of this oppositional world view through her poetic “revelatory distillation of experience” (Lorde, 2007:37).

Ambi

The first poem in the Prelude to *Migritude* titled *How Ambi Became Paisley*, begins to define *migritude* the concept. Here Patel traces the slippery and sordid migratory route of the ornamental pattern *ambi*, setting up her style of combining material that is both historical and deeply felt:

It began as a teardrop in Babylon. Where the sunlight came from Astarte, shameless goddess of the fecund feminine. The boteh. Stylized rendition of the date, palm shoot, tree of life, fertility symbol. It danced through Celtic art, until the heavy feet of Roman legionaries trampled over the Alps. [...]

Some historians claim it travelled to Moghal courts from Victorian England as the foliage shape of a herbal. Evolved into a cone, then a tadpole. But a legend in Kashmir calls it the footprint of the goddess Parvati. As she ran through the Himalayas at the dawn of time. Ambi. Form of a mango. Fruit that ripens and rots in the dreams of all South-to-North immigrants. A shape like a peacock feather. Like half a heart, sliced on a smooth s-shaped curve. Something that would feel good in the hand: round to the palm like a solid breast, narrow to a sharp point to test the pad of a finger. An image a child could draw, single stroke, free form, and still produce something elegant. (Patel, 2010:18)

In these opening passages, Patel historically locates her own ancestry and uses the *ambi* pattern as a kind of time travelling device, a vehicle through which to move through historical events and legends of culturally formative storytelling. The materiality of her language is also introduced here as she traces the evolution of the shape of *ambi*, with vivid sensual images of shape, texture, and likeness to the over-abundance of tropical fruit. One imagines piles of rotting mangoes on the roadsides of the global South, attracting insect, human and animal urban scavengers and simultaneously the same fruit, over-packaged and over-priced on the grocery shelves of the global North. The south to north immigration theme that marks the collection of poems is also introduced here. Patel also foregrounds history, geo-politics and legend as equally compelling modes of knowledge production, made more evocative for their intertwining. Well aware of the “market value of ‘exotic’ images,” Patel’s invitation is to “come for the saris and stay for the politics” (Reddy,

2010:151). She goes on to tell the story of a community of traditional weavers, “[m]akers of mosuleen, named after its city of origin, Mosul, in Iraq” (Patel, 2010:18), and the two Indian cities of Masulipatnam and Dhaka which “rose to glory and fame” as a result. The reader is invited to imagine crafters with generationally endowed skill to create a fabric so fine that thirty yards of it could, like magic, fit into a matchbox. The lines that follow read, similarly, like stage directions, “Egyptian pharaohs used it to wrap mummies. Imperial Rome imported it for women of nobility to drape, seductively, around their bodies” (Patel, 2010:18).

Imperialism is figured as the ‘barbarian’ protagonist and Patel answers the questions she has posed a few lines before: “Have you ever sliced a heart on a curve? Which piece would you keep?” (Patel, 2010:18), with the following response, locating the intimacy of the histories of trade and torture, making the “violence of imperial racial capitalism” (Foster, 2015a:113) evident, while also tracing the systematic destabilising of Southern economies:

[...] Armed with a switchblade, designed to slice the heart out of craft. To separate makers from the fruits of their labour. To stab the mangoes out of their hands. In 1813, Dhaka mosuleen sold at a 75% profit on the London market yet was still cheaper than local British fabric. The British weighed it down with an 80% duty. But that wasn’t enough. They needed to force India to buy British cloth. So down the alleyways of Dhaka stamped the legionaries – British this time, not Roman. Hunted down the terrified weavers, chopped off their index fingers and thumbs. (Patel, 2010:19)

The passage stands for all the brutality of imperialism, accounted for and otherwise, and *ambi* is figured as a violent weapon used against its original makers in service of the mobility of capital. This journey of *ambi* to paisley traces its migration from Babylon to a village in Scotland and evokes all other journeys of cultural appropriation including how “Kashmiri became cashmere” and “Mosuleen became muslin” (Patel, 2010:20). Weaving is imbedded in the form and content of the poem. Patel not only uses it as a method of entwining the personal and political as mentioned above, but also to track the political

interference on an international scale on weaving as a sustainable local craft. Weavers are deployed as vanguards of political action in the small town of Paisley where “having too much time for dangerous talk” they “became known as radical labour agitators” while they manufactured “imitation *ambi*, on imitation Kashmiri shawls, and got to keep their index fingers and thumbs” (Patel, 2010:20). Patel leaves the reader to speculate as to whether the labour activists in Scotland were responding to the historical violence from their fellow Europeans against the predecessors of their trade, in India. As summarized by Foster, “Referencing the brutal practice of torture for resisting slavery under colonialism, Patel’s tracing of the colonial commodification of a pattern and fabric provides an illuminating instance, and unsettling depiction of, racial capitalism and movement in the colonial era” (Foster, 2015a:113). In this opening poem, Patel lays out the features of the migrant disposition she calls *migritude*. She proposes a particular orientation to history and geopolitics from a migrant perspective. It is one from multiple locations that is able to see the contemporary effects of imperial expansion and also log the impacts of a systematic and highly effective colonial project on individuals in specific places in the world. *Migritude, the poem*, becomes an inconvenient and disruptive perspective that ruptures grand narratives of civilizing and of pure origins by posing a series of uncomfortable questions about marginal histories:

How many ways can you clone an empire? Dice a people, digit by digit? How do you price a country? How do you *value* its mountains and lakes, the scent of its trees, the colors of its sunset? What’s the markup on the shapes of fruit in the dreams of its people? Has your skin ever craved a texture you could not name? Have you ever held a strange cloth to your cheek and felt your heart thud? How many ways can you splice a history? Price a country? Dice a people? Slice a heart? Entice what’s been erased back into story? (Patel, 2010:19-20)

Finally, Patel asks if we have “ever set out in search of a missing half” (2010:21) and it is understood that a single *ambi* pattern is incomplete, a portion of a missing whole, a

shape seeking reconnection with an imagined other half. *Migritude*, the concept and the disposition, then offers a restless, critical position from which to view the world, which is transnational, diasporic, and African, and also one in relentless search for wholeness/equality/freedom. Audre Lorde's writing has also been described as an impulse towards wholeness, a need to encompass and address all the parts of herself, (Bereano, 2007) and an invitation to do the same, that Patel takes up with fervour.

Femme Migritude

The masculinist genealogy constructed by the poets and shored up by literary historians, critics, and Africanist philosophers continues to elide and minimize the presence and contributions of Black women, namely their Francophone counterparts, to the movement's evolution. (Sharpley-Whiting, 2000:10)

I've been unprotected, I have been naked and exposed. I have been clothed and armoured. I know what I carry in my suitcase. I carry my history. I carry my family. Over my saris, I wear my sisters. (Patel, 2010:50)

Where Patel's *Migritude* can be read as combining 'Négritude' and 'attitude,' she maintains some distance to the "primarily male-identified philosophical, literary, and cultural movement known as Négritude" (Sharpley-Whiting, 2009:3) by noting in an interview with Vanita Reddy that,

Césaire and Senghor are not direct influences, or primary sources, for *Migritude*. But the political and cultural space they opened up through Négritude, and the discourse that continues from that, is the soil from which *Migritude* could germinate. (2010:154)

Migritude draws on the heritage of *Négritude* "to suggest that there is a compass of suffering shared by migrants of colour into the heartlands of power, and it is this compass that binds migrants in unexpected ways" (Prashad, 2010:12). In addition, while Patel's project is precisely to re-work Négritude-era politics, the connotation of the movement as a vehicle for political liberation and also a celebration of diasporic culture is well captured in

the word 'migritude.' Through Patel's work, the diasporic culture that migritude celebrates, refreshingly includes African diasporas in the global South, and as Reddy writes, "creates [space] for a voice of a generation of migrants who speak unapologetically, fiercely, lyrically, for themselves" (Reddy, 2010:153). Patel acknowledges the lineage of Négritude in her work but is also clear about where it departs from this lineage which, through its most well-known poets, staged a "reclamation of Blackness, Africa, and history" by inaugurating the concept of African roots. These roots, according to the authors, (who traced their own from Africa, and the Caribbean and came to include African Americans all living in Paris) which had been "seemingly snapped by imperial processes of racism relegating Africa to prehistory and Black culture to nonbeing" (Foster, 2015b:3). Writing from Paris, Négritude was therefore founded on the identity conflicts experienced by Black, African, and African diasporic elite men in France in the 1930s (Sharpley-Whiting, 2000). Sharpley-Whiting's more rigorous historicizing makes a critical intervention into the accepted foundations of Négritude by writing of the less "widely accepted or acknowledged fact [...] that women writers and thinkers of the Négritude era, such as Jane Nardal, were at the movement's literary and philosophical centres and, often at the vanguard" (Sharpley-Whiting, 2000:10). Migritude authors have largely followed the footsteps of their Négritude predecessors by writing within a heteronormative South to North, Black Atlantic diasporic discourse. What distinguishes Patel's work in the migritude project, however, is her expansion of migritude into a queer Brown Atlantic, framing what Vanita Reddy describes as a "queer feminist Afro-Asian poetics" (2020:68). Patel draws on her heritage as a brown Kenyan embodying a legacy of south-to-south migrations. Facilitated by the British imperialist project in India and East Africa, Indian labourers were brought to Kenya as indentured workers at the end of the nineteenth century to build the British East African Railway (Reddy, 2020). Importantly, in

this construction, for a more inclusive discourse of diaspora, Africa is understood also as a site of arrival. As a site of both arrival and departure, and for the purposes of constructing a migrant attitude, Africa here is defined by movement.

If there are Négritude shoulders that Patel stands on, therefore, they are those of the Black French-speaking women of the *Femme Négritude*¹² movement. These include formidable authors in their own rights such as Suzanne Césaire, who, along with Aimé Césaire her husband, helped to found the Négritude movement, and as mentioned above, Paulette Nardal along with her sisters Jane and Andrée who, besides contributing to, and founding various influential black diasporic journals from the 1920s to the 1940s (Sharpley-Whiting, 2009), also co-hosted “the famous Clamart salon on the outskirts of Paris where more substantial encounters with Harlem Renaissance and New Negro artists and writers such as [Alain] Locke, Langston Hughes, Marcus Garvey, Claude McKay, and Augusta Savage were had” (Sharpley-Whiting, 2009:2). Much has been written about the seemingly intentional marginalization of these women to the male-identified philosophical, literary and cultural movement known as Négritude (Sharpley-Whiting, 2009). While this discussion is beyond the scope of the thesis, they are drawn on here as a way of positioning Patel in a black intellectual and artistic tradition of women ‘Black Internationalists’ who ruminate on questions of race, imperialism and colonialism and who see a world that links people by historical processes and conditions such as violent dispersal, imposed racialized identity and a view of black diasporas as being part and parcel of world history and modernity (Sharpley-Whiting, 2009). Among the ideological departures of migritude as its own philosophical and

¹² The term *Femme Négritude* was coined by T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, in her critical work on the marginalization of influential Black French-speaking women in the Négritude movement.

cultural movement, from Négritude, is the latter's commitment to Africa as an original homeland. As a meditation on migration, migritude, as a product of its times, is much more aligned with critiques to such essentialist positionings of Africa. Where Patel, (Suzanne Césaire, Nardal and her sisters align however is in their unflinching gaze; their ability to look both inwardly and outwardly as women of colour in their critique of the oppressions of their times; their challenge of the wilful blindness of history and the work it takes not to see women; and their insistence that women not only write themselves into history, but also create it with lucidity and compassion (Walker, 2012).

In her poem simply titled, *Idi Amin*, Patel writes of the anti-Asian violence under Uganda's infamous Black nationalist ruler who sought to expel the country's Asian population in 1972, the year of her birth. In *The Shadow Book* she describes him as "the villain of [her] childhood" (2010:85), and amongst the stories that she grew up hearing in Kenya, the neighbouring country of her birth, were of "[...] the last trains coming out of Uganda. Laden with traumatized Asians who had been stripped of all they possessed." She writes of images that haunt her childhood including one of "a man on Nairobi's railway platform who held his toddler child and cried. [...] Soldiers had boarded the train just outside Kampala, had dragged his wife off while he watched [...]" (Patel, 2010:11). These scenes are remembered and recounted against the backdrop of her mother's migrant decree, to invest only in passports, education and jewellery, the things that can be carried, because as she explains, "by dawn, we may be on the move, forced to reinvent ourselves in order to survive" (Patel, 2010:10). Patel remembers stories told by her mother of her parents and other Asians going to the railway station in Nairobi with food, water and clothing for those coming off the trains from Uganda (2010:85). In the poem simply titled,

The Jewellery, Patel's mother recounts the story of the safe deposit box in England that contains the family wealth in the form of jewellery that historically, South Asian families invested in, explaining that "the women would carry the family's savings in their gold ornaments, their valuable saris. It was safest - you see, it kept them safe. Women were respected, because they wore and guarded the family's wealth" (Patel, 2010:11).

Unprotected by their jewellery under Idi Amin's tyranny, the women are searched for it, separated from their families for it, and dragged off trains for it. In *Shilling Love Part I*, Patel writes of the anti-Asian violence enacted by the military coup in Kenya in 1982. In this penetrating poem, she concludes that despite all her "patriotic fervour" (2010:38), she is not black enough:

1982 /Gunshots in the streets of Nairobi / military coup leaders / thunder over the radio /
Asian businesses wrecked and looted / Asian women / raped / after the government /
regains control / we whisper what the coup leaders had planned

Round up all the Asians / at gunpoint / in the national stadium / strip them of what they
carry / march them fifty kilometres to the airport [...]. (Patel, 2010:38)

In the following poem titled *History Lesson*, Patel tells of the differing kinds of history lessons that she received: the creation myths that feature the nine clans of the Kikuyu, The Mugwe who parted the waters long before Moses, and Koitalel arap Samoei who predicted the coming of the train, and therefore the white man, through a vision of a long snake spitting fire. She learns of the paramount chief who went unarmed to a supposedly friendly meeting with British officers and was killed. She learns of the Maji Maji rebellion where Africans went into battle against the German colonial military armed with spears, bows, arrows and a protective brew of maize, millet and water. Patel tells us of the history that she did not learn in school including the torture, forced labour, murder and detention of over a million Kenyan men, women and children by the British over the eight years of the

Mau Mau uprising. Neither did these histories include the oral testimonies of women who survived the camps. She learns in school that Kenya attained its independence from Britain peacefully, without bloodshed and are a model nation for the rest of the continent when in fact “[i]n Kenya’s war of independence, fewer than 100 whites and over 25,000 Africans died. Half of the Africans who died were children under ten” (Patel, 2010:19). By including both South Asian and Black Kenyan experiences of violence and dispossession, Patel does not engage in a comparative analysis of racialized suffering, and she is not attempting to create commonality as a basis for alliance, nor is she making an equivalence of brown Kenyan and black Kenyan histories of oppression. Instead, she draws our attention to and “unsettles a diasporic logic of racial separatism in colonial and postcolonial Kenya” (Reddy, 2020:68). Patel’s narration of anti-Black and antibrown state violence against women in particular, creates what Reddy refers to as *proximate histories* as opposed to *shared histories* (2020:76). Where the latter refers to participation in a form of struggle based on commonality, the former refers to disparate struggles against a common source of oppression that may be historically synchronous, asynchronous or overlapping, but are marked by the racialized dispossession practices of imperial rule and state governance (Reddy, 2020). In the *Born to Law* section of *The Shadow Book*, Patel illustrates this when she writes about how journalists often ask for her thoughts on Indians in Kenya (2010:106). In her reply which includes having knowledge of brown Kenyans, but not of Indian Kenyans, she,

[...] points out that just as Black Kenyans who challenged single-party rule, and the betrayal of Kenya’s independence, were exiled, imprisoned, or killed, so also were dissenting brown Kenyans silenced – through assassination, deportation, stripping of citizenship. (Patel, 2010:106)

Patel's writing draws our attention to non-equivalent histories that share common political foes. By highlighting these incommensurable histories with a common source of oppression, she also draws our attention to the possibilities of African anti-imperial coalition, affiliation and alliance across race (Reddy, 2020). Patel also demonstrates the ways in which colonial borders create the concept of migrants and migration. This strikes me as a valuable perspective to have for contemporary African theatre-making that is concerned with issues of migration and is interested in alternative narratives of migration and movement that take processes of colonialism into consideration seriously in order to, as eloquently stated by Patel in the epigraph above, *meet the truth of our present moment*. These expanded notions of African diaspora also destabilise the dominance of south to north diasporic narratives and focus attention on less visible histories of diasporas within Africa. Patel's work firms up the category of migrant as constructed through colonial processes and created in opposition to the category of citizen. Inter-Africa diasporic affiliation allows the migrant category to hold a mirror up to the citizen category, to critique it with embodied evidence and to assume a unified position (of power) that allows the migrant to see the citizen as Other. Patel succinctly illuminates this in her poem titled, *What we talk about when we talk about movement*, when she says: "Citizen, you call yourself. Denizen of the citadel. The fantasy of rooted nativity. The fiction that you live where you began" (Patel, 2020:168).

The last poem in the play titled, *Born to Law*, marks the starting point of the production. When it was clear to her mother that Patel was not likely to marry according to any cultural conventions, she gifted her with a trousseau of saris, "the wealth a woman takes when she leaves the home of her parents" (Patel, 2010:61) to join that of her

husband. *MigrITUDE* began as a desire to use the contents of this red suitcase in her work, and she uses her saris as the literal cloth from which the work emerges, as “the containers of history, politics, economics, woven into fabric, codified into shape and pattern” (Reddy, 2010:151). With the saris, comes jewellery, and we hear the story of a mangal sutra necklace usually given to a woman by her husband, but in Patel’s case, given to her by an exasperated mother who observes the stubborn refusal of one of her daughters to fulfil her duty of ‘settling down’ (Patel, 2010). Central to Reddy’s construction of femme migrITUDE is

Patel’s failure to perform ‘proper’ heterodomesticity as a diasporic daughter and her positioning outside diasporic narratives of South Asian racial exceptionalism as a result of this heterofeminine failure. (Reddy, 2020:71)

MigrITUDE narrates the evolution of a complex relationship between mother and daughter through this gifting of saris and jewellery. Patel’s mother becomes a primary point of contact against which her evolving political sensibilities are tested, shaped, and sharpened.

In gathering material for the production, Patel researched the history of the design, motifs and weaving of the saris and as such objects do when listened to, they began to narrate their own stories of migration and empire. Part of enabling the saris to speak, as it were, also included a sari-viewing session with eight of her friends and Kim Cook, the director of the production. The observations, responses and associations gathered from this session are vividly captured in a chapter of *MigrITUDE* directly after the performance text, titled *What Came Out of the Suitcase* (Patel, 2010:65-70). In her *Shadow Book* reflections of *Born into Law*, Patel gives us a glimpse of her mother as a primary feature of Patel’s own journey to politicization:

As a teenage feminist, I put mangal sutras in the same category as wedding rings: a symbol of bondage, something that branded a woman as chattel. Moveable property. When my mother gave me one, I was stunned. It meant: *Your chosen path is no less serious, no less worthy of ceremonial recognition, than your sisters' marriages.* I couldn't have imagined breaking the rule that mangal sutras were only for married women. That they could only be given to a woman by her husband. In this act, my mother showed me up as the traditionalist. Appointed herself the revolutionary. (Patel, 2010:93)

In this story, Patel's mother is enrolled as one of her early feminist teachers, an instructor and guide in the ways in which patriarchal reasoning need not be reproduced (Ahmed, 2017). The voice of her mother is prominent throughout the performance text, in the form of stage directions indicating that a particular story or letter is to be performed as a voice-over by an actor playing the mother. Returning momentarily to *The Jewellery*, we see Patel's mother recount her own terrifying immigration to England, with her family jewellery hidden inside her coat and bag and eventually transferred to the safe deposit box:

On the way home, when we were standing on the railway platform, I started to cry. My jewellery was gone. I would never wear it again. Even the smallest pieces, the ones I used to love putting on you children, and everyone would say how pretty you looked. All locked up, in that dark vault. (Patel, 2010:13)

This intimate insight into Patel's maternal ancestry continues through letters in her mother's voice where we share in the complex relationship of Patel and her mother, refracted through the lives of her sisters, Shruti and Sneha, who appear to have chosen more traditional paths. Beyond the hint that lesbian is a word that does not exist in Gujarati (2010:59), Patel does not make any overt claims at a queer identity. Reddy's description of *Migritude* as an instance of queer feminist Afro Asian poetics then, emerges from a queer diaspora framework that "allows us to understand Patel's sexuality as exceeding any claims to identity and as instead constituted by her inability to embody authentic Indianness in the diaspora." Reddy goes on to explain that this "lack of authenticity is marked by her failure to reproduce a heteronormative logic of blood-based

kinship, secured through marriage and childbearing” (Reddy, 2020:72). It is through this *queer art failure* as Halberstam constructs it (2011), that Patel’s refusal of heteronormative versions of success, creates concrete possibilities of living life otherwise. Refusal as a marker of queer African diaspora is explored in more detail in the upcoming chapter on *Moj of the Antarctic*. Patel’s queer Afro-Asian poetics, however, helps us demarcate the space that refusal can occupy in the context of building a grammar for a migrant attitude.

In a piece titled, *I Never Wanted Daughters*, Patel shares her mother’s anxiety for the well-being of her girl-children. She says: “Your heart is never whole again once you have a daughter. I never wanted daughters. Women are never safe” (Patel, 2010:23). In the *Shadow Book*, Patel tells us that this is the only part of the performance script that her mother disagrees with, insisting that her daughters were always wanted and that any reference to them not being boys was spoken from a place where love shows up as fear, rage and rejection in a time of danger. In the performance, Patel wears her teenage training sari in this piece, one that “would melt it if got too close to heat” (Patel, 2010:82) evoking the stories from her childhood of women whose saris caught fire from open flame lamps during celebrations, supporting her mother’s fears of the precarity of her daughters’ lives. *Migritude* includes many odes to her mother, “The General,” including the opening of a poem called, *The Making (Migrant Song)*. She writes: “I make it out of the sari that wraps me in tender celebration / like the mother I rediscover. I make it out of the mother I got / in all her wounded magnificence” (2010:38).

The fourth poem in the collection titled, *Swore I’d Never Wear Clothes I Couldn’t Run or Fight In*, is a pact that Patel made with herself after growing up with messages about the feminine ideal of Indian women in saris who “allure without being sexual” and “attract

without meeting anyone's eyes" (Patel, 2010:34). Instructions such as, "You must never act as if you own[ed] your body. It's draped and displayed for the edification of others" (Patel, 2010:34), are contradicted with stories Patel heard of women who were strangled and burned in their saris. The poem opens with a passage from the *Mahabharata* which describes a "well-governed state" as one "where a woman, adorned with all dress and ornaments, and unaccompanied by men, can move freely and fearlessly in its roads and lanes" (Patel, 2010:33). This utopian scenario is set against the voice of an older Patel who learns of women in saris who went to battle, worked in fields and laboured on construction sites. The gifting of the trousseau to Patel by her mother, however reluctantly at first, facilitates the sharing of these rich stories, but also exemplifies a way in which feminist movement can take place in private, intergenerationally before it gathers momentum and finds public expression. As Sara Ahmed has said, "a story always starts before it can be told" (2017:4), and there is an alternative story being told here that belies the narrative that feminism travelled from the West to the East and South as an imperial gift (Ahmed, 2017). Sara Ahmed's journey to feminism is echoed by Patel's when Ahmed says,

Feminism travelled to me, growing up in the West, from the East. My Pakistani aunties taught me that my mind is my own (which is to say that my mind is not owned); they taught me to speak up for myself; to speak out against violence and injustice. (2017:4)

Patel's drive to speak out against injustice, particularly violence against women includes the systematic indexing of the experiences of women, and beyond her family narratives, she punctuates *Migritude* with stories, and testimony and media reports of Kenyan rape survivors. British soldiers sent to Kenya for military training were reported to have raped over six hundred women with the allegations covering over 35 years from the two years following Kenya's independence from Britain in 1965, to 2001. It was only in 2002

that the stories began to appear in the local Kenyan press and then internationally (Patel, 2010). *The Sky Has Not Changed Colour*, includes Patel's re-surfacing of these silenced narratives about how the darkest ghosts of empire haunt women's bodies:

Survivor 1

Walked ten kilometres from her cousin's home to find a well that had not dried up. Three soldiers approached her as she filled her water cans. She greeted them in English. She had just finished high school. Was about to become a law student. Two soldiers raped her, while the third held their guns. After the attack, she walked the ten kilometres back to her cousin's house. Without the cans [...]. She still wonders if they attacked her because she greeted them in English. The language that was supposed to be her key to the world. (Patel, 2010: 54)

This harrowing entanglement of women, migration and colonial excesses is a signature of Patel's work. Through the narratives of Survivor 1, Survivor 58 and Survivor 613, she confronts us with the worst *techniques of power* (Foster, 2015a) used against women to assert authority not only over individual bodies, but by extension over the nations that they represent. Through her own unrestrained fury, Patel permits us to rage at these atrocities and all the ones that go unaccounted for. We know who she refers to when she says:

May the redness overtake them. May red ants feast in their groins. Scorpions nestle in their beds. Blood vessels explode in their brains, organs rupture in their bellies. Wherever they go, may the land rise up in redness against them. Poison their waking and sleeping. Their walking and breathing. [...] May they never escape the redness on their hands [...]. (Patel, 2010:47)

Patel's technique of power is to force us to reckon with such brutality, by directly addressing any complacency we might have in the face of this history. This focus on the experience of women strongly locates Patel's migrant voice in a space of resistance, creating what bell hooks might call a radical space of marginality (1990). In this space, transgression is defined as a moving out of one's supposed place into territory that is inherently dangerous. This movement inevitably requires a pushing against oppressive boundaries thereby reclaiming a power that has been denied and making "a defiant political gesture"

(hooks, 1990:145). Patel claims a critical marginal position which offers a way of reading history and the present, of theorizing and making, through a silenced, unaddressed, and gendered lens. She reaffirms the necessity of feminism in the face of unabated sexism, sexual exploitation, and sexual oppression inseparable from racism (Ahmed, 2017). As hooks writes, “often when the radical voice speaks about domination, we are speaking to those who dominate” (1990:146). In Patel’s case however, she is also speaking distinctly to a large transnational inner circle of women whose lives have been defined by endurance of domination, who have “stood up, spoken back, risked lives, homes, relationships in the struggle for more bearable worlds” (Ahmed, 2017:1), whether this is recognized or not.

Using Ahmed, I determine that Patel’s descriptive work in *Migritude* is conceptual work. Using the term ‘migritude’ as a concept, a *sweaty concept* in fact, is “one that comes out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world.” By this Ahmed means “description as an angle or point of view: description of how it feels not to be at home in the world, or a description of the world from the point of view of not being at home in it” (2017:3). It comes from taking the position that our lived experiences can be used as a generative resource. This is a critical position that Patel leverages to expose prevailing oppressive ideologies. As Audre Lorde has said, “Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives” (Lorde, 2007:38). And the migrant sensibility in the poems in *Migritude* have become the skeleton architecture of the thesis and the sturdy bones on which its fleshy, sweaty thinking is attached.

From her position, Patel also performs more subtle gestures aimed at revealing the toxic subtext in interactions between the ‘migrant’ and the ‘host,’ what Pedzisai Maedza calls “the foreigner’s debt of gratitude” (Maedza, 2015:105). He uses this term to refer to

the “condescending social interactions where the host populace, implicitly and at times explicitly, reminds foreign nationals and citizens, through word and deed, to be grateful that they have been allowed into the country since their presence has the potential to ‘spoil the party’” (Maedza, 2015:105). Patel is intent on spoiling the proverbial party and in fact considers it her duty as a poet and activist to make us squirm, crack open our complacency to reveal what we have chosen not to see (Patel, 2010). She does not protect anyone from the discomfort of reckoning with inequality.

Conclusion

[...] I want to show that Empires reproduce themselves; that history buried becomes history repeated; that art is as much process as product. That we cannot know ourselves or our nations – or meet the truth of our present moment – until we look at how we got here. (Patel, 2010:140)

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are – until the poem – nameless and formless, about to be birthed but already felt. (Lorde, 2007:36)

By Audre Lorde’s account above, *migrITUDE*, names a particular quality of poetic illumination, a light by which Patel has engaged power by scrutinizing imperialism through her own life and ancestry and imagined change by giving a voice and name to a unique perspective on history. What *migrITUDE* the anti-colonial political project illuminates, is that imagining change includes making everything into something that is questionable (Ahmed, 2017), especially sites of profound gendered, racialized and heteronormative inequality. This parallel process of engaging power and imagining change firmly posits migrancy as a critical mode of being in the world, incisively challenging the relations of power that have historically been exercised over the movement of global southerners by global northerners.

Rosi Braidotti's claim that "[I]t is the subversion of a set of conventions that defines the nomadic state not the literal act of traveling" (Braidotti, 1994:5), is both shared and critiqued by The Migritude Project. In this project, migration is employed as a metaphor for movement, dislocation and the crossing of borders (Ahmed, 1999), but also ensures that the negotiation of a broadening network of borders, checkpoints, and modes of 'othering' (Foster, 2015a), refers to the actual embodied experiences of movement, dislocation and border crossing. Not to mention the disastrous effects of imperial expansion on Black and brown women in particular. As Foster has expressed, Patel's migrant attitude is ultimately a call for the "loud and proud diasporic voices that would speak out against systemic national and international expropriation of movement from non-white peoples" (Foster, 2015a:110). Read through Sara Ahmed, Patel warns us that this engagement of power involves the political labour of having to insist that what we (in this case African women migrants) are describing is not just what we are feeling or thinking (2017). Reading *Migritude* the performance text as feminist work, is to understand that its slow and steady work of imagining change lies in its "ability to keep insisting on something: the ongoing existence of the very things we wish to bring to an end" (Ahmed, 2017:6). Patel suggests to us that adopting a migrant attitude is a kind of homework. Work that is self-assigned and based on all there is to learn from not being at home in the world, from having experienced migration partly as a restriction of possibilities and what is learned from the tactical practice gained in staying in places that we are not entirely welcome in. We learn about worlds that we are not accommodated in, that do not expect us to be there, and using the resources of our particulars to challenge the universal, we generate knowledge (Ahmed, 2017). This migrant homework also consists of configuring unlikely home-places, to creating alliances with much more intimate units than nations and flags. Allegiances form for instance to local grocery

stores, to friends who supply packing boxes and to others who offer to store belongings. To those who promise to visit and in fact do, as well as to family narratives of survival; to the selection of family non-conformists and to parents who support the non-traditional monsters they have helped create. Allegiances form to silent still places in urban cacophonies, and to those who help to find ways to maintain and repair relationships fractured by time spent apart (Kabwe, 2015b).

This thesis project continues from *Migritude's* beginnings as a piece of performance work, and registers that if a migrant attitude signifies a critical mode of being in the world, then it is also a critical mode of making theatre. This is a dramaturgy that includes emphasizing modes of arriving rather than the places reached (theatrical processes rather than their products); the conceptual vocabulary available with the possibility of comparison; focus on the improvised, provisional, coincidental and unsettled; and “the dramaturgy of movement itself – the way in which physical movement, choreography and gesture become a central element in the performance text” (Fleishman, 2015b:9). These being and making modes also include the making of metaphorical connections where more logical ones fail, and an understanding of new countries as autobiographical fictions made up of finding resemblances between new places and those left behind (Carter, 1992). For Patel it also includes various ways in which tropes of migration and mobility can be woven into an artistic work including as primary, driving inner experience to be expressed, as well as the varying means and locations through which that experience can be made perceptible (Kabwe, 2015b).

Migritude is the foundational text in the formulation of a migrant attitude for theatre-making that is driven by a dramaturgy of African futures. In this chapter, I have

attempted to locate migritude the artistic genre that can trace its lineage through Négritude. I have also attempted to illustrate how Patel's autobiographical performance text centres a construction of migrants in the context of historical processes of colonial imperialism. Her deft weaving of the immigration experiences of women in her family with her outspoken criticism of the violent exertion of colonial, national and transnational control on the movements of people, foregrounds the historical processes that continue to make personal experiences of border crossings a matter of international concern. Patel constructs the migrant as occupying a critical marginal position that is unapologetic, confrontational, rageful even. It is a combative and rebellious stance against the violence and injustice enacted on the bodies of women by imperial and colonial geopolitics, and it seeks to produce discomfort. Through this first case study, I have begun to respond to the question of what a migrant attitude for theatre and performance-making might look like. In constructing this loose map, I am working with and through the following dramaturgical orientation points: Africa is defined by movement; the concept of migrant is tied to the concept of borders and colonial history; diasporic refusal; movement as a core feature of a production's dramaturgy; and the migrant is central to the project of social re-imagining. As discussed through the chapter, Patel's Migritude highlights the entanglement of migration, of colonial history and also expands notions of refusal beyond the diasporic refusal of return that sets migritude apart from Négritude. Patel's queer Afro-Asian poetics also instantiates a refusal of heteronormative notions of success that creates the essential spaciousness for constructing alternative African futures. In the chapter to follow on the production *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* by Magnet Theatre, the focus is on an example of movement and transformation as core features of both form and content illuminating this particular component of a migrant attitude, as well as the notion of Africa being defined by

movement. In her typically incisive style, Patel explains that “What we talk about when we talk about migration is, What moves, and who is moved? By whose muscle? [and] Where does it come to rest?” (Patel, 2020:168). The chapter to follow in many ways responds to these questions of what is meant when we speak of movement in/and Africa.

CHAPTER 5: *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking*

How is it that the distinction between subject and object, between me and things, is so crucially dependent on life and death? (Taussig, 2004:381)

Backstory

I have seen *Every Year Every Day I am Walking* by Magnet Theatre Company twice. First at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in 2007 and the second time, in 2008, at the Arena Theatre at the University of Cape Town. The latter occasion was a benefit show for an anti-xenophobia campaign, and I still have my oversized turquoise T-shirt bought that day, with the word *FOREIGNER* printed in bold black capital letters across the front. It seemed counter-intuitive for me, a Zambian immigrant to announce my status as a non-South African precisely at the time when the city was prickling from xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals, so I did not wear it publicly. On the way to the theatre, I had stopped at a petrol station to fill my car in the give-away language of English when the attendant had greeted me in isiXhosa. My memory of the brief moment is that, with my car keys in his hand, his gaze lingered on me angrily before complying, causing me to panic internally at the realization that I could not drive away if he turned out to be a lone xenophobe, out for a stray foreigner's head. Regardless of whether or not my oversensitivity at being a single, African, immigrant woman at the time, imagined his response to me as hostile, I was consumed by the awareness of my own relative privilege as a middle-class migrant, my vulnerability nevertheless, my pre-judgement of the violent intentions of a young South African black man, my permanent outsider status and the daily efforts of assessing where, when and with whom this status should be hidden or highlighted. With these thoughts and feelings brimming, I was primed to participate in the production.

