

Heterotopic Happenings

Invoking the Radical Imagination and Inspiring New Human-Ecological Norms through British Climate Change Performance

A comparative case study of *2071* and *And While
London Burns*

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Abstract:

We are at what appears to be an impasse. Almost everyone across the world – and certainly in the west – has heard of climate change and knows at least a bit about what it means. Yet dominant norms, values and behaviours still persist, despite the fact that many of these are agreed to be the very source of the problem. Finding a way – or more accurately, ways – to overcome this impasse is imperative if we are to seriously tackle the increasingly complex and ever-deepening social and ecological crises that climate change is producing.

Through a comparative case study of two pieces of British climate change performance – *2071* (2014) and *And While London Burns* (2006) – this thesis a) explores how dominant norms in the human-ecological relationship can be challenged and subverted through performance and b) increase the critical relevance of performance in today's 'late modern' world.

First, a theoretical framework is constructed using three key concepts: Elder Vass's (2013) norm circles, Foucault's (1984 [1967]) heterotopias, and Haiven and Khasnabish's (2014) radical imagination. These are theorised as being able to work together towards radical social change. To test this idea, the two performances are analysed using a method of heterotopic analysis, following the lead of Tompkins (2014). This involves a close and critical reading of the performances, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with key informants, the author's own experience of the performances and additional material including reviews and articles related to the performances.

The analysis is split into four sections. The first three each take a close look at one element of the performances' narratives. The final section discusses in what way the 'experience' of each of the performances can be said to be heterotopic, what type of heterotopias they are and what role, if any they play in invoking the radical imagination and inspiring new human-ecological norms. The thesis ends with a return to the theoretical framework and a discussion of its applicability to further research.

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If you want to learn about a culture, listen to the stories. If you want to change a culture, change the stories." Michael Margolis (2014)

Setting the scene

“The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear” (Gramsci 1992 [1930], 276)

We are at what appears to be an impasse. As Anthony Giddens (2009, 1) states on the opening page of his book *The Politics of Climate Change*: “Almost everyone across the world must have heard the phrase ‘climate change’ and know at least a bit about what it means”. But knowing what climate change means, knowing even what needs to be done to tackle it, is very different from actually doing it. As Giddens (ibid.) goes on to point out: “...the vast majority are doing very little, if anything at all, to alter their daily habits, even though those habits are the source of the dangers that climate change has in store for us.”

Finding a way – or more accurately, ways – to bridge this paradox and overcome the impasse is imperative if we are to seriously tackle the increasingly complex and ever-deepening social and ecological crises that climate change is producing. Much of the problem, as I see it, comes down to traditional – at least in the west – Cartesian divides, not only between humans and nature, but between the mind and the body, reason and emotion, and knowledge and action (see for example, Plumwood 2002, 42). My aim is to explore how these divisions can be challenged and subverted through the experience of performance¹. By doing so, I also hope to increase performance’s critical relevance in today’s late modern world.

As an English Literature graduate and keen consumer of stories, the seeds for this project are probably embedded deeper than I am able to fully comprehend. However, there is one recent event that I can tie directly to the birth of this thesis in its current form. One cold, wet Saturday night last November; leaving the Royal Court Theatre in Sloane Square, London, confused, disappointed and a bit depressed. I’d just seen *2071*, a new piece of performance on the issue of climate change where, according to its website, “the science is centre stage”².

¹ A note on my use of the words ‘theatre’ and ‘performance’, terms that tend to be used interchangeably. With the word ‘theatre’ I refer to the permanent buildings that have been created specifically for the housing of live performance. When I use the word ‘performance’ I take my lead from Kershaw (1999, 15) and refer to “cultural presentations that have recognisable theatrical components”. By theatrical components I mean “framing devices” that alert the audience, spectators or participants to the production’s “reflexive structure” and “constructed nature” (ibid.) The aim is for this definition of performance to be broad enough to cover the breadth of (theatrical) performance discussed in this thesis, but not so broad so as to slip into the “theatrical abyss” (ibid.) that opens up when society itself is considered ‘performative’ (see for example, Goffman 1959)).

² www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/2071 [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

I make an effort to see any performance piece I hear about that is addressing the issue of climate change. I saw *Greenland* at the National, the *Heretic* at the Royal Court, a wonderfully absurd piece called *Pastoral* at the small Soho Theatre and an epic three hour marathon called *Earthquakes in London* at the Royal Bath Theatre.³ Apart from *Pastoral*, I was disappointed by all of them. Part of my disappointment was probably tied to my over-egged expectations. But they also all seemed either too worthy, too didactic or too simplistic, with the issue of climate change remaining firmly in the domain of science.

On this last point, *2071* wasn't going to differ. British climate scientist Chris Rapley is both the co-writer and main protagonist. But there were some other words on the production's website that made my ears prick up: "Climate change is a matter of importance to everyone, but what to do about it is mired in controversy. What's needed is a conversation."⁴ That word 'conversation' sparked my interest.

So, I roped my parents into spending their Saturday night at the theatre with me. And we sat, for an hour, without break, listening to Chris Rapley lecture us on climate science. Dressed in a light blue shirt and dark blue suit, no tie, legs casually crossed at the ankles, he sat almost motionless throughout the performance. His monologue was measured and methodical: he paused only to take small sips of water from the glass on the table beside him.

2071 is undoubtedly a complex and intricately woven piece, stretching from outer space to ice cores deep underground and shifting through geological history onwards into the future. Its vast span of space and time is tethered to meaning by a deluge of quantifiable scientific information and peer-reviewed predictions, interspersed with a few personal vignettes. But it was fundamentally not a conversation. And with such a density of facts it was difficult to work out what sort of conversation he was hoping to spark after the performance too. A modicum of respite came in the form of monochrome graphics displayed on a huge screen behind Rapley throughout the production: maps of the Antarctic, swirling weather systems and stylish illustrations of what happens when glaciers melt.

When my parents and I left the theatre we discussed our opinions on the piece. I discovered my Dad really liked it. It told him things he didn't know. My mum found it overwhelming

³ Information about the respective productions can be found at: www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover/nt-production/greenland; www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/the-heretic; www.sohotheatre.com/whats-on/pastoral; www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/oct/04/earthquakes-in-london-review [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

⁴ <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/2071> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

and nigh on intimidating. My thoughts on it are still developing to this day. Many of them are in this thesis. The more I pondered the piece and my initial discomfort towards it, the more I tugged on the knot in my tummy that it had tied, the more convinced I became that this production had something very wrong with it. Wrong in the sense that it – sometimes subtly, sometimes less so – perpetuates so many of the dominant and damaging societal norms that I believe have got us into this chaotic mess. And does it in such an apparently benign way as to be (almost) invisible.

And so the seed was sown. It took a few more months for me to accept that this was the direction I was going to take my thesis. I had been adamant to move away from my literature roots and try and tackle something more ‘real’. But then I considered it a responsibility. Prejudice towards my natural subject area is something to be addressed, not ignored. Why can’t research into the arts, narratives, stories and the imagination be something with critical clout, something that can help reveal things about the way we understand the world? And through these revelations, change them?

1. Introduction

In this chapter I lay out a justification of the present study, offer a brief description of its structure and aims, and list the questions that will guide me through my research.

1.1. Justification for study

“The world is not at all imperfect; imperfect are our language, our knowledge and our consciousness.”⁵

Like Plumwood (2002), Klein (2014) and Steiner (1993), I see the ecological crisis as primarily a *human crisis* – a crisis of culture, a crisis of reason (“or of what the dominant global culture has made of reason” (Plumwood 2002, 5)), a crisis of language, knowledge and experience. A crisis of understanding of the reciprocal relationship humans have with their natural environment. A crisis, therefore, that is fundamentally bound up with the norms, values and behaviours that dominate the social world. And changing these means changing *everything*, “even the stories we tell about our place on earth” (Klein 2014, 4).

Stories can be found almost anywhere: in myths, fables, comedies, paintings, dances, films, fairy tales, novels, advertising campaigns and academic articles. In this thesis, however, I have chosen to focus on the stories that are found in performance; more specifically climate change performance in Britain at the beginning of the 21st century.

There are a number of reasons for this. First, performance is one of the oldest artistic practices, and, in its most basic form of one human watching another human pretending to be someone (or something) else, also the most primal. As such it is interesting to explore how it responds to a complex and inherently modern phenomenon like climate change.

Second, performance in Europe has a rich history of engaging with political struggle and social change, reaching an apotheosis in the middle of the last century with Brecht in Germany, Shaw in the UK and Ireland, and Sartre in France all making powerful work that challenged the status quo (Morgan 2013). One example of the proof of performance’s power

⁵ From the film, *Why has Bodhi-Dharma left for the East?* by Yong-kyun Bae, South Korea 1989. Quoted at the beginning of Steiner 1993

lies in the fact that there was state censorship of drama in many countries until fairly recently; most famously in Britain from 1731 until 1968 (Shepherd-Barr 2006, 10).

Lately, however, western society, has become less used to thinking of performance (particularly the type of performance that happens inside theatres) as a politically influential art form or as a medium capable of shaping cultural practices and social attitudes (ibid.). As someone profoundly interested in how cultural tools can be used to encourage social change – and acutely aware of the politics of power that are inherently bound up with all areas of the social world – I was keen to explore this perceived phenomenon of the ‘de-politicisation’ of performance for myself.

1.2. Thesis structure

I have organised this thesis around three key theoretical concepts – norm circles, heterotopias and the radical imagination – and use the concept of discourse as a framing device. It is possible that the key concepts are new or unfamiliar to the reader. For this reason – and for the clarity of my research in general – they are described and explained in detail in the Key Concepts chapter that follows. As you will see, I conceive them as potentially being able to work together to create radical and progressive human-ecological change.

By undertaking a close and critical reading of the performances *2071* and *And While London Burns (AWLB)* with a heterotopic analytical lens, my aim is to identify the heterotopias that can be found there and understand the role they can play in invoking the radical imagination and inspiring new human-ecological norms.

My ambition with this thesis is for it to act as both a call and a warning. A call for an increased focus on heterotopias – in all elements of society, not only the arts – and the role they can play in encouraging social change. And a warning that without a clear understanding of how these types of space can be employed to both challenge and support the prevailing paradigms, they can result in a deeper descent into environmental destruction and social depression, instead of an ascent into more just and justifiable ways of being, acting and knowing.

1.3. Research questions

Three questions will guide my route through this research.

- How do *2071* and *AWLB* create heterotopias?
- What type of heterotopias are they and what do they reveal about the productions' relationships with dominant social norms and systems of power, particularly those relating to the human-ecological relationship?
- What role, if any, can these productions play in invoking the radical imagination and inspiring new human-ecological norms?

2. Key Concepts

This thesis employs four key theoretical concepts – discourse, norm circles, heterotopias and the radical imagination. In this chapter I will define each of the key concepts in turn, describe how I understand them working together and explain the importance of this relationship to my research.

2.1. Discourse

Discourse is a complex concept employed across a broad field of social science and humanities research so it's important to outline precisely how and why I will be using it in this thesis. Discourse can be broadly defined as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, 1). Familiar examples include ‘medical discourse’ or ‘political discourse’. However, this broad definition misses two important elements of discourse: social construction and power. The first element refers to the fact that our ways of talking, acting and being do not neutrally reflect the world, our identities and our social relations, but instead play an active role in both creating and changing them (ibid.). The second refers to the fact that discourse is regulated in different societies or periods of history, an idea developed most comprehensively by Foucault (1991 [1975]; 2002 [1959]).

However, while Foucault (1980, 119) tends to focus on power as productive and spread evenly across the social world – “it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces

discourse...[and] needs to be considered as a productive network...much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” – in this thesis I am more interested in power in terms of domination and control. Or as Fairclough (1995a, 17) puts it “asymmetrical relations of power” and how they result in domination, which he states is an important objective for any critical analysis.