Every Year Every Day I am Walking (Every Year, Every Day) is a play about definitions of home, it is about losing home, painfully discovering how to home again, about death and

survival. It is about the conditions under which African migrant women and girls must live cautiously and always in anticipation of another move in the future. It is about up-rootings, re-routings, rooting in all senses of the word – to hunt, to rummage to forage, to establish a source, to place firmly, to imply birthplace and heritage. It is also about ground, grounds, re-grounding – about sand and soil as material and symbol, about the earth, terrain and property. It is about grounds for dismissal. About being familiar, making headway and about standing firm against all the odds. *Every Year, Every Day* is also about mothers and daughters, about the loss of a daughter and sister and the slow recovery of those left in this realm. It is about why African women move, how they move and what kinds of traumas they might experience as a result of moving. It is about understanding migration as a search for freedom from physical and emotional harm, and also as the means through which to cross boundaries of many kinds.

Introduction

As social actors we tend to see things in ego-centered ways, in terms of what they can do for us. We hardly look at them. Our interests are in the effects for us, aesthetic, social, scientific, psychological and so on. But every now and then we actually look at the thing itself, as a whole object, a thing in its own right. We explore its grain, feel its weight, note its color in different lights, marvel at its balance and delicate detail. Of course, our interest remains self-serving, and often nostalgic, but there is sometimes a moment of realization that in order to understand the thing we have to look harder, anew, deeper, more fully. (Hodder, 2012:2)

This chapter focuses on the visual language of *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* as a central dramaturgical component of the play that I will argue, following the late Harry Garuba's thoughts on features of animist materialism (2003), evidences a component of the migrant attitude that relates to re-enchantment. To this end, it will use an object-oriented analysis to discuss the different scenographic roles played by the shoes and the origami bird in the play. This object-oriented analysis will be guided by Bruno Latour's challenge to the

division of subject and object, to ask “what new configurations [might] emerge when subject and object are kept in relation?” (Sofer, 2003: viii). It asks this particularly from a cultural context in which boundaries of subject and object can be porous. The chapter proposes that the contribution made by this work to a migrant attitude, lies in the scenographic aspects of a performance work that centre a vitality of objects following Jane Bennett (2010). The conceptual and theoretical framing offered by Garuba’s description of “the practice of *continually re-enchanting the world* as a manifestation of the animist unconscious” (2003:266 italics in the original), is used to add conceptual detail to a migrant attitude. This migrant attitude that places the movement of subject and object in fluid configurations, locates the work within a particular sociocultural world view that is animist in its logic. It must be noted that it is a culturally mixed group of African theatre makers that have made *Every Year, Every Day*, and the animist lens on the reading of the production is one that is imposed from the outside. The shoes in particular as iconic symbols of migration will be the primary focus of study here for how the production mediates a relationship between people and objects. One effect that must be noted here, but that will not be the focus of the chapter, is the way in which the scenography creates the effect of “remain[ing] true to the silencing at the heart of the migrant experience, the loss of language, voice and agency” (Fleishman, 2015b:16). Through the journey of the origami bird in the play, I will also examine a particular spiritual dimension given to material objects that coheres with an animist materialism discourse progressed by Garuba (2003). The shoes and the bird are selected as *evocative objects*, to use Sherry Turkle’s term (2007), objects that are familiar, that facilitate thinking and feeling, objects that are defamiliarized here by theory enabling an opportunity to “explore how everyday objects become part of our inner life: how we use

them to extend the reach of our sympathies by bringing the world within” (Turkle, 2007:307).

Every Year, Every Day I am Walking is a production that emerged out of the company’s Migration Project and has been performed continuously in South Africa and internationally since 2008¹³, winning multiple awards along the way. The Migration Project generated a series of devised research-based professional productions between 2006 and 2010 that had migration as their thematic focus and explored experiences of moving and being in between (Fleishman, 2015b & Fleishman, Reznick & Yisa, 2012). The Migration Project “operated along three specific routes that are simultaneously conceptual and actual” (Fleishman, M., Reznick, J. & Yisa, F. 2012:6). First, Cecil John Rhodes’ incomplete Cape to Cairo Railway project, which nevertheless invokes actual increased movements of people across the continent. Second, the major highway route that links the Eastern Cape to the Western Cape of South Africa and that has been traversed in that direction by generations of amaXhosa who make new homes in Cape Town’s informal settlements. Third, the highway that links one of the most economically vibrant parts of South Africa with one of the most economically depressed, namely the N7 route from The Western Cape to the Northern Cape on the border of Namibia (Fleishman, 2015b). *Every Year, Every Day* in particular was made against the backdrop of regular xenophobic violence across South Africa, which came to a particular moment of intensity and escalation in many major cities, in 2008. The play follows the lives of a mother and daughter who are forced to flee their home in an unnamed Francophone country and arrive as refugees in Cape Town. It is

¹³ At the time of writing, the last performance of *Every Year Every Day* was in 2019 at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town.

published in *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays* (Fleishman, M., Reznek, J. & Yisa, F, 2012), and as such, also charts an instance of the complex process of migrating devised embodied work to published play text. The three main characters and multiple support characters are played by two highly skilled actors, and it is also a theatrical reflection of countless people's experiences of intra-Africa migration.

The play was influenced by the book *Suitcase Stories: Refugee Children Reclaim their Identities*, written by Glynis Clacherty and the children in The Suitcase Project (2006), a psychosocial art therapy project in Hillbrow initiated in 2001 for asylum-seeking young people who had become separated from their parents or orphaned before they arrived in South Africa (Clacherty & Welvering, 2006). The book is a collection of stories and images of the suitcases chosen by each child to tell the stories of their lives through mixed media artwork on the inside and outside of their suitcases. One of the main characters in the play is Aggie (played by Faniswa Yisa), the young girl who flees her home with her mother (played by Jennie Reznek) after assailants burn down her family home, killing her sister Ernestine. The name Aggie is taken from one of the children in the Suitcase Stories project who, together with her brother Paco left the Democratic Republic of Congo to live in Zambia before arriving in Johannesburg. Clacherty introduces her story as follows:

Aggie joined the group a long time after her brother. When I brought her a suitcase, she pointed out in her quiet way the old sticker on the suitcase that says, 'Savoy Hotel Ndola.' 'I lived in Zambia once, that is where Ndola is,' she says. 'I think this suitcase was meant for me.' She carefully paints around the sticker as she paints her suitcase yellow. She decorates the outside with gold stars and red string. Inside are many small pencil drawings of intimate household objects, such as a pot and a hoe, and a woman carrying water. One of drawings is carefully executed with great detail. It is a small drawing of a woman. (2006:36)

Considering the cast of characters in this production that is inspired by the story above, one imagines that this small drawing of a woman was a maternal figure in Aggie's

life¹⁴. The childhood world that is evoked for the characters Aggie and Ernestine in the play also seems prompted by Aggie's descriptions of her own childhood in a village in the DRC where she describes going to the fields with her mother when she was young and playing under trees while her mother worked. She recalls sitting by the river with her father until they saw fish and being treated by her grandmother with herbs when she was sick (Clacherty & Welvering, 2006).

Props, Objects and Things, Re-Enchanted:

According to Jibu Mathew George, Max Weber borrowed the term 'Disenchantment of the World' from the poet, playwright, philosopher and historian Friedrich Schiller who used it to describe "a shift from the holistic world view of the ancient Greeks to the fragmentation characteristic of modernity" (2017:2). In his extensive accounting of Enchantment, Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment, George traces ideas and concepts of the 'supernatural' through religious frameworks to shed light on enchantment and disenchantment as two responses to the supernatural, the supernatural defined broadly as "any form of afterlife" (George, 2017:9). In this chapter I will use Garuba's formulation of Re-Enchantment, not to mark a regressive process but to account for a "virtually all-pervasive phenomenon in modern African society" (Garuba, 2003:265). For Garuba, disenchantment names Max Weber's "accounts of the changes in attitudes and practices occasioned by the increasingly secular rationalization of the world brought about by

¹⁴ While there may be inspirations drawn from the real-life story of Aggie through her work in the Suitcase Project, the play makes no attempt to remain true to the actual details of Aggie's life and the character of Aggie in the play is not a depiction of her.

modernity and the rise of capitalism” (2003:266). The phenomenon of re-enchantment is one in which African traditional cultural beliefs and practices do not adhere to “the series of binaries in the Christian value system [including] life/death, enmity/forgiveness, the given/the hoped-for, and so on” (John, 2017: xi). In this research, these terms are not fixed in the study of religion and religious forms but used as ideas that illuminate points along the “continuum from beings to metaphors” (John, 2017:x). This chapter will explore an animist unconscious which is in operation through a process that Garuba describes as a continual re-enchantment of the world (2003) which is counter to progress marked by linear time and rational certainty. Garuba describes this animist unconscious as “a form of collective subjectivity that structures being and consciousness in predominantly animist societies and cultures” (2003:269). It is not my intention to suggest that the culturally diverse South African makers of *Every Year, Every Day* necessarily operate from within a predominantly animist society, or to suggest that animism as a form of collective subjectivity can be applied generally across African cultures. Instead, I am interested in putting Garuba’s term to use in the reading of how this production creates a relationship between subjects and objects that marks a distinct paradigm of reality that materializes the unknown. In Jane Bryce’s words, I am attempting here to explore how *Every Year, Every Day* “invokes the animist concept of the spirit world as an [in]visible but ever-present adjunct to the world of the living” (Bryce, 2019:6). Guided by Laura Marks’ work on haptic visuality (2000), I would say that rather than a symbolic representation of the invisible, the use of the shoes and paper bird in the production come to physically embody the invisible, insisting “on the materiality of the original presence to which they refer” (Marks, 2000:92). This insistence on the material reality of invisible presence that can be invoked by the use of objects in a production, is what I am considering as a distinct feature of the migrant attitude. This might also serve to

expand the notion of a dramaturgy of displacement (Fleishman, 2015b) that is used to describe the work in Magnet Theatre's Migration project, to include a movement across thresholds of reality facilitated by the displaced representations of subjects and objects in this work in particular.

While it is the shoes in the play that will be used to explore a particular animist unconscious that is not subject to the logic of the given, but in fact engages in a practice of *continually re-enchanting the world*, it is useful to start with locating the shoes within the larger scenographic world of props, object and things that participate in this re-enchantment. In the introductory notes to the play on costume we learn valuable information about how the theatre-makers conceive of the fluidity of characters and objects:

The three main characters are represented by their shoes, which are always kept close to them – either carried or worn, when they are not being manipulated as puppets. *Mama* is represented by a pair of worn, cream court shoes, as well as a headscarf. *Ernestine* is represented by a pair of green, plastic flip-flops. *Aggie* is represented by a pair of little, pink, girl's shoes (which the actress will never wear as they are for a small child), until the very end when she is given a pair of adult shoes by her mother, in this case green pumps or slippers. (Fleishman, M., Reznick, J. & Yisa, F. 2012:14)

The pre-set of *Every Year, Every Day* is a stage of *props, objects and things*. On a long metal table are items one might easily associate with children: a small wire elephant with a trumpeting trunk and a wire radio that could be mistaken for a small suitcase with its box shape and elaborate handle, and between them a pair of soft canvas shoes designed for a child, with a Velcro strap, toes touching as if to suggest that the wearer is slightly pigeon-toed. Hanging from the centre of the table and resting on the floor facing the audience, is a drawing of a house on red paper with white chalk, decorated and cut out by a child with window and door flaps for easy make-believe play. Barely noticeable, under the table and

behind the paper house is the small pile of *chitenge*¹⁵ cloths. Two rolls of paper rest on either side of the table, and this whole arrangement sits neatly in the middle of a round floor cloth which takes up most of the stage area. Already, these items promise to feature as core elements of the production, and these are in fact the first performers that the audience encounters. Other significant items that we come to encounter include two black umbrellas, an origami bird, two smiling stick figure self-portraits of children and a pile of crumpled airmail envelopes.

As items in the museum-like context of theatre, these *things* are compelling in and of themselves. Shoes for instance, long associated with travel and movement, are strong signifiers of people, unworn shoes strongly marking the absence of the human body. The wire radio and elephant reminiscent of the toys of my own childhood in the SADC¹⁶ region, are strongly associated with the Southern African immigrants on many a South African city street corner making and selling elaborate beaded wire decorative objects and figures. The airmail envelopes mark a nostalgic mode of communication across geographic borders that is now almost obsolete, and *chitenge* cloths are strong signifiers of Africa in general, African women, and our practical, portable, multi-purpose use of them. It is the combination of the items in and of themselves as participants in the stage action and the different ways in which they are embodied, manipulated, choreographed and worn, which makes *Every Year*, *Every Day* a particularly effective example of employing a dramaturgical device that coheres

¹⁵ *Chitenge* or *kitenge* is a vernacular term for central, southern and east African fabric, typically worn and used for multiple other purposes by women. *Vitenge* for plural.

¹⁶ The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an economic community comprised of countries in the southern African region including Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

with an animist conception of reality. Through Garuba, this is understood as the workings of a particular social imaginary in which the authority of Western science is subverted “by reinscribing the authority of magic within the interstices of the rational/secular/modern” (2003:271). Animism is seen as an umbrella designation for this mode of consciousness and one of its manifestations is the embodiment and physicalization of beings and spirits in objects (Garuba, 2003). This fluid migration between objects and people is also an endowing of objects with spirit which is a theatrical and social practice that emerges from a particular sociocultural code that is neither secular nor rational, nor positivist in its orientation. It is this orientation that marks the feature of the migrant attitude that *Every Year, Every Day* contributes.

An object-oriented description of the first few moments of the play, reveals the prominent place that movement and objects, and the movement of objects have in the form of the storytelling. In the blackout the actors enter the stage and the lights come up to reveal Faniswa Yisa running in wide strides around the circular floor cloth through pools of light, searching for something and holding a large black umbrella which catches the light as it turns and floats behind and above her. The umbrella is turned upside down, held by its handle and the actor tucks the arm of the umbrella into her right hip so that it fans out behind her, and she swings on an imaginary swing. Meanwhile the second human performer, Jennie Reznek, playing the character of Ernestine, is revealed as she brings the shoes on the table alive. They float up and down and do a delicate heel-toe dance until Aggie, Yisa’s character, notices them and eagerly takes them up into an embrace before she animates them gleefully with similar choreography to Reznek’s. The shoes seem to step out as puppets with stories of their own and then Yisa’s playfulness leads us to read that she is

playing with them as a child might, imagining them as dancing figures. The first piece of *chitenge* cloth, purple with orange and black butterflies, is used to create a river that the two sisters play in together and then it becomes the towel used to dry off from the river. As it is wrapped quickly, high round Aggie's body and secured with a quick tuck under her armpit, Rezek as Ernestine, finds a bird in one of their shoes – a turquoise origami paper bird which she becomes as she animates it to the delight of Aggie. As Aggie takes the bird it transfers its powers of animation into her own body and Rezek reveals a pair of green flip flop shoes which she holds to the middle of her back to make wings that echo the paper bird and the butterflies on Aggie's *chitenge*, which is still wrapped around her body. The shoes play the heel-toe counting game, ending in wide circles before they are placed on the floor. This action establishes important connections between Ernestine and the origami bird and the flip flops that will become an evocative refrain in the production. The girls hang the cloths on a washing line upstage to create a curtain of colourful fabric which contains the action in the domestic space of an African household. Each actor comes downstage with a *chitenge* as the mood shifts from upbeat, to more sombre. They use the simultaneous wrapping of their head scarves to transform into other people and we understand the context of the story to include a wider community.

As Turkle reminds us "Life, of course, is not lived in discreet stages, nor are the relationships with objects that accompany its journey. Objects have life roles that are multiple and fluid" (2007:6). This statement resonates with object-oriented criticism in theatre and performance which is largely marginal to subject-oriented criticism (Margolies, 2016) but is a form of critique that necessarily focuses on the play in production and not the play in scripted form. As such it is a useful orientation for a production that has emerged

from the history of South African theatre-making where plays are not pre-written, but made on the floor in a fluid collaborative process that involves research, generating material through improvisation and play, selection of images and shaping towards a coherent whole (Lewis & Krueger, 2016). As the description of the costume in the play text above states, the characters in *Every Year, Every Day* are represented by their shoes. What is clear even from the beginning of the play, if one is focused on the objects, is that these items in fact float between being understood to varying degrees as *objects, props, things, puppets, and costume*. My argument is that these human and non-human assemblages (Bennett, 2010) create a representational strategy that following Garuba, demonstrate a particular animist logic which gives the abstract, metaphorical and spiritual, material realization. Definitions of these terms vary from one theorist to another across disciplines. Puppeteering theorist Henryk Jurkowski for instance, observes that,

Puppets, props and objects have different kinds of existences and therefore they have different theatrical qualities and different connotations. Actors are human beings fulfilling theatrical functions; objects are things made by human beings not for theatrical use; props are things made for theatrical use; puppets are objects made to be theatre characters; masks are objects made for theatrical use in order to depersonalize an actor. (2013:111)

From this observation the only category that the shoes in the production in particular would not fall into is that of props if they are understood as not being made specifically for use in the theatre. Instead, according to the guideline, they are both objects, *made by human beings not for theatrical use* and puppets, *objects made to be theatre characters*. They are also surely items of costume. Elenor Margolies (2016) considers props and puppets as occupying the same category as objects made purposefully for use in the theatre. In *Every Year, Every Day* however, a central theatrical use of the shoes is as puppets. This is not a play through which the theatrical craft of 'property' making can be

celebrated, and instead sits much more appropriately in a South African theatre tradition of exploiting the theatrical potential of found objects. Preference for the term 'object' draws connections between their performative use and their everyday use (Margolies, 2016), resonating with Posner and others who note that,

Objects invade every aspect of our lives. We are inundated with ever newer and more enticing commodities and, thus, are compelled to engage with a growing array of *things* and encouraged continually to assess their value and our interactions with them. Capitalist society, spreading globally, habituates us to see *things* as a means of satisfying our desires, expressing our personalities, and somehow completing us - *things* as an essential extension of ourselves. (Posner Orenstein & Bell, 2014b:2)

Posner, Orenstein and Bell's view of 'things' indeed expresses a particular habitual way of seeing and relating to objects that is not as universal as she implies. The flow between performative use and everyday use of the objects in *Every Year, Every Day*, points to other habits of seeing that this chapter draws on, where value is assessed to the extent that things "acquire a social and spiritual meaning within the culture far in excess of their natural properties and their use value" (Garuba, 2003:267). In the context of forced migration, *things* can take on a particularly vital quality as the only items able to be saved, rescued, carried or worn. The significance and value of such items often perfectly ordinary, growing exponentially according to the conditions and circumstances of the forced migration. Perfectly ordinary items also become invested with sensory memory and as demonstrated by *Every Year, Every Day*, they also facilitate material encounters with absence (Marks, 2000).

A thick performance aesthetic

Elizabeth Grosz reminds us that “the thing goes by many names. Indeed, the very label, ‘the thing’ is only a recent incarnation of a series of terms which have an illustrious philosophical history: the object, matter, substance, the world, noumena, reality, appearance, and so on” (Grosz, 2009:124). These terms widen the parameters in which ‘things’ can be considered, creating more spaciousness for different versions of reality. The term, *things* is also used often to indicate a lack of certainty, a vagueness or lack of knowledge. For Bill Brown it “[...] is a word that tends, especially at its most banal, to index a certain limit or liminality, to hover over the threshold between nameable and the unnameable, the figurable and unfigurable, the identifiable and unidentifiable [...]” (2001:4). Brown’s view here comes closer to what Garuba calls “the merger of the material and the metaphorical, which animist logic entails” which “appear[s] to be reproduced in the cultural practices of the society” (Garuba, 2003:267). These terms are transferrable to a certain migrant state characterised by in-betweenness and captured by Paul Carter’s observations of works of art, which as he explains,

present a picture of the way the world is constructed that participates in its complexity rather than eliminates it. It realises (it releases) the inventiveness of matter in a way that eludes descriptions of reality couched in terms of simple concepts, one-to-one equivalences or [...] free-associative poetic reveries. (2004: xii)

This illustrates a distinctive feature of Magnet Theatre’s work as possessing a certain *thickness* that is described by Miki Flockemann, borrowing from Clifford Geertz, as a “thick performance aesthetic” as producing a sense of *being there* (Flockemann, 2016). This sense emerges from multiple meanings made possible by the company’s central focus on the physical images made by the body, and in this case, by the body and its non-human collaborators. Magnet Theatre’s point of departure is similar to Jurkowski’s who says,

“Theatre is transformation. It is a vision created by an artist, transforming himself or a puppet or even an object into an imagined character” (Jurkowski, 2013:69). Contributing to the *thickness* of the performance aesthetic in *Every Year, Every Day* is a constant flow between experiencing the actors as puppeteers and as characters, puppeteering as extensions of their own characters as well as others in the play. This mode of embodied storytelling offers an inter-subjective experience of the performance between the bodies of the spectators and those of the performers, offering the potential for transformation as a strategic element in the performers and spectators (Flockemann, 2016) and in the objects as well. This thickness is also attributed to the rich inter-layering of movement and migration in the performance text not only in the identifiable elements such as theme, narrative, choreography, use of objects, music and the multiple geographies that the production has been shown in; but somehow embedded also between these elements and through their theatrical interaction, in the less easily explainable arena of meanings and feelings. I would argue that this *thickness* is also a way to describe the animist principles in operation. Where Cartesian boundaries might be drawn between subject, object and spirit, this feature of a migrant attitude collapses the boundaries between subject, object, spirit. It thickens a single playing field with a more fluid, interrelated and wholistic understanding of these terms. In the preface to a collection of poems by refugee women from a number of African countries titled, *Living on the Fence* (2007), Gabeba Baderoon writes: “The writers are women who have experienced fear and tragedy which linger in memory and the remembering body” (Baderoon, 2007:5). Here Baderoon resonates with Fleishman’s description of Magnet’s practice as “a process of writing with bodies in and through movement” (Fleishman, 2016:58). This thickness is also made present through a displacing of the human subject as the centre of attention by crafting what Fleishman calls “choreographic assemblages” which

“involve a non-hierarchical collection of human and non-human bodies encountering each other in such a way as not to favour the human bodies” (2016:58).

Echoing Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s interrogation of the idea that the body is a thing among things (1945) Ian Hodder asks,

But surely humans are things also? If things are just temporary bundles of matter, energy, and information it must also be possible to say that humans are just bundles of biochemical processes, flows of blood and nerves and cells temporarily coalesced into an entity that is thoroughly dependent on and connected to air, water, food and so on. (2012:9)

In relation to these points above made by Hodder, the ethical critique of object-oriented thinking made by feminists and post-colonial theorists is worth noting here. Its detailed exploration is beyond the scope of this study, but there are nevertheless some important interventions made by Object-Oriented Feminists (OOF) which run parallel to the animist logics being explored here. As suggested by Hodder above, Object Oriented Ontology or OOO, takes the position that whether they are human, non-human, natural, cultural, real or fictional, all objects must be given equal attention (Harman, 2018), and that the world consists entirely of objects, and humans are seen as objects like any other, rather than as privileged subjects (Behar, 2016) Katherine Behar summarizes the feminist and postcolonial critique of Hodder and Graham Harman’s position by noting that,

[...] As its awestruck acronym might imply OOO’s tone often appears somewhat too elated by discovering a universe composed of objects. What is more, OOO seems to relish, in the idea that humans too are objects, a sense of liberation from the shackles of subjectivity. [...] OOF therefore positions itself as a friendly if pointed rejoinder, reminding this flourishing philosophical discussion first, that object-oriented approaches to the world are practiced disciplines outside philosophy, and second that all too many humans are well aware of being objects, without finding cause to celebrate in that reality. (2016:5)

Drawing on Mignitude the political project here, focuses attention on the historical oppressions of women and Africans and surfaces the history of objectification of women’s bodies and the sub-humanization of Black people. The non-subject/non-citizen status of the

migrant further points to crippling notions and practices of objectification. The histories of treating certain humans such as women, people of colour and the poor, as objects, is the political territory of Object-Oriented Feminism or OOF, prioritizing feminist intersectionality which works against framings that hinge on totality and exclusivity (Behar, 2016). The project of OOF to foreground the complications of uneven power relations is an important nuance in a migrant attitude that is concerned with re-enchantment. An object-oriented feminist approach asserts a position of ethical non-neutrality. By questioning notions of objectification, utilitarianism and instrumentalization in OOO, Object-Oriented Feminism “seeks to capitalize perhaps somewhat parasitically on the contributions of that thought while twisting it toward a more agential, political, embodied terrain” (Behar, 2016:3).

One of the most striking moments of disruption in the play which catalyses the entire narrative, is the scene in which the child-like representation of a family house is literally burned to ash on stage. Ernestine perishes in the blaze and Aggie and Mama, the remaining family members, are permanently displaced and forced to migrate. This is the most literal representation of the play’s dramaturgy of displacement. As Karabo Van Heerden iterates, “Understood in broad terms, displacement may encompass an act of circumstance, the effect of which results in voluntary or forced dislocation, or confinement” (2015:13) this is also one of the first times that we read the shoes as symbolic of migration in general and also, we experience them simultaneously as being among the only personal possessions that the characters are able to escape with. What is particularly dramatically effective in this scene and the ones that lead up to it, is the portrayal of a wider community of people in which this family is embedded as well as the extent of the sacrifice made by the family of protagonists. While this scene is theatrically effective and affective, Van Heerden

critically notes that displacement and forced migrations due to conflict tends to be over-represented by women “who are often forced to make far-reaching sacrifices” (2015:13). The particular way in which “vulnerability gets constructed through representations of female suffering” (Palmary, I., Chantler, K. & Kiguwa, P 2010:8) is noted by Ingrid Palmary and others as contributing to the naming of certain groups of people as vulnerable, namely in this case, women and children. What it means to be rendered as part of a vulnerable group has consequences for the levels of visibility that migrating women and children find themselves negotiating, with little control over their desire for visibility or not. As explained by Palmary, I., Chantler, K. & Kiguwa, P, “Whilst one cannot argue that women have been visible as migrants, it is the nature of this visibility that needs to be contested” (2010:7). The scene in the play that most clearly highlights this notion of problematic visibility, that is in fact endangering for migrant women, is the one in which Aggie and Mama arrive in a refugee camp. While Aggie attempts to make friends with some of the other children there, Reznik as Mama takes her shoes to the centre of the table and is engaged in the domestic duties of the refugee camp. Her vulnerability in this place as a woman and a newcomer is made evident as she collects a pair of black, shiny, man’s shoes, holding them high above her head and then bringing them down to the table to walk with measured and menacing steps around Mama’s shoes. Reznik places one of these black shoes heavily on her chest, forcing her upper body into a back bend, the other one over her stomach area as she rocks uncomfortably with her feet almost giving way under their imagined weight. Eventually Mama is able to fight her attacker off and this is the only time that another character is introduced by a pair of shoes. This powerful moment in the scene, forcefully highlights the

links between representations of women as immobile with the threat of violence against them if they ‘venture too far from home.’ The scene highlights the prominence of the risk of being victims of sexual exploitation for migrant women and girls on the move, including the risks of trafficking (Muzenda, 2015). For Tim Creswell and Priya Uteng who study gendered mobilities, among the oversimplifications of women’s experiences of transnational migration is a persistent argument that host societies (even technically temporary ones such as refugee camps) provide greater freedom for women than their home countries (2008). This scene in the play described above also demonstrates the ways that all the shoes in the production come to “encode the material conditions of displacement” (Marks, 2000:92) in one way or another.

Hosting a world of passing beings

The animation of everyday objects such as shoes in this production blurs a distinction between objects and puppets, and if puppets are in essence “any items which can be transformed into characters – even the human body (if treated like a puppet) or some part of it” (Jurkowski, 2013:73), then the play can be read as an instance of contemporary puppet theatre which holds central to its making “[P]uppets ... bearers of precise visual meaning” (Posner, Orenstein & Bell, 2014a:4). Jurkowski briefly traces the lineage of the use of everyday objects as puppets in theatre by noting that the puppet’s theatrical function started as an android, an apparently lifeless artificial human brought to life by an actor. It then moved to the puppet as a transforming figure, a substitute for the actor and a partner and participant in the actor’s work (2013). On the stages of transformation that exist for an object in performance, Jurkowski says,

[...] the object passes through two stages of transformation. First it has to take on life, and second it must become a character, or vice versa. This is a double transformation. [...] The manufactured object is an iconic sign of a character; the puppeteer adds movements and words which tell the public that the object is a living, scenic character. Though it may be considered an iconic sign, it nevertheless belongs to a class of objects in everyday use and has nothing to do with the theatre. Introduced onstage, it becomes a character by means of movement and sometimes words, but it lacks the iconic resemblance to a true character. (Jurkowski, 2013:73)

In a move away from the purely figurative or anthropomorphic, the use of shoes in *Every Year, Every Day* demands that the visually literate audience hold simultaneously not only their representation as characters, but also their functional everyday purposes and their high metaphoric value, in this case as symbols of migration. It is the infusion of life and agency into the object/puppet which becomes the central defining characteristic of a more expanded notion of puppet theatre (Posner, D.N., Orenstein, C. & Bell, J 2014) As articulated by Jurkowski,

When a movement fully dominates an object, we feel that the character is born and present on the stage. When it is the nature of the object which dominates, we still see the object. The object is still the object and character at the same time. Sometimes, however, this unity splits for a short while, to be regenerated after a moment. (2013:73)

In reference to the above, there is a kind of ironic inversion of the character being 'born' through the object which takes place in the play through the representation of Ernestine after she has died. This instantiates the animist re-enchantment phenomenon in *Every Year, Every day* as being most clearly apparent in the puppet's inherent ability to float between states of life and death. Through Walter Benjamin, Laura Marks notes how some objects not only embody memory but have an aura which is the quality given to an object that "makes our relationship to it like a relationship with another human being" (2000:80). This is evident throughout the play when the spirit of Ernestine is present to Aggie in the form of the origami bird and the shoes. This idea that it is a pair of shoes, and it is Ernestine;

it is a delicate paper bird, only seen by Aggie, and it is also Ernestine, deftly explores this slide between “the self as a discrete being and one intertwined with inanimate matter” (Posner, D.N., Orenstein, C. & Bell, J 2014:3). It also conforms to Marks’ view that aura is a “brush with involuntary memory” (Marks, 2000:81). These are representational strategies that draw on a rich animist conception of reality and the world which exists across African cultural practice and beliefs. These strategies maintain that animist logic subverts the binarism between life and death destabilizing the hierarchy of science over myth and magic (Garuba, 2003). Ernestine is embodied by a performer before and after her horrific death in the burning house. She is present in the form of the shoes, the paper bird and in Aggie’s longing for connection with her sister expressed so clearly later in the play through her undeliverable letters. *Every Year, Every Day* encodes the notion that “all matter [has the potential to be] endowed with spirit or as providing sites for hosting a world of passing beings [...]” (Posner, D.N., Orenstein, C. & Bell, J 2014:3). An important note made by Garuba in his essay is that the animist unconscious operates beyond the level of religious belief by eliding the “either/or orientation of monotheistic religions and their logic of binarism and exclusivity” (2003:271). This is a primary feature of the Schiller/Weber/Garuba expression ‘the re-enchantment of the world’ and the primary characteristic of the migrant attitude at work in this production. Here the metaphors of movement, mobility and migration serve an animist worldview in which the crossing of boundaries and identities predominates and comes to define a narrative universe (Garuba, 2003).

In considering the mobile life of materials on stage, Andrew Sofer writes that,

They are part of the material fabric of the play in performance. Enlivened by the actor’s touch, charged by the playwright’s dialogue, and quickened in the spectator’s imagination, they take on a life of their own as they weave in and out of the stage action. Often invisible on the page, props are vital on the stage. (2003:vi)

Props in this case can be substituted with the other terms that have already been considered here including, objects, things and puppets. He goes on to articulate movement or motion as the defining feature of a 'prop' in performance, creating and sustaining a dynamic relationship between the performers and audience (Sofer, 2003). When these inanimate objects are mobilized by performers, particularly in a production such as *Every Year, Every Day* which is so driven by notions of mobility, they "travel in concrete stage space and through linear stage time" (Sofer, 2003:vii), before a historically specific audience, at a particular performance event, in a unidirectional manner, while also calling attention to how the objects have been used in previous theatrical incarnations (Sofer, 2003). In this production, what is experienced in the unidirectional manner of event time, is a narrative that is non-linear in its construction of time and space. In sequence, the prologue takes place in Cape Town in the present followed by the Home and the Journey scenes in the past, the Arrival in Cape Town in the near past is the third scene in which there is a dream, ending with The Crisis in the Park back in the present (Fleishman, M., Reznick, J. & Yisa, F. 2012). The opportunity of object-based criticism is to pay attention to the spatial and temporal dimensions of the play in performance, how these elements are theatrically realized and to what effect. As Sofer remarks of his own work:

By viewing the prop as an entity rather than as a symbol, tool as well as trope, I aim to make visible precisely what we as text-based critics are trained not to see: the temporal and spatial dimensions of the material prop in performance. (Sofer, 2003: vii)

In considering notions of temporality in relation to Garuba's animist materialism, Uhuru Portia Phalafala writes of a particular temporal order of colonial modernity that differs from that of its colonies (2017). She uses Garuba's formulations as a "theoretical beacon" (2017:34) to study how the poetry of Keorapetse Kgositsile creates a double

understanding of time by absorbing the linear time of modernity into animist thought (Phalafala, 2017). One of the concepts that the poet coins to unify past, present and future and account for the figuring of time that is outside colonial modernity, is the 'coil of time' (Phalafala, 2017). The coil is metaphorically used by the poet to gather together, enfold and contract all these times into one moment and is informed by the Indigenous knowledge systems of his Tswana roots as well as the "oral, aural and literary episteme of his exilic routes in the diaspora [...]" (Phalafala, 2017:35). In the production, the present to past to near past to dream to present to unknown future, order of the play's narrative, is materialized in the audience's present through the manipulation and behaviour of the props, and in particular of the shoes and the origami bird.

Jiri Veltrusky (1964) attributes 'action force' to props that are not passive on stage, in other words, props that are not simply used as character accessories in the form of personal properties for actors. This action force is said to exist when a prop attracts action to it: "As soon as a certain prop appears on the stage, this force which it has provokes in us the expectation of a certain action" (Veltrusky, 1964:88). The shoes in *Every Year, Every Day* can be said to have this action force as describes by Veltrusky. As mentioned earlier here, as ordinary items they certainly link directly to individuals, providing much information in their style, colour and shape about the season, the wearer, what kinds of activities they might partake in while in them, and what displays of personality they might be performing in them. As items on stage however, they also shape expectation for action having been carefully chosen by the theatre-makers. Unworn shoes in particular are perceived "as spontaneous subjects equivalent to the figure of the actor" (Veltrusky, 1964:88) and yet more insubstantial and therefore more versatile for the additional work required by the

spectators. The value of the use of everyday objects is precisely in the preservation of their reality as this is the quality that radiates action force, even before the item has been put into use by the performers, and thereby suggesting to the spectators the possibilities for action (Veltrusky, 1964). What the shoes in *Every Year, Every Day* illustrate so clearly is that “the sphere of the live human being and that of lifeless object are interpenetrated, and no exact limit can be drawn between them” (Veltrusky, 1964:86). This becomes particularly pronounced during the repeated moments in the play when Reznik embodies the spirit of Ernestine by turning her flip flops into bird’s wings fluttering rhythmically behind her back, and becoming a presence that is felt, but not visible to Aggie whose search for her sister continues through letters that Mama cannot deliver. The flip flops allow the actor to embody the spirit of Ernestine and the object of the origami bird stands in for Ernestine and her relationship with her sister Aggie, before and after her death in the house fire and throughout Aggie’s journey with her mother as a forced migrant. The origami bird is not an object that is seen by Mama and therefore maintains more intimate and sacred qualities than the flip flops. As Phalafala evocatively writes, “The sacred image essentially reveals its underside: to speak of desire, for instance, is to speak of memory: they are twin forces. ‘Desire’ is an articulation of a memory in the future” (2017:44). As has been mentioned here, the shoes in *Every Year, Every Day*, are closely identified with their owners, indexing the wearers presence. They provide text for movement whether they are being worn or not, and also perform as independent theatrical subjects (Margolies, 2003). The extent to which one is directed by the form and conventional meaning of a pair of shoes, and the extent to which this meaning is created by how they are worn or otherwise used, as is the case in the production, is a dynamic tension at play in the theatrical use of objects (Margolies, 2003). The multiple use of shoes in the production points also to a productive tension between

subjects and objects in theatre that speaks to re-enchantment as a feature of theatrical practice more broadly. Margolies argues that,

shoes belong to a special class of object because they are worn on the body, and so should be considered under the heading of costume, rather than objects. However, rather than being exceptions to a rule, shoes problematize the assumption of a clear distinction between theatrical subjects and objects, with consequences for the study of objects in general. (Margolies, 2003:170)

Shoes as a practical necessity that mediate a relationship between the external world and the body, are strongly associated with movement, travel and making one's way and as such are important ritual markers of growing up. Towards the end of the play Aggie is left alone after waking from a dream in which the shoes of the two sisters have played their counting game together, the refrain of her core childhood memory. Aggie sadly takes up her shoes to narrate yet another letter to Ernestine about her coming of age as a woman and the fact that her and Mama must move to yet another new place. She starts off by speaking directly to the shoes and then continues, as if to herself, so that there is a seamless transition from the shoes as representation of her letter writing to Ernestine into the shoes as Aggie's own possessions. The audience reads this as happening simultaneously. After Aggie has ritualistically burned the pile of undelivered letters on stage in a metal bucket, Mama approaches gently behind her with a shoe box. Aggie opens it to find a pair of turquoise flat shoes and nestled in one of them is Ernestine's turquoise origami bird. These new shoes that Aggie will actually wear become a 'transitional object' as theorised by DW Winnicott (1993) and explained by Marks as "any external object that a person partially incorporates in the process of reorganizing its subjectivity" (2000:78). We sense that the bird that Aggie has found inside the shoes is not seen by Mama. Tucking the bird discreetly into her dress, Aggie puts on her grownup shoes and takes one small, gentle step at a time towards a future in which the loss of her sister will be integrated.

Conclusion

In the world of the play the bird is an intricately folded origami crane made from a sheet of turquoise paper. It is unexpectedly discovered by Aggie in her shoe in moments where the memory of Ernestine is present. In this way, “it is a thing that makes other things (things of a different order) happen; that is to say, its value is functional, and its function, inflected within an emblematic or hermeneutic register, is primarily narrative” (Stern, 2004:394). The narrative function it serves is as an embodiment of the memory of Ernestine for Aggie and one that emerges from an animist dramaturgical logic which serves to re-enchant the world. In her chapter about an iconic bird in the film, the *Maltese Falcon*, Lesley Stern makes some reflections which seem applicable to the context of the bird in *Every Year, Every Day*. She says:

It’s an odd bird, a funny sort of a thing, [...]. Is it a bird, or is it a thing, or is it an object? It doesn’t fly and it doesn’t sing, it is by no means real and yet it is not, by any stretch of the imagination, simply imaginary. (2004:394)

In the play, the memory of Ernestine is also embodied every time Reznick, who also plays Ernestine before and after she is killed in the burning house, takes her flip flops to her back to flutter them behind her like wings. These images of the bird come to contain Aggie’s memory of her sister, and also represent the spirit of Ernestine herself thereby materializing animist thought by spiritualizing the object world and giving the spirit, what Garuba calls, “local habitation” (Garuba, 2003:267). Animism is often simplistically understood as belief in objects such as stones, trees and rivers because these objects are physical and material manifestations of gods and spirits (Garuba, 2003). Tracking the multiple meanings and evocations of the shoes and paper bird in *Every Year, Every Day* however, expands this

notion of animism into the “merger of the material and the metaphorical” (Garuba, 2003:267). It is this merger that I would like to extract to add to what makes up a migrant attitude. The shoes in *Every Year, Every Day* distinguish each character for the audience so that we are not lost by the fluid character changes. They guide Aggie’s memory to her sister and their lost home, and they literally mark the journey as steps on the roads traversed in search of a home elsewhere. In Sara Ahmed’s words, “home becomes the impossibility and necessity of the subject’s future (one never gets there, but is always getting there), rather than the past which binds the self to a given place” (1999:331). In the play, the shoes mark the impossibility of return to the home once inhabited, and they also stand in for the memory of the home lost. Their multiple and simultaneous functions, uses and registers in the play come to embody a kind of restless movement on an animist continuum.

What *Every Year, Every Day* contributes to a migrant attitude is encompassed in the reading of the constant transformation of the shoes as they slide between props, objects, things, puppets, and costume, as a re-enchantment which holds an audience securely in the processual and the transitional. It references a particular sociocultural code which endows things with spirit and merges the metaphorical with the material. It is a way of asking how the immaterial can be materialized and how other parallel realms of existence that accompany the material realm can be made visible and felt. It is a dramaturgical prompt that asks how re-enchantment can be practiced.

While the focus of this chapter has been on the migrant attitude in the scenographic language of the play, *Every Year, Every Day* also illuminates other features of migritude the artistic genre, including the entanglements of south-to-south movements and encounters that mark Africa as a site of arrival. In this light, the migrations of Aggie, Ernestine and

Mama stand in for “[...] circulation[s] of bodies, cultures and worldviews” (Coly, 2020:170) that incubate the formation of diasporas in Africa. In the following chapter which looks at migration nuanced by race, gender and sexuality in *Moj of the Antarctic: an African Odyssey*, the notion of refusal as a feature of migritude will be put into play. *Moj of the Antarctic* challenges conceptions of racial purity, it sheds light on the performance of gender and thereby works to foreground the social constructions of identity. A feature of migritude that the analysis of this production works through is one that supports conceptions of living an unbounded life modelled by notions of black, queer diaspora.

CHAPTER 6: Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey

The primacy of the body as the most visible and dynamic signifier in performance not only draws attention to the ways in which diasporic subjects carry markings of their particular histories of ethno-racialization, but also enables the strategic use of bodies as prime sites for political intervention and resignification. A performance framework prompts us to be attentive to strategies of embodied self-representation – including mimicry, passing, black/yellow-facing, parody, drag and intentional hybridity – employed within and beyond the theatre to exercise diasporic subjectivity. (Gilbert & Lo, 2010:153)

In other words, performative acts repeat and recite, thereby calling into being that which is being acted out. Among diaspora subjects, performativity encompasses the repetition of stylized bodily acts that gives substance to notions of a bio-racialized identity, thereby suggesting that identity is not genetically determined but rather socially activated. (Gilbert & Lo, 2010:154)

Backstory:

My first encounter with *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey* was in the form of an invitation to see a performance of the play during its very short, British Council-sponsored run, in Cape Town at the Theatre in the District / The Lydia Williams Centre of Memory in 2008. For reasons that I do not recall, I missed the run, but a year later was invited to attend a meeting with the author, Mojisola Adebayo, when she returned to Cape Town with the express interest of wanting to meet South African theatre-makers towards future collaborations. This was well in line with her very established practice of working internationally with a wide range of theatre practitioners and companies. As a prolific maker of both devised and scripted theatre and performance, she has toured her work internationally and worked with a wide range of theatre companies. On her visit to Cape Town, she was particularly keen on working with artists who were interested in dealing with black and queer subject matters. Struck by her biography which was circulated at the time to the meeting participants, I recall being particularly intrigued by what appeared to be a migrant tendency in her life and work. Adebayo is a UK based Nigerian/Danish performer, writer, producer, director, specialist Theatre of the Oppressed workshop facilitator and academic, and works across and between media including physical live performance and video. The various platforms on which she operates include academia, community arts projects, applied theatre, professional artistic direction, anti-racism and equality training, as well as serving on the board of directors of Cardboard Citizens, a homeless people's professional theatre company in the UK which uses Forum Theatre. This migration across the territories of scholarship, activism and artistry resonates with Dwight Conquergood's formulation of performance studies as broadly made up of artistry, analysis and activism

(Conquergood, 2002). The collaboration which resulted from this meeting of Cape Town theatre-makers was *I Stand Corrected*, with dancer and choreographer Mamela Nyamza.

In 2013, *Moj of the Antarctic* was a required reading in a playwriting workshop that I attended in Boston as an example of writing in the style of epic narrative adventure. As a black queer diasporan myself with migrant history that has so far traversed some of the same continents as the playwright and protagonist, the epic story of survival and change across territory by continuously reconfiguring the constructs and interactions of race, gender, sexuality and class for escape and survival at a particularly oppressive historical moment, was remarkably affirming. Since then, the play has stayed with me as a unique example of a carefully researched, written and performed piece of theatre which combines a range of topical socio-political and geo-political issues that are not often put in conversation with each other. As a theatre maker, I am also drawn to the theatrical devices employed by Adebayo which are simple and highly effective. Besides the materiality of the language of the play itself, which is witty, poetic and full of clever wordplay, the lighting, musical score and movement vocabulary alongside this spoken text, work to gracefully create evocative stage worlds that resonate with the complexity of real worlds in the audience's imagination. Adebayo's performance is characterized by a vocal dexterity as she shifts easily between accents, and a deft gestural language with a dense poetic text that is saturated with symbol and metaphor. She combines this with pre-recorded video footage of her own research travels on the snow and icy mountains of Antarctica, and uses a small range of props, costumes and mobile set pieces to shift characters, and traverse vast geographical distances. The content and form of the production sits outside the realm of easy oppositional binaries and firmly in the intersecting arenas of black queer diaspora,

begging the question of what there is to learn from the nexus of so many positions of marginality.

Introduction:

In December 1848, Ellen and William Craft ended their lifelong search for answers. Ellen was at her master's plantation, and William was busy at work as a cabinetmaker. Until this moment it seemed as though they sustained only one conversation for months, even years. Nothing else mattered: How could they determine their own fates? How could they ensure they would always be together? How could they guarantee that no one else in their families would be enslaved? There was only one answer. Escape. (Dawkins, 2012:31)

Moj of the Antarctic was first performed in 2006 and is inspired by “the real-life story of light-skinned African American slave Ellen Craft who in 1884 cross-dressed as a white man to escape slavery, with her darker-skinned husband, William Craft, accompanying her as her servant” (Goddard, 2008:142). The play tells the story of a woman named Moj, a shortening of Adebayo's first name Mojisola, who travels from the American South to England and eventually becomes a sailor on a whaling ship bound for Antarctica (Adebayo, 2009). It is described on the title page of the scripted text as “a one-woman play performed with photography, video, poetry, light, dance, movement, music, storytelling and song” (Adebayo, 2008:149). The play was produced by the Antarctic Collective and performed in London at the Lyric Hammersmith in 2006 and the Oval House Theatre in 2007. As articulated by Adebayo in an interview with Lynette Goddard, her interest in the story of Ellen Craft was,

[I]n her crossing boundaries of race and gender, but also the geographical boundaries – she went from the Deep South in Georgia way up to the North to Boston, from Boston over to Britain where she lived in Surrey for a while, before eventually going back to the United States. The crossings of all of these boundaries fascinated me and I started thinking about how to extend her incredible real-life odyssey into a theatrical odyssey by taking her to Antarctica. (2008:142)

Adebayo's themes of race, gender, sexuality and climate change are carried by the epic migrant journey taken by the central character whose narrative intersects with Adebayo's own biography to form a "kind of auto-bio-mythography"¹⁷ (Goddard, 2008:147). Adebayo describes her play as an "intertextual fusion of Ellen's real life boundary-breaking transgender, trans-racial, trans-geographical performance with the voices of almost 20 dead authors" (Adebayo, 2009:92) in which Ellen Craft's biography merges with her own imagination to become a new fiction for the stage which in turn shapes her own biography which, as a result of making the play, includes the fact that Adebayo is "the first black woman to perform on Antarctica" (Adebayo, 2009:96). Central to Adebayo's re-interpretation of Ellen Craft's story is a queering of her narrative beyond what is documented. In *Moj of the Antarctic*, Moj, the child of a slave owner and an enslaved woman, has a relationship with another female slave named May who is killed as a result, propelling Moj's daring escape and epic adventure. On this Adebayo remarks, "I see Ellen Craft as a wonderfully queer thing, part of a queer history and legacy. It's nothing to do with her sexuality but is about her transgressing the boundaries of gender" (Goddard, 2008:144). I would argue, as Sara Ahmed has in relation to the material conditions of migration (1999), that Moj's escape in the play has plenty to do with her sexuality, while Ellen's story is very much about transgressing boundaries of race and gender, and it is also about escaping the material conditions of slavery. This practice of queering extends to Adebayo's inclusion in the text of quotations from iconic white male writers and theorists including Shakespeare,

¹⁷ Biomythography, coined by Audre Lorde in her (1982) book *Zami: A New Spelling of my Name*, is a compositional strategy for writing which combines biography, myth and history in epic narrative form.

Darwin, Homer and Karl Marx. The effect is not only to queer black history, but to also perform a kind of Africanizing of a European literary tradition. This alongside material from classic African American writers and abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, results in a poetic mid-nineteenth century play that is as unfixed in time as it is in the places that Moj and the person imagined as Ellen Craft migrate through (Goddard, 2008). The projections used in the production are of Adebayo herself, performing Moj in various (male) guises in Antarctica, and the play as a whole creates an unlikely relationship between Africa and Antarctica told through Moj, Adebayo and the play's engagement with black face minstrelsy as a feature of Antarctic expeditions. In an article that maps the history of staging the Antarctic, Elizabeth Leane says of Adebayo's work:

The title of the play asserts both Adebayo's and Moj's right as black queer performers to find a place in the white south, not to possess but rather to be possessed by the continent – to be 'of the Arctic'. Her play imagines a role in the continent's history for those who were historically excluded, marginalized or erased. (2013:26)

Refusal

Refusal: a rejection of the status quo as liveable and the creation of possibility in the face of negation i.e., a refusal to recognize a system that renders you fundamentally illegible and unintelligible; the decision to reject the terms of diminished subjecthood with which one is presented, using negation as a generative and creative source of disorderly power to embrace the possibility of living otherwise. (Campt, Tina Marie, 2019:83)

Following the *lines of flight* (Holland, 2013) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987b) in *Moj of the Antarctic* along the routes of black queer diaspora, this chapter explores a component of migrant attitude featured in the production that mobilises Tina Campt's notion of refusal which is equated with a desire for freedom that Ruth Wilson Gilmore expresses as the possibility of living an unbounded life (Campt, 2017). The migrant attitude strand in *Moj of*

the Antarctic is one that stretches beyond the geographic, political and imagined boundaries of nationality, sexuality, race and gender and ultimately refuses the demands of respectability, productivity and inclusion, (Tonstad, 2020) intent on finding another way. Put simply by Jafari Allen, “[T]o follow the routes of black/queer/diaspora is to interrogate dynamic, unsettled subjects whose bodies, desires, and texts *move*” (Allen, 2012:215 italics in the original). This movement, Allen finds is “more useful and more pleasurable than attempting to fit complex, contradictory, and perhaps fugitive experiences and imaginings into the staid desensitized and sterile boxes of ‘race,’ ‘sexuality,’ ‘nationality,’ discipline, or genre” (2012:215). Instead, the sensitized and vital piece of a migrant attitude that is found here, will be charted through the literal and metaphorical escape routes (lines of flight) of the *unsettled subjects of* Moj and May, the acts of *passing* in the play that enable Moj’s escape and her death at the end of the play. The chapter uses queer identity and queer strategy as it features in the production to formulate a queer political position. In this instance it mobilizes Linn Marie Tonstad’s formulation of a queer ‘we’ which forms around the unassimilable (Tonstad, 2020). She notes that, as a political position, queer “stands with those who don’t have a choice to conform or to belong, and not with those whose nonconformity can be turned on or off at will (Tonstad, 2020:110). The unsettled subject of ‘blackness’ comes into focus here from the biography of the playwright/performer who grew up as “a Black girl of mixed Danish and Nigerian (Yoruba) cultural heritage in London in the 1970s” (Adebayo, 2009:92), to the practice of racial (and gender) passing that the play explores. *Moj of the Antarctic* is an engagement with marginal histories and an example of what Emma Parker calls “alternative narrative[s] of queer diaspora produced by contemporary women writers”, and in this case, theatre-makers (2011:639). Aspects of the play are examined here as an interrogation of the “gendered and sexualized foundation of

national identity in the context of migration and globalisation” (Parker, 2011:640) by way of considering less nation-centric, hetero-patriarchal frameworks for the reading and making of performance works.

May:

In the day you darken in the sun like Solomon’s Beloved
while I on the inside looking out am jealous of the overseeing sunlight who has gained the
right to kiss your face and arms
I steal a look through the master’s telescope and survey the blue black night of your skin. A
shimmering crystal sphere made visible by my desire
I gaze in awe and join the dots to trace the graceful shape of you [...]
the night is a shadow the sun has made and in this little corner of inner outer space I pray to
have a little more time [...]. (Adebayo, 2008:34)

In the play, Moj “*a mid-nineteenth century African-American house-slave in her late teens/early twenties*” (Adebayo, 2011:28, emphasis in the original) has a lover named May who she describes as “an angel from the dark side of the moon” (Adebayo, 2011:31). Standing upright, with arms crossed and one hip cocked, Adebayo presents May, the female field slave who has secretly taught Moj to read as a way of one day winning her freedom, and which also enables Moj to read from her master and father’s “lie-brary” (Adebayo, 2011:31), when she is supposed to be dusting the bookshelves. Through the portrayal of various other characters, the audience learns the circumstances under which May herself came to read: a fictionalized version of the real story of Margaret Douglass whose story was originally published in 1923 under the lengthy, explanatory title of: *The Personal Narrative of Mrs. Margaret Douglass, A Southern Woman, : Who was Imprisoned For One Month in the Common Jail of Norfolk, Under the Laws of Virginia, For the Crime of Teaching Free Colored Children to Read* (Douglass, 1854). In the scene in which we are introduced to May, Moj moves stealthily towards the telescope in the corner of the library, no doubt installed there

for the master to watch over those enslaved in his fields from the comfort of his house. Moj uses it to look for May who is working outside and calls to her by singing a forbidden Yoruba song which she mixes with a Christian hymn to avoid detection. Moj waves to May outside the window and we imagine that this secret communication has, with great care developed over time. A music and light transition take us into the scene where Moj writes a poem to May that is full of longing and premonition. She reads it aloud as she does so, underscored by piano music, and the words that open this sub-heading are projected on the screen as handwriting. In the production, Adebayo tiptoes into a pool of light at May's cabin down stage left, looking behind her as she does. A brief flirtatious scene follows, where Adebayo plays both Moj and May in a coy exchange of the poem before Moj goes inside May's cabin. Adebayo tucks the poem into her skirt pocket as May and accompanied by a slowly building, lyrical and percussive beat, abstracts a delicate, sensuous love-making dance, ending with a parting wave before Adebayo reaches back into her pocket. As she pulls out the poem the retribution of organ chords cut sharply into the scene, and we see Master reading the poem.

This imaginative representation of the intimate relations of enslaved people allows us to read the bodies of enslaved women outside of economic units, and the women's 'deviant' sexuality as a threat to sustainability of the slave industry. It allows them a form of sexuality in the context of slavery that is not only chosen but one that does not reproduce property for the 'Massa,' a "collector of books and bodies, scriptures and slaves" (Adebayo, 2011:30). As Alexis Pauline Gumbs eloquently notes:

She who refuses to reproduce *properly* reveals a dangerous desire for something different. She who refuses to reproduce *properly* bears the mark of the alternative, the mark of the criminal, the mark of the terrorist. She who refuses to reproduce property must be busy teaching us something else. She who refuses to reproduce the status quo threatens to produce a radically different world. (Gumbs, 2010:13 italics in the original)

Moj and May mark not only a desire for something different, but the existing practice of something different. The active, wilful, desire of the two women works to exceed readings of “the captive body reduced to a thing” (Spillers, 1987:67). As Hortense Spillers notes, the powerlessness over one’s sexuality which typically marks the experience of female slaves, “slides into a more general ‘powerlessness,’ resonating through various centres of human and social meaning” (Spillers, 1987:67). Rescuing these centres of human and social meaning from powerlessness is an apt description for the political project of *Migritude* as a whole. Detaching queerness from sexual identity we follow Halberstam after Foucault to understand homosexuality as a threat to a particular way of life, and not to a particular way of having sex (Halberstam, 2005). In this light, Moj and May as both slaves and lovers present what Halberstam would call a queer use of time and space “in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction” (Halberstam, 2005:1). In the play, when the master discovers the poem written by Moj, in making sure that the ‘punishment fit the crime,’ he whips Moj’s writing hand, and because May has read the poem, he whips her eyes in the presence of Moj causing fatal injuries. Describing the horror that she witnesses, Moj says mournfully to the audience:

Train tracks cut across her eyes,
A forest spread on her face,
Roots descended into her neck and chest,
Her head split like fallen fruit
Was unrecognizable as human.
[...] (Adebayo, 2011:38)

Adebayo’s choice to simply describe the manner in which May dies instead of bringing her highly skilled acting to bear on this moment, leaves a chilling imprint of black disposability which tethers black life to black death (Campt, 2019). What the relationship of

Moj and May and in particular the brutal death of May brings into focus is where value and fear were attributed, and it appears that May is punished most for the crime of reading, particularly given her grievous past in this regard:

But May Jackson, field slave. Have you learnt nothing? You above all should know a reading heathen is a mortal sin. You shall not disgrace this house as you did the house of Sarah Jones. (Adebayo, 2011:37)

Before the Master orders May to “OPEN YOUR EYES til I whip you blind!”, He describes May and Moj as “*Filthy* dreamers who defile the flesh, despite dominion, and speak evil of dignities” (2011:37, emphasis in the original), a passage taken from the book of Jude in the bible. May’s love for Moj’s combined with the mortal sin of being a literate dark-skinned woman, serves to tether black pleasure to black pain (Campt, 2019) and foregrounds the proposition that black queers are not meant to survive. This places emphasis on the here and now that is heightened in the face of a constantly diminishing future (Halberstam, 2005). A diminishing future which is refused by Moj (and Ellen) as she takes decisive action in its wake, using it to create possibility for a future after all. As Halberstam notes, “while the threat of no future hovers overhead like a storm cloud, the urgency of being also expands the potential of the moment and [...] squeezes new possibilities out of the time at hand” (2005:2). In the face of the “persistent devaluation of Black life and degradation of black flesh” (Chambers-Letson, 2018:3), and the constantly reoccurring reminders that some bodies are simply expendable, Adebayo’s portrayal of May and May’s death signals the ways in which “performance makes visible the claim of history to the body in the present. The way history resonates across the body and won’t let it go” (Chambers-Letson, 2018:65). This resonating body is represented by May in particular. In her death she sends a frequency into the narrative arc of the play that marks a line of flight

which propels Moj's escape from the plantation and also continually calls Moj back to her. They are connected through Moj's words in the fated poem which reverberates until Moj walks out into the Arctic cold in her underwear at the end of the play,

We can never be separate [...]

Your smile is a constellation of scintillating stars in which I read my destiny and hope one day to draw a map, to find a way, to navigate this gutted ship of 'ancestral oak,' to your volcanic shore. (Adebayo, 2011:34)

In the written accounting of the real escape of the Crafts in *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*, William Craft describes the laws under which slavery was violently maintained:

The Constitution of Georgia has the following (Art.4, sec.12): - 'Any person who shall maliciously dismember or deprive a slave of life, shall suffer such punishment as would be inflicted in case the life offence had been committed on a free white persona, and on the life proof, except in case of insurrection of such slave, and unless SUCH DEATH SHOULD HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT IN GIVING SUCH SLAVE MODERATE CORRECTION.' (Craft, 1860:14)

In Allyson Hobbs' *History of Racial Passing in American Life* (2014), she accounts how inherently dangerous a literate enslaved person was considered by their masters, detailing how written passes issued by masters to restrict the mobility of the enslaved could be easily forged, duplicated or borrowed by slaves who could read and write and accordingly plan an escape. She notes also that literate enslaved people lowered their value on the market. William and Ellen Craft incidentally were not literate and as a result were at even greater risk of being caught as Ellen would not be able to register her name and that of 'her slave' in hotel visitors' books (Craft, 1860). In the escape narrative, William accounts to "have known slaves to be beaten to death, but as they died under 'moderate correction,' it was quite lawful; and of course, the murders were not interfered with" (Craft, 1860:14). In the play, it is the murder of May that propels Moj to devise a desperate plan to escape.

Passing

Moj of the Antarctic engages deeply in the politics of race in general and the politics of passing in particular. Marcia Dawkins and others provide a useful definition of the traditional meaning of passing by understanding it as “the phenomenon in which a person gains acceptance as a member of social groups other than his or her own, usually in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, citizenship or disability status” (2012: xi). Passing is tactical and strategic, and this section looks closely at the parts of the production where Adebayo uses the audience to directly assist the character Moj in passing and escaping, towards understanding one of the ways in which refusal features in a migrant attitude. Passing demonstrates the idea of hiding one’s identity as a member of a vulnerable minority group or groups in order to be absorbed into the powerful majority group, often by carefully attending to how one presents to the outside world. As Dawkins and others go on to explain, passing,

has a large circumference. It is a way for us to see and not see, a way for us to be seen and not be seen. It looks at us and turns away from us at the same time. [...] Passing forces us to think and rethink what exactly makes a person black, white, or ‘other,’ and why we care. It helps us create worlds we can actually live in. (2012: xi).

Passing enables a shift in social position amidst certain social limitations and demands that we consider issues of identity in relation to the public and the private (Dawkins, 2012). It is not a collective act of resistance, but it requires the participation of several players in order to be successful. Dawkins describes this as a triangulated theatrical model which is evident in every instance of passing. The roles of these three dramatic characters are ‘the passer’ in our case, Moj herself; ‘the dupe’, characters in the play who

are outwitted; and 'the in-group' or 'clairvoyant' (Dawkins, 2012) who are played by the audience accomplices, and later on in the play by a character who Moj meets in a bar, named William (Willy) Black. Black is the theatrical version of the real-life William Brown, a famous nineteenth century passer who served in the British Royal Navy for eleven years as a sailor until 'she' was discovered to be female and most likely the first African woman in the Royal Navy (Adebayo, 2009).

In a scene simply titled *The Plan*, Moj recalls her own ancestral history of escape and heavenly line of flight (Campt, 2019:82) as she remembers her great grandfather who "threw himself into the sea with chains about his feet, he would rather become a fossil than see his family treated like cattle" (2011:39). This pre-empts the ending of the play and plants the seed for the character's final metaphorical return to May. While Moj sings a song from *The Tempest*, a projection plays on the screen of her looking like her great-grand father dancing on the deck of a ship, a re-imagining of the moment before he jumps overboard. It is easy to link this fictional moment in the play to Adebayo's own experience of a visit to James Island, a historic slave holding site in the Gambia where she was told by local guides of how liberation meant death for the thousands of Africans who "threw themselves into the crocodile infested river Gambia, and also into the Atlantic ocean, in order to escape slavery through the act of suicide" (2009:94). Adebayo says that *Moj of the Antarctic* then is partly an attempt to honour the spirits of "[s]o many African souls [that] sleep on the beds of the Gambia river and the Atlantic Ocean as a result of slavery" and the many that are "washed up on the shores of islands such as the Canaries, at the feet of European holiday-makers today" as illegal immigrants "attempting to escape poverty which is a direct legacy of the slave trade, perpetuated hundreds of years before" (2009:94).

It is towards the end of the scene that Moj returns us to the world of the master's library, "having lost [her] lover in a blizzard of blows too cruel to behold" (Adebayo, 2011:39). There she has a revelation while dusting books by European scholars, that leads her to plan her escape:

It occurred to me that the only creatures to walk truly free upon the earth were men. White men. Rich White men. And they did not even know it. Free to take a long drive, free to take a long bath. Free to have and free to waste. (Adebayo, 2011:40)

As, Moj speaks the text, she physically illustrates each type of 'freedom' with exaggerated, mocking gestures, and she decides to "play a white man for a while" and "divest of the cloth of victimhood" and "*transvest to liberty*" as it were (2011:40, italics in the original). In this moment, the mode of her escape is made clear in her spoken text and physical language, and we understand that she will swap her skirt, symbolic of her gender and slave status, for the clothing of a wealthy white male which she has access to in the home of her slave master and father. This fictional re-imagining of the Ellen and William Craft escape story is taken directly from their escape narrative in which William Craft tells of, "Knowing that slaveholders have the privilege of taking their slaves to any part of the country they think proper, [where] it occur[s] to [him] that, as [his] wife was nearly white, [He] might get her to disguise herself as an invalid gentleman, and assume to be [his] master, while [he] could attend as his slave, and that in this manner [they] might effect [their] escape" (Craft, 1860:29). The scene ends as Moj decides to consult the books in the library to learn how to become a white man, and ironically selects Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* as her first resource, over articulating the last word of the book's title as she opens to a page.

The strategy of passing relied heavily on the category of class, with the enslaved drawing on all their available resources to create disguises in which they appeared as the free person they were resolved to become (Hobbs, 2014). As Alyson Hobbs goes on to articulate:

White skin functioned as a cloak in antebellum America. Accompanied by appropriate dress, measured cadences of speech, and proper comportment, racial ambiguity could mask one's slave status and provide an effectual strategy for escape. Many runaway slaves neither imagined nor desired to begin new lives as white; they simply wanted to be free. (Hobbs, 2014:29)

If caught, by the slave hunters' bloodhounds it was not uncommon for slaves to be "tortured to death as examples, in order to strike terror into the hearts of others" (Craft, 1860:28). As Moj says in the play: "If I wanted simply to be tortured and die, I should do it myself and not let a dog lick his lips with it" (Adebayo, 2011:40). And yet she admits: "I wanted to live, though did not know why" (Adebayo, 2011:40). In the context of her research on refugee and migrant women on the move, Maria Tamboukou says of grief: "No matter how mobile or transient the self is it works hard on preserving its continuity, on going on living" (Tamboukou, 2020:244). This will to live despite the odds against her leads Moj to plan and rehearse her escape and as we will see, the play concludes with the characters refusal to go on living. In the set up to her escape in the play, Adebayo uses a series of slow-moving projected images of the icebergs, snow and lights of "*Antarctica in all its glorious whiteness*" (2011:40, emphasis in the original) to allude to the fictional world of the play generally and also to indicate the actual and metaphorical weight of the specific place that the character will find itself in at the end. She accompanies these images with a voice-over of her speaking the text from *Moby Dick* about the position of whiteness at the top of a 'natural' hierarchy which is worth quoting here at length for the apt references to how whiteness has been

deployed historically as both desirable and fearful:

Though in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty, as if imparting some special virtue of its own, as in marbles, japonicas, pearls; and though various nations have in some way recognised a certain royal pre-eminence in this hue...and though this pre-eminence...applies to the human race itself, giving the white man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe; and though, besides all this, whiteness has been even made significant of gladness...there lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more panic to the soul than redness which affrights in blood...Witness the white bear of the poles, the white shark of the tropics; what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are? (Adebayo, 2011:40, ellipses in the original)

The narration is low, soothing, and authoritative, as if speaking some obvious truth, and lights come up at the end of this transition to reveal Moj, now changed into the base layer of her outfit transformation - a pair of dark trousers and a white vest. The bookcase has also been opened to transform it into a kitchen unit with a small fold out table with various household utensils and ingredients. She opens a book on the table and turns the pages as if looking for the right recipe for how to make a white man, and a farcical scene follows in which she follows the instructions on the page she has opened to. The scene is titled *The Rehearsal* and the mode of performance is that of an early silent black and white comic film, and through a rapid series of highly physical gags in which she requests assistance from different audience members, she makes her transformation from poor, mixed-race enslaved woman to rich white man, and with all the irony of stereotypical racial identification, she enrolls the audience as her in-group clairvoyants. Dawkins tells us that irony is a fundamental feature of passing, allowing the in-group clairvoyants to maintain a critical distance (2012). It becomes the lens through which the audience will see Moj after her transformation, endearing her to us as we must now protect her secret from the dupes she will encounter along the way.