More specifically, I am interested in the role discourse plays in producing values, opinions and behaviours; and further, how systems of power can play a part in controlling precisely which values, opinions and behaviours become dominant ‘norms’. As you will see in the following sections on norm circles, heterotopias and the radical imagination, both of these questions are integral to an understanding of social change – not only what form it takes and from where, but even how possible it is. As Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, 17) point out, “discourses [can be] seen as frameworks that limit the...scope for action and possibilities for [social] innovation.”

2.2. Norm Circles

In this thesis I will be employing the sociologist Dave Elder Vass’ (2010; 2013) theory of norm circles to explain how social norms are produced, endorsed and enforced, as well as the process by which they can be changed. As you will see, this theory is key to my understanding of the potential performances, the stories they tell and the way they tell them have for generating social change. I will, therefore, take the time to describe the structure and effects of norm circles in detail, as well as explain how they relate to my area of research in particular.

2.2.1. What are norm circles and how do they function?

According to Elder-Vass (2013, 22), norm circles are social structures, primarily made up of people (but can, and often do, include texts and institutions), that are committed to endorsing and enforcing a particular social norm – be it cultural, linguistic, discursive or epistemic. Each ‘norm’, therefore (whether it’s sitting quietly at the theatre or believing that climate change is the result of human activity), has a corresponding ‘norm circle’ supporting it. Further, each person (text or institution) is influenced by a number of different ‘norm circles’. Norm circles, then, can be said to *produce* the social world.

However, as well as producing the social world, norm circles can also have *causal effects* on it. This causal effect is a result of what Elder-Vass (2013, 18) terms the norm circle's "emergent causal power", which is produced by the interaction of its members (what I will call the 'insiders'). This 'interaction', whether it be *sitting quietly* at the theatre or *communicating* that climate change is the result of human activity, produces a tendency in others (what I call the 'outsiders') that come into contact with the norm circle to follow the same practice.

What is particularly important to note here is the role of the collective in producing this effect. The assumption made by a norm circle 'outsider' is that any person (text or institution) enforcing or endorsing a particular norm is representative of a wider group. And it is this recognition, rather than the 'outsider's' exposure to one particular 'insider', that affects their tendency to conform (Elder-Vass 2013, 23). The same is true in the other direction: when any 'insider' acts to enforce the norm with an individual 'outsider', the sense is that they are acting on behalf of something wider than themselves – a "collective intention" – which encourages the 'insider' to endorse or enforce the norm more strongly (Elder-Vass 2010, 123). The causal effect of a norm circle, then, is produced by the norm circle itself – or at least the 'idea' of the norm circle – not the individuals within it. The recognition of this collective influence is not new, or unique: as Durkheim put it more than a century ago, "The group thinks, feels, and acts quite differently from the way in which its members would were they isolated" (Durkheim 1964 [1894], 104).

At this point, the question of power also becomes important. Just who (or what) is believed, perceived, or indeed known, to be in this 'wider group' is significant in terms of how often and how strongly any particular norm is conformed to. At any one time and place, certain people (texts and institutions) – due to myriad and interwoven reasons, which include tradition, identity, access to resources and physical strength – hold more power than others. And those with more power in turn have more influence over approving (or disapproving) values, opinions and behaviours, and hence more control over the prevailing normative environment and the norms with which others feel obliged (or forced) to conform (Elder-Vass 2013, 29). Additionally, those in power are likely to work to endorse or enforce norms that serve to perpetuate their position, further increasing their overall influence.

However, who (or what) has more power varies in different societies in different times and even within different social environments in the same society at the same time. This is

because, while norm circles produce in people (texts and institutions) a set of *beliefs* or *dispositions* regarding what is appropriate, these beliefs or dispositions do not *compel* them to conform. The norm circle merely creates a *tendency* to observe the norm concerned, a tendency that is *mediated* through and thus *depends upon* these same beliefs and dispositions (Elder-Vass 2013, 27). This reflexive relationship between norm circles and the beliefs and dispositions that create and sustain them indicates a social structure that is inherently open to change. As Elder-Vass (2013, 33) goes on to point out, because the beliefs and dispositions associated with a particular norm arise from “communicative interactions”, if those interactions change – or are changed – in some way to produce *different* beliefs and dispositions, “the normative environment itself could be – would be – constructed differently”. And by definition, different normative environments produce different norms, different values, different behaviours, even different stories, as well as different power dynamics.

It is at this point that we can really start to see how norm circles can be employed to explain the process of social change. Further, if we consider ‘seeing or experiencing performance’ as a form of ‘communicative interaction’, we can start to see how the beliefs and dispositions presented there could play a part in social change. This discussion has also gone some way to indicating how important a close consideration of the concept of power is in any study that attempts to understand the social world.

In this next section I will take a closer look at how social change can be understood in the context of norm circles.

2.2.2. Norm circles and social change

“Normative intersectionality” is the key term when considering change within norm circle theory (Elder-Vass 2013, 28). It describes the effect of an individual being influenced by a number of different “norm-set circles” (clusters of related norms – familial, political, cultural or religious, for example) at the same time (ibid.). This is something that is particularly common in today’s ‘modern western world’ – as a result of what Bauman (2006) terms “liquid modernity”.

The result is a social structure made up of a “patchwork of overlapping normative circles” all competing for influence in any given social space at any given time (Elder-Vass 2013, 29).

This in turn means a social structure that is “inherently open to cultural competition, conflict, and change” (Elder-Vass 2013, 30).

With its focus on encouraging radical social change, this thesis is particularly interested in this “patchwork” and how its composition can be shifted so that alternative norms – those related to a human-ecological worldview, for example – can be brought to the fore. Bhaskar’s (1998 [1979]) “transformational model of social activity” offers a useful framework here. Conceived as a loop with two critical moments – the structural and the agential – it explains the relationship between individuals, social structure and agency. As Elder-Vass (2010, 134) explains: “In the structural moment individuals are causally affected by pre-existing social structures and in the agential moment they themselves act, and as a consequence reproduce or transform the social structure concerned”.

Transformation occurs if enough individuals are exposed to enough “norm-undermining” experiences over time (Elder-Vass 2010, 135). In response, they are likely to develop a different belief about the appropriate behaviour in a particular situation. This effect is reinforced by their normative intersectionality, which means there are always other norms with causal powers that can emerge. The result is that the cycle reproducing any given behaviour may be “subverted often enough for the norm to start to weaken, fade away or be transformed” and a new normative environment be created (Elder-Vass 2010, 135). This process of ‘normative negotiation’ is happening at all times and to different degrees throughout the social world, with varying levels of impact and importance.

However, as Elder-Vass (2010, 136) goes on to point out, it is possible for individuals to resist this change by, for example, strengthening their own norm-supporting behaviour to counterbalance the weakening of others. This process is also known as “cultural cognition”; in the sustainability context its effect is clearly exemplified in the behaviour of climate change deniers who dismiss evidence of environmental damage because accepting it would also mean dismissing values and activities they admire (see for example, Hamilton 2013; Kahan 2010).

Norm circles, therefore, offer a concise way of understanding how the social world is both contingent upon and constructed by its members. From this position it is then possible to recognise that what may be perceived as immovable truths – the inevitability of economic growth, the primacy of rational knowledge, or financial wealth as the only indicator of value, for example – are in fact socially constructed ‘norms’, inherently open to change. By moving

the discussion onto heterotopias, my aim is to explore one way that new normative environments can be encouraged into existence.

2.3. Heterotopias

In this thesis, I will be using heterotopias as a theoretical framework, an analytical tool *and* an object of analysis. In this section I will describe the concept of heterotopia with the aim of both drawing a detailed picture of how I understand the important role they can play in terms of encouraging radical social change and beginning the process of sharpening the concept into a useful analytical tool. How I use the concept in my analysis will be described in detail in my Methodology chapter below.

2.3.1. What are heterotopias?

The term heterotopia is originally a medical one, used to refer to parts of the body that are not where they should be; out of place organs, extra fingers and toes, or, like tumours, alien to the body as a whole (Hetherington 1998, 131). In 1967, Michel Foucault (1984 [1967], 3) appropriated the word to describe social space, “counter-sites” where “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted”. Foucault (*ibid.*, 4-9) goes on to lay out six principles of heterotopia, which can be summarised as follows: (1) they can be found in every culture in the world, but take varied forms; (2) a society can make them function in vastly different ways, refashioning their use over time; (3) they are capable of juxtaposing a number of incompatible sites in a single place; (4) they are linked to time, both its accumulation and flow; (5) they always contain a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable; (6) they have a function in relation to all other space. For Foucault, these sites can be as diverse as psychiatric hospitals, retirement homes, theatres, museums, cemeteries and festivals.

Yet despite this initial laying out of heterotopias, Foucault never returned to them in his later work causing some scholars to question his conviction in the concept. Many others, however, have taken it up as a valuable tool for exploring ideas around social change, seeing them as “potentially transformative spaces of society from which meaningful forms of resistance can be mounted” (Hook 2010, 185). This thesis falls into the latter category but that does not mean it is blind to the criticism levelled at the concept, which tends to be aimed at the breadth

of its definition (for example, Harvey 2000, 185, which I discuss below). As a result, it is worth saying a bit more about how I understand heterotopias by drawing on scholars who have developed Foucault's concept in interesting and important ways.

2.3.1.1. It's no utopia

First, it is vital to recognise that heterotopias are fundamentally *not* utopias. While utopias are always imaginary, a vessel for envisaging a future state of perfection, existing completely out of order; heterotopias are always real, situated in the here and now, but both separate from and yet connected to all other space (Topinka 2010, 57). It is this paradoxical and dialectical relationship with the surrounding dominant social order that gives heterotopias their particular power. The very fact that they emerge with the imprints of hegemonic discourse is key to their ability to “*effect change*, not simply evade or oppose domination” (Crane 2012, 354 emphasis added). Even Harvey (2000, 196), recognises that radical alternatives to the current system must be “rooted in our present possibilities at the same as it points towards different trajectories”. Or, to put it more poetically and perhaps more profoundly, they must be amphibious, “half in the dirty water of the present but seeking to move on to a new, unexplored territory” (Wall 2005, 178).

2.3.1.2. Heterotopias of resistance

Second, it is important to ensure that heterotopias are not idealised. While they are agreed to be “spaces in which an alternative social ordering is performed” (Hetherington 1997, 40) – laboratories where new ways of organising society can be tried out – there is no guarantee that these ‘experiments’ will be ‘acceptable’ or ‘appropriate’ (Harvey 2000, 185). As Harvey (ibid.) goes on to point out:

“The cemetery and the concentration camp, the factory, the shopping malls and Disneyland, Jonestown, the militia camps, the open plan office... ‘privotopia’, and ‘ecotopia’ are all sites of alternative ways of doing things and therefore in some sense ‘heterotopic’...What appears at first sight as so open by virtue of its multiplicity suddenly appears either as banal...or as a more sinister fragmentation of spaces that are closed, exclusionary and even threatening...”

When it comes to encouraging radical change towards more equitable and just human-ecological norms, it is important that we are able to recognise these degenerate forms of heterotopia, wherever they appear, and focus on identifying and encouraging “heterotopias of resistance” – real counter-sites that invert and contest existing economic and social hierarchies and have social transformation as their function rather than escapism, containment or denial (Kohn 2003, 91).

Two recent examples of heterotopias of resistance take the form of social movements – the ‘Camp for Climate Action’ and the ‘Occupy Movement’. In this thesis, however, I am interested in exploring heterotopias that can be found in another part of the social world, that of performance. Achieving radical human-ecological change requires engagement and action from all corners, and the creative arts have a long history of acting as society’s collective conscience (Griffiths 2010, 6), meaning what is found there can have profound impacts on the way society understands and responds to its deepest questions. As Tompkins (2006, 167) suggests, it can be in the experience of performance that “the opportunity arises to construct worlds that help interpret and reinterpret what happens outside”.

2.3.2. *Heterotopias in performance*

Despite Foucault (1984 [1967]) defining theatre as an example of heterotopia, it is not a concept that has, so far, garnered much interest among theatre and performance scholars (ibid.) for more information, see Tompkins 2014, 22–23). This is in large part because Foucault’s (1984 [1967]) proclamation that theatres are *inherently* heterotopic offers little scope in terms of analysis and critique. However, by conceptually separating the *theatre* from the *performance* that happens within it, heterotopic analysis becomes rather more rewarding. Further, when it is applied to performances that happen outside theatre buildings – as *AWLB* does – productions which by their very nature have a more nuanced and complexly bound relationship with their wider cultural context, and are in fact “more or less *constituted* by the ways in which paradigms are rubbing up across each other”, even more fertile ground is produced (Kershaw 1999, 7).

I, therefore, join Joanne Tompkins (2006; 2014) in an assertion that heterotopias are a useful tool for not only connecting a performance to the world in which it is situated, but also for offering a deeper explanation of the structures of power and knowledge that produce it

(Tompkins 2014, 5). In the rest of this section I will expand on some of the points already made above and discuss the concept of heterotopia in the context of performance specifically. By doing this, the relationship I perceive between norm circles, heterotopias and the radical imagination that forms the conceptual foundation to this thesis will start to become apparent. As with heterotopias more generally, when encountered in performances they can be seen to “rehearse the possibilities” of other ways of being, acting and knowing, creating an “experimental zone in which different ‘worlds’ can be constructed and tested” (Tompkins 2014, 3). The result is that the audience itself is asked “to test the validity of the categories it believes it lives by” (Barker 1993, 52). It is here that we can start to see how heterotopic performance can play a part in encouraging social change, particularly if the word ‘categories’ is exchanged with Elder Vass’s (2010; 2013) term ‘norm circles’. For, if the heterotopic experience serves to play a part in ‘undermining’ one or more dominant norms, it can in turn contribute to Bhaskar’s (1998 [1979]) aforementioned “transformational model of social activity” and assist in the eventual subversion of said norm(s).

It is important at this point, however, to make it clear that I do not see heterotopic performance as being able to *directly* intervene in the world. Just as norm circles depend on the beliefs and dispositions of their members for their power, so too does the power of performance. In the words of Marcuse (1978, 33): “Art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world.”

Additionally, while performances rarely last longer than 90 minutes – certainly neither of the productions analysed in this thesis go beyond that – this apparent ‘transitoriness’ is not necessarily a barrier to the pieces’ affective properties. On the contrary, it can be integral. The inherently impermanent and fleeting nature of performance can be said to give the heterotopias produced their particular power. This reflection during a discussion about climate change performance describes what I mean:

“You can see theatre as a way of rehearsing a way of being for the time that you encounter it, but the really important thing is that you don’t have to commit to it. Opening up that space to play can allow you to come back to the real world with more options and ways to respond to it” (Beaufoy et al. 2013).

Finally, to address the ‘live’ element of theatre and performance and the important part this plays in creating powerful heterotopic spaces. First, there is the ‘social contract’ that

performance relies on: “Seeing theater and performance requires us to show up...to put our bodies in a place [and time] where artists tell their stories and paint their pictures” (Dolan 2008, 96). This fact becomes increasingly significant when considered in the context of Bauman’s (2006; 2001) theory of ‘liquid modernity’ where techniques of power are said to be bound up in mobility, flexibility and intangibility (Bauman 2001, 12). The result, says Bauman (ibid.), is that people are unable to ‘get a hold on’ their present condition, a hold strong enough to encourage thoughts of changing it. The very “present-tenseness” (Dolan 2008, 17) of performance then – ‘present’ in the physical and temporal meaning of the word – can be said to infuse any possible alternatives that are revealed in and through the heterotopic element(s) of live performance with a powerfully embodied, tangible and rooted meaning. This is, of course, not to say that performance is the *only* art form with the potential for heterotopic qualities – far from it! – but a discussion of this breadth must be saved for another piece of work. What I do hope to have shown, however, is not only the possible power of heterotopias in terms of creating a space where radical alternatives can be explored, rehearsed and enacted, but that performance offers one important way that heterotopias can be created and engaged with.

2.4. The Radical Imagination

With the relationship I conceive between norm circles and heterotopias now introduced, it is necessary to move to an explanation of the radical imagination and how it too relates to the subject of this thesis. As mentioned in the Introduction, this thesis begins from the basic assumption that radical change is required to tackle the current environmental and social crises; radical change even to the stories we tell about ourselves. Implicit in this assertion is the idea that stories play a *constitutive* as well as a reflexive role in the social world: we tell them and are told by them. Or, as Bauman (2001, 7) somewhat enigmatically puts it: “The stories told of lives interfere with the lives lived before the lives have been lived to be told.”

In their development of the concept of the radical imagination, primarily in the context of social movements research, Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish extend this idea, reminding us (by invoking Karl Marx) that:

“the imagination is never a pure, unmediated effusion of the human soul but is always shaped, conditioned and guided by one’s socialization. In other words, we can never *fully* imagine our way out of our own prison

precisely because what we can imagine is always based on what we have experienced in our lives (even vicariously through stories) and these experiences are forged within a particular set of power relations” (Haiven and Khasnabish 2010, vii).

The result is that, imagining the world, its social institutions, and human (and non-human) relationships as radically different becomes extremely difficult. Haiven and Khasnabish’s response is to call for an imagination that “suggests as possible that which feels at some level inconceivable” (Paulson 2010, 34); something they call the radical imagination. It is worth quoting Haiven and Kasnabish’s (2014, 4 emphasis in original) description of what they mean by this in full:

On the surface level, the radical imagination is the ability to imagine our world, life and social institutions not as they are but as they might otherwise be. It is the courage and the intelligence to recognize that the world can and should be changed. But the radical imagination is not just about dreaming of different futures. It’s about bringing those possible futures ‘back’ to *work* on the present, to inspire action and new forms of solidarity today. Likewise, the radical imagination is about drawing on the past, telling different stories about how the world came to be the way it is, and remembering the power and importance of past struggles and the way their spirits live on in the present.

When this description is considered alongside the discussion of heterotopias above, it strikes me that the two make strong partners in a project for radical social change. By creating a space – in the physical, metaphorical, and psychological sense of the word – where the normative environment is more open to contestation and subversion, heterotopias becomes a place where not only the radical imagination, but also radical acting and being, can be encouraged, supported, embodied and rehearsed. While Haiven and Khasnabish focus their attention on social movements, I am interested to see how this theorisation can be broadened to translate into a discussion of performance, British climate change performance in particular.

3. Methodology

In this chapter I first outline my methodological and ontological approach. This is followed by a description and justification of my research design. In the final sections of this chapter I

outline my epistemological approach, use of methods – both data collection and data analysis – as well as discuss the limitations to my research.

3.1. Realist social constructionism

Largely due to my emphasis on norm circles, this study will take the methodological approach laid out in Elder-Vass' (2013) *The Reality of Social Construction*. It argues that social scientists should be both realists and social constructionists, what Elder-Vass (2013, 7) terms “a realist social constructionism – or, if you prefer, a socially constructionist realism”.

This means that, while I believe “any attempt to make sense of our social world must explain the role that culture, language and discourse, and knowledge play in it”, I do not take a “*radical or extreme*” constructionist position, where “*everything* depends on the ways in which we think about it” (Elder-Vass 2013, 3, 5 & 6 emphasis added). Instead, I take what Elder-Vass (ibid. 6) terms a “moderate” constructionist view which, like that of realists, believes the world is divided into elements that depend on how we (individually or collectively) think about it – and thereby *can* be socially constructed – and those which do not – and thereby *cannot* be socially constructed.

It is worth noting too that, in making this argument for combining realism and social constructionism, Elder-Vass is following a lead suggested by Roy Bhaskar, the founding father of critical realism. In his *The Possibility of Naturalism*, Bhaskar (1998 [1979]) discusses what he calls, the “concept-dependence” of social structure; by which he means, the production of meaning is not “determined” but is, instead, dependent on beliefs.

Further, Bhaskar (ibid.), and consequently Elder-Vass (2013), both conceptualise society as an ‘open system’, “inherently open to cultural competition, conflict and change” (Elder-Vass 2013, 29). Identifying and understanding the mechanism that causes change in the social world is a major focus of this thesis. It is only following a successful conceptualisation of this mechanism that I can begin to explore how social change (towards a more ecological worldview, for example) can be encouraged and achieved – in the case of this thesis, through heterotopic performance.

3.2. Comparative case study

The structure of this research is a comparative case study. The ‘cases’ are two pieces of

climate change performance first produced in Britain in the last ten years: *2071* in 2014 and *AWLB* in 2006. The ‘study’ is their role in invoking the radical imagination and inspiring new human-ecological norms. My rationale for choosing a case study is a common one: for “theory-building, testing and refining” (May 2011, 228). Through an in-depth examination of the two cases with a heterotopic lens, I aim to test the theoretical relationship between norm circles, heterotopias and the radical imagination laid out in the Key Concepts chapter above.

Further, because this research project is based on understanding ‘real-life’ events – the performances and the effect they create – it was important to use ‘real life’ cases for analysis. It would have been impossible to carry out this research using only theoretical tools or by drawing on generalisations about the subject area.

3.2.1. Why British climate change theatre and performance between 2006 and 2014?

There are a number of reasons for looking at British climate change performance produced in the last ten years. First, due to heterotopias being both time and space contingent, it was important to select cases that come from a period and place I am personally familiar with; it is only by doing this that I am able to meaningfully comment on the relationship between the performances’ heterotopias and the cultural context they are both a product of and a response to.

Another more general reason as to why British climate change performance in the last ten years makes an interesting, valuable and relevant case to study is that the amount of this type of performance being produced during this time has accelerated. There is also evidence to suggest that British performance has been quicker to respond to the topic of climate change than other parts of the world (Bilodeau 2013). When Kirsten Shepherd-Barr (2006) wrote her comprehensive study of science on stage, for example, climate change did not merit a mention. Three years later, however, a number of large-scale, mainstream performances appeared in the UK in quick succession – *The Contingency Plan* (2009); *Earthquakes in London* (2010); *The Heretic* (2011); and *Greenland* (commissioned in 2010). The glut prompted prominent British theatre critic Michael Billington (2011), to remark playfully, “Climate change drama is the new growth industry”.

3.2.2. *Why 2071 and AWLB?*

As I describe in “Setting the scene” at the beginning of this thesis, it was seeing *2071* on a dreary November evening in 2014 that prompted the earliest ponderings of this project in its current form. The disappointment I felt during the production, the frustration I felt immediately after it and the lingering sense of discomfort it provoked, pushed me into a closer inspection of the piece and my response to it. *AWLB* was explicitly selected as a powerful counterpoint to *2071*. The productions are both focused on communicating issues around climate change and confronting their audience with the question, ‘How do we want to live?’ However, each approaches the subject matter in a strikingly different way, both in terms of narrative structure and theatrical form. (See *Appendix I* for background information on each of the texts and an introduction to their differing narrative structures and theatrical forms.) Further, each production was born out of a different sphere of society – *2071*, the scientific and *AWLB* the activist.

It was these stark contrasts and what I felt they could reveal that prompted me to settle on making a comparative study of these two productions. My aim was to, as Mitchell (2006 [1983], 37) states, construct a case study “where the concatenation of events is so idiosyncratic as to throw into sharp relief the principles underlying them”. In a short piece of research such as this, with the explicit aim of illustrating the powerful role performance can play in society, I was keen to give some idea of the spectrum of cases available but still ensure an analysis that is sufficiently in-depth and comprehensive.

Finally, as I delved deeper into the concept of heterotopias and the possibility of heterotopic analysis in performance, the potential within both those pieces for an engaged, critical and revealing reading of this type became increasingly apparent.