Moj begins her transformation in front of the audience by removing a small jar of what appears to be flour from the kitchen cupboard, and powders it quickly onto her face, hands, and feet. Returning to her face to feel the effect of the whitening with the backs of her fingers, she notices that her cheeks are too smooth and so instead of taking out a cheese grater as it says in the stage directions, in the performance she takes out a large, brush with thick bristles, which she quickly and comically pats over her chin, cheeks and above her upper lip for the desired masculine 'roughness' giving a mock growl in satisfaction afterwards. She then notices with exaggerated horror that she will have to do something about her breasts. Reaching into the bottom of the kitchen cupboard, she retrieves a long, wide bandage which she unrolls and starts to wrap around her chest as she moves down stage. A challenging task for one, she asks a white, male audience member in the front row to help her with the final wrap before she tucks in the edges. In the recorded performance, the man obliges and is instructed to hold the end of the bandage taught while Adebayo winds herself towards him. The moment is funny and poignant. She thanks him as she makes the final tuck, and he returns to his seat. Satisfied that her chest is sufficiently flattened, she moves her hands to the base of her back only for them to slide down her backside and for her to notice that this is yet another area of her body that will need adjustment if she were to convincingly pass as a white male (Adebayo herself is in fact slender already, making these farcical adjustments to her body, even more ludicrous). She takes a large carving knife from the cupboard and in slow motion with a horrified facial expression she goes as if to slice her buttocks, only to change her mind as the knife nears her body and she returns to the upbeat, farcical pace of the music, to swap the knife for a rolling pin instead. Much more to her preference, she raises it in the air for a triumphant moment, and to the amusement of the audience she rolls her bottom before asking a

different audience member in the front row to assist her with this intervention. Needing an even more effective approach however, Moj thanks the assistant and places the rolling pin on the floor, sitting on it in order to roll with more vigour before she jumps up, satisfied that it has worked with time. She strides confidently back to the cupboard to replace it and runs her hands through her hair which is longer and thicker than it is in the image of her as a man projected on the screen. Noticing that the texture of her hair is entirely inappropriate for her escape disguise, she searches the cupboard for a solution and pulls out an iron, tests that it is hot by quickly touching a licked finger to the bottom of it, and dramatically throws her head down onto the fold-out table/ironing board and irons two sections of her hair flat to the amused groans of the audience. Satisfied, she runs her hand through her now 'straightened' hair, only for her hands to rest on her crotch, realizing that she has yet to solve this problem. She retrieves a box from the cupboard out of which she takes out a lump of dough and throws it onto the floor. Taking up the rolling pin once more with determination, she rolls the dough vigorously into a thick pancake and then clumsily works the dough with her hands into a long roll while the audience is heard responding to the gag with great amusement. They are particularly taken when Moj hurriedly hands it to someone in the front row to fix while she disappears behind the bookcase/kitchen. The lights dim here and the projected silent video of Moj as the wealthy white man is seen laughing hysterically. She emerges onto stage wearing a long-sleeved white shirt and groaning from the discomfort of having put a peg on her nose in order to narrow it. She removes the peg before checking that the audience member who was tasked with making a penis for her has finished their work. In the stage directions it specifies that this should be a female audience member. Adebayo retrieves the dough penis with thanks and then wryly breaks it in half, handing a portion of it back to the audience as she speaks the only words of this section: "I

said a *white man*” (2011:41, emphasis in the original). She marches back to the kitchen cupboard with the audience chuckling hard and discreetly tucks the dough into the front of her trousers. Her disguise almost complete, Moj removes a black top hat, black waist coat and tailcoat from the bottom shelf and slowly puts each piece of new clothing on, as the video continues behind her. Moj completes the outfit by whipping off the small white cloth that has been on the foldout table throughout this scene to tie it around her neck as a cravat and tops it all off with the Master’s striped scarf hanging loosely around her neck, before she folds the table back into the cupboard and closes the door of the bookshelf. Her parting gag is to try to dance and clap out of time with the music, suggesting that a successful pass must also include an adjustment of her behaviour. Adebayo exits the stage, the lights transition to a cool white and blue with side lights casting shadows, and she returns wearing a pair of white gloves and carrying a small brown bag.

The form that this scene takes, as a series of gags in quick succession in which multiple adjustments are made to both the appearance and the clothing of Moj, becomes a dramatization of Hobbs’ remarks about passing in which she emphasizes that, “Slaves drew on all available resources to construct the appearance of the free person that they resolved to become” (2014:30), adding that the strategy of passing in this context relied heavily on the category of class to shape the disguises. Adebayo’s use of irony cleverly belies a sophisticated understanding of Southern racial, social and gender norms that runaway slaves like Ellen and William Craft would have relied on besides Ellen’s racial ambiguity. As Hobbs articulates, “[...] racially ambiguous or white appearance is contingent on a brew of actions, behaviours, and mannerisms. Looking white is, in many ways, contingent on *doing white*” (Hobbs, 2014:45, emphasis in the original). The assembly of social and cultural

expressivity that is passing, “[...] emphasizes collisions of perception, situation, truth, true knowledge, and identifications” (Dawkins, 2012:17), and these uncontained tactics of survival enforce “the necessarily failed administrative accounting of the incalculable” (Harney & Moten, 2013:51).

Dawkins tells us that “Irony stretches a concept as far as it can go; [providing] the opportunity to gain critical perspective by capturing and prolonging the moment in which convertible representations are poised in mutually informing, yet unresolved symbolic tension” (2012:24). Adebayo’s active engagement with the audience in creating this symbolic tension positions them as critical participants, as noted earlier, while the production creates “space to seek out conceptual and practical ways for understanding how racial [and gendered] parts and wholes [...] belong together so that they can indeed belong” (Dawkins, 2012:24). In this scene, we see Moj become the ‘passer’, the direct assistance of the audience in her preparation and disguise enrolls them as the ‘clairvoyants’ and together they anticipate who will be successfully ‘duped’ on Moj’s perilous journey North. The irony with which this particular scene is played also serves to remind us that “the stakes of belonging and unbelonging in black/queer/diaspora are high” (Allen, 2012:220). The scene also marks a particular moment in the history of the antebellum period, in which temporary or strategic passing for a particular purpose was born out of a determined desire for freedom (Hobbs, 2014), as is seen in William Craft’s original narration from which the story of Moj is adapted:

We sat up all night discussing the plan and making preparations. Just before the time arrived, in the morning, for us to leave, I cut off my wife’s hair square at the back of the head and got her to dress in the disguise and stand out on the floor. I found that she made a most respectable looking gentleman. My wife had no ambition whatever to assume this disguise, and would not have done so had it been possible to have obtained our liberty by more simple means; but we knew it was not customary in the South for ladies to travel with male

servants; and therefore, notwithstanding my wife's fair complexion it would have been a very difficult task for her to have come off as a free white lady, with me as her slave; in fact, her not being able to write would have made this quite impossible [...] My wife's being muffled in the poultices [...] furnished a plausible excuse for avoiding general conversation, of which most Yankee travellers are passionately fond. (Craft, 1860:35)

Researchers who study passing (Hobbs, 2014; Dawkins, 2012; Wald, 2000) have discovered that it is a phenomenon that is intended to be hidden, leaving no trace, and as a result the few records of passing include slave narratives as in the case of the Crafts, and advertisements for enslaved runaways in which slave owners warned the public "about slaves 'of very light color' with 'complexion[s] so white,' that they might escape 'under the pretense of being a white man'" (Hobbs, 2014:29).

Two moments follow in the play that cleverly return us to the perilous risk that Moj has undertaken through her mode of escape by introducing the first dupes to complete the triangulated passing scenario. The first of these moments is of an interaction between Moj dressed as a white man and a train passenger who leans back curiously with his arms crossed and head slightly cocked, and with a slight speech impediment, says to Moj who one imagines is looking incredibly self-conscious: "Are you quite all wight Sir?". Hearing, "Are you quite all *white* Sir?", Moj is alarmed that she might have been discovered and manages only a terrified, "pardon?", in response. The passenger who we recognize not only by the repeated phrase, but also by Adebayo's distinct shifts in physical characterization, says eventually: "are you quite all right? You look deathly pale." To which Moj swiftly answers: "Good!" (2011:43, emphasis in the original), looking at her gloved hands and quickly deepening her voice to continue the conversation in the safety of her disguise as a white man. The second moment in this scene of rapid character changes is on arrival in Boston when the two female passengers who we have seen earlier in a memorable conversation in which one of them

compares “these niggers” to “black snakes” that can’t be killed (Adebayo, 2011:43), shake a sleeping Moj enthusiastically by the shoulder to tell her/him that the train has arrived in Boston, while she fans her face in a gesture meant to stereotype a particular kind of hyper-femininity. In contrast and in response, Moj with deepened ‘masculine’ voice, tugs once at the jacket of her tailcoat and says: “Thank you Ladies, [...] good day to you!” (Adebayo, 2011:43). Having successfully duped these passengers, Moj turns to leave the train, bends to pick up the brown bag and swings it high to clutch to her chest to become one of the ‘Ladies’ who exclaims to her fellow passenger while looking in the direction that Moj has gone: “Oh Aunt Martha that gentleman is so delicate, do you suppose he resides here in Boston? I think I am quite taken with him” (Adebayo, 2011:44). These two moments demonstrate acts of passing in action, and the particular ways in which successful passing, while perilous, eased the harrowing journey to freedom. As the in-group clairvoyants, the audience is in the position to critically examine the leveraging of Moj’s racial and gender ambiguity in order to secure her physical liberty. By flouting the racial customs of the day and undermining the certainty of racial identity (Hobbs, 2014), Moj’s passing is read as an articulation of broader notions of freedom as she charts an unlikely “cartography of gendered mobilities” (Tamboukou, 2020:235) along queer/black/diasporic lines of flight. These broader notions of freedom are precisely what the production articulates and contributes to a migrant attitude. Usefully, Allen notes that, “The ways in which African (descended) groups (dis)identify as Black (or ‘black’), Afro-hyphenated, Kreyol, Creole, mixed, or other designations do not occur in a vacuum but are conditioned by particularities of place, in relation to discourses and practices within other places” (Allen, 2012:216). In this case, Moj’s disidentifying as black, while strategic, serves to undermine it as a racial category. In claiming Blackness as a refusal of systemic whiteness however, and queerness

as a refusal of heteropatriarchy, Moj as a Black queer woman undermines a theory of black diaspora attributed to Paul Gilroy. According to Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Gilroy's is a "masculine narrative of mobility and modernity" (Gumbs, 2010:9) which is undercut in the play as Moj inhabits the moving of people and ideas associated with fluid geography. Without naming names, Gayatri Gopinath also refers to the "traditionally masculinist underpinnings of the most visible forms of both diaspora scholarship and diasporic cultural production that foregrounded male lives, desires, and subjectivities and that side lined queer female ones" (2011:636).

'The Northern Freakshow' is the title of a scene in the published script, which ends in a rousing participatory song with the audience who have been enrolled as abolitionists, who have gathered in a lecture hall in Boston to hear Moj's testimony as "the runaway negro slave girl in her disguise as a white man" (Adebayo, 2011:44). Concerned primarily about the Fugitive Slave Law at the time which compels all citizens in Boston to send runaways back as slaves, Moj is reluctant to share her story widely, interested only in finding a home and a job now that she has made safe passage out of the slave South. Lars Homer the Abolitionist and Moj's host, who one imagines from Adebayo's portrayal, is a rotund, seemingly good-natured, 'do-gooder' attempting to be on the right side of history, persuades Moj to use a public testimony as a fundraiser for abolitionist work. He introduces Moj to the audience who he addresses as Righteous Brothers and prompted by cues which are projected onto the screen, the abolitionist audience respond verbally to Moj's testimony with increasing dissatisfaction and boredom with her lack of lurid detail. Having been very much on Moj's side as in-group clairvoyants, now that Moj does not need to pass anymore, Adebayo re-enrols us as morally dubious male abolitionists who are aroused by the fact that Moj is the

only woman in the room. Lars gets carried away with the opportunity that Moj presents to be paraded as a circus freak recalling the histories of scientific racism, human zoos, and other displays of living and dead Black African bodies for the arousal of Northern audiences. As the scene continues, a white heterosexual fear and morbid fascination with racial mixture is revealed. Adding to this, the disjunct Moj presents to them between her gender presentation and biological sex sends Lars into a titillated spin, referring to Moj as “*biologically* female, yet instance, manner, aspect and voice she is virtually a hermaphrodite, a *halfbreed* indeed in hue this mulatto is quite *unblemished*, quite virgin [...]. She is as pale as polar bear! As flawless as a snowflake! A near *Antarctic* alabaster albino! The lightest, whitest negro in the milky waaaaaaay!” (Adebayo, 2011:45), and while he carries on there are still images of Adebayo sitting in the Antarctic snow in white face. The scene is comical in its delivery but also demonstrates how passing is inherently critical, and how impossible it is to maintain the ‘stabilities’ of race and gender.

Exploding the myth of biological racial categories in particular, threatens any institutions this myth upholds (Dawkins, 2012) and at the time of nineteenth century racialised slavery there was a “moral panic about the parameters of whiteness” (Hobbs, 2014:42). Hobbs explains that “Perhaps the greatest concern was that if black could be mistaken for white, then white could just as easily be mistaken for black” (2014:42). Capitalising on this, abolitionists, sought to bolster antislavery sentiment among Northern audiences by making fears about racial misrecognition more urgent by distributing images of white slaves. They stoked these fears of white enslavement by arguing that if the Southern slave regime continued to expand then white children could easily be stolen into slavery (Hobbs, 2014). The 1850 Fugitive Slave Bill was passed in Congress to ideally

dissuade those enslaved from attempting to escape in the first place, but if they did manage to do so, it required that “the inhabitants of the *free* States should not only refuse food and shelter to a starving, hunted human being, but also should assist, if called upon by the authorities, to seize the unhappy fugitive and send him back to slavery” (Craft, 1860:87). Such a scenario is played out as The Northern Freakshow scene continues and Adebayo transforms into a slave catcher who has been in the abolitionist hall all along, biding his time for this precise moment to declare his business. Running to evade him, Moj appeals urgently to the audience abolitionists for their help to distract and confuse the slave catcher, offering them a chance to redeem themselves. What follows is a lively, communal karaoke-style rendition of the song *Sinnerman*, a traditional Negro Spiritual popularized by Nina Simone. Moj quickly instructs the audience as to when to sing their part (which is projected on the screen) of the call and response song and accompanied by music, she runs through the auditorium, amongst the audience as a video of Adebayo dancing barefoot on a rock in the Antarctic mountains, plays on the screen. She takes the money from the lecture ticket sales and boards a ship from Boston to Liverpool, still dressed as a man, but “having reclaimed [her] melanin”, she hopes in England to be “free to write [her] life with ink in her pen” (Adebayo, 2011:48), a reminder of the painful circumstances that drove her to escape in the first place. This representation of Moj as she leaves the United States for England indexes her identity as a black queer diasporan and reinforces Jafari Allen’s remarks that sites of resistance and self-making must find air in spaces outside the state’s purview (2012). At this juncture in the play, we can also see how diaspora comes to refer to particular conditions of movement and processes of (dis)identification (Allen, 2012).

In a “bawdy nineteenth-century pub” in London, Moj happens “upon a sailor with a story” with an infectious personality, described as a “big, brash, Scotsman” (Adebayo,

2011:48). William (Willy) Black based on the real life of William Brown, takes a long inquisitive look at Moj and says: "Pardon young lad, but there is something very familiar about you" (Adebayo, 2011:48). It turns out that Moj has been recognized by someone whose perceptive qualities have been sharpened by an equally remarkable life story and he asks, "You are an African, like me, correct?" (Adebayo, 2011:49). Moj responds with a jumbled sentence peppered with different accents: "Yes, no. I mean I was, then I wasn't, and now in London it seems I am an African again" (Adebayo, 2011:49). Willy recognizes Moj, not only as an African but also as a woman claiming that, "Our sort can spot each other a mile off. Don't worry yourself, you're in London now." Enrolling the audience as the other patrons of this *nineteenth-century 'gay' bar*, he goes on to say "take a look around you. This place is full of them" (Adebayo, 2011:49). Willy persuades Moj to becoming a seaman, "the best job for an African woman by far":

WILLY: [...] if I had my time again, I'd become a whaler of the Southern Ocean Moj, I'd catch myself an oil-filled dragon of slimy gold. [...] Take some advice from an old sea dog, become a whaler Moj, there's plenty of work in the big fish and lucrative too. (Adebayo, 2011:50)

Willy exits the bar after a parting exchange with Moj about the 'perks of the job', which include the sailors, leaving the audience to imagine what Willy's passing tactics might have been to survive the Navy as a light skinned, heterosexual woman crossdressing as a white man.

According to Hobbs, "Before 'passing as white' became meaningful, racially ambiguous men and women frequently and successfully 'passed as free'" (2014:34). In her research, Hobbs identifies a historical shift within the context of transformations in the slave

system from 'passing as free' in the eighteenth century where the category of race was not attached to the category of slave status, to 'passing as white' in the early nineteenth century where these categories were more fully intertwined (2014). She notes that before the New World slave societies where skin colour would be a liability, passing as free was often facilitated by Maritime life, "as it offered long stretches of time removed from a master's surveillance, freedom to travel at one's will, and a bustling multiracial environment where few, if any, questions were asked about one's background" (2014:34). The scene cleverly indicts the British imperial project while also positioning it as a site of opportunity for Moj in her own quest for freedom and independence, complicating its role in history as playing a highly exploitative long game across vast geographical distance, whilst simultaneously providing opportunity for migrants to be made and defined by participating in the machinery of industry and 'progress'. What is also made clear over the course of the play and in the final scenes to follow, is how individuals themselves were made to become the literal machinery of industry and progress, entrenching unequal racialized and gendered labour practices. That the imperial project can be credited for creating *bustling multiracial environments* of people from a range of backgrounds masks the traumatic beginnings of such mixing through firmly held racist ideologies and affirms the epic narrative arc of *Moj of The Antarctic* as an important mapping of black diaspora. In this way, the play conceptually dramatizes Allen's notion that: "Black diaspora is at once about particular locations (actual and imagined); *roots/uprooting* [...] and *routes* that bodies, ideas and texts travel (2012:126), supporting a notion of diaspora more as a study of an ontological condition than an identity or geographic framework (Gumbs, 2010). This conception of diaspora as an ontological condition supports Patel's migritude as a mode of being in the world.

Conclusion

I remember you, my love The Lady May. You rock my memory gently. I bed anchor in words and dreams. (Adebayo, 2011:55)

Having passed an informal interview with a Sailor who addresses Moj as his “sooty little sailor friend” (Adebayo, 2011:52), she finds herself on a whaling ship called The Lady May, forecasting an ending to the play that will see the lovers reunited as Moj uses metaphors of the sea to evoke sensual memories of May. On the ship Moj is responsible for working in the kitchen, and for organizing the Christmas entertainment since the expedition plans to be somewhere in the Antarctic by then. Since Moj is still passing as male, the audience is in role as the in-group clairvoyants once more and witnesses her interactions with the dupes on the ship. After an albatross sighting, Moj runs downstage to tell the audience what this signifies in sailor lore and in relation to her own heritage, connecting us back to her early story of her grandfather who jumped overboard to save his own life and also continuing to quietly set up the ending of the play. In the face of the magnificent and unlikely Antarctic landscape that she finds herself in, Moj realizes the limitations of the freedom that she has acquired since leaving the plantation. She uses a sensory comparison of the shackles of the cotton industry with the anchors of finding herself in a wild wilderness of ice, on a whaling ship full of men. And yet she admits that she feels so close to home. Sara Ahmed’s (1999) useful conception of home takes on a theatrical tone, as one that intrudes into the senses and inhabits, more than it is simply inhabited as already constituted space. In this way “it defines what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers” and indicates that “being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other” (1999:341). This porous second skin of home allows one to touch and be

touched by the world in a way that suggests that the boundaries between self, home and away are permeable (Ahmed, 1999), and much more complex than framing home and away in opposition to each other.

Moj is overcome by the irony and sadness of her situation as a member of a conquering/colonizing expedition setting foot on new territory and becomes inhabited by the idea of a final homeward journey to May. She introduces the Christmas eve entertainment to the audience who are enrolled as the other sailors and removes her clothes down to her white briefs and vest and stands centre stage on the top step of the portable stairs as if on a small stage facing the audience. She mimes applying black face paint while still images in quick succession play on the screen behind her of Adebayo sitting in the snow in her white shirt and tailcoat applying black face paint with the black, snowy rock behind her. A projected image fades in of a close up of Adebayo in the top hat in black face with tears running down her face. The stage directions read: *“Pause. MOJ is empty”* (Adebayo, 2011:62).

With a distant look in her eyes, she sings the Yoruba song that she sang sweetly to May earlier in the play, this time with a mournful melody, heavy with finality. The song ends, and Moj blinks to bring the audience/sailors into her focus and then quietly delivers the line of text spoken by Captain William Oates before he stepped out into the cold close to the South Pole on the famous expedition with Scott of the Antarctic: *“I am just going outside and may be some time”* (Adebayo, 2011:63). Moj’s stepping out performs a longing for something else, and this something else is a key aspirant feature of a migrant attitude. As Muñoz asks, *“might it be a call for a certain kind of transcendence?”* (2009:185), a departure from the here and now and a refusal of this time and place? The piece of migrant attitude

enacted here is not to follow Moj's line of flight to her death, but to see her stepping out towards May as a kind of unsettled homing instinct that is free from normative arrangements (Gopinath, 2011:637). Instead of equating queer behaviour with death, I would like to argue following Gumbs through Jose Esteban Muñoz (2009), that queer behaviour and politics "must be radically futurist because of the dire unacceptability of the present political situation, especially for queer people of color" (Gumbs, 2010:12). As *Moj of the Antarctic* demonstrates, a migrant attitude that follows the lines of flight of black/queer/diaspora is one that productively disorients dominant notions of home, nation, race, gender, and sexuality towards more spaciousness and pliability in these terms and more spaciousness and pliability in the inhabiting of them. Reflecting on the strokes (/) between the terms black, queer and diaspora, Jafari Allen notes that they,

can be seen to conjoin the terms on either side or to push them apart, towards sharper individual focus. Both *black* and *queer* exert pressure on *diaspora*, just as *black* leans to *queer* – perhaps toward *something else*, or the conjuncture to come. Black/queer/diaspora work explores the cumulative, synthetic force of each [...]. Note once again the *strokes* shared between *black/queer/diaspora*: they are in fact also caresses [...]. (Allen, 2012:217, italics in the original)

That black, queer and diaspora as loaded terms can create a caress when they are conjoined, creates a vital, life-giving notion of care and love for the multiply subaltern. This tracing of Moj's lines of flight in the play towards this *something else* reveals the tactics deployed in service of an alternative that in Camp's terms is humble, strategic, subtle, discriminating, devious, exacting, quiet, opportunistic, dogged and disruptive (2017). In the play, passing as straight and white, while strategic and highly valuable for Moj as a tactic to evade the dupes, is ultimately not a permanent solution. Finding herself at the end of the play still trapped in a kind of enslavement to "heteronormativity and its intimate connection

to racism, sexism and classism” (Allen, 2012:225), Adebayo, through Moj stages a refusal to continue to be enrolled as a participant in systematic oppression. For Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou, African migrant women too register a refusal to stay in their ‘proper’ place (2013). By being unmanageable and disorderly, they resist existing social orders and articulate a possibility of living without the management or order prescribed to them by colonialism and its foot soldier, heteropatriarchy. Taking Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s lead (2013), Campt articulates this notion of refusal to cooperate with the logic of white supremacy, not as practices of active resistance but more,

Like the concept of fugitivity, *practicing* refusal highlights the tense relations between *acts* of flight and escape, and *creative practices of refusal* – nimble and strategic practices that undermine the categories of the dominant. (Campt, 2017:32 italics in the original)

If, as Harney and Moten propose, “Knowledge of freedom is in the invention of escape” (2013:51), then it can be argued that the more un-free, the more elaborate one’s invention of escape, and the freedom inventions of migrants can then be conceptualized as a particular epistemology of people on the move who express the desire to live un-bounded lives. Through the escape inventions of Moj, inspired by Ellen Craft, Adebayo as a theatre-maker practices refusal at several registers. We witness and in fact participate in Moj’s refusal to continue to be enslaved, her refusal to be recaptured, her refusal to conform to the ‘rules’ of race and gender and ultimately a refusal to live at all within structures that assert their control over her.

What *Moj of the Antarctic* offers to a migrant attitude is a model of a flight plan along black/queer/diaspora routes. It inflects migrature’s attitude with refusal and offers a range of ways to prompt one to disorient and undermine various dominant categories. It is

also the component of the migrant attitude that marks an intention to find another way, another route through a particular barrier towards freedom. It asks one to consider what the revolutionary manoeuvres might be towards something that could be called an unbounded life. The next chapter proceeds from this consideration to migrate out of the bounds of earth. The analysis of Kapwani Kiwanga's, *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls*, marks a shift in the trajectory of the thesis towards the future by figuring the migrant as a core component of an African re-imagining project. The next two chapters will focus on the otherworldly potential of migritude by examining its potential speculative African features. Through a chronotopic analysis, the chapters lean into a migratory mythology infused with African futurism towards conceptualizing a dramaturgical framework that is invested in imagining change.

CHAPTER 7: Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls

It would be disingenuous of me to take Afrofuturism wholesale and pretend that it is 'my size.' What I want for Africans living in Africa is to imagine a future in their storytelling that deals with issues that are unique to us. I would like for us to see what size takkies fit us, and run with that. (Mashigo, 2018: xiv)

Backstory:

I encountered Kapwani Kiwanga and her performance of *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls* at the African Futures festival hosted by the Goethe Institut in Johannesburg in 2015, around the time that students in South African Universities were beginning to protest for a more just educational system. It was an interdisciplinary festival held in Johannesburg, Lagos, Nairobi and Berlin, at times concurrently, and it brought together an impressive line-up of artists, scholars and cultural activists to consider the themes of Africa and/in the future. I was drawn to the imaginative and experimental nature of the central questions of the festival: “What might various African futures look like? How do artists and scholars imagine this future? What forms and narratives of science fictions have African artists developed? Who generates knowledge about Africa? And what are the different languages we use to speak about Africa’s political, technological and cultural tomorrow?” (Heidenreich-Seleme & O’Toole, 2016:14). It somehow seemed both appropriate and indulgent to be engaging these questions while students were drawing on a legacy of past injustices to ignite the present with their protests. Kiwanga’s performance was scheduled at the end of a line-up of conference-style presentations. A hush settled as she arrived at the podium, her presence already unsettling any expectations of form or content set by the previous presenters. The audience had packed a room with a stage and seating in chairs on the unraked floor, so I was glad to be standing with others at the back as our view of the stage and projection screen was unobstructed. It was daytime, and black curtains did a partial job of keeping out the light, but the stage area was sufficiently darkened for the single desk lamp on the table to only light Kiwanga’s face when she sat down, giving the effect of an utterly composed, detached speaking head, floating in mid-air. She introduced

herself as a galactic anthropologist from the future and proceeded to share her knowledge and findings from her research on Earth-Star complexes supported by projected images, video, and recorded sound. Kiwanga's performance lecture was a refreshing variation on the academic lecture format to say the least, and to a theatre person (there were not many of us in the room that day), it was an astute reminder of the impact of a presenter's voice, outfit and physicality as aesthetic components brought to bear on precisely constructed and carefully rehearsed material. Her thickly layered content merged history and fiction in ways that were captivating, and I was intrigued by how obsolete she was making questions of what was and was not 'true' in her presentation. The experience of Kiwanga's work marked a formative turn in my own consideration of 'academic presentations' and I have since been inspired to experiment with my own version of performance lectures. The African Futures festival formed an important temporary community of people who were doing speculative work about African Futures in a wide variety of ways. While it was influenced by diasporic thinkers and makers, the focus was on artists and scholars from the continent itself and those whose practices engaged directly with African futurity. This also made a formative impression on my thinking about Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism as differing strands in a patchwork of African and African-descended liberatory practices. As noted by Nnedi Okorafor however, there are important fundamental distinctions between Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism where the latter "is more specifically and directly rooted in African culture, history, mythology and point of view as it then branches into the Black Diaspora, and it does not privilege or centre the West" (Okorafor, 2020: iv). It is this nuance that Kapwani Kiwanga's work activates.

Introduction:

Good evening. My name is Kapwani Kiwanga. I'm a galactic anthropologist from the year 2278. I specialize in ancestral earth civilizations. I am pleased to be with you today to share some of my findings on my current research on forgotten Earth-Star complexes in terrestrial memory. (Steingo, 2017)

Kapwani Kiwanga is a Canadian-born, Paris-based multimedia artist who combines her background in comparative religion, anthropology and art to work with objects, performance, film and sound to represent different kinds of spatial, temporal and sensual intelligence (MacLeod, 2016). As a multicultural Canadian, she grew up with a desire to visit other places, a distinction noted by Erin McLeod from the more nationalistic Canadian notions, "such as a relationship to nature or founding narratives, which can distance Canada from its reality as a colonial project" (2016:114). Her work is driven by questions of narrative and counternarrative in dialogue with the scientific and the magical to examine historical accounts that have been marginalized or suppressed. According to her biography on the Goodman Gallery website, her work focuses on sites specific to Africa and the African diaspora and she "relies on extensive research to transform raw information into investigations of historical narratives and their impact on political, social, and community formation" (Goodman Gallery, n.d). She works with mobility, plurality and flux and maintains an interest in dissolving hierarchies between disciplines, between popular knowledge, oral histories and vernacular culture, and what is considered to be more authoritative by way of institutional validation (MacLeod, 2016). This combination of background, research interests and creative impulses leads her to often make destabilizing work which futuristically investigates the past. In her *Afrogalactica* trilogy (2011-2017) she performs the role of an anthropologist from the United States of Africa in the year 2100

(Heidenreich-Seleme, L. & O'Toole, S., 2016) to enact a speculative interpretation of African history while also making projections about the future. First in the *Afrogalactica* series subtitled, *A Brief History of the Future*, Kiwanga pays tribute to Kwame Nkrumah's role in envisioning a Pan African future. Her theatrical world imagines 2058 as the year that the United States of Africa comes into being. 2058 is a year which commemorates the centennial anniversary of the 1958 Pan-African conference in Accra, Ghana when Kwame Nkrumah proposed his model of a federation of African States (Bould, 2019). The second in the series is subtitled, *Black Star Chronicles*, and the third is subtitled, *Deep Space Scrolls*. Following Stevphen Shukaitis (2009), this thesis chapter is driven less by evidencing the persistence of space imagery and extra-terrestrial voyage in Kiwanga's performance work, and more by asking what the function of this imagery in the workings of African social imaginaries might be. Put in service of articulating an additional component of a migrant attitude, this leads to a consideration of the ways in which the future can be leveraged in theatre and performance, in order to not only navigate and critique an often hostile and exclusionary present, but to see how it can also be put towards imagining and working towards alternative African realities.

Where *Moj* is a contemporary response to the crippling past of the slave trade in the context of the United States, *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls* (2015) responds to the colonial past in the context of Africa. Through this chapter, I explore how Kiwanga's work supports the part of a migrant attitude that deals directly with the future in response to Uppinder Mehan's comment that, "if we do not imagine our futures, postcolonial peoples risk being condemned to be spoken about and for again" (2004:271). His strict definition of a postcolonial person is "one who is a member of a nation that has recently achieved

independence from its colonizers” (2004:269). However, he goes on to use the more inclusive term ‘postcoloniality’ to refer to the,

survivors – or descendants of survivors – of sustained, racial colonial processes; the members of cultures of resistance to colonial oppression; the members of minority cultures which are essentially colonized nations within a larger nation; and those of us who identify ourselves as having Aboriginal, African, South Asian, Asian ancestry, wherever we make our homes. (2004:269)

It is this more expansive definition that will be at play here. The component of a migrant attitude that emerges from Kiwanga’s work is one that regards the dimension of the future as what Kodwo Eshun might call “chronopolitical terrain” (2003:289), and the African intervention in the production and distribution of this dimension, as a “chronopolitical act” (Eshun, 2003:292). That is to say, acts that are concerned “with the possibilities for intervention within the dimension of the predictive, the projected, the proleptic, the envisioned, the virtual, the anticipatory and the future conditional” (Eshun, 2003:293).

The examination of *Afrogalactica* will mobilize Bakhtin’s formulation of the chronotope, the work of postcolonial science fiction theorists such as Michelle Reid (2009), and the foregrounding of gender (and race) as “a determinant in the projection of imagined futures” (Bryce, 2019:1) through Marleen Barr (2008) and others. While the chapter will borrow heavily from Afrofuturism it will lean towards Nnedi Okorafor’s (2020) articulation of an alternate thread called Africanfuturism, not as a way to make any strict distinctions, but only to recognize the dominance of this label from the position of the black diasporas in Europe and North America, and to carve out a porous space in which Africa as a geographic location and as a sign converse with science fiction and (post)colonialism. This supports Mohale Mashigo’s contention that Africans living on the continent need something different

from Afrofuturism to reimagine futures or a fantasy present in response to our own needs. In other words a project that predicts Africa's future post-colonialism(s) whatever they might be (Mashigo, 2018). Okorafor leverages this proposition when she coins Africanfuturism as one, unhyphenated word "so that the concepts of Africa and futurism cannot be separated" (Okorafor, 2020:iv). The concerns of the Africanfuturism for Okorafor are with visions of the future, technology and optimism with roots first and foremost in Africa. Importantly for this thesis as a whole and this chapter that deals with time and place, she goes on to say that "[i]t's less concerned with 'what could have been' and more concerned with 'what is and can/will be'. It acknowledges and grapples with and carries 'what has been'" (Okorafor, 2020: iv).

The chapter will explore the ways in which an important piece of a migrant attitude emerges in Kiwanga's African futurist work through a chronotopic focus on history (time) and geography (place), not as dualities, but as elements which, when held in productive tension, are "inextricably interwoven" (Massey, 1994:261). This foregrounds Hans-Thies Lehmann's remarks about an aesthetic investigation as necessarily involving ethical, moral and political questions (2006b). A chronotopic analysis of *Deep Space Scrolls* will consist of an assessment of some of the spatio-temporal environments created and how they contribute towards the overall dramaturgy of the work.