3.3. Methods

In this section I describe and explain my methods of data collection and data analysis. The first part includes information about my empirical material and how it was collected. The second part describes my method of heterotopic analysis.

3.3.1. Data collection and empirical material

I draw on a combination of empirical material to conduct my analysis: the performance texts; my own experience of the productions; semi-structured interviews with key informants; as well as a combination of additional material, which includes reviews, online comments and supporting documents.

3.3.1.1. The texts

There are two elements to the texts that are important for my analysis: the texts as words and the texts as performance⁶. In terms of the texts as words, I use the full scripts of both *2071* and *ALWB* in this project. I downloaded the *2071* text from the production's webpage (www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/2071); the *ALWB* text I transcribed myself using the audio download available on the production's website (andwhilelondonburns.com). Information on the texts as performance was gathered through a combination of my own experience, semi-structured interviews and additional material, as you will see below.

3.3.1.2. My own experiences

As I have indicated previously, heterotopias are difficult to pin down. Not only are they time and space contingent, but they are heterogeneous, transient and largely subjective. As a result, my ability to both identify heterotopic spaces in the productions and fruitfully analyse them is dependent on my 'embeddedness' within the cultural context they are a product of and are responding to. Some of my analysis, therefore, draws on my own experience of, and response to, each of the texts in question.

In this sense, being an 'insider' is of vital importance for my analysis. However, an advanced level of reflexivity is also required throughout this research process. By this I mean my "ability...to question and/or interpret the assumptions informing the social worlds through which [I] live" (Kershaw 1999, 23), something that has become central to many accounts of social process in the contemporary world (Lash & Urry 1994). This straddling of positions is

⁶ This separation is only for empirical purposes. During my analysis, the two are never considered in isolation and instead are understood to work dialogically, co-creating the production.

challenging to maintain, but is integral to a project like this, which has both a critical and a generative aim.

I saw *2071* on the evening of Saturday 8th November, 2014 at the Royal Court Theatre, London. I took brief notes during the performance and wrote an article reflecting on the piece the following week (see *Appendix II*).

I experienced *AWLB* twice in the space of one week: once on Monday 16th March 2015 around 3pm and once on Friday 10th March 2015 at around 6:30pm. It was important to complete the walk more than once and at different times of day in order to increase the variety of my experience. I prioritised weekdays during office hours, as the *AWLB* website advises that at others times some of the walk's sites are inaccessible.

The first time I completed *AWLB*, the experience was interspersed with pauses to consult the map on my smart phone for orientation due to changes in the city-scape that have occurred between the production being made in 2006 and my experience of it almost a decade later. As a result, I decided to use this first experience of the walk as an opportunity to take notes and photographs throughout. The second time I took the walk I was able to experience it as a complete whole.

3.3.1.3. Semi-structured interviews

I conducted four semi-structured interviews with key informants, all of which were audio recorded and transcribed in full over the following days. See *Appendix III* for a table laying out relevant information on each of these interviews and the interviewees. All of my interviewees are directly involved with performance production; all but one are directly involved in performance with an environmental focus; and all but one have had direct experience with at least one of the texts being analysed in this thesis.

I selected a semi-structured interview style to allow for a balance between the participants being able to answer questions largely on their own terms while maintaining a focus on my specific area of research (May 2011, 135). This allowed the interviewees the opportunity to talk fluidly about a subject they know well with the potential to take the conversation in directions that I might not have accounted for but were nonetheless relevant.

3.3.1.4. Additional material

Supplementing the above material is a diverse collection of additional reflections on the performances gathered through casual conversations with friends, colleagues and relatives who have also seen *2071* and *AWLB*; newspaper and magazine reviews; interviews; and online comments from audience members.

3.3.2. *Heterotopic analysis*

In this thesis I use the method of heterotopic analysis, largely following that laid out by Joanne Tompkins in her book, *Theatre's Heterotopias: Performance and the Cultural Politics of Space* (2014). It is a form of engaged and critical reading of performance that works to identify a heterotopic experience by taking into account the intersection and interaction of a combination of the following spaces:

“the theatre venue in which a performance takes place (or, if it does not take place in a conventional venue, the location in which it is staged); the narrative space(s)/place(s) that the playwright establishes, which are generated in the venue or even referred to beyond the limits of the performance space; and the layers of design and direction that are added to the first two types of space and which continue to accrete (and in some cases challenge or subvert) meaning.” (Tompkins 2014, 29)

As Tompkins goes on to point out, not all of these spaces are equally relevant in every heterotopic production (ibid.). Further, a heterotopia can appear in a performance for varying amounts of time, sometimes offering only a glimpse and at others appearing for much longer (ibid.).

This type of method relies heavily on the researcher's ability to interpret the text in a particular way and Tompkins offers a collection of questions that can be asked about a performance to assist with this (see Tompkins 2014, 30). She describes them as “background work” (ibid.), however and not a fixed checklist; the answers to the questions “do not in themselves determine whether a production is heterotopic: rather they provide information...from which an interpretation can be built” (ibid.).

While this method may seem somewhat amorphous, its analytical ambitions are clear. By focusing attention on heterotopias – their creation and their effect – it not only offers a tool

for recognising and rehearsing how alternatives to the existing order can be brought into existence, but also how performance itself can play a part in encouraging social change. For Tompkins (2014, 29), however, this change is always “for the social good” and it is here that my approach to heterotopic analysis shifts slightly from hers. First, I question the use of the term ‘social good’ as if it is objective fact and recognise instead that the term ‘good’ is relative i.e. what is good for one may not be good for others. Second, I am just as interested, if not more, in performances that can be said to produce heterotopias that encourage *repressive* rather than *progressive* change. Recognising and understanding how these types of alternatives can be brought into existence is also of vital critical and analytical importance.

3.4. Limitations

First, there are a couple of limitations in terms of the two performance texts. I was unable to gain access to the visual graphics that accompany the *2071* play text, which limits my analysis of this aspect of the performance. Instead of an in-depth exploration of exactly what graphics displayed when during the piece I relied on press images of the performance and my own memories of it. However, while the inclusion of this information would certainly have been a useful addition to my empirical material, adding greater complexity to my discussion, I do not believe that it would have resulted in different conclusions.

In terms of *AWLB*, there is no official transcript available of the text so I transcribed it myself using the audio files available online⁷. Not only does this immediately bring in an element of my own interpretation at the textual level in terms of grammatical structure but some of the operatic elements of the text were not entirely audible and it was not always possible to discern the exact words that were being sung.

Second, despite attempts through the Royal Court theatre press office and personal contacts, I was unable to gain direct access to Katie Mitchell, Chris Rapley or Duncan Macmillan of the *2071* team. I did however speak to James Marriott, the *AWLB* co-writer, which means the type of reflections I have on each of the texts is slightly different. However, because *2071* was such a high-profile piece, involving three well-known individuals, gathering secondary

⁷ andwhilelondonburns.com/download/ [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

data on it was much easier than for *AWLB*. This went some way to making up for what could be considered a lack of interview material.

Finally, to move to my method of analysis. First, in terms of replicability of this study, I must recognise that my perceptions of the heterotopic in *2071* and *AWLB* may not appear in the same way to someone else. Not only are heterotopias time and space contingent, but the mode of analysis is somewhat subjective. However, this is not to say that frames and devices employed here cannot be replicated – either on the same performances or on others that occur in different places and at different times. And this leads me to my final limitation: Joanne Tompkins is the only scholar I am aware of who is actively and academically engaging with this type of performance analysis, which significantly limits the breadth of knowledge I am able to draw on when applying the method to my own research. However, my aim with this thesis is to raise the profile of this type of methodology in terms of its applicability and significance, so while this is a limitation at present, my hope is that it will not be one that continues into the future.

4. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter is split into four sections. The first three each take a close look at an element that makes up the performances' narratives: the story they tell, their use of space, and their relationship with the audience. These three narrative elements can be said to combine to create an 'experience', the subject of the final section of this chapter.

My aim in the first three sections is to analyse and discuss the different ways each of the performances construct meaning around the issue of climate change and what this reveals about their relationship with dominant human-ecological norms. The final section will return to my research questions and discuss in what way the 'experience' of each of the performances can be said to be heterotopic, what type of heterotopias they are and what role, if any they play in invoking the radical imagination and inspiring new human-ecological norms.

Finally, as is the case throughout this thesis, during the analysis I am dealing with elements that are inherently and intricately bound. While for analytical ease and reader clarity I have separated them in a manner that I believe is most fruitful for this project, my aim is to strike a balance between dealing with each element discretely alongside offering an insight into their

relationships with each other.

4.1. The story told

In the first section of analysis, my focus is on the characters, the events (actions, happenings) and the imaginative (as opposed to physical) setting of the performances. As you will see, in each of the performances these ‘story’ elements work together in particular and explicit ways to construct a discourse that extends throughout the piece.

4.1.1. 2071

“Without doubt our shared aim is to get *the narrative* of climate change clear in people’s minds”. These are the words of *2071* director Katie Mitchell (qtd. in Murray Brown 2014, emphasis added) and serve as a good introduction to the points I will be making in this section. With its single narrator and self-professed focus on communicating “the results of the science” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 2), *2071* positions itself firmly in the positivistic tradition of knowledge production and truth i.e. that there are objective ‘facts’ that can be gathered about the world *independent* of how people interpret them (May 2011, 10). Connected to this is the belief that there is one ‘true’ narrative (of climate change, for example) and one ‘true’ way of understanding the world.

What I want to illustrate is how the story told in *2071* works to perfect a dominant western discourse that a) is overwhelmingly the legacy of white (European and North American) men and b) constructs damaging and dangerous dualisms which split humans from nature, mind from body and reason from emotion. Dualisms that are *damaging* in the sense that, when manifested in norms, values and behaviours, are responsible for the social and ecological injustices that are the major cause of climate change (Plumwood 2002, 4). And *dangerous* in the sense that they are presented as logical, rational ‘givens’ – in other words, they are (almost) invisible.

I will illustrate what I mean with examples from the *2071* play text. First, a few simple but specific points to note regarding what can be called the story’s characters and events (see *Table 1* on the page 28). Because of the type of piece *2071* is – with no character

development or sequence of events in the traditional narrative sense of the words – I use both the terms ‘characters’ and ‘events’ loosely.

To justify my categorisation of the numerical figures as ‘events’ see *Figure 1* below, where I have plotted the points at which the numerical figures (numbers, dates and amounts) appear throughout the text, page by page. You will see that there are two clear peaks: pages 17 and 23. These peaks of numerical figures coincide with narrative peaks in the text where humanity’s attempts at understanding and responding to climate change are described. Page 17 contains a detailed description of the IPCC Working Groups and its most recent report; page 23 a long list of commitments that have been made, but are as yet unmet, by some of the world’s most powerful (and most polluting) countries. Further, while it might feel unnatural from a narrative point of view to categorise ‘action’ in terms of numerical figures, from a natural science perspective this is nothing out of the ordinary.

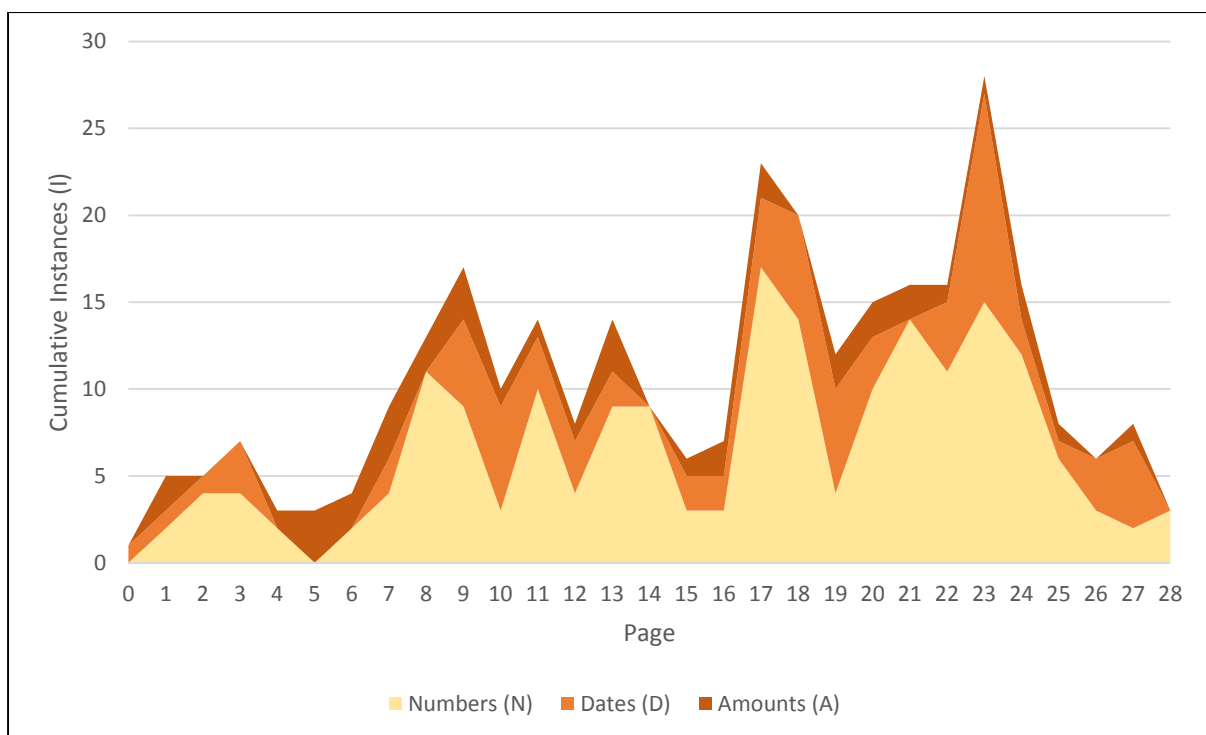


Figure 1: ‘The Number Arc’. Graph showing the amount of times specific numbers, dates and figures appear on each page of 2071

Source: Author’s own creation using information from the 2071 play text

Story component	Who or what?	Comments
Characters	2071 features 13 characters, including Rapley. Only two are female and neither of them are mentioned by name. One is Rapley’s mother and the other is his granddaughter, for whom the play is written. Judging by Rapley’s appearance and nationality, I am assuming that both women are white European.	Significantly, the two female characters in 2071 both play almost no active role but are metaphorically linked to ‘the earth’ – its past and its future. Rapley’s mother is credited with giving him an Atlas as a child that had large areas of the Antarctic marked ‘Region Unknown to Man’. It is this atlas, and in particular its ‘Region Unknown to Man’, which has fascinated Rapley throughout his life, prompting him to probe, prod and penetrate the region (and others) with the help of a variety of scientific instruments and pieces of technology. Rapley’s granddaughter, on the other hand – who is, at the time of writing, the age he was when he received the atlas – represents a different ‘region’ of the earth that is, as yet, ‘unknown to man’: its future. “I tell her I think she should become an engineer” he says, so she can continue the pattern of market growth, exploitation and technological innovation (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 27).
Characters	The rest of the characters are male – and of these men, only three do <i>not</i> hail from Europe or America (Yuri Gagarin, the first human in space, Xo Kinping, the Chinese President and Narendra Modi, the Indian Prime Minister). This aforementioned list also includes two of the three characters in the play who are non-white; the third is Barack Obama, the U.S. President.	Many of the male characters are implicated in the story through their pioneering connection to the Antarctic landscape: their names given to the islands, ice shelves and glaciers they are credited with penetrating for the first time. Others through their relationship to scientific discoveries and technological innovations – Yuri Gagarin, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldridge. The rest are contemporary global politicians tasked with legislating on and planning for the future of the planet.
Events (actions, happenings)	A total of 306 numerical figures appear in this 65 minute play; that’s around one every 10 seconds.	The huge array and density of numbers, amounts and dates in the 2071 story point to the abstracted nature of natural science. Instead of action being described in words that implicate a tangible, experiential relationship between two things, be they human, animal or inanimate, action is condensed into mere numerical associations.
Events (actions, happenings)	The verbs “measure”, “map”, “use”, “look”, “see”, “observe”, “study” and “take” all feature between five and nine times. The verb “feel” features twice. As do the verbs “penetrate” and “extract”.	The action words that do exist are overwhelmingly enacted <i>upon</i> the planet and paint a clear picture of domination and power.

Table 1: Summary of 2071’s character and event components

I recognise that the comments in *Table 1* only offer broad brush strokes of the type of story *2071* is telling. However, they do go some way to revealing the picture I am trying to show. In the next few paragraphs I will dive into more detail, addressing, in turn: how emotion and sensory experience are dealt with in the text, as well as a discussion of the discursive context *2071* sits within. These elements all play an important part in constructing the story's (imaginative) setting.

4.1.1.1. Emotion

According to the positivistic tradition, emotions pave no part of the path to truth. In fact, emotions are believed to be actively destructive to objectivity. "Over-identifying with the 'subject' of the research is said to prevent 'good' research. The researcher should be detached and hence assumed to be objective" explains May (2011, 21). In *2071*, Rapley accepts that climate change "is an extremely emotive issue" and that "we are all susceptible to bias and irrationality when confronting it" (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 1). His response is to turn to science. The result is that in the very first moments of the performance, 'emotion' and 'irrationality' are bound together and positioned in direct opposition to 'science'.

One of the most powerful moments of the *2071* story also draws a line between reasoned objectivity and emotion, but with a slightly different effect. Rapley is describing drilling for ice cores in the Antarctic using the (scientifically) obligatory numerical adjectives – 800,000 years ago, 5 metres long, 3 kilometres deep – when he shifts his focus to the offcuts, "small chunks of core, which aren't useful to science" (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 13). These words "aren't useful to science" serve to immediately release Rapley from "try[ing] to remain objective and dispassionate" (ibid.). He picks a piece up, he holds it, he listens to the air bubbles "pop and crackle" as the ice melts from the heat of his hand (ibid.). "I breathed the air coming out of it, air that was trapped at the time of freezing" (ibid.). And here, among a density of data and the opacity of objectivity, we find a brief but potent moment of intimacy. Emotional and sensory, it is a truly embodied experience.

4.1.1.2. Sensory experience

The moment described above leads us into a brief discussion on the role of the senses in *2071*. As shown in *Table 1* on page 28, "look", "see" and "observe" are among the most

common 'actions' performed in *2071* – actions that are more often than not, performed upon the earth in order to “measure” and “map” it (two other verbs that appear a number of times in the text). This coincides with the positivistic maxim ‘seeing is believing’. Humans’ other four senses (touch, smell, hearing and taste) are manifest in the text only through their absence – relative in terms of touch and hearing, which receive bit-parts in the *2071* story, absolute in terms of smell and taste, which do not appear at all.

In her interview, Wallace Heim⁸ links this lack of sensory experience in *2071* directly to its fascination with numbers and positivistic science: “this whole idea of thinking about it in terms of numbers...diminishes people's experience, it belongs to a culture which...got us into this mess.” “And it's the poverty of imagination” she continues. “The view that this thing that is happening, which has economic and social and philosophical reasons for it, which are deeply complex and tied up with power, tied up with all sorts of things, can only come out in numbers. I find this bizarre. That is that the only way we can comprehend this?”⁹

4.1.1.3. Discursive context

I have so far highlighted a number of character, event and scenic elements to the *2071* story that anchor it in a white male-dominated tradition of reasoned objectivity that diminishes lived experience and is disconnected from nature. That these elements are all part of the discourse of positivistic natural science has, I hope, been made clear. However, while this particular discourse may be the most prevalent in the *2071* story, a number of related discourses are also drawn upon, each serving to strengthen the other. To help explain I will borrow a term from critical discourse analysis, without employing its full analytical usage. The term is “order of discourse” and it refers to the configuration of all “discourse types” that are used within a social institution or social field (Fairclough 1995b, 66). Significantly, orders of discourse can be seen as a domain of potential cultural hegemony where conflict is dissolved and dominant groups struggle to assert and maintain a particular structure within and between themselves (Fairclough 1995b, 56).

To illustrate my point I will highlight three discourse types that can be found in the *2071* story that both support and strengthen each other, as well as seek to secure their cultural

⁸ Wallace Heim, interview with author, 18th March 2015

⁹ Ibid.

hegemony into the future. They are Colonialism, the Anthropocene, and growth and techno-fixes.

Colonialism

Colonialism is never explicitly referred to in *2071*, however its fingerprints feature throughout the text. James Ross (British), Carl Anton Larsen (Norwegian), Sir Hubert Wilkins (Australian), George M. Totten (North American). These are just some of the ‘characters’ that feature alongside Rapley; explorers who proudly gave their names to islands, ice shelves and glaciers of Antarctica. The men themselves don’t feature in the text, but their legacies do. And while there is none of the coercion and genocide (physical and cultural) of *people* associated with colonialism in other parts of the world (no doubt only because there were no people to be found here) it is a product of the same set of norms, values and behaviours – a worldview that sees a certain section of humanity (theirs) as superior to the rest, and the planet as something to be conquered (Maddison 2014, 1).

Significantly, Rapley, implicitly identifies himself with this history when he describes flying over the Wilkins ice shelf in 2009 after parts of it had collapsed due to rising sea temperatures (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 11). The ice shelf is named after the first man to observe it from the air, Sir Hubert Wilkins (Mill 1929), so when Rapley says he “looked down on the vast area of shattered ice – it looked like pieces of a broken window” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 11), a critical reader can’t help but wonder how much more pertinent it would have been if it had looked to him like pieces of a broken mirror...

The way colonial discourse features in the *2071* story both *naturalises* and *neutralises* what was – and still is – a violent, unjust and deeply damaging reality for so many (‘other’) people and places in the world. Further, in the same way that the colonial project denied the lived experience of the colonised, the *2071* story pays little attention to the lived experience of the individuals worst affected by climate change, as you will see below.

The Anthropocene

“In 1712, the invention of the Newcomen Steam Engine started a chain reaction of innovation, technology and science that spread across the globe, driven by a desire for profit

and the pursuit of a better life” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 15). This is the first sentence of what can be called the ‘second half’ of *2071*. It is the moment the story’s focus shifts to the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch defined by “human impact on the planetary system...[which has] irreversibly brought the climatic stability of the Holocene to an end” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 16). There are a number of “we’s”, “us’s” and “our’s” found here: “we have burned”; “driven by us”; “our use of fossil fuels” (ibid.). It is possible that *2071* knows its audience when it uses these collective pronouns – largely affluent, western urbanites – but there is little evidence in the text to suggest this. Instead, I argue *2071* uses the concept of the Anthropocene to erase difference and ignore the fact that uneven distribution – of energy, labour, resources and technology – is a condition for the very existence of the modern, fossil-fuelled capitalist economy (Hornborg 2001, 2011). To put it another way, the fossil economy was not created nor is it upheld by humankind *in general*. Instead, capitalists in a small corner of the western world invested in steam power, which laid the foundations for the fossil economy, while today a significant chunk of humanity is still not party to the fossil economy at all (Malm & Hornborg 2014, 64-65).

The result is a discursive trick, whereby what could – and should – be a point of *antagonism* within the order of discourse presented in *2071* is dissolved and in fact helps secure *hegemony*.

Growth and techno-fixes

In the first few moments of *2071* Rapley states that he is, “here to communicate the results of the science, their implications and *the options we have before us*” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 2 emphasis added). Further, the production’s webpage claims that “What’s needed is a conversation”¹⁰. Yet as the *2071* story develops it is clear that the terms of both the ‘conversation’ and the ‘options before us’ are tightly controlled.