Chronotopic Acts:

Most of us tend to conceive the future in the same terms as the past, which is to say as a linear progression of events in time. However, our imaginings of the future must necessarily be non-linear to truly capture the exponentially diverse array of possible futures ahead of us at any given point in time. We must not think of the future as a string of events waiting to unfold, but a boundless field of possibilities competing to be materialized. (Dotse, 2016:24)

Kiwanga works conceptually with a readily apparent chronotope and displays a clear concern with the production of particular spatiotemporal environments. For performance work that may place less emphasis on plot or character, a chronotopic reading focuses on how the spaces and timeframes that are inhabited by the characters and performers are constructed and manipulated. Furthermore, as much as Bakhtin confined his analysis to written texts, according to Andrew Clark, he “strongly implies the existence of non-literary chronotopes” (2017:10). In Clark’s research on the chronotope in the science fiction genre, he forwards an argument of Bakhtin’s that when referring to a particular genre, “what we are talking about is actually a particular way of representing space-time itself” (Clark, 2017:10). In other words, it is the treatments of time and space that make a genre function at all. In his description of a genre he includes a set of expectations placed upon a text, a site of informational exchange in which texts connect with a body of genre-constituting free-floating ideas and motifs, transferable across different media, and a pre-existing terrain to be explored into which texts either find their way, or emerge from (Clark, 2017). Whether or not *Deep Space Scrolls* as a performance text emerged from or found its way to the genre of science fiction, it conforms to many of the expectations of the genre through a number of factors: the title and content of the work, Kiwanga’s appearance and disembodied vocal treatment, and her introduction at the beginning of the performance as someone who has joined the audience from another space and time. While science fiction is primarily considered a literary and filmic genre, this live performance work and the many other African visual, performance and digital artists who occupy this *pre-existing* terrain, confirm that these *genre constituting free-floating ideas and motifs* have always been transferrable across media.

A definitive feature of the futurist genre which *Deep Space Scrolls* also adopts, is the notion of the migrant whether in the form of encounters with ‘aliens’ who migrate from other worlds/universes, or the construction of unknown worlds with varying degrees of similarity to our own. Inversely, common to the migrant experience is the awareness of different temporalities and spatialities – often experienced as co-existing; the negotiation of strangeness and a practice of new world-making through invention and improvisation which are also definitive features of speculative fiction. As such, the genre of science fiction in the service of African futures contributes to the making of new *migratory mythologies* (Carstens & Roberts, 2009) in and for a continent that is already rich in migrant narratives that “draw strongly on motifs of transformation, hybridity, gender-bending and extra-sensory perception” (Carstens & Roberts, 2009:79). In the context of theatre and performance, science fiction-inspired migratory mythologies that centre Africa, also point to an expansive notion of *dramaturgies of displacement* (Fleishman, 2015b) which include references to other worlds and other worldliness marked by manipulation of the spatio-temporal. The focus on the overt and underlying spatiotemporal structures of a text shifts focus from a thematic or stylistic analysis, but it must be noted, that it is additive rather than a replacement of these other types of analysis (Clark, 2017).

Although Bakhtin presents the chronotope as a combination of space and time, he does not consider them to be weighted equally and considers the principle of time to be more dominant than space (Clark, 2017). While notions of migration would seem to lean more heavily in the direction of the spatial, I would argue that among the functions of a migrant attitude is to ensure that there is a balance in the space/time equation by ensuring that modes of temporality such as history and biography are considered alongside the more

obvious modes of spatiality. For Clark, the science-fiction genre also tends to prioritize the spatial, with often vague depictions of a far future time (2017). In this case, a focus on Africa, nuances the spatial, highlights the historical context of the audience, and foregrounds particularly African constructions of time as a continuum or as circular or as simultaneous. Yi-Fu Tuan raises this notion of the image of time as a swinging pendulum or as a circular orbit ceding to the European notion of time as an arrow (1977), a notion that is mobilized by Kiwanga's time-traveling protagonist.

Kiwanga is trained as an anthropologist, and she performs this role in her artistic practice. There is a heightened sense of theatricality when she arrives on stage to perform *Deep Space Scrolls*, as she adopts some of the visual tropes of the futuristic genre by appearing androgynous and wearing an elegant monochrome jumpsuit. Her hair is slicked into a tight pompadour, and she sits still at a table throughout her lecture which she delivers in an emotionally detached, deadpan manner. Her physical presence is dwarfed by the large projections behind her as she reads from her notes with a disembodied effect on her microphone, completing the cyborg effect. Occasionally she glances up to the audience, as the projected images and video and audio excerpts support her spoken words. There is no irony apparent in her presentation that combines rigorous historical research and fictional material (Kiwanga, 2017) to create a "supra-or extra-fictional" text which "emulates empiricism and documentation" (Clark, 2017:7) and succeeds in defying any boundaries between the real and the imaginary.

Concerning technology in relation to black people and machines, Isiah Lavender III, in his chapter on critical race theory and science fiction, makes a point of noting through Ben Williams, that within the structures of slavery, "race functioned as a labour-based

technology, where black human beings, coded as natural machines, were used to generate wealth (2009:190) In this light, “African slaves and their descendants are [figured] as cyborgs in a white human world” (2009:190). The post-humanity that is signalled when mechanical metaphors are used for black people, embodies a history of slavery, and I would argue any subsequent valuing of black people as units of labour, leading to the conception of an original form of the post-human (Lavender, 2009). This qualifies a founding thesis of Afrofuturism that the enslaved African had a science fictional existence that marked them as the first moderns. As Kodwo Eshun writes of Toni Morrison’s argument in this regard:

African subjects that experienced capture, theft, abduction, mutilation and slavery were the first moderns. They underwent real conditions of existential homelessness, alienation, dislocation, and dehumanization that philosophers like Nietzsche would later define as quintessentially modern. (2003:288)

Images of black cyborgs, then maintains into the territory of the future, what Eshun recognizes as a “vigilance that is necessary to indict imperial modernity” (2003:288).

In *Deep Space Scrolls*, Kiwanga takes on the colonial iteration of imperial modernity by surveying the controversial official discourse of ethnographic literature that credited non-Africans for the building of Great Zimbabwe and her cyborg’s performative response to this history, is an inversion of early Eurocentric anthropological and archaeological speculations about Africa based on their dismissal of the evidence of early African civilizations (Steingo, 2017). She speculatively re-opens questions of not only who may have built Great Zimbabwe, but why they might have done so. She also (re)considers the ‘Sirius Mystery’ of the Dogon in West Africa whose traditional knowledge of the Sirius B star was attributed to “intelligent beings from the region of the star Sirius” by anthropologist Robert K.G. Temple (1976:1). In the introduction to his infamous book, *The Sirius Mystery*, (1976)

he explains that: “The Dogon were in possession of information concerning the system of the star Sirius which was so incredible that [he] felt impelled to research the material” (Temple, 1976:1). Temple’s ideas were soundly mocked as conspiracy theory in more credible scientific circles, but in *Deep Space Scrolls*, Kiwanga provocatively takes Temple’s lead to explain to the audience that:

According to Dogon tradition, the star Sirius has a companion star. The interesting fact is that this companion star remains invisible to the human eye in your present day and was first observed on January 31, 1862, with a telescope by American astronomer Alvan Graham Clark. The Dogon knowledge of this imperceptible companion star, which your scientists call Sirius B, long preceded the first telescopic observation. For many it was inconceivable that the Dogon, having no advanced astronomical tools of observation, could have knowledge of Sirius’ companion star. The Dogon Astronomical knowledge became widely known as the ‘Sirius Mystery.’ (Steingo, 2017:7)

Kiwanga leverages the myth, orality and Indigenous beliefs that are central to African modes of storytelling, to speculative ends, undertaking “journeys both forward and backward in time, enabling the writing of alternative histories in the mythic mode” (Carstens & Roberts, 2009:79). As Jane Bryce notes: “Orality and traditional cosmologies, then, are a pre-existing source of speculation about the nature of reality; [and] are [not] limited to past and present or even earthbound realities, as Dogon astrological wisdom bears witness” (Bryce, 2019:4). In the extract above, Kiwanga sets up a spatial relationship between the earth-bound place of the Dogon territory, and the astrological space of their companion star, suggesting a fluid link between the two that forces an imaginative leap into the unknown. The use of the word ‘tradition’ to describe the Dogon’s knowledge in regard to their astronomical knowledge, also sets up a productive temporal tension that supports the possibility of ancient African scientific knowledge. In this way, Kiwanga “invites us to consider what might happen if submerged, sublimated, or suppressed stories, voices, or philosophies became so dominant as to create a radically different world” (Bryce, 2019:2).

This invitation is at the centre of what her work contributes to the formation of a migrant attitude. Kiwanga exploits this tension in the service of reclaiming the expertise of the Dogon's advanced and ancient scientific knowledge from Temple in particular, and Eurocentric anthropology in general. In doing so, she also undercuts the association of a remote place with a remote and timeless (ahistorical) past, the interplay of geography (space) and history (time) here creating an immersion into a very particular colonial context. Through Anne McClintock's formative, *Imperial Leather* (1995), Henrietta Gunkel and kara lynch note the peculiarities of the politics of time and space in relation to geopolitical formations:

From the Enlightenment project onwards, Europe, for example, continues to position itself up in relation to Africa. In this way, temporally, Africa, and by extension its diaspora, remains spatially outside – an anachronistic space – always as a past that Europe races to leave behind by way of settler colonial logics of eminent domain. (2019:23)

Tuan reminds us that “the belief that exotic peoples have no history colors the thinking of even modern ethnographers” (he was writing in 1977), and he generously proposes that this may be due to a common predisposition “to associate the distant with the timeless” (1977:122). This timeless association of Africa corresponds to a dystopic one in what Eshun calls the “economy that runs on SF capital and market futurism [where] Africa is always the zone of the absolute dystopia” (2003:292). He further notes, that “there is always a reliable trade in market projections for Africa's socioeconomic crisis” and adds that: “Market dystopias aim to warn against predatory futures, but always do so in a discourse that aspires to unchallengeable certainty” (Eshun, 2003:292). As a work of science fiction, *Deep Space Scrolls* explores the ways in which scientific discourse is used as a mechanism of imperial authority by constructing and disseminating ideas of truth (Reid,

2009). In this light, contraventions of 'rational observation' which break the boundaries between scientific 'truth' and fiction might be interpreted as a 'subaltern science' (Reid, 2009).

Female Postcolonial *Counterfutures*

As a work of "Africanist science fictional intervention" (Gunkel & Lynch, 2019:23), *Deep Space Scrolls* emerges and circulates within the context of colonial/postcolonial/neocolonial discourse. As demonstrated by Shailja Patel's *Migritude*, the lens of migration can provide insight into the effects and consequences of colonialism, and the contention of postcolonial science fiction, is that creative work that speculates on African futures can provide a model for imagining what might come after colonialism. It assumes that such a thing as a truly postcolonial or post-imperial state is imaginable and therefore possible. Gerald Gaylard reminds us of the difficulty of conceiving of such a time and place when the past, present and foreseeable future are so dominated by all kinds of nations, colonies, empires and their effects (2005), marking the continued presence of colonialism in different forms. The very idea of 'postcolonial' is troubled by the fact that the days of empire are not in fact over.

Positioning futurism as an imaginative fiction from which to gain some perspective, conforms with Gaylard's thoughts on magical realism as a genre of African literature. "This distance", he says "might appear to obscure society, but in fact society's more obscure, ostensibly unrepresentative, artefacts are often where the centre's exiles and what it cannot admit about itself are to be found" (2005:2). As a defamiliarizing manifestation of imagination, Africanfuturism already speaks strongly to how migrants shape a poetics of

freedom. In contrast, Nalo Hopkinson says wryly in the introduction to her co-edited collection of Postcolonial science fiction titled, *So Long Been Dreaming*, that,

[...] one of the most familiar memes of science fiction is that of going to foreign countries and colonizing the natives, and as I've said elsewhere, for many of us, that's not a thrilling adventure story; it's non-fiction, and we are on the wrong side of the strange-looking ship that appears out of nowhere. (Hopkinson, 2004:7)

In light of this, Hopkinson goes on to add that: "To be a person of colour writing science fiction is to be under suspicion of having internalized one's colonization" (2004:7).

Understood simply, "Postcolonialism is a theoretical lens through which any [text] may be read" (Hoagland & Sarwal, 2010:5), and "a collection of critical practices that examine the colonial process" (Reid, 2009:256). To apply a spatio-temporal lens to *Deep Space Scrolls* is to employ a postcolonial reading strategy that unearths complex relationships of power, and practices that can be transferred to the migrant attitude under construction here. In her work, Kiwanga does more than simply assert that Great Zimbabwe was built by local African populations and goes further to fictionalize the location as a site of an observatory tower from which this population studied the stars. This invitation to read the history of the Great Zimbabwe ruins differently, as O'Toole notes in his interview with Kiwanga, requires "a different critical faculty" (2016:92). If this is synonymous with a migrant attitude, then I would argue that it is the chronotopic combination of an historical time and place, futurized, in the present of the performance event that requires this different critical faculty/migrant attitude to be engaged. An analytical focus away from narrative and character also offers an alternative possibility for the analysis and for the making of performance work that may not be concerned with these more structurally dramatic theatre elements.

In relation to the colonial 'discovery' of 'Africa,' *Deep Space Scrolls* (re) positions African knowledge as still discoverable, as unknown, as mysterious and yet scientific, in a manner that succeeds in what Harry Garuba might call a re-enchantment of the world (Garuba, 2003). Kiwanga confirms the now widely accepted post-colonial construction of an alternative timeline of scientific 'discovery' on which specific African populations long preceded the West. According to Michelle Reid, the European colonial project was an ideological 'fantasy' in which colonizers created their own myths of destiny, agency and progress to enable them to justify their subjugation of colonized people by denying that they were fully human or civilized (2009). Kiwanga's speculative spatial intervention includes both territorial and extraterritorial explanations for the desertion of Great Zimbabwe in the 1400s (Steingo, 2017). She notes various individuals including those invited to then Rhodesia, by Cecil John Rhodes himself, who removed artefacts and damaged ruins whilst looking for the evidence of non-African builders (Steingo, 2017). Steingo goes on to say that: "By the 1950s, archaeologists had reached a consensus regarding the African origins of Great Zimbabwe". And yet, Kiwanga notes, even into the 1970s, "the official discourse of Rhodesia was that the structure was built by those from outside the continent" (2017:5). Kiwanga weaves this narrative with a galactic version known only to select earthly anthropologists such as the South African, Richard Peter Wade, and future anthropologists such as herself, without making a distinction between what may or may not be 'factual':

Kiwanga notes that according to Wade a certain canonical tower at Great Zimbabwe was in fact 'an astronomical marker used to designate the position of a brilliant supernova that appeared in the southern skies around 1200' A.D. Indeed, the supernova 'Vela Junior' has been known since 1998, and Wade has calculated that this exploding star would likely have appeared directly above Great Zimbabwe in the mid-thirteenth century. (Steingo, 2017:6)

Kiwanga's reading of the canonical tower as *an astronomical marker* again creates a relationship between places of which little is in fact known as well as a speculative re-reading of history. The 'Africanness' of Kiwanga's work does not solely depend on the geographic location of her content, "but on the way in which it engages with the cultural and political struggle over the power relationships formed by technological development (Reid, 2009:261). These relationships are shaped by an Orientalist (Said, 1979) hierarchy which produces a binary between the 'scientific' and the 'mystical'. Uppinder Mehan notes that, "The simple binaries of native/alien, technologist/pastoralist, colonizer/colonized are all brought into question by [artists] who make use of both thematic and linguistic strategies that subtly subvert received language and plots" (2004:269). This subversion is achieved in *Deep Space Scrolls* by Kiwanga's strategy of shifting the "perspective of the narrator from the supposed rightful heir of contemporary technologically advanced cultures to those of us whose cultures have had their technology destroyed and stunted" (Mehan, 2004:269).

In the performance, Kiwanga positions herself as a galactic anthropologist from the future, who has come back in time to inform us, in the present, of an imagined system of exchange between humans and extra-terrestrials known as the Earth Star complex (Steingo, 2017; Kiwanga, 2017). This positioning does not allow the performance event audience to simply bask in the affirmation of ancient African civilizations and the genius of their advanced knowledge systems. It performs something more than a simple inversion of the long history of discrediting by European theorists by "[seizing] upon and then [radicalizing]" their "wilder and more speculative claims" (Steingo, 2017:2). The effect of this is to disrupt and complexify any easy notions of temporality and to produce a heightened awareness of the making of history in the present. As she explains of her work, "there is a present amidst

the future and past” (2016:89), asking us to consider what it might mean to (re)visit African history in this way, through a reminder of the highly constructed nature of historical accounting. Reid notes that the range of representations of colonial themes in science fiction revels in the prospect of “expanding new frontiers in outer space”, and while many texts suggest the “genocide of all alien races so as to ensure human supremacy” other texts are “more critical of the oppression inherent in expansionist attitudes” (Reid, 2009:257). This demonstrates science fiction’s complicity in colonial expansion and the ways in which *Deep Space Scrolls* performs a subtle yet powerful critique of the colonial project that directly engages specific colonial histories of Africa and also imagines how these histories can be changed depending on who is doing the accounting.

A discussion of science fiction is integral to a discussion of empire, with the themes of empire allowing science fiction to identify the prominent issues that accompany the actual practices of empire (Hoagland & Sarwal, 2010). In a revealing reflection of his own introduction to science fiction writing, author Jonathan Dotse reveals the following:

When I first started writing science fiction, I wanted my stories to be about Africans, but I found it extremely difficult to imagine the future setting of Africa, simply because my perceptions were dominated by the implicit assumptions built into the predominant Eurocentric narratives of the future. It required a great deal of effort in order to break this line of thinking and reconstruct my own individual philosophy of what was truly possible. (Dotse, 2016:29)

Among the predominant perceptions of science fiction narratives is the reputation that the genre has for presenting “quintessentially masculinist [...] macho heroes swaggering and bullying their way through the galaxy” (Hoagland & Sarwal, 2010:6). Kiwanga does not create an alternative invasion scenario, but upends a particular ideological fantasy of colonialism, revisiting and revising the construction of the colonized as other and inferior,

thereby re-examining what Reid refers to as “naturalized representations of power and dominance” (2005:258). And yet, postcolonial artists like Kiwanga, use the genre to their own ends of striking back, as it were, challenging the very stereotypes that science fiction has supported (Hoagland & Sarwal, 2010). One of these strategies has been to pay attention to gender representation. It is highly significant in *Deep Space Scrolls* for example, that Kiwanga is a (black) woman challenging (white) male history. Marleen Barr (2008) seeks to formulate a woman-centred Afrofuturism in her edited collection, *Afro-Future Females*, where she responds to what she considers the masculinist foundations of Mark Dery’s definition of Afrofuturism (2008). In her preface, Barr writes that the book is about black women’s “impact on science fiction as authors, protagonists, actresses, and editors” where she wishes to “create a dialogue with existing theories of Afro-Futurism in order to establish fresh ideas about how to apply race to science fiction studies in terms of gender” (2008:xiv). In her article on African futuristic films and novels including *Phumzi* by Wanuri Kahiu, *Les Saignanets* by Jean-Pierre Bekolo, *The Shadow of Imana* by Veronique Tadjou and *Zoo City* by Lauren Beukes, Jane Bryce writes of authors who resist homogenizing images of African women and “embody explicit critiques of patriarchy” by giving their “female characters capacity for magical transformation” and by “creating destructive female archetypes who refuse victimhood and abjection” (2019:9). *Deep Space Scrolls* is clearly at home in this very small sampling of the vast array of work at the nexus of science fiction, race, and gender, serving to maintain an intersectional approach in the formulation of a migrant attitude.

Beyond her direct challenge to the recorded history of Temple and his contemporaries, Kiwanga’s appearance and manner throughout her performance also creates a critical engagement with race, gender and science fiction by generating an

alternative form of femininity and therefore expanding the boundaries of humanness (Bryce, 2019). In *Feminist Fabulation*, Barr argues for “respecting marginalized feminist fiction which attempts to correct patriarchy’s problematic depictions of humanity” (1992:xiii). In part this is done by insisting that alternative notions of gender and femininity are key determinants in African speculative fiction and that such strategies are a prominent marker of the “materiality of chronopolitical intervention and the *difference* of an African version of the historical future” (Bryce, 2019:16, italics in the original).

Prepossessing the Future

Africanfuturism as a *technology of survival*, as suggested by Elizabeth Hamilton, is characterized by the presence of futurity, fantasy and technology; is oriented towards Black liberation; and is rooted in materiality, transformation and the manipulation of time (2017). She notes that:

An insistence on materiality, rather than a nebulous reliance on concept, is remarkable in Afrofuturist works. The material does not by any means subordinate the subject, but it is significant to the understanding of each work of art. [...] Temporality is in constant flux with time travellers and artists as temporal interlopers. As temporal interlopers, artists are constantly making useful space for the past to make a stake in the present or the future. (Hamilton, 2017:20)

Hamilton’s concern that the material not *subordinate* the subject seems to be a revealing admission of a subject/object binary where the former has dominance over the other. Part of the exercise here is to call into question, as feminist and anti-colonial theories have, the universalizing of binary analysis. Understood as conceptual tools, migrants and migration embody a practice of disruption and restlessness that disturb binary notions of fixity and settlement and their constructed opposites. Oriented from Africa, these concepts

function not only to keep things mobile and porous but also to continually disallow the neo-colonial machinery of policing people's movements to function effectively. In this way, migrants, undocumented migrants in particular, practice a kind of refusal to be regulated. The diasporic dwellings that form as a result register an insistence on coming, going, staying, arriving and returning (Campt, 2017) as modes of living that are not neatly categorized and in fact create the kind of tension between movement and stasis that is often capitalized on as a theatre-making device. A migrant lens also speaks back to the "colonial viewpoint that renders Black people spatially static and outside of history" (Gunkel & Lynch, 2019:23).

The contribution to a migrant attitude which emerges from Kiwanga's work is one that recognizes the "currency of black [female] visioning" (Gunkel & Lynch, 2019:23) and acknowledges and participates in the circulation of knowledge, people culture and technology in order to "(p)rewrite and revision the future" (Bryce, 2019:12). This notion of pre-writing resonates with Garuba's thoughts on the ways in which animist culture subverts the authority of Western science by *prepossessing the future* by "laying claim to what in the present is yet to be invented" (Garuba, 2003:271). This is echoed by Lisa Yaszek's observations, that "Afrofuturism is not just about reclaiming the history of the past, but about reclaiming the history of the future as well" (Yaszek quoted in Lavender, 2009:190). Rather than escapist, the African futurist work of pre-possessing the future becomes a critical practice of imagination and agency. Kelley notes that Afrofuturism "is a movement that invites dreaming, urges us to improvise and invent, and recognizes the imagination as our most powerful weapon" (2002:159). This imaginative freedom targeted ahead into possibility, generates what Kelley terms a "habit-forming demand for freedom" (2002:164) and therefore a foundation for an anti-colonial and decolonial project. If (feminist) futurism

from an African perspective is positioned not as an aesthetic but as a particular state of mind, then it is about constantly looking for the potential, for the possible, for the heroic and catastrophic as a way to endlessly nourish the collective imagination in the present towards a truly post-colonial future, whatever that might be.

Conclusion

Thematic and structural strangeness is a primary characteristic of science fiction, and Kiwanga's work conforms to some of the formal bases of a science fiction text through a distancing from the historical moment of its performance by creating an alternative world which is estranged from the audience (Clark, 2017). In *Deep Space Scrolls*, this is achieved through a defamiliarizing of Zimbabwean and Dogon history. By historicizing the content of her presentation in the future, she creates a multi-temporal experience which focuses attention on a period of African history that is not only marginalized but as noted earlier, highly emblematic of a deeply set colonial power imbalance. Contrary to Clark's assertions that space tends to dominate the chronotope in science-fiction, *Deep Space Scrolls* foregrounds time as a more pivotal notion, historical time in particular, as it locates the historical context of the performance in relation to what is and is not known of African history, as well as forward into a future history. Kiwanga weaves between times, led by a temporal logic that is circular or spiral suggestive of Kgositsile's coil of time discussed earlier here. Through the performance, Kiwanga constructs a dialogue set in the future, between historical narrative, archiving and contemporary reality which becomes a powerfully disturbing critique of ongoing structural asymmetries as well as a curious, playful window

into imagining the future of historical archiving in an African context. In the vein of postcolonial science fiction, Kiwanga's creative practice embraces history, memory, tangent and fragment to create coherent futuristic narratives that offer a productive framing for current conversations about what it might mean to decolonise knowledge by challenging the very meaning of terms such as 'civilization' and 'knowledge'. Reflecting on her own performance style, Kiwanga says:

If the structure of the performance is faithful to the formal reserve of the academic conference, the tone is true to the playful realms of science fiction. The conference is an apparatus of authoritative knowledge production. By appropriating the conference to an Afro-futurist end, I am at once 'queering' this institutional device and proposing alternative visions of collective pasts, speculative futures and the under considered elements of the present. (Steingo, 2017:9)

Through a chronotopic lens, Kiwanga's work uses specific places to evoke multiple layers of time and also particular moments in time to establish the specificity of places (Roach, 1999). As a work of Africanfuturism, *Deep Space Scrolls* functions at the level of allegory – the extra-terrestrial environment can be read as the foreignness we attribute to 'unknown' places and the 'other' humans who inhabit them. At the level of speculation however, the work operates in a way articulated by Kodwo Eshun:

By creating temporal complications and anachronistic episodes that disturb the linear time of progress, these futurisms adjust the temporal logics that condemned Black subjects to prehistory. Chronopolitically speaking, these revisionist historicities may be understood as a series of powerful competing futures that infiltrate the present at different rates. (Eshun, 2003:297)

In this way, Africanfuturism becomes a mechanism for disrupting time and place beyond the particular themes, ideas and iconography associated with space travel, extra-terrestrials or human interface with technology. *Chronopolitically* speaking, her revisionist approach to African history foregrounds "the extent to which concepts such as "culture",

“society”, and “humanity” continue to be sustained through Eurocentrism. Spatially, Kiwanga’s work stages the migrants’ gesture to the elsewhere, specifically an elsewhere of African concern. Her experimental engagement with race, colonialism, foreignness, knowledge and power are features of the chrono-politics of a migrant attitude. *Deep Space Scrolls* relies on a dramaturgy of temporal and spatial disruption and complication that proposes ways in which ideas could have been and might still be sustained through an African lens. An example of this in *Deep Space Scrolls* is the model that Kiwanga creates for a pan-African utopian project by putting the (future) history of the Dogon and that of Great Zimbabwe in the same conversation. Kiwanga’s *Afrogalactica* series has been performed all over the world with what I can only assume to be a range of varied receptions according to the place of the performance and its historical relationship to Africa. For instance, a work shown in Johannesburg, South Africa with content focused on other regions of the continent, does important work for disrupting fixed notions of place. Not least of these is the sharp relief of the regular xenophobic tensions between South African nationals and those Africans deemed not to be, marked specifically by an increased spotlight on migrants into the southern-most country from further north. As an anti-colonial pan Africanist future project, *Deep Space Scrolls* conducts an important disruption of perceptions of a homogenous mass of countries outside South Africa, while it also troubles the naturalization of the colonial borders. As noted by Gunkel and Lynch,

Digging into the past to vision the future and address the present means developing critical analyses and practices that challenge and disrupt white settler colonialism and whiteness as the dominant thread of future making and revisiting the motivations behind and the legacies of pan-African future projects. (2019:25)

Recalling the history of pan African future projects returns us to Kwame Nkrumah, celebrated as Africa's first post-colonial political leader who died in 1972, the year of the last manned moon landing (Heidenreich-Seleme & O'Toole, 2015). It is a reminder that the many iterations of African future thinking include the speculative work done by the first generation of leaders of independent African states. Science fiction is occasionally seen as being a genre that is deceptively nostalgic, with only a shallow attachment to the future. As Erica Hoagland and Reema Sarwal elaborate: "In essence, the nostalgic drive of sf can be understood as the future made familiar. Thus, the future is relegated to mere stage dressing, as the past is obsessively revisited and reconsidered" (2010:9). That the past is mined for material is certainly the case, it is in fact an endless source considering its deep intertwined complexities that can be endlessly reevaluated, and I would argue that the 'stage dressing' is the modality through which these pasts are refracted, offering changes of direction that question present norms at the least and illuminate and inspire a forward looking orientation at best.

What a migrant attitude benefits from a spatiotemporal analysis of *Deep Space Scrolls* is a set of chronopolitical questions. Questions that concern how the manipulation of time and space can be oriented towards experiments in African futuristic visioning. These are also questions that are directed to the historical geopolitics of the African continent, towards prepossessing its future. The final case study to follow marks a shift away from the analysis of the work of other artists to focus on one of my own productions, *Astronautus Afrikanus*. Similarly, to Kiwanga's work, its central focus is on engaging notions of Africanfuturism as a strategy for imagining otherwise. The dramaturgical focus of the analysis will be on the ways in which the audience were invited to adopt a migrant attitude

in their navigation of the work. Turning to look at my own work at this point is not simply an exercise observing something that has been but is intended to continue an exploration into a realm of possibility towards mapping a set of coordinates for a migrant dramaturgy.

CHAPTER 8: Astronautus Afrikanus

[...] We acknowledge the concrete impact of anti-black violence, and we also circulate in other spheres, ones that breathe some space into speculating and dreaming otherwise. In these spheres time and space converge and transform. While paying homage to the people that walked these paths before us, it is black visioning that looks into outer-space, underground, and at sea that guide us. These visionary fictions reference the past in our present in order to claim a future. (Gunkel & Lynch, 2019:22)

Backstory:

In May of 2015, I was invited to be the director in residence at the Rhodes University Drama Department in Grahamstown, now known as Makhanda, in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, to make a new work with students across years of study. It was an invitation I accepted gladly for the opportunity to work with Lieketso wa Thaluki (Mohoto), my long-time collaborator, as well as designer Ilka Louw, both of whom were on staff in the department at the time. This invitation coincided with the #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall student movements as they were starting to urgently articulate their needs for a transformed, decolonized curriculum across South African campuses. In this context, the production became a laboratory for thinking about the unique place that theatre and performance has in this larger political project. It became a place through which to examine different interpretations of movement(s) alongside each other: movement in the form of mobility as discussed in previous chapters, and in this case inhabited by the production's mobile audiences, and movement in the form of the organized resistance of the students holding their ground, demanding a stop to financially exclusive and Eurocentric educational models.

Astronautus Afrikanus, as the project came to be called, manifested as a large-scale (by student production standards) immersive work composed of a series of live installations. While I had an existing interest in site-specific live art and had previously experimented with different kinds of audience engagements, my appetite for using this form increased after two memorable immersive theatre productions that I saw in New York many years ago, *Fuerza Bruta* (Brute Force) by an Argentinian theatre company of the same name and *Sleep No More* by British company, Punchdrunk. *Fuerza Bruta* was a series of daring, spectacular

performance moments that were not necessarily related but were all staged around and above the standing audience. My memory of the show was that it was a forceful sensory experience of spectacle and stunts which included a man in a dress shirt and tie running on an oversized treadmill through a cardboard wall, and a giant transparent pool which descended directly within touching distance above our heads in which performers danced, and a constant techno light and soundtrack. It was not for the faint of heart. *Sleep No More* was also extraordinary in that it was a film-noir version of *Macbeth* staged on the multiple floors of the old McKittrick Hotel in Chelsea, New York. In the production the audiences are masked, enrolled as hotel guests and choose their own path through the narrative by following any character of their choice through exquisitely designed environments for as long as they please within the three-hour time span of the performance. These productions were formative in my own artistic practice and experimentation with the form of immersive theatre and led a number of successive projects that created experiences for audiences in which they were mobile. These include an iteration of *Afrocartography: Traces of Places and all points in between*, with a professional cast and a student chorus, at the Wits University Theatre (2013) which invited audiences to move through several spaces adjoining the main proscenium stage as they accompanied the character of the Traveller on her journey through the narrative. *Nomads Among Us* (2015) a work devised with final year graduating students using their personal migration stories, was staged in the Origins Museum at the University of Witwatersrand and also invited audience to roam through a series of performance installations embedded within the existing exhibitions. These productions which created a kind of migrant experience for the audience create a proverbial backdrop to this chapter in which I work through the notion of a migrant and participatory audience as central to a dramaturgical project for African reimagining.

Introduction:

‘Some people think I am crazy’ Nkoloso told a reporter for the Associated Press. ‘But I’ll be laughing the day I plant Zambia’s flag on the moon.’ (Serpell, 2017)

While doing some research for a playwriting workshop in Boston in 2013, I discovered what would become the source story for *Astronautus Afrikanus*, in a rather colourful figure in Zambian history: Edward Mukuka Nkoloso (1919-1989), a graduate from the University of Zambia and a schoolteacher was determined that Zambia would not only join the space race but would in fact beat both Russia and America to planting their flags on the moon. So strong was his conviction, that he started a space training academy outside Lusaka called the Zambia National Academy of Science, Space Research and Philosophy. This was in the era of African countries gaining their formal independence from their colonisers and on the eve of Zambia’s freedom from British rule in 1964. In a short video available online,¹⁸ Nkoloso is interviewed by a British reporter. When asked to identify his space craft, he points to two empty oil drums stacked on top of each other with a small oval window cut into the side of the top drum. His Afronauts are captured doing jumping jacks as part of their training programme and rolling each other down a series of bumpy hills in empty oil drums to simulate weightlessness. In the video, the interviewer calls Nkoloso and his team “a bunch of crackpots” as David Bowie’s *Space Oddity* plays in the background. Namwali Serpell explains how it is that a reporter at the scene of the academy’s activities could use such an insulting parting shot. She describes Nkoloso’s quirky appearance to

¹⁸ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abVrYdYNAyU>

include a standard-issue World War II combat helmet and khaki military uniform, from his days in the Northern Rhodesian Regiment forces, a flowing multi-coloured silk or velvet cape, combat boots and a thick moustache. His Afronauts who sometimes appear in green satin jackets and yellow trousers, are reported saying that they were in fact the Dynamite Rock Music Group when they were not training as space cadets (Serpell, 2017). Serpell goes on to summarize Nkoloso's plans and motivations:

Godfrey Mwango, at twenty-one, had been tasked with the moon landing. Matha Mwamba, sixteen, was headed for Mars. Nkoloso's dog, Cyclops, was to follow in the paw prints of Russian 'muttnik' Laika. The other cadets carried a Zambian flag and a staff in the shape of 'a crested eagle on a dinner plate atop a sawn-off broomstick.' Nkoloso said he had been inspired by his first airplane flight. When the pilot refused to stop the plane so that he could get out and walk on the clouds, Nkoloso made up his mind to enter the space race. (Serpell, 2017)

Nkoloso was also known to be a freedom fighter and member of the Zambian resistance movement and in the context of these vastly opposing images of him, his story became a very generative source for a production. Up until this point, my migrant imaginings had been earth-bound, but the introduction to Nkoloso, exploded the idea of territorial borders/limits and led me to seek out and make performance work that engaged these dual notions of movement as resistance in the direct confrontation of power, and also movement as an opening of possibilities that allows change to be imagined and actively pursued. It is this formation of a kind of *kinopolitics* (Nail, 2015) which this chapter seeks to unpack towards a final contribution to the dramaturgical components of a migrant attitude. Nkoloso's story inspired not only *Astronautus Afrikanus*, but also a short experimental performance work incubated at the Centre for the Less Good Idea in Johannesburg in 2017, called *A Zambian Space Odyssey*. In the latter work, it is proposed that Nkoloso is in fact a movement builder and leader of a band of anti-colonial revolutionaries who are using the

space training programme narrative as an elaborate decoy, and in this way remain undetected by the outgoing British authorities. *Astronautus Afrikanus* would turn the Rhodes University Theatre Complex into a working space station complete with technicians, security personnel, a rocket launch site, and an audience who navigated through all of this with the kinetic counterpower of migrant agency (Nail, 2015). This work became a significant feature of the African Futures Project which includes *A Zambian Space Odyssey* and *Jacaranda Time*, both written and performed as part of Season Two of the Centre for the Less Good Idea, as well as a text called *Prompts for African Futures* featured in the first issue of the *Imagined Theatres Journal*.¹⁹

The devising process for *Astronautus Afrikanus* involved individually researched, designed and crafted live installations to create several worksites in the process of generating material to launch the rocket or in the process of harnessing useful energies, materials, ideas and concepts to sustain life on another planet. The brief to the cast was to individually research an Indigenous African Knowledge System to use as source material for what their workstations would be producing. This project would join the list of other artists who have also been inspired by Nkoloso's story including Christina de Middel, Nuotama Frances Bodomo, Namwali Serpell and Stary Mwaba²⁰.