Regarding the ‘conversation’, in terms of whose voices are present in this conversation and whose are not, much of what has already been discussed in the above sections relates. Regarding the ‘options’, Rapley makes it explicitly clear near the end of the performance just what he means by this: “There’s little we can do to reduce the global economy. All governments are committed to increasing it and, in any case, our prosperity and wellbeing

¹⁰ <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/2071> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

depends on it” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 25). In one fell swoop, myriad options that sit outside the dominant growth paradigm are disregarded including work on degrowth (see for example, D’Alisa, Demaria & Kallis 2014), post growth (see for example, The Post Growth Institute¹¹), the circular economy (see for example The Ellen Macarthur Foundation¹²), and meeting people’s needs rather than their wants (see for example, Jackson 2009).

Rapley’s statement gains even more significance when considered alongside the apolitical, unemotional, reasoned discourse of positivistic natural science so prevalent in 2071. “Science can inform, but it cannot arbitrate, it cannot decide...it can’t answer moral questions, value questions”, Rapley tells us (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 28). Yet what 2071 has actually done is make a series of political and moral statements that are undeniably tied to a particular set of values. Here again, then, we see how an order of discourse can be constructed in a way that creates hegemony and quells antagonism. The ‘growth is a given’ discourse is bolstered by the positivistic discourse, which claims unrivalled access to objective truth.

Further, with the ‘growth is given’ position firmly established, the techno-fix solution (supported by neoliberalism) then becomes the only option available: “My hope lies with the Engineers” states Rapley (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 26). Once energy technologies that are cheaper and cleaner than “Unabated Fossil Fuels” are available, “the markets will drive its exploitation”, he continues (ibid.). Plumwood’s (2002, 8) words ring powerfully true at this point: “Technofix solutions make no attempt to rethink human culture, dominant lifestyles and demands on nature, indeed they tend to assume that these are unchangeable.”

4.1.2. *AWLB*

Because of its form as a site-specific audio-walk, separating the ‘story’ of *AWLB* from the physical space it occurs within is by definition difficult¹³. In response, this first section of analysis will focus primarily on the characters and action as they feature in the audio element of the text, leaving the majority of the arguably more significant – and certainly more nuanced and complex – discussion of *AWLB*’s relationship with its *setting* for the section titled “The space it’s told in” below. Further, I will follow a similar analytical route through

¹¹ <http://postgrowth.org/> [last accessed 18th May 2015]

¹² <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/> [last accessed 18th May 2015]

¹³ Site-specific theatre can be broadly defined as “performance that occurs outside the theatre venue in a place that is closely connected to the form and function of the performance itself” (Tompkins 2011, 225)

the material in this section as was taken in the section on *2071* above in order to highlight the contrasting nature of the two pieces. This is something that becomes particularly pertinent in the section on “Discursive context”, as you will see.

First, *AWLB* is an unabashedly political piece of performance. For co-writer, James Marriott, art and politics are “absolutely synonymous...I find it impossible to separate the two.”¹⁴ This immediately informs the analytical lens through which *AWLB*’s story should be seen. While in *2071*, much of the analytical work involved *deconstructing* the story’s claim of objectivity, the focus here is on how *AWLB*’s politics serve to explicitly *construct* its story, character and events.

Second, it is the mythic tradition rather than the natural scientific one that informs *AWLB*’s position on knowledge production and truth. Not only does the story feature dragons – “Guardians of the city. Beasts of fire. Devourers. Seducers” (Marriott & Jordan 2006) – but it follows a typical mythological narrative structure, “The Hero’s Journey”, as identified by the seminal American mythologist, Joseph Campbell (1949). According to Campbell (*ibid.*, 30), the Hero’s Journey narrative involves three major stages: separation, initiation and return: “A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men”.

AWLB’s unique power comes from the fact it contains *two* hero journeys: one ‘fictional’, between the nameless hero and Lucy; the other ‘real’, between the guide and the listener. The second of these ‘journeys’ I will explore in more detail in the sections entitled “The space it’s told in” and “The relationship with the audience” below. The first can be simplified as: the hero, an unnamed financial trader, unhealthy, overworked and depressed, falls in love with a woman called Lucy who opens his eyes to the damage the City of London and its institutions are doing to the planet and its people. The hero considers running away (as Lucy did) or committing suicide as ways to cope with his problems, but decides to stay, “Stay and change the city and love London in a way that we never have before...Build a new city, not on oil and gas but on the wind and the sun” (Marriott & Jordan 2006).

Significantly, myths are not created to *explain the world* so much as to *explain our place within it*. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* (2002) defines them as, “traditional stor[ies]

¹⁴ James Marriott, interview with author, 17th March 2015

concerning the early history of people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon”. Creating a *new* myth, then, can be said to also create a *new* explanation of our place in the world. So, when *AWLB* co-writer James Marriot¹⁵ says, “Part of my job is to create myths”, he is not only indicating his understanding of the constitutive role stories play in the social world, but signalling his desire to create a new social order. I will illustrate my meaning using examples from the text.

First, it is important to make it clear that in the context of *AWLB*, climate change is understood as largely a *social* phenomenon, with questions of norms, values and behaviours taking precedence over questions of science. As you will see, instead of leading to a neat conclusion, a ‘fix’ for the ‘problem’ of climate change, the *AWLB* story is focused on asking its audience to re-examine their fundamental existential assumptions, anxieties, and aspirations.

Let’s begin by taking a look at the story’s characters. As in *2071*, the majority of *AWLB*’s characters are white men: Humphrey Morice, Governor of the Bank of England in the 1700’s, the philanthropist George Peabody, and a litany of individuals who headed up major teams at BP, Shell, Swiss Re, Deutsche Bank, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), Lloyds Bank and Orrick, Harrington and Sutcliffe LLP at the time of *AWLB*’s writing. The nameless hero is also male – and, according to the production’s website, most likely white (see *Figure 2* below). Also as with *2071*, *AWLB* only features two women – the guide and Lucy, the fictional hero’s love interest. However, the roles these characters play differ significantly from the women in *2071*.

¹⁵ James Marriot, interview with author, 17th March 2015

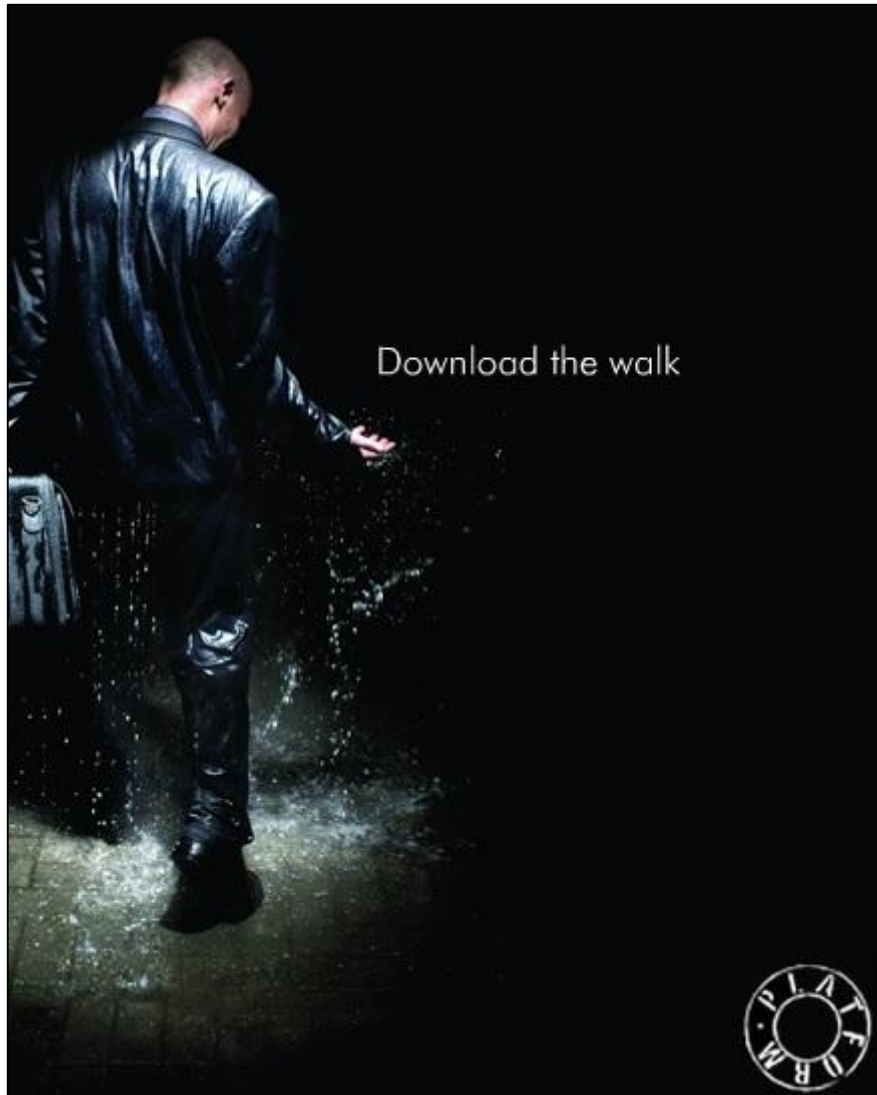


Figure 2: AWLB promotional image

Source: Reproduced with Platform's position (<http://andwhilelondonburns.com/>)

While in *2071* the women characters feature as metaphorical tools at best, in *AWLB* they direct large parts of the story's action. The guide, who leads the listener through much of the narrative's physical and imaginative setting is a calm, informed and official voice of reason. "Follow me and everything will be fine," she announces at the very beginning of the piece. Lucy, on the other hand, is an impassioned and intelligent call for change, the catalyst for the fictional hero's existential crisis and ultimate resurrection. Both are forceful figures in a piece that aims to challenge and subvert a host of dominant norms and taken for granted truths.

Of the male characters (not including the fictional hero), Humphrey Morice is introduced first: "He owned 14,000 slaves" and committed suicide after defrauding the Bank of England of more than £29,000 and embezzling trust funds left to his own daughters (Marriott &

Jordan 2006)¹⁶. It is made clear throughout the rest of the *AWLB* story that the same type of characters are carrying out the same type of actions, from many of the same locations, to this day. But instead of enslaving other countries' human resources they are enslaving their fossil fuels, and instead of embezzling their children's future financial wealth, they are embezzling their children's future.

For example, "Steve Mills at RBS gave a loan of \$100 million dollars to BP to help construct the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline", explains the guide (Marriott & Jordan 2006). "It carries oil from beneath the Caspian Sea, through the farmlands of Azerbaijan, the mountains of Georgia, and the villages of Turkey to the cities of Western Europe" (ibid.). Meanwhile children's voices sing a haunting counting song that is repeated a number of times throughout the performance: "One degree warmer, two degrees. Three degrees warmer, one two three. Four degrees warmer, five degrees. Six degrees warmer, four five six. Seven. Seven. Seven" (Marriott & Jordan 2006). At just two degrees warmer, *AWLB* warns us, "Acid seas dissolve the skeletons of marine life. A third of all species face extinction. Deadly heatwaves hit. Greenland melts. Hundreds of millions are threatened by rising seas" (ibid.).

Having now presented some broad points regarding the *AWLB* story it's time to once again dive into more detail, addressing how emotion and sensory experience are dealt with in the text, as well as a discussion of the discursive context *AWLB* sits within.

4.1.2.1. Emotion

Unlike *2071*, *AWLB* actively engages with emotions. Its very form as an *operatic* audio-walking-tour was chosen to "grab" the listener and "move" them – "That's all we wanted to do with this piece" says Marriott¹⁷. And grab and move you it does – in both a physical and an emotional sense – as you join the hero on a rollercoaster ride of potent feeling: depression, love, despair and hope.

As Marriott understands it, engaging with people's emotions offers the "possibility that you...press that button that opens the mind to something else"¹⁸. Marriott doesn't define what

¹⁶ The *AWLB* text refers to the 14,000 slaves, suicide and embezzlement; the specific details of the defrauding and embezzlement were gathered here: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/morice-humphry-1671-1731> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

¹⁷ James Marriott, interview by author, 17th March 2015

¹⁸ James Marriott, interview by author, 17th March 2015

this ‘something else’ is, but there are clues in the *AWLB* story itself. “It’s not knowledge we lack; what’s missing is the courage to *understand* what we know,” (Marriott & Jordan 2006 emphasis added) writes Lucy on a battered postcard that she sends to the hero from a remote idyll on the Cornish coast. In the context of *AWLB* it seems clear that ‘understanding’ what we know, comes through an emotional and embodied experience of that knowledge. This is indicated in both the story of piece and its form as an audio-walk. Without *feeling* this knowledge, then – feeling in both the emotional and physical sense – we cannot truly *understand* it. As Wallace Heim¹⁹, commented when I asked her how she understands climate change: “[science] that’s kind of how I know about it. It’s not really how I understand that, that’s kind of a different thing...I can talk to you at length about the science, the forecasts and the activism around it [climate change], but it's like, you know, I'm talking about...[pause]...what we construct so that we *don't* talk about it.” *Understanding*, she says, comes through “emotion” and “imagination”²⁰.

4.1.2.2. Sensory experience

Accordingly, the senses and bodily experience also play a major role in *AWLB*. Of course, the piece’s form again plays a major part in this, which I will expand on in later sections, but the story itself also draws on these elements too. In simple terms, the hero describes experiences throughout the story that evocatively engage all his senses. One of the most powerful moments comes during the first act, *Fire*, where he describes, as a child, seeing the image of a Buddhist nun setting herself alight in protest at the Vietnam War:

“The billowing flames almost look like cotton wool. As if they were comforting her in death...She was baptising herself in oil. In petrol. In the black blood of our society. The warm stinking blood of this simmering city. When I was little I used to think that if you held up photos close enough to your nose you could smell the scene. That one smelt of the sickly sweet stench of spilt petrol in filling station forecourts. And of the kitchen after my mum had burnt the last feathers of a chicken that was about to go into the oven.” (Marriott & Jordan 2006)

There is a ‘synaesthetic’ quality to these words with one sense rolling purposely into another. And this synaesthesia is not only limited to the fictional characters in the story, as Misha Myers (2010, 61) describes in her experience of the piece: “*AWLB* is densely packed with

¹⁹ Wallace Heim, interview by author, 18th March 2015

²⁰ Ibid.

factual information and is fast moving, such that it can be difficult to absorb it all – that is, if only auditory perception is engaged...when there is a merging of something I hear with a detail I see, smell or touch in the city around me... I am able to absorb information that is no longer abstract, but embodied and more imaginatively and emotionally resonant”.

Sex, or rather the process of *de*-sexualising, also has a significant presence in the *AWLB* story – and it is used to make a political point. “They stole her nipples” (Marriott & Jordan 2006). These are the first words of *AWLB*, sung by an operatic female voice, and they relate to the (in)famous Starbucks mermaid logo which, “Before they became a multinational” Lucy assures the hero, “had nipples” (ibid.). The tone is then set for a prevalent theme in the story: the aligning of aggressive, extractive capitalism with the neutering of the global body and, ultimately, suicide.

Just a few minutes into *AWLB*, we learn that the hero has recently learnt he is infertile. This discovery makes him think about a photograph he saw “yesterday in the papers” (Marriott & Jordan 2006):

“Of a polar bear’s shrivelled penis. Poor bastard just lying there on melting ice caps. Starving to death as their hunting grounds collapse into the sea. Not even being able to have a decent shag because their cocks have withered. Marinated in our toxic soup for too long. Same soup that’s already turned a third of this country’s fish into hermaphrodites. Same soup that’s flowing through me. Same stupid soup” (ibid.)

Not only does this passage work to dissolve the traditional Cartesian divide between ‘humans’ and ‘nature’; when combined with the hero’s numerous references to suicide, his own and that of the City – “The City is a senseless suicide machine, subconsciously plotting its own and so many others’ deaths” (ibid.) – *AWLB*’s critique of the current dominant economic and social norms is made powerfully clear.

4.1.2.3. Discursive context

AWLB’s abovementioned critique of ‘business as usual’ is supported by the subversion of a number of normative discursive constructs – the same normative discursive constructs that can be found in *2071*. In this sense, the discourses outlined below can be seen as part of the

same ‘order of discourse’ as those found in 2071. However, instead of supporting hegemony, they create potential for discursive conflict.

The World-System

As mentioned in the introduction to this section discussing the *AWLB* story, *AWLB* is explicit in making the link between today’s extractive industries – characterised by BP and Shell – and the colonialism of previous centuries. “If you look closely at the [exhaust] fumes” directs the guide, “you can see the geology of other countries disappearing into thin air. The petroleum rocks of Azerbaijan, from deep beneath the Caspian Sea, turning into gas.” (Marriott & Jordan 2006)

In this sense, the story told in *AWLB* can be said to align with Wallerstein’s (2006) “world-systems analysis” (and Hornborg’s (1998, 2001, 2011) “ecological theory of unequal exchange”), which contends that the capitalist world-system runs on particular mechanisms of extraction and accumulation that operate between underdeveloped peripheral nations and developed core countries. Further, by drawing comparisons between the City of London and the Roman Empire, which “became a starving parasite”, razing forests and draining fertile soils, eventually “[falling] victim to its own suicidal success,” (Marriott & Jordan 2006) the *AWLB* story, is anticipating what Wallerstein (2009²¹) calls “the bifurcation of the system process.” At this point, says Wallerstein (ibid.), “The question is no longer, how will the capitalist system mend itself, and renew its forward thrust? The question is what will replace this system? What order will be chosen out of this chaos?” These are the same questions asked in *AWLB*.

The Capitalocene

“Capitalocene” is one of the alternatives Malm and Hornborg (2014) suggest in their critique of the Anthropocene discourse discussed above. It argues that the current geological epoch should be dated from the birth of capitalism in England and the Netherlands in 1450²². With

²¹ This reference is from a lecture published online (listed in the Bibliography below), which is why there is no page number

²² The Capitalocene concept was originally proposed by Jason Moore, in two 2014 essays entitled, *The Capitalocene, Part I: On the Nature & Origins of Our Ecological Crisis* and *The Capitalocene Part II: Abstract*

its placing of the cause of climate change squarely on the shoulders of corporations like BP and Shell (which are, incidentally, British and Dutch-owned entities), the same story is told in *AWLB*. The city is the “maker of markets and hurricanes”, announces the guide ominously (Marriott & Jordan 2006). And this, from *AWLB*’s beleaguered hero commenting on the penetration of pollution into his person: “Now our bodies have become storehouses. Banks for the wastes of BP, Shell, Exxon, Chevron” (Marriott & Jordan 2006). These comments also serve to make clear the connection between humans and nature.

No more business as usual

Unlike *2071*, *AWLB* doesn’t set out to explicitly “communicate...the options we have before us” (Macmillan & Rapley 2015). What it is explicit about is that ‘business as usual’ is *not* an option. Its approach to the question, ‘what next?’, however, is rather more complex. Lucy’s decision is to move away, disentangle herself from the capitalist machine and live off the land. “This place is wonderful. It’s off-grid, has it’s own spring and orchard. You know it’s the only way we’ll survive the crunch,” she writes (Marriott & Jordan 2006). Yet, this is dismissed scathingly by the hero as “running away” and a profound parallel is struck between this decision and the plight of “animals, birds, insects, fish, leaving their nests, their homes...leaving what they know behind” (ibid.).

The hero, on the other hand, contemplates denial, in the form of suicide, but eventually rejects this as an option and chooses what, in *objective* terms, is the easiest option of all: “I’m not going to burn or drown myself. I’m going to walk away. Slowly. Walk away. Leave my work. Quit the job and let go” (Marriott & Jordan 2006). But of course, in the current hegemonic order of things, *this* is the radical act²³. “We’re so deeply embedded,” says the hero, “we’re driving towards a brick wall, unable to see beyond the dials on the dashboard. And we’re going faster and faster” (ibid.). It’s the same point Plumwood makes on the first

Social Nature and the Limits to Capital, both of which are available here:
<http://www.jasonwmoore.com/Essays.html> [last accessed 18th May 2015]

²³ While this specific solution of ‘quitting your job’ is particularly pertinent to the financial workers of the City of London to whom the *AWLB* story was originally designed to be told, the sentiment behind can of course be applied more generally

page of her book, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002, 1), when she turns the story of the *Titanic* into a metaphor, with spectacular effect:

“..we have received the iceberg warning, and have made the remarkable decision to double the engine speed to Full Speed Ahead and go below to get a good night’s rest. A change of course might be bad for business, we might have to slow down, lose time. Nothing, not even the ultimate risk of the death of nature, can be allowed to hold back the triumphant progress of the ship of rational fools.”

4.2. The space it’s told in

This section of analysis is focused on the performances’ use of space – both the physical space within which the productions occur and their engagement with that space throughout the performance. By engaging with an analysis of space I am aligning myself with the likes of Lefebvre (1991), Harvey (2000) and Kohn (2003) who recognise that there is a dialectical relationship between a society and that society’s space. Or in other words, that a spatial theory is a social theory, and vice versa (LeFebvre 1991, 26). Implicit in this recognition is an understanding that space is bound up with power and thus an attentiveness to space can be said to generate a deeper understanding of the circulation of power (Kohn 2003, 6 emphasis added), something that is integral to the aim of this thesis.

Further, in terms of performance specifically, space plays a substantial role: there can be no performance if there is nowhere for it to ‘take place’ – whether this be on a stage, on the streets of London or in a virtual space. A critical engagement with the use of space in *2071* and *AWLB* is also vital for successful heterotopic analysis of the pieces. While an analysis of the performances’ spatial element alone cannot reveal the full effect heterotopias create, it is impossible to understand them – how they are created and the way they work – without it.

Of the three theorists I mention above, I will be drawing primarily on Lefebvre for my analysis in this section, in particular his conceptualisations of “abstract space” and “social space” as described in his seminal work, *The Production of Space* (1991). According to Lefebvre (1991, 1–2), abstract space is born out of Enlightenment thinking and a desire to describe the world with quantitative measurements. It is space that has been reduced to a set of coordinates, lines and planes, an empty vessel that exists prior to the matter that fills it, the space of planners, engineers, cartographers and scientists, and the dominant space in any society (LeFebvre 1991, 38). He describes it as the “space of power”, both “buttressed by

non-critical (positive) knowledge” and “tend[ing] towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities” (Lefebvre 1991, 51). By definition, it denies both the *physically perceived* dimensions of space and the *lived experience* of space, subsuming them both into abstract mental formulations, producing what Lefebvre sees as an impoverished, fragmented – and I would add destructive – understanding of space. “Each time one of these categories is employed independently of the others, hence reductively, it serves some homogenizing strategy”, he says (Lefebvre 1991, 369).

Lefebvre’s radical response to this dominant and reductive realisation of space is to theorise a spatial “conceptual triad” (*Figure 3*), with perceived (physical), conceived (abstract) and subjective (lived) space producing what he calls “social space” through their dialectical interrelations (Lefebvre 1991, 33).