¹⁹ The book *Imagined Theatres: Writing for the Theoretical Stage* edited by Daniel Sack (2017) is accompanied by an online open access journal: <https://imaginedtheatres.com/>. Prompts for Future Africa is part of the South Africa collection edited by Megan Lewis: <https://imaginedtheatres.com/south-africa/>

²⁰ de Middel is a Spanish photojournalist with an eclectic practice known for producing a book titled *The Afronauts*, a book of staged conceptual photographs exploring Nkoloso's space programme. Bodomo is a Ghanaian-born film maker who produced *Afronauts*, a dreamlike, speculative black and white short film based on Matha Mwamba, Nkoloso's first Afronaut. Serpell is a Zambian-born, genre-bending author who has written essays such as *The Afronaut Archives: Reports from a future Zambia* and *Afrofuturism: Everything and Nothing*. Stary Mwaba is a renowned Zambian artist whose interest in Zambian history has inspired projects such as *Life on Mars* inspired by Nkoloso.

This chapter will look at *Astronautus Afrikanus* through a chronotopic and heterotopic (Tompkins, 2014) lens as a means of examining the particular socio-political context of the production. This approach aims for an articulation of the work as a practice of decoloniality that contributes to a dramaturgy of migritude. To aid this exercise, it will feature descriptive sections that are aimed to immerse the reader into the world of the production to facilitate a focus on the audience as inhabiting what Thomas Nail would describe as a the “pedetic force of the migrant” (2015:223) that reflects the energy of movement(s). The heterotopic lens will be focused on the production’s use of immersive space in relation to the Rhodes/Fees Must Fall student protests. Repurposing the term heterotopia from Michel Foucault and a host of cultural geographers, Joanne Tompkins usefully develops it as an analytical frame for performance which “enables a better understanding of the concrete space(s) of performance amid the social context in which such performance is enacted” (Tompkins, 2014:11). Tompkins summarises her exploration of heterotopia by adding that it is,

[...] a space generated via performance that enables us to better understand the theatrical experience; it may comprise the concrete space of the theatre venue, the imagined locations depicted in that venue, and/or the social context for the performance. (2014:16)

Following Jill Dolan’s lead (2005) the chapter will suggest that when a performance bumps up against a significant historical moment which pulls on legacies of injustice, it can have the effect of reaching towards something else that is not yet here. It will be argued that this is particularly so in the case of *Astronautus Afrikanus* which actively created an immersive theatrical world for a mobile audience where the concrete space of the venue bumped up against the imagined location of a space station depicted in it and also against the socio-political context of the student movement in which it was staged. It will be argued,

through Tompkins that the world-making practice which is inherent in theatre and performance is extended through a heterotopic lens which specifically engages the relationship of spatiality in performance to structures of knowledge and power (Tompkins, 2014). In this light, the work adds an element of the *utopian performative* to the construction of a migrant attitude which, in Dolan's words, "[...] persuade[s] us that beyond this 'now' of material oppression and unequal power relations lies a future that might be different, one whose potential we can feel as we're seared by the promise of a present that gestures towards a better later" (2005:7). Through *Nail*, it will be argued that this *better later* can be inhabited by an audience of participants who have migrant agency, and therefore come to represent the potential of movement(s) along a continuum of meanings from protest actions to space travel.

The African Futurist Antihero

Our reading of Nkoloso as an African futurist anti-hero and the creative and intellectual ancestor of the project was to reclaim him as a utopian visionary, ahead of his time in his ability to see a Zambian mission to the moon as a metaphor for the expansive and deeply hopeful future of an independent Northern Rhodesia. In his enactment of what Harry Garuba might call *prepossessing the future* (2003), he planned to launch the rocket from Independence Stadium to coincide with the very first hoisting of the Zambian flag. *Astronautus Afrikanus* was conceptualized as being driven by notions of how the ancient and futuristic might meet in the present, and Nkoloso's space rocket became a kind of connecting device in our project, a method of metaphorically connecting the ground to the sky, the ancient to the future, the practical to the potential. It was this commitment to the

potential that we were most inspired by and out of this came a series of questions that framed the devising process and the audience experience, and that were captured in the Director's note, which read:

It seems that now more than ever we are presented with the opportunity to re-member ourselves. To put ourselves back together and imagine ourselves as Africans, differently. Thinking about how we as theatre makers might do this in the face of oppressive legacies opened up a host of questions that led us, the cast and crew, to re(discover) the Edward Mukuka Nkoloso in us all. We asked ourselves, what happens if we start from the premise that we know; that we are full of knowing and our capacity for curiosity about ourselves, each other, and the world we share, is great? We asked what happens if we consider indigenous African knowledge systems central rather than alternative; status quo rather than subversive; common practice rather than subordinate, sceptical, inferior and the domain of the 'less educated'? We asked what happens if we float on the continuum between ancient African and future African worlds? And we wondered what our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents as far back as we can go knew, and through us, still know. What Africans know, and particularly how it is that we come to know. We asked what is embodied, believed, trusted, felt, tried and tested and made manifest through materials. (Kabwe, 2015a)

In an effort to reclaim the figure of Nkoloso from the pejorative images of him cast by the videos online and the many racist and Afro-pessimistic comments in response to them, we chose to read him as an early African futurist whose own performative antics were an incitement to inhabit the future. This inciting invitation to inhabit the future was extended to the audience precisely when the present was prickling in the heat of the student movement. Nail describes social pedesis or social turbulence as "the irregular movement of a collective body" (2015:223). Against the history of Nkoloso's own revolutionary activities as part of Zambia's resistance efforts, this particular moment of social turbulence was also placed in the context of other moments of African social turbulence. As a production, *Astronautus Afrikanus* enrolled the audience as the social figure of the migrant, who in the formulation of social pedesis, is "the social figure who moves outside the dominant forms of social motion" (Nail, 2015:223). On this basis, Nkoloso

himself is an example *par excellence* of a figure who moves outside the dominant forms of social motion.

Acts of Immersive Decoloniality

Gareth White describes immersive theatre, broadly, as “performances which use installations and expansive environments, which have mobile audiences, and which invite participation” (2012:221). In this light, the production’s dramaturgy was driven by a particular concern with the spatial. Upon reflection I understand my role in the production as creating the conditions for an audience to inhabit and experience a familiar space differently and to take an active role in co-producing the work by interacting with performers, installations and other audience members. The spatial proximity of audience to performers and to the live installations throughout the Rhodes Main Theatre complex was navigated by a mobile audience who had been enrolled as observation visitors to a space station as soon as they entered the theatre lobby from the outside. The following safety briefing introduced the transformed spaces of the theatre complex to the audience and set out the spatial rules of operation within this theatrical world:

Welcome to the Pan African Space Station Shuttle Launch of Craft number PASSLC201513126. Our aircraft is under the collective command of Astronautus Afrikanus, descendants of the great Edward Nkoloso’s first flight crew and members of the Zambian National Academy of Science, Space, Research and Philosophy. You will conduct your launch observation visit independently and without guidance and with that in mind we ask you to pay particular attention to the following safety information: You have been issued with an access pass. Please ensure that it is visibly on your person at all times. In the event of an emergency that requires an evacuation, such as a fire or a loss of power, these passes will act as a safety tag allowing us to account for you as a member of today’s observation visit. You are on board a working space station and while every effort has been made to ensure your safety, you are responsible for your own wellbeing and expected to be respectful of the equipment and staff that you will encounter. Please note that from the end of this sound sequence you will be un-guided and at liberty to explore the workings of the space station in

your own time. For your safety, unauthorized areas will be clearly marked. Remember, there are worlds out there they never told you about. (Kabwe, 2015b)

The aim of the safety briefing was to make explicit to the audience the kind of frame of mind, or attitude required to participate fully in the immersive experience. It served to invite the audience not only to physically travel through the performance, but also to travel imaginatively, to remain inquisitive and to respond intuitively to what they found curious or interesting, to adopt an exploratory (migrant) attitude. The last line of the briefing is taken from the final track of Sun Ra's 1978 album, *Lanquidity*, in which the original track title is, *There Are Other Worlds (They Have Not Told You Of)*. This allusion to a spatial elsewhere marks an important characteristic of the African futures dramaturgy under exploration here, above and beyond the clear images, ideas and visual tropes of space and space travel in the production as a whole. If anything, this production seemed to correspond more to Clark's assertion of the science fiction chronotope as prioritising spatiality, with often vague depictions of time (2017). This corresponds to heterotopia's relationship to "utopia, the better known aspirational 'topos'" (Tompkins, 2014:1). As will be discussed however, the dramaturgical coincidence of making this work with students in the context of the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall student protests, had significant temporal implications – a reminder that the dramaturgy of a play in performance is always situated in space *and* time (Turner & Behrnt, 2007). Among the markers of difference in immersive theatre work is that audiences are "asked to do more than watch, think and feel, so that" (Alston, 2016:9) as Adam Alston contends, "they can feel more of the work and feel more intensely" (2016:9). Audiences are put into a dynamic relationship with the materials of the production that they have agency in negotiating. Audiences are also put into a dynamic heterotopic relationship

with the location of the work. In *Astronautus Afrikanus*, this was both in the sense of it being staged in a theatre building that was used site-specifically and also in the sense of that theatre building being the property of the university at a time when the university and its structures were under fire. I would like to argue that the physical movement of the audience and the invitation to explore the production with curiosity are features of an audience migrant attitude. Beyond that however, and more critically, is a migrant relationship that the audience is put into in relation to the institution as a whole. What follows is a description of the audience's experience after the initial briefing:

A long blow of a kudu horn marked the end of the safety briefing and the performers, as *afronauts*, descended the steps that flank the foyer, mingling with the 'observation visitors' and greeting them as per their new names assigned to them on arrival at the make-shift box office outside the theatre. They directed the visitors towards the various worksites in the space station at which the technicians were now harnessing useful materials to sustain human life on another planet, designing wearable technology, completing sketches of alternative space craft models and generating fuel from unlikely sources for the rocket launch. Some members of the audience eagerly followed the actors, keen for whatever their enrolment in the fiction would require them to do. Others lingered longer in the foyer, did a doubletake at the now visible security personnel, or consulted their programmes for some indication of what to expect next, how to proceed as members of the observation visit and where to go first. The map in the programme sketched the areas of the Rhodes Main Theatre complex that were part of the stage world, those that are out of bounds, as well as emergency exits and assembly points. The map mainly served to locate the eleven worksites – spread between the theatre foyer, side lobbies, workshop dock,

wings, stages, dressing rooms and auditorium – which included spaces such as The Particle Stability and Acceleration Lab, The Star Blanket, The Light Refraction Travel Lab, The Design Lab, The Nkoloso Tribute Room, Rocket Core and the Main Control Chamber, each a detailed spatial environment of its own. The audience was free to encounter these sites, and the technicians who activated them, at their own discretion – an invitation that seemed at once liberating and daunting. The re-naming of the various functional parts of the theatre complex to the demarcations of the individualised workstations in the world of the play, served to specify and nuance the details of the audience’s immersed experience. As the audience moved within this world at their own pace, they also slid in and out of the roles of spectators and participants as they were permitted a greater degree of agency, unrestricted by the theatre’s conventional rules for behaviour, time frame and presentation. While each workstation was designed specifically, they were not closed off to each other. This created a sense of spatial expansion and busy productivity as both the audience and performers moved fluidly in and around the sites.

Alston writes that,

Aesthetic experiences in immersive theatre tend to promote introspection, because in the heady heights of immersion and participation it is not art objects that take precedence so much as the affective consequences of an audience’s own engagement in seeking, finding, unearthing, touching, liaising, communicating, exchanging, stumbling, meandering and so on [...]. (2016:7)

This increased investment of energy entitles audiences to create intimate and personal exchanges with performers and become aware of their important role in the theatrical world. In this case, one in which the activities that they participate in, and are surrounded by, invite them to collectively co-create an imagining of a futuristic scenario that is mapping out a set of possibilities. The list of verbs at the end of the quote also suggests that

immersive works inherently have migrant qualities, as these terms collectively suggest the activities of migrants and travellers. Audiences that are asked to participate in performance works that are designed to engender these kinds of activities are asked to adopt a kind of migrant attitude. This attitude however is not apolitical. In the context of the political revolutions that *Astronautus Afrikanus* was responding to, this migrant attitude was one that was still tied to the concept of colonial borders and imperial expansion as is illustrated in the performance description that follows.

If, for need of some context, an audience member started in The Nkoloso Tribute Room, they would find themselves in one of the dressing rooms of the theatre, dimly lit and re-designed as a memorial to Edward Mukuka Nkoloso. Any visitor to the Tribute Room would have heard a faint, tinny choral version of Zambia's unofficial national anthem, *Tiede Pamodzi Mutima Umo* (translated from Nyanja as *Let us go together with one heart*), as if played on the visible record player. This song was popularised by Kenneth Kaunda in the struggle for Zambia's independence. They would see, behind a red velvet rope, items associated with Nkoloso's quirky appearance – including a World War II helmet, purple cape, and combat boots on the kind of basic costume rail commonly found in theatre dressing rooms. The room also held paper rocket models, images from Christina de Middel's *Afronauts*, (2012) piles of fabric from a Lusaka market and an odd assortment of ethically suspect hardcover coffee table books about Africa and Africans. One might have correctly attributed the slightly musty smell to the dressing room shower, rather than the supposed age of the artefacts in the room. This installation was designed by Ilka Louw and was the only space that was not inhabited by a performer; audiences in fact could only stand behind a velvet rope to observe the items and artefacts in the room. The dressing room created a

spatial container in one of the furthest corners of the overall performance space, which mirrored the kind of temporally static environment of ethnographic museum exhibits which contrasted sharply with the active pace of the rest of the workstation. The space (Lusaka) and time (independence) that was referenced and halted in the Nkoloso Tribute room was an important historical marker in the context of the real-life historical moment in which the production was made and staged, namely the student movement known as #RhodesMustFall and then #FeesMustFall, immersing audiences in a *coil of time* in which the past and present were gathered together.

The country-wide protests ignited South African universities in May 2015 after a student at the University of Cape Town defiled a campus statue of Cecil John Rhodes with human waste (Jansen, 2017). Continuing into 2016 and 2017, the student movement forcefully raised a number of urgent issues pertaining to the neo-colonial educational project as it continues to play out in lecture halls, seminar rooms, labs and studios. The ensuing call to decolonise education arose from a collective mobilising against institutional racism and sexism, the continued privileging of Eurocentric modes of teaching and learning, and the commodification of education to demand “free, quality, decolonised education and [express] dissatisfaction with the rate and depth of change two decades after South Africa’s democratisation” (Naidoo, 2016:180). It must be noted that the passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was one of the first major catalysts of student activism in South Africa, and the Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall protests exist within this long line of student organising in the country’s political history (Nieftagodien & Heffernan, 2016). This temporal link was a highly significant factor in the 2015 student movement and was mobilised accordingly with students harnessing their continued political alignment with

previous student movements and emphasising the lack of change so many years later.

Several members of the *Astronautus Afrikanus* cast were directly involved in the protests and brought a hyper-sensitivity to the issues of colonialism as they were presented by Nkoloso's story and by the unfolding student movement.

In his chapter, 'Thinking Outside the Ivory Tower', Nigel Gibson, renowned scholar of Frantz Fanon, offers the following in relation to thinking about space and institutional space in particular:

In South Africa, the university is an institution established to reproduce colonial ideology. Any critical politics of pedagogy and curriculum must also include its geography, its location and buildings, its accessibility, gates, barriers and dividing lines (literal and figurative) as well as its classrooms; challenging the very structures of the university (its disciplines, academic ranks, administration, exams, grades, and daily culture, including all its social-spatial relations). (Gibson, 2015:187)

A significant driver towards the making of immersive theatre work is a desire to be in conversation with the space (and time) in which the performance event occurs, accepting the proposition put forward by Nick Kaye that the meanings of utterances, actions and events are affected by their local position and situation (Kaye, 2000). In the case of *Astronautus Afrikanus*, the idea was to stage an intentional provocation into how institutional structures are spatially upheld, and to propose through this overlapping of the concrete space of the building with the abstract space of the performance, that these structures can be transformed. The mobile agency of the migrant audience is expanded conceptually here to include a refusal to inhabit oppressive institutional structures. In this light, "migritude is a migration out of imposed categories, identities, spaces, homes, and territories" (Coly, 2020:172). A migrant attitude then, is also about having a "political and historical consciousness" (Coly, 2020:172) that claims a right to move and also to stay in

conditions that are favourable. It points to a political agency that rebels against restrictive, exclusionary and de-humanizing institutional practices.

In another context, the location of *Astronautus Afrikanus* in and around the Rhodes Theatre complex might simply have contributed to an interesting theatrical experiment in immersive performance, particularly for students at the Rhodes Drama Department who are accustomed to using the venue in much more conventional ways. Against the backdrop of Rhodes Must Fall, however, which was gaining significant momentum at the time of the production, the immersive, site-specific use of the Rhodes Main Theatre complex, with all its implicit and explicit codes for good behaviour, took on a much more politically resonant charge in the making of the work. In thinking about how *Astronautus Afrikanus* might engage notions of decoloniality in the context of the student uprisings, it is useful to refer to Walter Dignolo and Catherine Walsh who write about how the colonial matrix of power, (also expressed as modernity/coloniality), “has worked and continues to work to negate, disavow, distort and deny knowledges, subjectivities, world senses, and life visions. (2018:4). In this case, the contribution made towards a migrant attitude, takes its cue from their conception of decoloniality which they argue is not a new mode of critical thought, but rather “a way, option, standpoint, analytic, project, practice, and praxis” (2018:5). For the temporary community that was formed by audiences and performers, the futurized ‘what if’ of the production points to Jill Dolan’s thinking about the theatre as a space of hope. She writes about the value of, “[t]hinking of utopia as processual, as an index to the possible, to the ‘what if’ rather than a more restrictive, finite image of the ‘what should be,’ [which allows] performance a hopeful cast, one that can experiment with the possibilities of the future in ways that shine back usefully on a present that’s always itself, in process” (Dolan,

2005:13). She further notes, through Angelika Bammer, that “a decolonizing project is one that sustains the concept of utopia as process” (2005:12), which coheres with Tompkins’ argument that “heterotopia rehearses the possibilities of something else [...]” (2014:3) and the notion that decoloniality involves a commitment to the potential. In this case a heterotopically inspired question that arises might be, how can theatrical space come to represent potentialities? (Tompkins, 2014). From the perspective of crafting an experience for an audience, it might also be framed as, how can an audience participate in something that is steeped in (critical) potentialities. A migrant attitude allows the figure of the migrant to be re-humanized in the face of these potentialities. It rejects the victim status of migrant and instead recovers the agency of this status that is then shared as an embodied experience.

Space Invasions and Counter-memories

[...] theatre, more than other art forms, offers the opportunity to experiment spatially with the depiction of possible worlds in performance. (Tompkins, 2014:8)

Conventional use of a traditional end-on proscenium theatre space reveals a relatively small amount of its overall structure and capacity to an audience, hiding from view the messier work areas of the backstage, wings, workshops, and dressing rooms. These spaces are interlinked, but audience access tends to be regulated in order to maintain the theatrical illusions of the stage under the lights, from the darkened auditorium. For Nick Kaye, “site-specificity is linked to the incursion of ‘surrounding’ space, ‘literal’ space or ‘real’ space into the viewer’s experience of the artwork” (2000:25). The maze-like quality of the *Astronautus Afrikanus* performance space made for an understanding of the now more expansive environment as a found space rather than one with clear designations for its use.

This was the case both in the making of the work as we (re)discovered the potential for the Theatre's spaces in locating each installation, as well as for the spectator/participants who were tasked with finding the installations located in generally unexplored areas of the building. Through this opening up of spaces, audiences created their own routes with their own flow, they determined their own changes in speed and direction and decided how much time they would spend at each point of interest. As articulated by Eugenio Barba, any place indoors or outdoors deliberately selected to establish a particular actor-spectator relationship, is never neutral (2010). Our aim was to invite the audience to experience the interior architecture of multiple adjoining theatre workspaces that were transformed but not disguised, thereby challenging the more common experience of theatre buildings which tends "to curtail the potential for engagement with the world beyond their walls" (Tompkins, 2014:40). Kaye notes that "the location, in the reading of an image, object, or event, its positioning in relation to political, aesthetic, geographical, institutional or other discourses, all inform what 'it' can be said to *be*" (2000:1, italics in the original). In support of this, Barba goes on to explain that: "A traditional stage, [...] a square in front of a church, the great hall of a university, [...] or the mess hall in a jail, all have a past even if it belongs to our epoch. They are bursting with information and material signs which can be accentuated, opposed or refused, but not omitted" (2010:45). In the case of *Astronautus Afrikanus*, the 'space invasion' performed in the theatre, and at the University named after the colonial arch villain of the day, Cecil John Rhodes, whose contested memorialisation had sparked the protests, made for an important intervention into the site's colonial history and context, throwing into sharp relief the student movements' calls for transforming institutional culture. As Mignolo notes, there is no one outside the colonial matrix of power, and "there is no proprietor or privileged master plan for decoloniality" (2018:108), only concrete

processes that “give route to shifts and movements toward decoloniality’s otherwise”

(Walsh, 2018:29). This thinking and doing otherwise, Mignolo writes, emerges from the,

[...] need to think from the experiences of what modernity disavowed and by so doing to show that modernity is half of the story constantly hiding and repressing what doesn’t fit the imaginary and desires of storytellers that legitimize themselves in the name of science, politics, and economy that provides a warranty for the well-being and interests of storytellers. (2018:113)

For the collective of storytellers in *Astronautus Afrikanus*, the alternative use and experience of the Theatre became a site of interrogation and a metaphor for un-seating institutional structures still steeped in colonial ideology. An exercise in “undermining [the] conventional oppositions between the virtual space of the art work and ‘real space’ of its contexts” (Kaye, 2000:25) became a strategy to challenge the assumed stabilities of the site and, by extension, the University as a whole. The migrant dramaturgical dialogue created for the audience between the interior space of the performance and the exterior ‘real’ world was one concerning deterritorialization, exploring “how artistic practices [can] deterritorialize public space and create awareness about the compositional dimension of space in human, geographical and political terms” (Eckersall, P., Monaghan, P. & Beddie, M. 2014:19). This awareness, mobilized by theatre’s capacity to make visible the invisible, is aimed at altering the perception of spaces as fixed and immobile and focused on their transformative potential as expansive, open, multi-functional and filled with possibility. This migrant attitude towards space as pliable and having capacity for co-creation, disrupts a uni-directional feature of dominant migrant discourse which reads the migrant as seeking hospitality. Outside of this tense ‘host’ and ‘guest’ dynamic, “migritude seeks to rethink, consume, and redistribute space” (Coly, 2020:173).

Tompkins reminds us that “the different spatial locations that a heterotopic interpretation isolates are inevitably temporal as well as spatial” and that “one of the qualities of heterotopia is its fleeting nature” adding that, “it is an event that is almost always understood after the fact” (2014:13). Thinking temporally then, in many ways *Astronautus Afrikanus* modelled a dramaturgical constellation of past, present and future, creating a multi-dimensional awareness of history (Eckersall, P., Monaghan, P. & Beddie, M. 2014). At a more micro level, within the world of the play, time was marked by the underscore of a Fela Kuti inspired soundtrack, upbeat and designed to keep the atmosphere lively and also cognisant of the rising temperatures of the student movement ‘outside.’ The migrant attitude created through this multi-dimensional awareness of history, is one that considers the presence over time, of “[...] the forces that shape, stop or police movement and the ways in which these forces create not security, but crisis” (Ali, Christopher & Nair, 2020:57). In the same way, as has been mentioned earlier here, immigration policies create criminals of migrants and place people in search of security in precarious positions. While migrants may decide to move, “[...] they do not [always] get to decide the social conditions of their movement” (Nail, 2015:2). In this light, *Astronauts Afrikanus* stages a utopic version of the social conditions of movement in the form of the audience taking part in the preparation of a group of people traveling to space.

The production ended with the sound of a kudu horn, which ushered the observation visitors into the Main Control Chamber, and the Afromaut technicians and security personnel communicated the magnitude of the impending rocket launch in the way they eagerly brushed past the visitors to take their places at the front of the stage facing the auditorium. Red and white security tape kept everyone on the correct side of the open trap

door in the centre of the stage from which a deeply set, faint white light illuminated the torso-level cloud of billowy plastic orbs secured to each other, and to an invisible pulley with bright red wool. The orbs were not inflated enough to be mistaken for balloons, and with little trace of their original use as supermarket fresh produce bags, this strange, ethereal, luminous structure gave the stage space, now occupied by the audience who had spilled onto it from all sides, an otherworldly quality. The horn continued in celebratory blasts while each Afronaut was called by name and lineage from the sound and lighting booth on the upper level at the back of the auditorium, now lit as the rocket's flight deck. In a grand, poetic roll call, each Afronaut was praised for their mythical and technical contributions towards this momentous and long-awaited launch. The Afronauts took their places in the rocket's interior, facing the audience in the raked auditorium to form the shape of a tall triangle indicating the trajectory of the rocket. The countdown began and the room was flooded by what sounded like an approaching thunderstorm. Amidst this growing sound, the mechanics of the machine that was soon to launch could be heard. The light from the trap door intensified and the cloud of white billowy plastic orbs appeared to catch fire. At the blast off, several things happened at once: a final blast of sound ejected the plastic cloud into the air, taking the blinding fire-light with it; there was a blackout in the flight deck and the Afronauts disappeared from view. After several silent beats, Fela Kuti crept back into the hush. A door opened into the passage leading back to the lobby and main entrance of the theatre and as the audience left, they may have heard the quietly determined soundscape of rocket-building work beginning again (Kabwe, 2019).

Both space and time are concentrated at the beginning and end of this production, with the audience gathered together at these moments with collective focus on the safety

briefing and then the rocket launch. Between these moments, time is marked at the rate and pace of each individual experience of the installations. I recall that some audience members rushed through the installations and left early not knowing there was more to come, and others did not have time to see all that was offered, seeking out and taking up every opportunity for improvised engagement with the performers and their worksites. The space of the control chamber was designed to be compact and busy with the audience in close physical proximity to each other and to the launching rocket, with a final self-conscious inversion of typical spatial roles in theatre, as the performers move to the auditorium while the audience remains on the stage. The kudu horn call to the 'main control chamber' marked a change of tempo in the overall rhythm of the production. From what had been an upbeat, if not casual pace of wandering through the installations, to a gathering momentum that ended abruptly with the rocket launch and the disappearing of the cast. The quiet re-entry of the music and soundscape however suggested a continuation rather than a ceasing, designed to create a sense of future possibility for the audience. As articulated by Tuan: "When we stand before a prospect, our mind is free to roam" (1977:125). In the case of creating a heterotopia, Tompkins, through David Harvey argues that the presence of other worlds in performance must connect to a political function of some kind, "such as the attempt to articulate the potential for social change" (2014:22). Creating space for an audience's mind to roam then, becomes connected to their physical roaming through spaces designed to experiment with possibility.

As a production, *Astronautus Afrikanus* was conceptually centred on a commitment to creating space for an audience to imagine alternatives to existing realities by attempting to offer them ways to transcend time and geography to, as Sunstrum provocatively says,

“approach paradises that are yet-to-be known, yet-to-be seen, yet-to-be” (2016:141). This, in many ways encapsulates the approach to theatre and performance that a migrant attitude seeks to foster. At the time, the notion of African futures was seen by the students as a useful strategy for imagining alternative realities, particularly in the context of an actively oppressive institutional environment. While held by the conceptual container of African futurism, the working process of the production, was greatly preoccupied with the practical tasks of making by creatively problem solving how audiences would experience the work if they were not sitting facing the stage, where installations would be located, how to create coherence without narrative signposts, and working the details of individual sites of performance. Throughout this process, parallel conversations about the work and the student protests were dominated by the sense that African futurism (and science fiction in general) is in fact not about the future, but about the dreams, nightmares, conflicts, opportunities and realities of the moment in which the work is being made (Eriksen & Gjerris, 2017). An important *chronopolitical* critique is raised by Mark Dery, who registers the potential irrelevance of futuristic thinking at a time of crisis by saying that, “The notion of Afrofuturism gives rise to a troubling antinomy: Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures?” (1994:180). In response, I would argue that both *Deep Space Scrolls* and *Astronautus Afrikanus* attempt to do the work of assembling what Kodwo Eshun calls, “*countermemories* that contest the colonial archive [...]” (2003:288), thereby maintaining a “vigilance that is necessary to indict imperial modernity [...] into the field of the future” (Eshun, 2003:288). To counter any notion that the work of decoloniality is only the work of those *communities whose past has been deliberately rubbed out*, Mignolo reminds us in his chapter titled *What Does it Mean to Decolonize?* that,

The matrix (colonial) created by a minority of the human species rules the life of the majority of the human species. Power is that instance of the colonial matrix in which all of us, human beings, are being ruled, and the ruling includes of course the creators and gatekeepers of the rule: the ruler is ruled by its own desire and compulsion to rule. Decoloniality is the exercise of power within the colonial matrix to undermine the mechanism that keeps it in place requiring obeisance. (2018:114)

In this light, *Astronautus Afrikanus* models an exercise of power within the colonial matrix which works to undermine the colonial mechanism, and part of this undermining is in the work of historical imagination that is mobilised through the evocation of Nkoloso's descendants as space technicians in the present, occupied with the business of preparing to travel to the moon. For Tompkins, "The potential existence of a paradoxical world on stage wherein both the actual and the 'conjured' locations coexist offers the opportunity to practice – to 'rehearse,' as it were – potential socio-political alternatives to the larger space-time reality" (2014:37). These socio-political alternatives are embodied in the figure of the migrant who is more than a metaphor for liberation, but rather functions more critically outside a particular social order. Nkoloso represents this kind of migrant figure, who even at the moment of Zambia's apparent liberation from British colonial rule, engages notions of independence that are much further reaching than a mere exchange of flags.

Unlike *Deep Space Scrolls*, whose dramaturgy creates an experience of a future history, *Astronautus Afrikanus* tries to create an imagined future in the present. It is imagined that this future is attained through preparation for physical mobility, and the accessing of a long continuum of African knowledge-making, as well as a practice of "venturing beyond," an artistic (and political) pursuit claimed by Sunstrum. She encapsulates the function of African futurist praxis when she speaks of her studio practice saying: "I am interested in reclaiming and re-ordering narratives of power via an imaginative

or speculative occupation of geographies (space) and histories (time)” (2016:149) As a performance that was created specifically for a site, *Astronautus Afrikanus* attempted to venture beyond at several scales. Heidi Taylor, quoted in Tompkins, captures the multiple resonances of the work through the astronomical metaphors she uses to describe the world-making effect of site-specific works that place audiences and performers in more fluid relationship, when she says: “[I]t creates not a world but a universe, with its orbits and gravitational pull, constant movement, explosions and black holes. Other worlds exist in a universe” (quoted in Tompkins, 2014:43). Taylor goes on to note that there is often a higher degree of randomness in such work brought about by the increase of improvised, unscripted text which demands dramaturgy so that the significance of the scripted elements is not lost (in Tompkins, 2014:43).

Conclusion

By investigating the spatiality of the literal and metaphoric contexts they provide, we have the chance to discern, through performance, the existing social and political realities that structure our lives and to chart alternatives to them. These productions unsettle the familiar to address how the socio-political milieu in which a performance takes place might work differently. (Tompkins, 2014:44)

In the context of the 2015 student uprisings to which the cast of this project was negotiating their degrees of allegiance, the last diminishing ‘crackpot’ comment made by the British interviewer was heavily critiqued in an early rehearsal. The discussion around the video centred on what students read as the deep levels of disregard and ridicule not only of Nkoloso and his project, but by extension African ingenuity. The students read Nkoloso’s capacity to dream as big as the superpowers of the day as delegitimised by the British interviewer and, by extension, the West. As one of the few pieces of available archival footage of Nkoloso, the video was seen as writing him and his project into history as largely

illegitimate and comical. They perceived the tropes of representation here as having the capacity to rupture the connection between Africanness and intelligence, ingenuity and knowledge-making in a powerful way that corresponds to Nelson Maldonado-Torres' view of the "logic of the modern/colonial attitude" as one that is "constant[ly] questioning the full humanity of the colonized" (2017:439). These readings set an early agenda for our project as one that was concerned with challenging pessimistic discourses on Africa as a part of the work of decoloniality. As with *Deep Space Scrolls* however, the opportunity exists to not only read *Astronautus Afrikanus* as a (re)assertion of African ingenuity, but to also see what might happen when the temporal distance between the past and the future is collapsed into the present. Both works are examples of how the past and the future can be evoked by distance (Tuan, 1977). In the case of *Astronautus Afrikanus*, this was a distance that was bridged and traversed by a mobile audience who engaged at several levels with the politics of movement.

In response to the issues raised by the student movement about knowledge production in a university setting - what it means to know, who determines what is constituted as knowledge, how it is validated and what kinds of knowledge systems are de-legitimised and how? – the devising process took a particular shape. Each cast member conducted a self-directed research process including detailed engagements with family members, with more or less available historical records and their own ideas of African knowledge-making. This research formed the basis of generating their performance material and Pan African Space station characters as technicians, each working with a particular expertise in the collective work of the space station. Among them we had Afropythonisam, a student studying dance and physics who harnessed energy from each of the four elements;

AfroMogolo, an old man (played by a female law and drama student) who drew energy from the stars with his stationary bicycle as an experiment in creating renewable energy; and AfroCyan and AfroSechat, second- and third-year drama and psychology students, who ran tests on lunar soil samples in the ZASA lab. These were just a few of the cast of eleven who demonstrated that thinking and making “from and with the modernity/coloniality’s underside, margins, and cracks” (Walsh, 2018:20) is a playful and productive position from which to re-think, re-imagine, re-make and perhaps re-exist in.

Designer Illka Louw ran a series of workshops on materials and objects as the ‘texts’ of performance, both in relation to the actors but also as performative elements in and of themselves which audiences would engage with directly. As the content evolved, so did the form and eventually what was written as the performance text was a rich assemblage of characters, transformed spaces, objects, costumes, environments and installations until the final rocket launch – a spectacle of light and sound. Returning to the spectacles created by Punchdrunk and *Fuerza Bruta*, Alston describes his own experience of the immersive works of these companies, as an “*experience machine*” (2016:2). He borrows this term from political philosopher, Robert Nozick, who used it to describe a thought experiment he proposed in 1974 to “stimulate the brain to artificially induce desired experiences” (Alston, 2016:2). Alston re-purposes it to describe immersive works as,

enclosed and other-worldly spaces in which all the various cogs and pulleys of performance – scenography, choreography, dramaturgy, and so on – coalesce around a central aim: to place the audience members in a thematically cohesive environment that resources their sensuous, imaginative and explorative capabilities as productive and involving aspects of a theatre aesthetic. (2016:2)

This resourcing of an audience's *sensuous, imaginative, and explorative capabilities* resonates with the "spatial machinations" (Tompkins, 2014:44) of heterotopias and strikes me as a valuable component of a migrant attitude, and one that feeds my creative practice. As a contribution to a migrant attitude, this resourcing includes a making visible of different perspectives that displace Western rationality, and that function as a way of undoing, disobeying and delinking (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:4) from the colonial matrix of power, "toward an otherwise of thinking, sensing, believing doing and living" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:4) that is exemplified by migrant life. In this way the cogs and pulleys of performance provide much necessary machinery for the work of decoloniality. The danger of centring migration in this work as a liberatory metaphor is that it has the capacity to reduce migrant experience to abstraction by obscuring the social and political violence that often constitutes the migrant condition (Ali, Christopher & Nair, 2020). The dramaturgy of *Astronautus Afrikanus* certainly required the audience to engage in leaps of their imaginations, but these leaps were grounded in the context of the very present material reality and embodied experience of a South African student movement, set against the story of a Zambian freedom fighter with a transcendent liberatory vision. In this way the migrant as a liberatory metaphor is tethered to a set of specific socio-historical contexts that are not abstracted. Migrantitude is further engaged in this project by staging a South-to-South encounter that [...] "decenters the global North as the orbit of the world's processes, futures, and history" (Coly, 2020:170). Where migrantitude as an artistic genre feature Africa as a site of both arrival and departure, *Astronautus Afrikanus* proposes that Africa can be a site of departure to elsewhere, besides the global North, and this elsewhere is populated by the imaginations of the audience.

Towards conceptualizing a migrant attitude for theatre and performance, *Astronautus Afrikanus* also offers a way of thinking about the spatial element of a performance work. It asks what the socio-political implications are between the stage world, the work's venue and the world that the theatre is situated in. It proposes that part of the commitment to imagining alternative realities might be to collapse boundaries between audiences, performers, and the materials of the theatrical world in order to intensify the relationship with the 'real world.' The production asks what might emerge when the relationship of the stage world and the actual world are intensified as a way of pointing to something different from the existing spatio-political structures. *Astronautus Afrikanus* also models a way to invite an audience to embody a migrant attitude through their physical movement through the work and their engagement with the invitation to acknowledge and then transcend both time and geography in order to do the political work of confronting power by imagining alternatives to the very present socio-political realities that literally and figuratively surrounded the production. Furthermore, by staging a relationship between South Africa and Zambia's incommensurate but shared history against a common source of oppression, in this case (neo)colonialism, the production serves to decentre the global north by focusing on south-to-south movements and encounters with the belief that, "[...] there is much at stake, epistemologically, in attending to the routes of migritude into Africa" (Coly, 2020:170).

A List of Concluding Questions

Patel creates an identitarian category for what it means to be migrant that is not connected to nation, ethnicity, origin, or destination but characterized by movement. Migritude is also characterized by labor, scarcity, contingency, insecurity, community ethics, and savvy—all of which go unexpressed in dominant narratives. While these are shared migrant experiences, it is important to note Migritude, both Patel's text and the scholarly framework it inspired, emphasize embodied experience and material histories that underscore consequential differences between varying conditions of movement and politico-legal status (asylum seeker, refugee, exile, nomad, economic migrant) to challenge the attenuation of the migrant into figure or metaphor. (Ali, Christopher. & Nair, 2020:381)

CONCLUSION

Expectation, hope, intention towards possibility that has still not become: this is not only a basic feature of human consciousness, but, concretely corrected and grasped, a basic determination within objective reality as a whole. (Bloch, 1996:7)

Still, in this current moment of stark, murderous contradiction, we are compelled to envision and produce work that is deeply humane and capacious, as well as analyses that not only reflect “real life” on the ground but also speculate on liberatory models from the past and project our imaginations forward, to possible futures. (Allen, 2012:214)

Performance and politics are always intertwined. It was in the theatre that I first learned to use my migrant biography as source material for artistic exploration and saw other theatre-makers do the same. It was through a process of performance-making and/as research that I identified a creative obsession with migration that has oriented my artistic practice and guided the work on many creative and research projects, of which this thesis is one. The quest at the heart of this project has been inspired by a noticeable organic shift in my own thinking and making, from a thematic exploration of migration using stories, ideas, images and metaphors based on (my) migrant identity, to using migration more strategically in the dramaturgy to reference other possibilities. To this end, *Theatres of Migritude: Towards a Dramaturgy of African Futures*, has tried to bring migration and Africanfuturism into closer proximity to work through some ideas that demonstrate a relationship between the real and the imaginary movements of people. At this meeting place, migrants come to represent their variegated selves, they are not erased as subjects and they also come to represent the subversion of conventions, a way of thinking/making/doing towards imagining life free of the kinds of constraints that migrant ways of being typically symbolize. Instead of internalizing these very real constraints, however, my interest is in working through migration to create a loose set of attitudes one might adopt in relation to empire, power, nationality, sexuality, gender and subjecthood without making metaphor of the migrant to

the point of abstraction. The thesis conducts a series of migrant-centred analyses of five case studies towards framing a making-practice for theatre that is concerned with African futures. The research question at the heart of the thesis is, *what does it mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance making?* And the quest undertaken here has been to find out what alternative understandings of African migrancy exist in the spirit of all the works studied. What I have discovered on this quest and attempted to respond to here, is an approach to thinking about how a relationship between migration and Africanfuturism can be put towards a dramaturgical practice mobilized in the direction of possibility, potential and a more hopeful future.

As bell hooks has said,

Our living depends on our ability to conceptualize alternatives, often improvised. Theorizing about this experience aesthetically, critically is an agenda for radical cultural practice. For me, this space of radical openness is a margin – a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a “safe” place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance. (1990:149)

My project also aims to join the *community of resistance* that is Black, migrant cultural production by contributing theatre and performance works. It follows Shailja Patel’s lead into a contemporary iteration of migritude formulated through her caustic autobiographical performance poem *Migritude*, in which she stages an unapologetic confrontation with colonial power from the perspective of a South Asian Kenyan migrant. Up until my discovery of Edward Mukuka Nkoloso, my migrant imaginings had been earth-bound. The introduction to Nkoloso, exploded the idea of territorial/terrestrial borders and led me to seek out and make performance work that engaged dual notions of movement as resistance through the confrontation with power, inspired by Patel, and movement as an

opening of possibilities that allows change to be imagined and actively pursued. Bringing these two angles together towards an expanded articulation of migritude, has been the work of this thesis. It has sought to do this by identifying migrant attitudes in each of the case studies that guide a formulation of migritude that can be used in theatre-making. The markers of this new formulation are where it can be seen that south-to-south encounters are foregrounded, the concept of migrant is linked to the concept of colonial borders, and Africa is defined by movement.

As a site of both arrival and departure, a diasporic African identity is created that refuses the *return* of Black Atlantic diasporic discourse and also refuses to internalize the rhetoric that reduces Black migrant life to pathology. Migration is central to a production's form, content and context and the migrant is featured as the facilitator of social re-imagining and an agent of potentiality. Each of the case studies illuminates these features towards a coherent dramaturgical framework that I am calling a dramaturgy of African Futures, which is ultimately a dramaturgical practice with an emancipatory agenda. The migrant attitudes that emerge from the case studies are not intended to create a schematic structure with clearly defined outcomes, but instead a dynamic, migrant compositional logic that is socio-political and aesthetic. Migritude, like marginality in hooks' terms, is seen not as a "site of deprivation" but as a "site of radical possibility, a space of resistance" and "a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives" (hooks, 1990:149). hooks goes on to imagine this as: "[...] A site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" (1990:150). *Migritude* sets the stage for this work by

foregrounding the precarities that mark migrant life as being created by global-historical, imperial processes. It focuses attention on the aspect of migritude that shackles the concept of migrant to the concept of colonial and neo-colonial borders and insists that the material reality of migrant life is acknowledged and understood as part of a continuing process of imperialism. In *Every Year, Every Day I am Walking* the notion of borders is transcended through the fluid configurations of subject and object to re-enchant the world. *Moj of the Antarctic* rehearses the refusals of migritude that gesture towards unbounded life: Blackness as a refusal of systemic whiteness, queerness as a refusal of heteropatriarchy and death as a refusal to return to a life deemed uninhabitable, and a general refusal to be regulated. In *Migritude, Every Year, Every Day, Afrogalactica* and *Astronautus*, Africa is a site of departure and arrival. As a “category of thought” Africa is thereby “remobilized as diaspora, [as] a site of entanglements, a laboratory for all sorts of encounters and crossings, an incubator of cosmopolitanisms and modernities, and a ferment of migritude *avant la lettre*” (Coly, 2020:170). *Afrogalactica* and *Astronautus Afrikanus* connect events in African history to each other, and also to a speculative past (*Afrogalactica*) and an imagined future (*Astronautus*) to propose a chrono-politics of migritude. Theatres of Migritude are concerned with how migrants shape a poetics of freedom. They are invested in migration at the centre of a critical faculty for making and reading performance work that nourishes the collective imagination.

Theatres of Migritude is a proposal for an African migrant focused dramaturgy. Through this research project, I have discovered that having a migrant attitude means paying attention to movement, to states of transit, to power relations at play, conditions of change and to how potentiality can be infused into an audience’s experience. In the

footsteps of Elinor Fuchs' dramaturgical guide, *Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to ask a Play* (2004), which she describes as a "template for the critical imagination" (2004:5), I offer the following questions as dramaturgical prompts for Theatres of Migritude:

What does it mean to have a migrant attitude for theatre and performance making?

What does migration look like? - is it real or imaginary and how do you know?

What modes of itinerancy are apparent? What or who is moving? By what forces, and where do they rest?

When is movement figured as privilege and/or as transgression?

Where are the figures on route to?

Is the audience enrolled as travellers, settlers, visitors, tourists, locals or foreigners?

How do you know the above and what are the implications of your observation?

What leaps into the unknown are the audience asked to take?

What is the temporal logic of this world?

How do the past, present and future interact?

How is the (neo)colonial project made manifest?

Whose marginal story/ies are the centre of attention?

How are African futures signalled or gestured to?

Is colonial ideology in regard to culture, society or humanity reproduced or challenged?

How is the utopian glimpsed?

How is change imagined?

How is the territorial and extraterritorial traversed?

How is instability fostered, and does it manifest in the form, content, context or in the interaction of all three?

How is the past investigated? Through personal or political means, or both?

What kind of speculative thinking are you asked to do?

What allegories of the foreigner are present?

How are the spatial and temporal dimensions of the theatrical world realized? Is it through the movement of objects, people, ideas or something else?

How is the audience experience steeped in potentialities?

How does the work signal towards living an unbounded life?

Migritude is an interdisciplinary genre (and movement?) that addresses Africa as a point of migratory arrival and departure. Africanfuturism, an interdisciplinary subgenre of science fiction that looks out to the world from Africa, “is concerned with the connection between cultural expressivities and performances and technology occurring on the African continent and which addresses the history, science, and experiences of people living there” (Mougoue, 2021:1). By pairing migritude and Africanfuturism I have attempted, through the questions above, to create the starting point for the consideration of how a dramaturgy of African Futures might be put to work in my own theatre-making practice. I resonate strongly with Sisonke Msimang who writes in her memoir titled *Always Another Country*:

When you are a child who grows up in exile as I did, when you are a refugee or a migrant, or someone whose path is not straightforward, you quickly learn that belonging is conjunctive: you will only survive if you master the words ‘if,’ ‘and,’ ‘but,’ ‘either’ and ‘both’. You learn that you will be fine for as long as you believe in the collective, your tribe. (Msimang, 2017:5)

These conjunctions describe the “[...] being-in-the-world of the migrant” (Ali, A., Christopher, I.F. & Nair, S.M., 2020:55) and suggest what it might entail to have a migrant

attitude for life, let alone theatre-making. It is these conjunctions that underlie the questions above in aid of continuously building on ideas, probing those already on the table, offering alternative paths and other doors to open and generally maintaining a space of possibility, incompleteness and non-arrival. My *belief in the collective* is strong and demonstrated in part by my preference for collaborative, interdisciplinary theatre-making. I would like to reflect on one such project here in conclusion as an instance of the migrature artistic practice that has continued to articulate itself alongside the writing of this thesis.

Jacaranda Time, was a 2017 collaboration between digital artist and scholar Tegan Bristow, electronic sound composer Cameron Harris, and me. We were all academic/artist hybrids at the Wits School of Arts in Johannesburg at the time, in the divisions of Digital Arts, Music and Theatre and Performance, respectively. Tegan was one of the curators for Season 2 of the *Centre for the Less Good Idea*²¹, a home for incubating works across disciplines that do not fit neatly in a traditional gallery or theatre. She had invited Cameron and I to join her in co-creating an interactive, digital performance work as part of a series of performances to be staged on a scaffold. I offered to write the performance text, or in this case more of a performance score, and also shape the evolving material of the performers, Thandazile Sonia Radebe and Namatshego Khutsoane. It was October in Johannesburg, and my leaning towards migratory themes settled on the Jacaranda, a tree that blooms magnificently in many parts of the African continent between September and November including Lusaka and Johannesburg, two of my home-bases, transforming monochromatic urban landscapes with its iconic purple flowers. The Jacaranda has a migrant history with its

²¹ <https://lessgoodidea.com/about>

seed pods having been carried from South America to other parts of the world through the colonial expeditions of the 1800s “to beautify the cities” (Fitchett & Raik, 2021:1). My own migrant ancestry as well as a desire to play expansively with time, were the other core inspirations that led to the writing of a poetic performance text which was performed by Namatshego as she traversed the scaffolding. The text formed the basis from which to engage notions of the transversal, of migration, movement, blocking and flowing through space and time, in the real and the imaginary. Both Cameron’s sound composition and Tegan’s digital falling Jacaranda blossoms were interactive elements, activated by Thandazile’s choreography on the lower levels of the scaffold. In retrospect, *Jacaranda Time*, seeded the kinds of questions that have emerged above at the intersection of migration and Africanfuturism, as an extract of the performance text reveals:

She was. He is
They will be an approaching thunderstorm
She is a September breeze at his back
He was a suitcase
She dreams a path lined with purple blossoms
He will be the distance between here and Maputo
She is walking
He was walking towards her all of his life.

She is a story
He was a pile of shoes with the soles worn thin
He will be a song
She will find a purple omen on her shoulder
He was a song, an old song that the old people used to sing
They are a field of maize, mile after mile between Harare and Lusaka
She is a dusty sunset
He was a passport photo
She will be the road that rises up to eat the shoes off his feet
They are a blue-lilac-purple atlas
She is a hole in the road
He is a small stone and a heard of goats
They were the first rains approaching
She will be here tomorrow

He is hope.

He was a talking drum convincing her to stay
They are speaking in tongues
She will stop and hear him on the wind
He was a leopard
He was the story of a leopard
He was the story of a hungry leopard that followed him from Livingstone to Ndola
She is a hunter and a transistor radio
They will walk towards each other all of their lives
He was a walking stick waiting to be found on a dry riverbed
She was an eagle

He will be sadza and dried tilapia
They are counting stars
He will collect water from deep in the gorge, the boiling pot of Victoria Falls
She was a vulture on a baobab branch, shoulders hunched over the road
They are a kudu through the windscreen
She will find a purple omen on her shoulder
He was in love and missing a shoe
She was a dusty brown jacket
They are traveling time and thin from walking
She will be thundering smoke
She was the Chief but walked away towards Blantyre to follow her purple dreams
He is the Limpopo.

Together with Namatshego, we created the character of a restless, time-travelling storyteller in search of something ever-elusive – another half, a resting place, a memory – embodied by the ethereal figure of Thandazile, whose dance vocabulary controlled the flow, frequency, volume and texture of the sonic and visual landscape. This *looking back* to *Jacaranda Time* instantiates the kind of process that is elaborated on in the methodology section here through Agamben (2009) when he speaks of a retracing in order to locate a *moment of arising* and not an original point of departure. What is more conscious to me now, is how the dramaturgy of *Jacaranda Time* articulates the kinds of migrant attitudes that I have attempted to gather up here. The text of *Jacaranda Time* responds to the prompts above for instance, through the interactions of past, present and future through the fluid use of ‘is’ ‘were’ and ‘will’ upsetting notions of consecutive time and perhaps

inviting the audience to engage with a more simultaneous temporal logic instead. There are iconic migrant images evoked throughout the text including suitcases, walking, shoes, and names of places. It strikes me that the blur of lines between people, animals, plant life and objects signal different ecologies of migration each shaped by either biological or arbitrary forces, as Sonia Shah explains:

The movements of wild species are shaped primarily by the constraints of their own biological capacities and the particular qualities of the geographic features they encounter on their journeys, such as the steepness of the mountainsides, and the speed and saltiness of ocean currents. The paths taken by human migrants, in contrast, are shaped primarily by abstractions. Distant political leaders lay down rules based on political and economic concerns, allowing some in and keeping others out. They draw and redraw invisible lines on the landscape in biologically arbitrary ways. Transportation companies offer passage on certain routes and not others, depending less on the wind, weather, and tides than on which ones net them the highest margins of profit. (2020:10)

Besides this play between political and biological determinants of migration, I would like to think that the fluid transformations between persons, animals, birds and objects also invites an alternate legibility for the figure of the migrant that is liberated from the entrapping discourse that tends to pathologize people and indeed plants and animals that move, under the category of 'invasive species.' The Jacaranda tree in this case is an allegory for the pioneer migrant and is incidentally categorized as an alien invasive species in South Africa due to its water consumption, so while the existing trees are not removed, their deliberate replanting is prohibited (Fitchett & Raik, 2021).

The collaborative process of making this work is documented in the second issue of *Ellipses*, an online creative arts research journal²². Titled *Jacaranda Time: Diagrams of*

²² <http://www.ellipses.org.za/project/jacaranda-time-diagrams-of-collaboration/>

Collaboration, this version of the work combines our original material in the forms of text, sound and digital code, with commentary from all five collaborators on the process of making and presenting the work at the *Centre for the Less Good Idea*. *Diagrams of Collaboration* expands beyond a documentation of the work and reflection on our process, by creating a new project which invites the audience to an online stage to interact with extracts of the raw materials in the form of commentaries from the collaborators, code, sound samples and text. In the live performance, the jacaranda blossoms responded to Thandazile's movements which also modulated the live sound composition, while the text was spoken by Namatshego. In the virtual performance,

[...] the audience can themselves 'modulate' the interactive elements by exploring how the data begins to overlap and inform a reflective exploratory whole. For example, raising the volume of the sound samples feeds colour data to the scene and changes the behaviours of the falling Jacaranda 'blossoms'. [...] The speed of the line-by-line flow of script can be altered. The collaborator commentaries can be played over one another and are overlaid by the choice of sound samples. (Bristow, T., Harris, C. & Kabwe, M., 2017)

In the original work, the digital Jacaranda flowers, electronic soundscape and mythic poetic text, created an other-worldly quality in which the migrant's gesture to the elsewhere was embodied by the searching quality of the performance languages. I believe that a heightened quality was also created by the experience of simultaneously experimenting, designing and performing. What *Diagrams of Collaboration* allowed us to do, was to unpack and make sense of the work for ourselves by articulating some of the questions that lay at the heart of our frustrations, longings and euphoric moments of discovery. We asked what might have happened if we had understood the jacaranda software and the sound as performers in their own right? And if Tegan and Cameron as the developers of those performance languages had understood their glitchy, unpredictable set-up as part of a durational performance, as opposed to features of the technical background.

We asked each other about what levels of emotional investment are necessary of performer whose body conducts the sound. We asked about the relationship of spirituality and technology and expressed in different ways a longing for something that released the pressure to create something 'polished,' particularly when the performance elements are so wayward, and the project was so experimental. Between us, I think we articulated a desire to have brought a migrant attitude more strongly to bear on a project that did not need to seek a point of arrival. We wished to rest more in the ebb and flow of discovery through points of connection and points of departure.

A Dramaturgy of African Futures is a dynamic compositional exercise that works with grammars of migration. It is mobilized by restlessness and a yearning for what else might be possible.

She was the last silverback
He is an invasive species
They will be found under a bridge eating purple blossoms
They were a bottle of warm coca-cola from the petrol station in Kabwe
He was an over ripe mango on the roadside
They will be an ornamental shrub in British Africa
She is roasted maize
They are the first of many cigarettes smoked at the Chirundu border
She will be bright lights and big city blues
She will sleep rough until he becomes the world in a guava
They were thrown carelessly over her shoulder.

They are the thunder drowning out Brenda Fassie on the radio
She will be a spherical ball of incandescent gas
She is the four giraffes of the Southern Cross as they walk the purple route
They will shoot the breeze with stones from his catapult
He was the smell of roasting groundnuts
He is. She will be. They were the first rains approaching
He was a waterfall thundering smoke
They will be a Portuguese sailboat

She is a handshake
He was a sweet goodbye kiss
He is 3 zebras on Orion's belt and they will take twelve years to go around the sun

She went north with her three children and ended up in Bulawayo
They were a ritual and watched the rains come
He is buried at *MaDojeni* and 70 elephant tusks surround his grave
He will leave Nkata Bay for Johannesburg, pray at the banks of the Limpopo and
marry in Bulawayo
They had sacred duties.

She will be a fisherman on the Kafue River
He was drowned by a mermaid and his body never found
She will remember piles of rotting mangos on the roadside
She is an unknown birth date and will swear that within an hour of completing the
ritual, it will begin to rain
He was born in the line of Chief Zingalume, Amfumu
They will follow the purple roads from Fort Jamison through Kwa Mutoko to pray at
the banks of the Limpopo
He will not reach Johannesburg.

She is a brown jug in a red suitcase with a brass clasp
They are travellers born
She was smoke and rain
He is a purple oasis of home in foreign wilderness
He was a woody seedpod on a boat from Brazil to Pretoria
They were a forest of blue rosewood fern
She is semi-deciduous with a round, spreading mauve-blue lilac crown
He was a leaf-less branch.

She will be a tree top resting on their rooftop
They will drink warm Fanta in Kampala in a purple tunnel
They are sprawling, undulating terrain
She is the Spirit of this place.

He was a lonely visitor with a broken shoe
He will leave stories in his footsteps for the chameleons to read
They were the steep rise that joined the sky
He will melt into the Nairobi sunset
She was a blue jacaranda not yet in bloom and he is parched

She will dance *mutomboko*
She is *Lesá*, the Bemba creator god of the future.
He is *ifikolwe* the ancestors of the past
They are walking towards each other all of their lives.

Bibliography

- 4th Year Performance Students, W.U. 2015. *Nomads Among Us* Origins Museum, Johannesburg: Wits School of Arts.
- Abebe, A. 2019. Performing Diaspora. In *The Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies*. R. Cohen & C. Fischer, Eds. 1st ed. London: Routledge. pp 55-62. 10.4324/9781315209050-7.
- Adebayo, M. 2008. Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey. In *Hidden Gems*. D. Osborne, Ed. London: Oberon Books. pp 149-190.
- Adebayo, M. 2009. The Supernatural Embodied Text: Creating Moj of the Antarctic with the Living and the Dead. In *Sexualities/Textualities and Technologies: Writings of the Body in 21st Century Performance*. S. Broadhurst & J. Machon, Eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp 92-102.
- Adebayo, M. 2011. Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey. In *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One*. London: Oberon Books. pp 19-64.
- Adesanmi, P. 2005. Re-Defining Paris: Trans-Modernity and Francophone African Migritude Fiction. *Modern Fiction Studies*. 51(4) pp 958-975.
- Agamben, G. 2009. *The Signature of all Things: On Method*. New York: Zone Books.
- Ahmed, S. 1999. Home and Away: Narratives of Migration and Estrangement. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. 2(3) pp 329-347. DOI:10.1177/136787799900200303.
- Ahmed, S. 2017. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ali, A., Christopher, I.F. & Nair, S.M. 2020. Introduction: Migritude from a Comparative Perspective. *The Minnesota Review (Minneapolis, Minn.)*. (94):54-66. DOI:10.1215/00265667-8128407.
- Allen, J.S. 2012. Black/Queer/Diaspora at the Current Conjuncture. *Glq*. 18(2-3) pp 211-248. DOI:10.1215/10642684-1472872.
- Allsopp, R. & Lepecki, A. 2008. Editorial: On Choreography. *Performance Research*. 13(1) pp 1-6. DOI:10.1080/13528160802465409.
- Alston, A. 2016. *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ashcroft, B. 2009. The Ambiguous Necessity of Utopia: Post-colonial Literatures and the Persistence of Hope. [Paper in special issue: Utopias Dystopias, Alternative Visions. Archer-Lean, Clare (ed).]. *Social Alternatives*. 28(3) pp 8-14.
- Ashcroft, B. 2012. Introduction: Spaces of Utopia. *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*. (2.1) pp 1-17.
- Baderoon, G. 2007. Preface In *Living on the Fence: Poems by Women who are Refugees from Various African Countries*. Y. Tal, M.M. Schuster & A. Schuster, Eds. Muizenberg: Women's Writing Workshops. pp 5-6.
- Bakewell, O. 2008 In Search of the Diasporas Within Africa. *African Diaspora*. 1 pp 5-27. DOI:10.1163/187254608X346024.
- Bakewell, O. & Landau, L.B. 2018. *Forging African Communities: Mobility, Integration and Belonging*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Bakhtin, M.M. & Holquist, M. 1981. *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Balfour, M. 2013. *Refugee performance practical encounters*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Balon, R. 2015. Kinless or Queer: The Unthinkable Queer Slave in Toni Morrison's "Beloved" and Robert O'Hara's "Insurrection: Holding History". *African American Review*. 48(1) pp 141-155. DOI:10.1353/afa.2015.0011.
- Barba, E. 2010. *On Directing and Dramaturgy: Burning the House*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203870297.
- Barr, M.S. 1992. *Feminist Fabulation: Space/Postmodern Fiction*. Iowa: University of Iowa Press.
- Barr, M.S. 2008. *Afro-future females: Black writers chart science fiction's newest new-wave trajectory*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.:
- Behar, K. 2016. *Object-Oriented Feminism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Behrndt, S.K. 2014. Dramaturgy and the Facilitation of Encounters. In *Dramaturgy in the New Millennium: Rationality, Performativity and Potentiality*. K. Pewny, J. Callens & J. Coppens, Eds. Brussels: Narr Verl. pp 130-143.
- Belle, L.V., Khan, Z., Smith, H.A. & Singh, J. 2020. Experimentations With the Archive: A Roundtable Conversation. *Feminist Review*. 125(1) pp 17-37. DOI:10.1177/0141778920931878.
- Bemong, N., Keunen, B., De Temmerman, K. & Borghart, P. 2010. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*. Gent: Academia Press. DOI:10.26530/OAPEN_377572.
- Bennett, J. 2010. *Vibrant matter: a political ecology of things*. Durham N.C: Duke University Press.:
- Bennett, S. 1990. *Theatre Audiences: A theory of Production and Reception*. London: Routledge.
- Bereano, N.K. 2007. Introduction. In *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde*. Berkley: Crossing Press. pp 8-12.
- Bloch, E. 1996. *The Principle of Hope*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Bloch, E. 2000. *The Spirit of Utopia*. 2nd ed. California: Stanford University Press.
- Bogart, A. & Gay, J. 2015. The Art of Collaboration: On Dramaturgy and Directing. In *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. M. Romanska, Ed. London: Routledge. pp 213-216.
- Bordwin, J. 2018. Katherine Behar, ed. Object-Oriented Feminism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. p 296. *Critical Inquiry*. 44(2):390-391. DOI:10.1086/695382.
- Borggreen, G. & Gade, R. 2013. *Performing archives/archives of performance*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen.
- Borghart, P., Keunen, B. & De Temmerman, K. 2010. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*. Gent: Academia Press. DOI:10.26530/OAPEN_377572.
- Bould, M. 2013. *Paradoxa No.25: Africa SF*. Danvers: Paradoxa.
- Bould, M. 2016. *From Afrofuturism to AfroSF*. Switzerland: IG Rote Fabrik.
- Bould, M. 2019. Afrofuturism and the archive: Robots of Brixton and Crumbs. *Science Fiction Film and Television*. 12(2) pp 171-193. DOI:10.3828/sfftv.2019.11.
- Bould, M. 2009. *The Routledge companion to science fiction*. New York, N.Y: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203871317.
- Boyce-Davies, C. 1994. *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. 1st ed. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203201404.

- Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. Florence: Routledge.
DOI:10.4324/9780203974919.
- Braidotti, R. 1994. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. 1st ed. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Braidotti, R. 2011. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Braziel, J.E. & Mannur, A. 2003. *Theorizing diaspora: a reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Bristow, T. 2012. We want the funk: What is Afrofuturism to the Situation of Digital Arts in Africa? *Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research*. 10(1):25-32. DOI:10.1386/tear.10.1.25_1.
- Bristow, T. 2016. Access to Ghosts. In *African Futures: Thinking About the Future in Word and Image*. L. Heidenreich-Seleme & S. O'Toole, Eds. New York: Kerber. pp 207-220.
- Bristow, T., Harris, C. & Kabwe, M. 2017a. *Jacaranda Time* [Performance]. Johannesburg: Centre for the Less Good Idea.
- Bristow, T., Harris, C. & Kabwe, M.B. 2017b. Jacaranda Time: Diagrams of Collaboration. *Ellipses: Journal of Creative Research*. (2) : <http://www.ellipses.org.za/project/jacaranda-time-diagrams-of-collaboration/>.
- Brown, A.M. 2021. *Holding Change: The way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Meditation*. Chico: AK Press.
- Brown, B. 2001. Thing Theory. *Critical Inquiry*. (28.1) pp 1-22.
- Brown, B. 2004. *Things*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Brubaker, R. 2005. The 'diaspora' diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 28(1) pp 1-19.
DOI:10.1080/0141987042000289997.
- Bryce, J. 2019. African Futurism: Speculative Fictions and "Rewriting the Great Book." *Research in African Literatures*. 50(1) pp 1-19. DOI:10.2979/reseafritlite.50.1.01.
- Butler, J. & Athanasiou, A. 2013. *Dispossession: the performative in the political: conversations with Athena Athanasiou*. Cambridge, UK; Polity Press.
- Campt, T.M. 2017. *Listening to images*. Durham: Duke University Press. DOI:10.1515/9780822373582.
- Campt, T.M. 2019. Black visibility and the practice of refusal. *Women & Performance*. 29(1) pp 79-87.
DOI:10.1080/0740770X.2019.1573625.
- Canut, C. & Sow, A. 2014. Testimonial Theatre and Migration Performance. *Africa Today* 2. (61.2) pp 3-18.
- Carstens, D. & Roberts, M. 2009. Protocols for Experiments in African Science Fiction. *Scrutiny* 2. 14(1) pp 79-94. DOI:10.1080/18125440903151694.
- Carter, P. 1992. *Living in a New Country: History, Travelling and Language*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Carter, P. 2004. *Material thinking: the theory and practice of creative research*. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press.
- Castles, S., Haas, H.D. & Miller, M.J. 2014. *The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cesaire, S. 2012. 1943: Surrealism and Us. In *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent (1941-1945) Suzanne Cesaire*. D. Maxim, Ed. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. pp 34-38.
- Chambers-Letson, J. 2018. *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life*. New York: New York University Press.

- Chatzidakis, A., Hakim, J., Litter, J., Rottenberg, C. & Segal, L. 2020. *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence*. London: Verso.
- Chela, E., Kona, B. & Moffett, H. 2017. *Migrations: New Short Fiction from Africa*. South Africa: Short Story Day Africa.
- Clacherty, G. & Welvering, D. 2006. *The Suitcase Stories: Refugee Children Reclaim Their Identities*. Cape Town: Double Storey.
- Clark, A. 2017. *Reading Space-time: A Chronotopic Analysis of the Science Fiction Genre*. The University of Auckland.
- Clark, K. & Holquist, M. 1984. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Coly, A.A. 2020. Postface. *The Minnesota Review (Minneapolis, Minn.)*. 2020(94) pp 169-173. DOI:10.1215/00265667-8128519.
- Conquergood, L.D. 2002. Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research. *TDR: Drama Review*. 46(2) pp 145-156. DOI:10.1162/105420402320980550.
- Cox, E. 2014. *Theatre & Migration*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; Palgrave Macmillan.
- Craft, W. & Craft, E. 1999. *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Craft, W., Craft, E. & Schoff, S.A. 2013. *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom: Or The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cresswell, T. 2010. Towards a Politics of Mobility. *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space*. 28(1) pp 17-31. DOI:10.1068/d11407.
- Cresswell, T. 2011. Towards a Politics of Mobility. In *African Cities Reader II: Mobilities and Fixtures*. N. Edjabe & E.A. (. Pieterse, Eds. Vlaeberg, South Africa: Chimurenga. pp 159-171.
- Cresswell, T. & Uteng, T.P. 2008. Gendered Mobilities: Towards a Holistic Understanding. In *Gendered Mobilities*. T.P. Uteng & T. Cresswell, Eds. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited. pp 1-12.
- Davies, C.B. 1994. *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. London: Routledge.
- Dawkins, M.A. 2012. *Clearly Invisible: Racial Passing and the Color of Cultural Identity*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.
- De Meyer, B. & ten Kortenaar, N. 2009. *The Changing Face of African Literature / les Nouveaux Visages de la Littérature Africaine*. Amsterdam: BRILL. pp ix-xii
- de Middel, C. 2012. *The Afronauts*. Madrid: Self-Published.
- Dean, D, McNeil D, Meerzon, Y. 2020. *Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture*: Palgrave Mcmillan
- Delany, S.R. 2012. *Starboard wine: More notes on the language of science fiction*. Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dentith, S. 1995. *Bakhtinian Thought: an Introductory Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. 1998a. Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression. *The Library Quarterly (Chicago)*. 68(3) pp 347-349. DOI:10.1086/602987.
- Derrida, J. 1998b. *Archive fever: a Freudian impression*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dery, M. 1994. Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R Delany, Greg Tate and Tricia Rose. In *Flame Wars: the discourse of cyber culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. pp 179-222.

- Dolan, J. 2005. *Utopia in performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Donato, K. & Gabaccia, D. 2016. *The Global Feminization of Migration: Past, Present and Future*. [August 15, 2017].
- Dotse, J. 2016. We Know We Will. In *African Futures: Thinking about the Future in Word and Image*. L. Heidenreich-Seleme & S. O'Toole, Eds. Bielefeld: Kerber. pp 23-34.
- Douglass, M.C. 1854. *Educational Laws of Virginia*. Cleveland: John P. Jewett & Co.
- Eckersall, P., Monaghan, P. & Beddie, M. 2014. Dramaturgy as Ecology: A Report from the Dramaturgies Project. In *New Dramaturgy: International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. K. Trencsenyi & B. Cochrane, Eds. London: Bloomsbury. pp 18-35.
- Eckersall, P, Grehan, G and Scheer, E 2017 *New Media Dramaturgy: Performance Media and New-Materialism* Palgrave Macmillan: London
- Edwards, B.H. 2001. The Uses of Diaspora. *Social Text* 66. (19.1): pp 45-73.
- Eriksen, M.M. & Gjerris, M. 2017. On Utopias and Finding Courage in a Hopeless Situation. In *Science Fiction, Ethics and the Human Condition*. Cham: Springer. pp 227-246.
- Eshun, K. 2003. Further Considerations on Afrofuturism. *CR (East Lansing, Mich.)*. 3(2) pp 287-302. DOI:10.1353/ncr.2003.0021.
- Espin, O. 1999. *Women Crossing Boundaries: A Psychology of Immigration and Transformations of Sexuality*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203905241
- Feldman, A. 2018. Re/entangling Irish and Nigerian diasporas: Colonial amnesias, decolonial aesthetics and archive-assemblage praxis. *Cultural Dynamics*. 30(3) pp 173-198. DOI:10.1177/0921374018795077.
- Fensham, R. 2009. *To Watch Theatre: Essays on Genre and Corporeality*. Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang S.A.
- Féral, J. & Bermingham, R.P. 2002. Theatricality: The Specificity of Theatrical Language. *SubStance*. 31(2) pp 94-108. DOI:10.1353/sub.2002.0026.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. 2008. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203894989.
- Fitchett, J., M & Raik, K. 2021. Phenological advance of blossoming over the past century in one of the world's largest urban forests, Gauteng City-Region, South Africa. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*. 63 pp 1-8. DOI:10.1016/j.ufug.2021.127238 : <https://www.sciencedirect.com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/science/article/pii/S1618866721002636> [Aug 30, 2022].
- Fleishman, M. 2009. Knowing Performance: Performance as Knowledge Paradigm for Africa. *South African Theatre Journal*. 23(1) pp 116-136. DOI:10.1080/10137548.2009.9687905.
- Fleishman, M. 2012. The Difference of Performance as Research. *Theatre Research International*. 37(1) pp 28-37. DOI:10.1017/S0307883311000745.
- Fleishman, M. 2015a. Beyond Capture: The Indifference of Performance as Research. (Unpublished).
- Fleishman, M. 2015b. Dramaturges of Displacement in the Magnet Theatre Migration Project. In *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; Palgrave Macmillan. pp 12-36.
- Fleishman, M. 2016. Making Space for Ideas: The Knowledge Work of Magnet Theatre. In *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space*. M. Lewis & A. Krueger, Eds. 1st ed. Pretoria: UNISA. pp 53-75.
- Fleishman, M., Reznik, J. & Yisa, F. 2012. Every Year, Every Day I am Walking. In *The Magnet Theatre 'Migration' Plays*. J. Reznik, and others, Ed. Mowbray: Junkets.

- Flockemann, M. 2016. 'Being There': The Evolution of Performance Aesthetics from Medea (1994-96) to the Magnet Theatre 'Migration Plays' (2012). In *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space*. M. Lewis & A. Krueger, Eds. UNISA: Pretoria. pp 83-103.
- Foster, C.I. 2015a. "Migrants with Attitude": Shailja Patel and the Phenomenology of South Asian African Diaspora. *South Asian Review*. (36.3) pp 109-122.
- Foster, C.I. 2015b. *Black Migrant Literature, New Africa Diaspora, and the Phenomenology of Movement*. New York: City University of `New York.
- Foster, C.I. 2019. *Conscripts of Migration: Neoliberal Globalization, Nationalism, and the Literature of New African Diasporas*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Fraser, M.M. 2012. Once upon a problem. *The Sociological Review (Keele); Sociol Rev.* 60:84-107. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02118. x.
- Fuchs, E. 2004. EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Some Questions to Ask a Play. *Theater (New Haven, Conn.)*. 34(2) pp 4-9.
- Gallien, C. 2017. The Subversive Power of the Migrant: About Thomas Nail, The Figure of the Migrant, Stanford UP. : <https://booksandideas.net/The-Subversive-Power-of-the-Migrant.html> [September 22, 2021].
- Garner, J.V. 2010. Giorgio Agamben: The signature of all things: on method, Luca D'Isanto with Kevin Attell (tr.): Zone Books, 2009, 124 pp, (hbk), *Continental Philosophy Review*. 43(4) pp 579-588. DOI:10.1007/s11007-010-9158-1.
- Garuba, H. 2003. Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society. *Public Culture*. 15(2) pp 261-286. DOI:10.1215/08992363-15-2-261.
- Garvin, P.L. 1964. *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Gaylard, G. 2005. *After Colonialism: African Postmodernism and Magical Realism*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- George, J.M. 2017. *The Ontology of the Gods: An Account of Enchantment, Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment*. E-Book: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Georgelou, K., Protopapa, E. & Theodoridou, D. 2017. *The practice of dramaturgy: working on actions in performance*. Amsterdam: Valiz.
- Gibson, N.C. 2015. Thinking Outside the Ivory Tower. In *Being at home: race, institutional culture and transformation at South African higher education institutions*. P.A. Tabensky & S. Matthews, Eds. Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. pp 184-202.
- Gikandi, S. 2011. Foreword. In *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on Borders and Spaces in Contemporary African Literature and Folklore*. J. Wawrzinek & J.K.S. Makokha, Eds. Amsterdam: Rodopi. pp 9-12.
- Gilbert, H & Lo Jacqueline. 2009. *Performance & Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australasia*: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gilbert, H. & Lo Jacqueline. 2010. 'Diasporas and Performance'. In *Diasporas, Concepts, Intersections and Identities*. K. Knott & S. McLoughlin, Eds. London: Zed Books. pp 151-156.
- Goddard, L. 2008. Mojisola Adebayo in Conversation with Lynette Goddard. In *Hidden Gems*. D. Osborne, Ed. London: Oberon Books. pp 142-148.
- Goodman Gallery. *Kapwani Kiwanga: About. n.d.*: <https://www.goodmangallery.com/artists/kapwani-kiwanga#bio>.
- Gopinath, G. 2011. Foreword: Queer Diasporic Interventions. *Textual Practice*. (25.4) pp 635-638.

- Gouws, A. 2010. The Feminisation of Migration. *Africa Insight*. 40(1) pp 169-180.
- Grant, S., McNeilly, J. & Veerapen, M. 2015. *Performance and Temporalisation: Time Happens*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Grehan, H. & Eckersall, P. 2019. *A dramaturgy of cultural activism*. Routledge
- Grosz, E. 2009. The Thing. In *The Object Reader*. F. Candlin & R. Guins, Eds. London; Routledge. pp 124-138.
- Gumbs, A.P. 2010. *We Can Learn to Mother Ourselves: The Queer Survival of Black Feminism 1968-1996*. Duke University.
- Gunkel, H. & Lynch, k. 2019. Lift Off...an Introduction. In *We Travel the Space Ways: Black Imagination, Fragments and Diffractions*. k. Lynch & H. Gunkel, Eds. Bielefeld: Transcript. pp 21-43.
- Gunner, L. 2009. Preface. In *The Changing Face of African Literature / les Nouveaux Visages de la Littérature Africaine*. B. De Meyer & N. ten Kortenaar, Eds. Amsterdam: BRILL. pp ix-xii.
- Halberstam, J. 2005. *In a queer time and place: transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. New York: New York University Press.
- Halberstam, J. 2011. *The queer art of failure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hamilton, E.C. 2017. Afrofuturism and the Technologies of Survival. *African Arts*. 50(4) pp 18-23. DOI:10.1162/AFAR_a_00371.
- Harman, G. 2018. *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything*. London: Penguin Books.
- Harney, S. & Moten, F. 2013. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions.
- Hartmann, I.W. 2012. *AfroSF: science fiction by African writers*. S.I: StoryTime.
- Heidenreich-Seleme, L. & O'Toole, S. 2016. *African futures: thinking about the future through word and image*. Bielefeld: Kerber.
- Helgesson, S. 2012. Migritude. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. 48(3) pp 331-332. DOI:10.1080/17449855.2011.639953.
- Hoagland, E. & Sarwal, R. 2010. Introduction: Imperialism, the Third World, and Postcolonial Science Fiction . In *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World: Essays on Postcolonial Literature and Film*. E. Hoagland & R. Sarwal, Eds. London: McFarland & Company. pp 5-19.
- Hobbs, A. 2014. *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hodder, I. 2012. *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationship between Humans and Things*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holland, E.W. 2013. *Deleuze and Guattari's A thousand plateaus: a reader's guide*. London; Bloomsbury Academic.
- hooks, b. 1984. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, b. 1990. *Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics*. 1st ed. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, b. 2000. *Feminism is for Everyone: Passionate Politics*. Cambridge: South End Press.
- hooks, b. 2012. *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*. London: Taylor and Francis. DOI:10.4324/9780203822883
- hooks, b. 2015. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9781315743172
- Hopkinson, N. 2004. Introduction. In *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy*. U. Mehan & N. Hopkinson, Eds. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press. pp 7-11.

- Huggan, G. 2001. Unsettled settlers: Postcolonialism, travelling theory and the new migrant aesthetics. *Journal of Australian Studies*. 25(68) pp 117-127. DOI:10.1080/14443050109387668.
- Ingold, T. 2011. *Being alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description*. London: Routledge.
- Jansen, J.D. 2017. *As by fire: the end of the South African university*. Cape Town, South Africa: Tafelberg.
- Jeffers, A. 2012. *Refugees, theatre and crisis: performing global identities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- John, M.K. 2017. Foreword. In *The Ontology of the Gods: An Account of Enchantment, Disenchantment, and Re-Enchantment*. J.M. George, Ed. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. pp ix-xiv.
- Jurkowski, H. 2013. *Aspects of Puppet Theatre: Second Edition*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kabwe, M.B. 2015. *Astronautus Afrikanus* [Performance] Makhanda, South Africa: Rhodes University Theatre.
- Kabwe, M.B. 2015. Mobility, Migration and 'Migritude' in Afrocartography: Traces of Places and all points in between. In *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows*. M. Fleishman, Ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. pp 125-148.
- Kabwe, M.B. 2019. Astronautus Afrikanus: Performing African Futurism. In *Acts of Transgression: Contemporary Live Art in South Africa*. J. Pather & C. Boule, Eds. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. pp 286-308. 10.18772/22019022798.
- Kanengoni, A. 2015. Editorial. *Buwa! Moving Stories, Women and Migration in Africa*. (6) pp 2-3.
- Kapwani Kiwanga. 2015. *Afrogalactica: Deep Space Scrolls* [Painting]. Johannesburg: Goethe Institut.
- Kaye, N. 2000. *Site-specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*. London: Routledge.
- Kelley, R.D.G. 2002. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Keunen, B., De Temmerman, K., Bemong, N. & Borghart, P. 2010. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*. Gent: Academia Press. DOI:10.26530/OAPEN_377572.
- Kihato, C.W. 2010. A picture speaks a thousand words: Understanding women's migration in Johannesburg through visual diaries. *Scrutiny* 2. 15(1) pp 33-54. DOI:10.1080/18125441.2010.500457.
- Kihato, C. 2013. *Migrant women of Johannesburg: everyday life in an in-between city*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Kiwanga, K. 2017. Comprehensive Methodology in Ancestral Earth-Star Complexes: Lessons from Vela Zimbabwe. *Manifesta Journal Around Curatorial Practices: Future(s) of Cohabitation*. <http://manifestajournals.org/issues/futures-cohabitation>.
- Kobialka, M. 1999. *Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice and Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Küchler, U, Maehl, S. & Stout, G. 2015. *Alien Imaginations: Science Fiction and Tales of Transnationalism*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional.
- Lam, A. 2020. Hybrids, identity and knowledge boundaries: Creative artists between academic and practitioner communities. *Human Relations (New York)*. 73(6) pp 837-863. DOI:10.1177/0018726719846259.
- Langer, J. 2011. *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lavender, I.III. 2009. Critical Race Theory. In *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. M. Bould, Ed. New York, N.Y: Routledge. pp 185-193. 10.4324/9780203871317.
- Leane, E. 2013. IcecapeTheatre. *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*. (18.6) pp 18-28.
- Lehmann, H. 2006. *Postdramatic Theatre*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203088104.
- Lewis, M. & Krueger, A. 2016. *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space*. 1. Bristol: Intellect Books Ltd.

- Little, S, Suliman, S, Wake, C. 2022. *Performance, Resistance & Refugees*: Routledge.
- Lorde, A. 1982. *Zami: A New Spelling of my Name*. California: The Crossing Press. Lorde, A. 2007. *Sister outsider: essays and speeches*. Berkeley, Calif: Crossing Press.
- Lugones, M. 2008. The Coloniality of Gender. *Worlds & Knowledge Otherwise*. pp 1-17.
- Luhumyo, I. 2017. The Impossibility of Home. In *Migrations: New Short Fiction from Africa*. E. Chela, B. Kona & H. Moffett, Eds. Johannesburg: Short Story Day Africa. pp 251-262.
- MacLeod, E. 2016. *Kapwani Kiwanga: An Artist Anthropologist*.
- Maedza, P. 2015. (Re)-membering the Cape and the Performance of Belonging(s). In *Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows*. M. Fleishman, Ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. pp 97-109.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. 2017. Frantz Fanon and the decolonial turn in psychology: from modern/ colonial methods to the decolonial attitude. *South African Journal of Psychology*. 47(4) pp 432-441. DOI:10.1177/0081246317737918.
- Malpas, J. 2015. Timing Space-Spacing Time: On Transcendence, Performance and Place. In *Performance and Temporalisation: Time Happens*. S. Grant, J. McNeilly & M. Veerapen, Eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp 25-36.
- Mann, D. 2015. The Journalist. *The Journalist*. (35) www.thejournalist.org.za/art/enter-astronautus-afrikanus [June 5, 2015].
- Margolies, E. 2003. Were those Boots Made Just for Walking? Shoes as Performing Objects in Everyday Life and in the Theatre. *Visual Communication (London, England)*. 2(2) pp 169-188. DOI:10.1177/1470357203002002003.
- Margolies, E. 2016. *Props: Readings in Theatre Practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marks, L.U. 2000. *The skin of the film: intercultural cinema, embodiment, and the senses*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.
- Mashigo, M. 2018. *Intruders: short stories*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa.
- Massey, D.B. 1994. *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty. 1945. *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203720714.
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty. 2013. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Taylor and Francis. DOI:10.4324/9780203720714.
- May, J. & Thrift, N. 2001. *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203360675.
- Mbembe, A. 2007. Afropolitanism. In *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent*. S. Njami & L. Durán, Eds. Johannesburg, South Africa: Jacana Media. pp 26-30.
- Mbembe, A. & Balakrishnan, S. 2016. Pan-African Legacies, Afropolitan Futures. *Transition (Kampala, Uganda)*. (120):28-37. DOI:10.2979/transition.120.1.04.
- McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial leather: race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial conquest*. New York: Routledge.
- McGillivray, G. 2011. The Performance Archive: Detritus or Historical Record. In *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden Archives of Performance*. G. McGillivray, Ed. Bern; Peter Lang. pp 11-28.

- McKenzie, J. 2004. The Liminal Norm. In *The Performance Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge. pp 26-31.
- McKinney, J. & Iball, H. 2011. *Researching Scenography*. Edinburgh University Press
- Mehan, U. 2004. Final Thoughts. In *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy*. U. Mehan & N. Hopkinson, Eds. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press. pp 269-271.
- Mehan, U. & Hopkinson, N. 2004. *So long been dreaming: postcolonial science fiction & fantasy*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press. pp 7-11
- Meerzon, Y. 2012. *Performing Exile Performing Self: Drama, Theater, Film*: Palgrave Macmillan
- Michlin, M. & Rocchi, J. 2013. *Black intersectionalities: a critique for 21st century*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Mignolo, W.D. 2018. What Does It Mean to Decolonize? In *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. W.D. Mignolo & C.E. Wash, Eds. Durham: Duke University Press. pp 107-134. 10.2307/j.ctv11g9616.10.
- Mignolo, W. & Walsh, C.E. 2018. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, and Praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press. DOI:10.1515/9780822371779.
- Moffett, H. 2017. Introduction. In *Migrations: New Short Fiction from Africa*. E. Chela, B. Kona & H. Moffett, Eds. South Africa: Short Story Day Africa. pp 7-9.
- Mougoue, J.T. 2021. Gender and Sexuality in African Futurism. *Feminist Africa*. 2(2) pp 1-10.
<https://feministafrica.net>.
- Msimang, S. 2017. *Always Another Country: A memoir of exile and home*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Muñoz, J.E. 2009. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. 10th ed. New York: New York University Press.
- Muñoz, J.E. 1999. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Musoni, F. 2020. *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. DOI: 10.2307/j.ctv104tb2v
- Muzenda, G. 2015. Choiceness Choices of Women in Migration. *Buwa! Moving Stories: Women and Migration in Africa*. (6) pp 6-11.
- Mwenya B Kabwe. 2017. *A Zambian Space Odyssey*. : <https://lessgoodidea.com/season-02#/scaffold-performances/>.
- Naidoo, L. 2016. Contemporary Student Politics in South Africa: The Rise of the Black-Led Student Movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in 2015. In *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa Before & Beyond Soweto '76*. A. Heffernan & N. Nieftagodien, Eds. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. pp 180-190.
- Nail, T. 2015. *The figure of the migrant*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
DOI:10.1515/9780804796682.
- Nardal, P. 2009. Introduction: On Race, Rights and Women. In *Beyond Negritude: Essays from Woman in the City*. D.T. Sharpley-Whiting, Ed. Albany: SUNY Press. pp 1-14.
- Nardal, P. & Sharpley-Whiting, T. 2009. *Beyond negritude: essays from Woman in the city*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Nelson, A. 2002. Introduction: Future Texts. *Social Text*. 20(2) pp 1-15.
- Nieftagodien, N. & Heffernan, A. 2016. *Students Must Rise Youth struggle in South Africa before and beyond Soweto '76*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

- Nkala, J.K. & Nkala, J.K. 2009. *The crossing; and The bicycle thief*. Mowbray, South Africa: Junkets.
- Nkenkana, A. 2015. No African Futures without the Liberation of Women: A Decolonial Feminist Perspective. *Africa Development / Afrique Et Développement*. 40(3) pp 41-57.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/afrdevafrdev.40.3.41>.
- Okorafor, N. 2020. Africanfuturism Defined. In *Africanfuturism: An Anthology*. W. Talabi, Ed. online publisher: Brittle Paper. pp iii-v.
- O'Toole, S. & Kiwanga, K. 2016. Archaeological Digging: Kapwani Kiwanga. In *African Futures: Thinking about the Future Through Word and Image*. L. Heidenreich-Seleme & S. O'Toole, Eds. Bielefeld: Kerber.
- Palmary, I., Chantler, K. & Kiguwa, P. 2010. *Gender and migration: feminist interventions*. London; Zed.
- Parker, E. 2011. Introduction: queer, there and everywhere. *Textual Practice*. 25(4) pp 639-647.
DOI:10.1080/0950236X.2011.586773.
- Patel, S. 2010. Come for the Saris, Stay for the Politics: An Interview with Shailja Patel. In *MigrITUDE*. New York, NY: Kaya Press. pp i-v.
- Patel, S. 2010a. Foreword. In *MigrITUDE*. New York, NY: Kaya Press. pp 9-12.
- Patel, S. 2010b. *MigrITUDE*. Jozi Book Fair 2017 Festival Special Edition ed. New York: Kaya Press.
- Patel, S. 2020. What We Talk about When We Talk about Movement. *The Minnesota Review (Minneapolis, Minn.)*. 2020(94) pp 167-168. DOI:10.1215/00265667-8128505.
- Patel, S. & Reed, J. 2014. *Shailja Patel* [Sound recording]. Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts Podcast.
- Pather, J. & Boule, C. 2019. *Acts of transgression: contemporary live art in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Pather, J., Boule, C., Disemelo, K., Goliath, G., Gule, K., Hennlich, A., Kabwe, M.B., Lemu, M. et al. 2019. Astronautus Africanus: Performing African Futurism. In *Acts of Transgression: Contemporary Live Art in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. pp 286-308. 10.18772/22019022798.
- Patrycja Koziel. 2021. From Afrofuturism to Africanfuturism 2: Contemporary Expressions within Popular Culture. *Hemispheres (Wrocław, Poland)*. 36 pp 69-83.
<https://search.proquest.com/docview/2683180118>.
- Patton, C. & Sanchez-Eppler, B. 2000. *Queer Diasporas*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Pewny, K., Callens, J. & Coppens, J. 2014. *Dramaturgies in the new millennium: relationality, performativity and potentiality*. Tübingen: Narr Verlag.
- Phalafala, U.P. 2017. Time is Always NOW: Animist Materialism in Keorapetse Kgositsile's Temporal Order. *Scrutiny* 2. 22(2) pp 33-48. DOI:10.1080/18125441.2017.1344873.
- Phelan, P. 1993. *Unmarked the politics of performance*. London: Routledge.
- Pine, F. 2014. Migration as Hope: Space, Time, and Imagining the Future. *Current Anthropology*. 55: S95-S104.
DOI:10.1086/676526.
- Pinto, I. 2015. Theatre History and Performance: the Archive's Unruliness as Method. *Revista Brasileira De Estudos Da Presença*. 5(3) pp 507-532.
- Porter, R. 2009. *Deleuze and Guattari: aesthetics and politics*. Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press.
- Posner, D.N., Orenstein, C. & Bell, J. 2014. Introduction. In *The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance*. D.N. Posner, C. Orenstein & J. Bell, Eds. London: Routledge. pp 1-12.
10.4324/9781315850115.
- Prashad, V. 2010. Foreword: Speaking of Saris. In *MigrITUDE. Jozi Book Fair 2017 Festival Special Edition ed* New

- York: Kaya Press. pp i-v.
- Reddy, V. 2010. Come for the Saris, Stay for the Politics. In *Migritude*. S. Patel, Ed. New York: Kaya Press. pp 151-156.
- Reddy, V. 2020. Femme Migritude: Shailja Patel's Afro-Asian Poetics. *The Minnesota Review (Minneapolis, Minn.)*. (94):67. DOI:10.1215/00265667-8128421.
- Reid, M. *Science Fiction Foundation*. :<https://www.sf-foundation.org/postcolonial-science-fiction-dr-mic> [2005].
- Reid, M. 2009. Postcolonialism. In *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. M. Bould, Ed. London: Routledge. pp 256-266.
- Reinelt, J. 2002. The Politics of Discourse: Performativity Meets Theatricality. *SubStance*. 31(2) p 201. DOI:10.2307/3685486.
- Richards, S.L. 2015. Introduction: Citizen & Artist: African women making theatre. In *African Theatre 14: Contemporary Women*. M. Banham, J. Gibbs & F. Osofisan, Eds. Rochester: Boydell & Brewer. pp 1-5.
- Roach, J. 1999. Territorial Passages: Time, Place and Action. In *Of Borders and Thresholds: Theatre History, Practice and Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. pp 110-124.
- Romanska, M. 2015. *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*. London: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203075944.
- Rudakoff, J. 2017. Ed. *Performing Exile: Foreign Bodies*: Intellect Books.
- Said, E.W. 1979. *Orientalism*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- Said, E.W. 1993. *Culture and imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Sartre, J. 1988. *What is Literature? and Other Essays*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Saxon, C. & Spillers, H. 2013. *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book*.
- Schechner, R. 1988. *Performance theory*. New York: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203361887.
- Schechner, R. 2003. *Performance theory*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge Classics. DOI:10.4324/9780203426630.
- Schneider, R. 2001. Performance Remains. *Performance Research*. 6(2) pp 100-108. DOI:10.1080/13528165.2001.10871792.
- Schneider, R. 2011. *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*. Florence: Routledge. DOI:10.4324/9780203852873.
- Selasie, T. *Don't ask where I'm from, Ask where I'm local*. : https://www.ted.com/talks/taiye_selasi_don_t_ask_where_i_m_from_ask_where_i_m_a_local/transcript?language=en [2014].
- Sellars, P. 2014. Foreword. In *Theatre & Migration*. E. Cox, Ed. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. pp viii-xiii.
- Serpell, N. 2016. *Afrofuturism: Everything and Nothing*. Public Books: A Magazine of Ideas, Arts & Scholarship.
- Serpell, N. 2017. *The Zambian "Afronaut" Who Wanted to Join the Space Race*. New York: The New Yorker.
- Settle, Z.T. & Nail, T. 2016. Kinopolitics and the Figure of the Migrant: An Interview with Thomas Nail. *The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology*. : <https://theotherjournal.com/2016/11/28/kinopolitics-figure-migrant-interview-thomas-nail/> [September 22, 2021].
- Shah, S. 2020. *The Next Great Migration: The Story of Movement on a Changing Planet*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Sharpley-Whiting, T. 2000. Femme négritude: Jane Nardal, La Dépêche africaine, and the francophone new

- negro. *Souls (Boulder, Colo.)*. 2(4) pp 8-17. DOI:10.1080/10999940009362232.
- Shukaitis, S. 2009. Space is the (non)place: Martians, Marxists, and the outer space of the radical imagination. *The Sociological Review (Keele)*. 57 pp 98-113. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-954X.2009.01819. x.
- Smith, Z. 2019. *Feel free: essays*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Sofer, A. 2003. *The stage life of props*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. DOI:10.3998/mpub.11888.
- Soja, E.W. 1989. *Postmodern geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.
- Spillers, H. 1987. Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book. *Diacritics*. 17(2) pp 65-81.
- Steingo, G. 2017. Kapwani Kiwanga's Alien Speculations. *Images Re-Vues*. DOI:10.4000/imagesrevues.4051: <https://journals.openedition.org/imagesrevues/4051> [April 2019].
- Stern, L. 2004. Path that Wind through the Thicket of Things. In *Things*. B. Brown, Ed. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press. pp 393-430.
- Stevenson, M., Bosland, J. & Perryer, S. 2006. *Distant relatives / relative distance: Michael Stevenson, 7 June - 8 July, 2006: Barthélemy Toguo ... [et al.]*. Cape Town: Michael Stevenson.
- Sunstrum, P.P. 2015. Afro-mythology and African Futurism: The Politics of Imagining and Methodologies for Contemporary Research Practices. In *Africa SF*. M. Bould, Ed. Vashon Island: Paradoxa. pp 113-129.
- Sunstrum, P.P. 2013. Afro-mythology and African Futurism: The Politics of Imagining and Methodologies for Contemporary Creative Research Practices. *Paradoxa*. 25(Africa SF) pp 113-129.
- Sunstrum, P.P. 2016. Leaping Out. In *African Futures: Thinking about the Future Through Word and Image*. L. Heidenreich-Seleme & S. O'Toole, Eds. Bielefeld: Kerber. pp 141-153.
- Swanby, N.A. & Frank, C. 2020. Introduction: archival experiments, notes and (dis)orientations. *Feminist Review*. (125) pp 4-16.
- Tamboukou, M. 2020. Mobility assemblages and lines of flight in women's narratives of forced displacement. *The European Journal of Women's Studies*. 27(3) pp 235-249. DOI:10.1177/1350506820932946.
- Taussig, M. 2001. Dying Is an Art, like Everything Else. *Critical Inquiry*. 28(1) pp 305-316. DOI:10.1086/449042.
- Taussig, M. 2004. Dying is an Art like Everything Else. In *Things*. B. Brown, Ed. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press. pp 381-392.
- Taylor, D. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Taylor, S.R. 2018. *The Body is not an Apology*. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Temple, R.K.G. 1976. *The Sirius Mystery*. London: St. Martin's Press.
- TEMPLE, R.K.G. 1980. The Sirius Mystery. *Nature (London)*. 283(5744) pp 242. DOI:10.1038/283242b0.
- Thomas, S.R. 2000. *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*. New York: Grand Central Publishing.
- Tololyan, K. 2007. The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*. 27(3) pp 647-655. DOI:10.1215/1089201x-2007-040.
- Tompkins, J. 2014. *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI:10.1057/9781137362124.
- Tonstad, L.M. 2020. A Queer we? *The Against Nature*. (1) pp 109-111.
- Trencsényi, K. & Cochrane, B. 2014. *New dramaturgy: international perspectives on theory and practice*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Tualki-Worsonu, T. 2006. Bye-Bye Barbar or What is an Afropolitan? In *Distant Relatives / Relative Distance*. B.

- Toguo, and others, Ed. Cape Town: Michael Stevenson. pp 54-57.
- Tuan, Y. 1977. *Space and place: the perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Turkle, S. 2011. *INTRODUCTION: THE THINGS THAT MATTER*.
- Turkle, S. 2007a. *Evocative objects: things we think with*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Turkle, S. 2007b. Introduction: Things that Matter. In *Evocative Objects: Things we Think With*. S. Turkle, Ed. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. pp 3-11.
- Turner, C. 2015. *Dramaturgy and Architecture: Theatre, Utopia and the Built Environment*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Turner, C. & Behrndt, S. 2007. *Dramaturgy and performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Unknown. 2018. *Migration Policy Institute*. : <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2018> [October 2019].
- Uteng, T.P. & Cresswell, T. 2008. *Gendered mobilities*. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- van Driel, M. 2017. Foreword to 2017 Special Edition. In *Migritude*. New York: Kaya Press.
- Van Heerden, K. 2015. No Place to Call Home: Women and Migration in Southern Africa. *Buwa! Moving Stories: Women and Migration in Africa*. (6) pp 12-17.
- Van Kerkhoven, M. 2009. European Dramaturgy in the 21st Century: A Constant Movement. *Performance Research*. 14(3) pp 7-11.
- Veltrusky, J. 1964. Man and Object in the Theatre. In *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*. P.L. Garvin, Ed. Washington: Georgetown University Press. pp 83-91.
- Wa Kabwe-Segatti, D.K. 2009. De la Migritude a la 'de-migritude': L'exemple de Veronique Tadjou. In *The Changing Face of African Literature / les Nouveaux Visages de la Littérature Africaine*. B. De Meyer & N. ten Kortenaar, Eds. Amsterdam: BRILL. pp 83-94.
- Wald, G. 2000. *Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth Century U.S. Literature and Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Walker, K.L. 2012. Translator's Introduction. In *The Great Camouflage: Writings of Dissent (1941-1945) Suzanne Césaire*. D. Mazim, Ed. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press. vii-xix.
- Walsh, C.E. 2018. Decoloniality For: Resurgences, Shifts, and Movements. In *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. W. Mignolo D & C.E. Walsh, Eds. Durham: Duke University Press. pp 15-32.
- Walsh, C.E. 2020. *The Decolonial For: Resurgences, Shifts, and Movements*.
- Wawrzinek, J., Makokha, J.K.S. & Gikandi, S. 2011. Foreword: On Afropolitanism. In *Negotiating Afropolitanism essays on borders and spaces in contemporary African literature and folklore*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. pp 9-12.
- White, G. 2012. On Immersive Theatre. *Theatre Research International*. 37(3) pp 221-235.
DOI:10.1017/S0307883312000880.
- Wilmer, S, E. 2018. *Performing Statelessness in Europe*: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Winnicott, D.W. 1993. *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis: Collected Papers*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge.
DOI:10.4324/9780429484001.
- Winnicott, D.W. (. 2001. *Collected papers: through paediatrics to psycho-analysis*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
DOI:10.4324/9781315013398.

Yuin Tal, M.M. & Schuster, A. 2007. *Living on the fence: poems by women who are refugees from various countries in Africa*. Muizenberg Cape Town, South Africa: Women's Writing Workshops.

Faces of Africa 2013. [DVD].: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2ikxZK65pA> [February 1, 2015].

Performance Research. 26(5):1-7. DOI:10.1080/13528165.2021.2021735
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2021.2021735>.