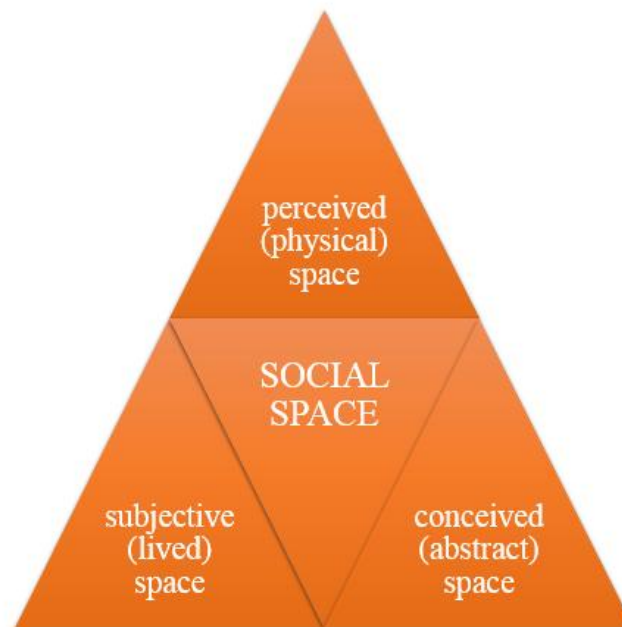


Figure 3: Diagrammatic illustration of Lefebvre’s conceptual triad
Source: Inspired by Hansen 2014, Page 21, Figure 2

My aim in the analysis below is to draw on Lefebvre’s conception of social space to show how *2071* denies the separation of these spatial elements, producing a space of domination, while *AWLB* actively works to reveal them, creating a site of resistance.

4.2.1. 2071

There is a long tradition of thought that views theatre – the building as opposed to what necessarily happens within it – as a space of domination²⁴. In his *Letter to M. D’Alembert on the Theatre* in 1757, Rousseau, as summarised by Kohn (2003, 13-14), argues that the theatre creates the illusion of community and communication (by concentrating people in one place), but in fact fosters isolation. “The space is structured to encourage each individual to focus attention on the stage instead of engaging with his fellow citizens. It breeds an attitude of passivity and reinforces hierarchy” (ibid.). More recently, theorists have employed Lefebvre’s (1991, 51) concept of “abstract space” to frame theatre as a space that is produced by the ruling ideologies of society, “made for purposes of power and control that too often work against the interests of the majority” (Kershaw 1999, 31).

2071 is performed in a traditional theatre space in a traditional theatre format. The person on stage is not, of course, an actor – Chris Rapley plays himself, a climate scientist – but there is certainly a stage, which the audience sits silently and immobile in front of, in the dark, throughout. However, these basic elements alone are not enough to place *2071* into the tradition of repressive theatre described above. It would be incorrect, not to mention naïve, to assume that a recognition of the theatre *space* working in this way automatically means that all performance happening *inside* theatres do too.

It is in the performance’s set design instead that clues to *2071*’s vigorous production and valorisation of abstract space can be found. Throughout the 65-minute piece, Rapley sits in a black hole of data, with graphs, graphics and maps swirling around his head, these mental abstractions being used to describe myriad physical and social features (see *Figure 4*).

²⁴ Of course Foucault (1984 [1967], 3), by including theatres in his theory of heterotopias as “counter-sites”, does not conform to this type of thinking.



Figure 4: Chris Rapley in a black hole of data

Credit: Stephen Cumminskey

Further, this flattened and reductive ontology is not only represented on stage in the physical *set* of the piece, but can be identified in *2071*'s imaginative *setting* too. The excessive presence of numbers, and their use as both adjectives and verbs in the story, is something that has already been discussed in detail above, but of more relevance to this section specifically is Rapley's repeated reference to the "2 degrees Centigrade 'Guardrail'" (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 20) – notably the only point in the production that the monochrome graphics flash momentarily to alarm-bell red. Two degrees Centigrade above the pre-Industrial average is the temperature limit after which the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have said climate change will be "dangerous", Rapley tells us (Macmillan and Rapley 2015, 20). But the questions, dangerous for whom, what, where or how is never asked; that the meaning of 'dangerous' is heterogeneous, with local, social and cultural peculiarities (see for example, Gillis 2014) is never considered; these fundamental elements of *lived experience* are swallowed whole, consumed by abstraction.

In light of these comments, it would seem that the argument for *2071* producing a space of domination is clear. However, there is one more element worth considering – the

performance's relationship with the Royal Court theatre as a symbolic *physical* space. The Royal Court, where *2071* was shown, describes itself as "at the forefront of creating restless, alert, provocative theatre about now", a place that "opens its doors to radical thinking and provocative discussion, and to the unheard voices and free thinkers that, through their writing, change our way of seeing."²⁵

Considering this information alongside what has been discussed above, it is possible to see how *2071* not only produces a space of domination that serves to strengthen its hegemonic narrative, but also, and perhaps more significantly, is positioned in a space that allows it to masquerade as radical and progressive. Perhaps, then, *2071* can be considered (at least theoretically) as a 'site-specific' piece, despite that fact that it occurs *inside* a theatre instead of outside as is traditional. In this reading of the piece, the venue at which *2071* is performed is "closely connected to the form and function of the performance itself" (the definition of site-specific theatre provided by Tompkins (2014, 225)), with the three elements working together to perpetuate dominant norms while creating the appearance of subversion.

4.2.2. *AWLB*

AWLB has an intense, complex and overt relationship with its performance space. According to its website, the piece is "set amongst the skyscrapers of the most powerful financial district on Earth, London's Square Mile"²⁶. However, the key word in this sentence is not London, but "amongst". For *AWLB* is not really set anywhere that can traditionally be defined as 'place'. Or at least not one single place. Instead it nestles in the nooks between places, occupies the space of slippages – and as a result, succeeds in making Lefebvre's concept of social space palpably manifest.

An indication of *AWLB*'s intention to play with conceptions of space is clear before the walk is even begun, for anyone who chooses to download the piece's accompanying map (*Figure 5*). It is a hybrid creation, depicting a traditional road map interwoven with natural geographic elements, such as the River Walbrook (one of London's 'lost rivers'²⁷) and a

²⁵ <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/about-us/> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

²⁶ <http://andwhilelondonburns.com/> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

²⁷ The River Walbrook is one of London's 'lost rivers'. Its name is thought to originate from the fact that it ran through the Roman London Wall; today it flows through the middle of the City of London, underneath what is now the Bank of England, through Poultry, joining the Thames between Southwark and Cannon Street Bridges. The upper part of the river was covered over in 1440 and it now runs completely underground, feeding a sewer (<http://www.londonlostivers.com/river-walbrook.html>) [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

cluster of trees, and historic symbols, such as a dotted line indicating the furthest reach of the flames of the Great Fire of London in 1666. Three architectural behemoths of the modern City of London, No.1 Poultry, Tower 42 and the Swiss Re building (commonly known as ‘The Gherkin’) are also depicted. Further, with its roughhewn marks and appearance of being printed on a scrap of cardboard box, the map evokes memories of childhood treasure maps, infused with myth and mystery.

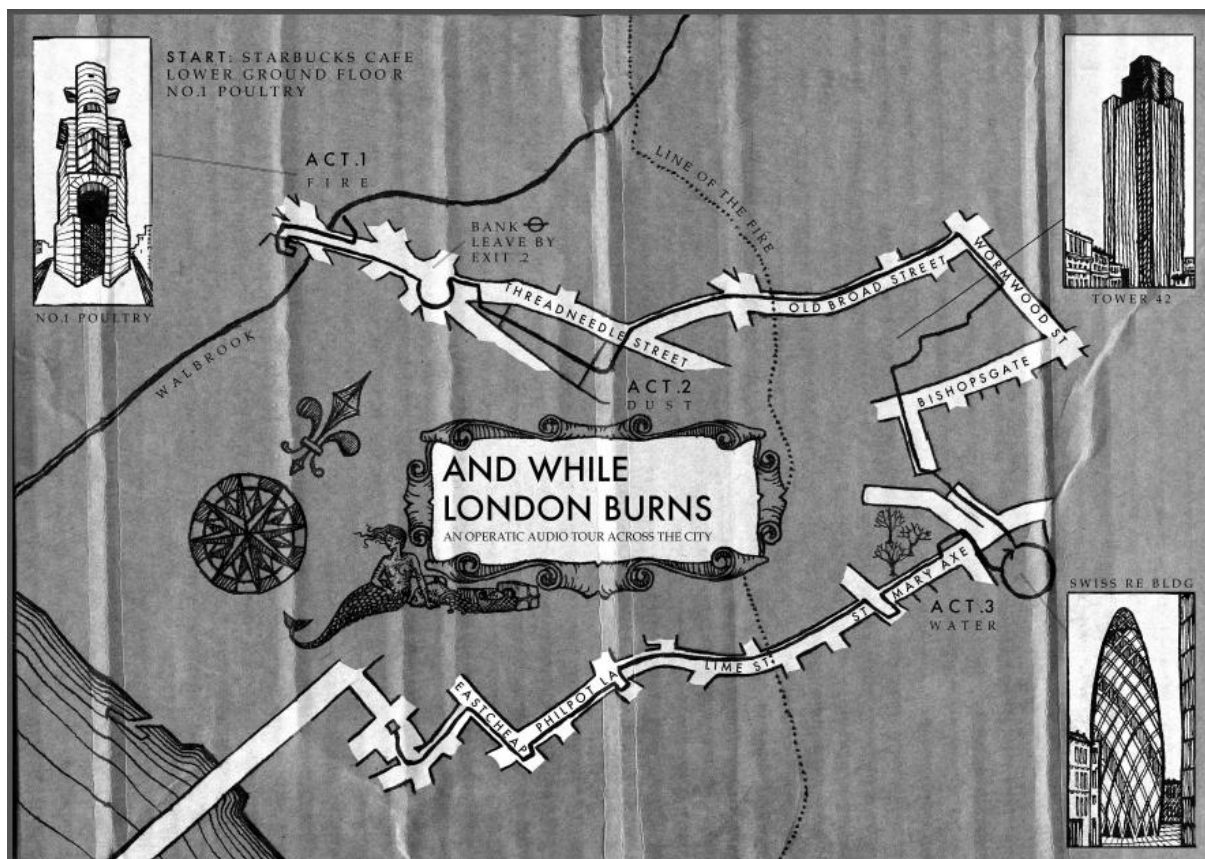


Figure 5: AWLB Map

Source: Reproduced with Platform’s permission

(<http://andwhilelondonburns.com/download/awlb-map.pdf>)

However, this map only shows a small portion of the spatial dimensions *AWLB* weaves between as it moves through its set. It is in fact possible to count (at least) eight different dimensions in the piece²⁸, each of which can be allocated to one of the three spaces depicted in *Figure 3*’s diagrammatic illustration of Lefebvre’s conceptual triad. Further, each spatial

²⁸ I say ‘at least’ as this is the amount I am able to account for currently, but it is possible there are more to be found

dimension that is revealed does itself reveal something about at least one of the others i.e. there are dialectical interrelations between them. The result, as you will see, is an enrichment of the spatial experience and a challenge to the abstract form of spatial ordering that is so pervasive, particularly in London’s financial district.

In

Table 2 below, I have listed seven of the eight spatial dimensions that can be found in *AWLB*, alongside the position they correspond to in Lefebvre’s conceptual triad. (See *Appendix IV* for the same table but including a third column with direct quotes from the *AWLB* text to offer a sense of each space as it exists in the performance.) The eighth spatial dimension in *AWLB* is the personal journey of the listener, which, like that of the fictional hero, can be defined as ‘lived space’ in Lefebvre’s conceptual triangle. This dimension is not included in the table as, while there are particular moments in the piece where the effect is intensified (discussed in my analysis of ‘relationship with the audience’ below), the whole of *AWLB* can, in a sense, be positioned here.

In *Figure 6* on the following page I have mapped all eight of *AWLB*’s spatial dimensions, illustrating both their position in Lefebvre’s conceptual triad and their dialectical interrelations with each other.

Spatial dimension in <i>AWLB</i>	Location in Lefebvre’s triad
The carbon web	Abstract space
The historical city	Lived space
The natural landscape	Physical space
Street furniture and street names	Physical space
Geopolitical relations	Abstract space
Path of fossil fuels	Abstract space
Personal journey of the hero	Lived space

Table 2: The spatial dimensions of AWLB
Source: Created by author using AWLB transcript

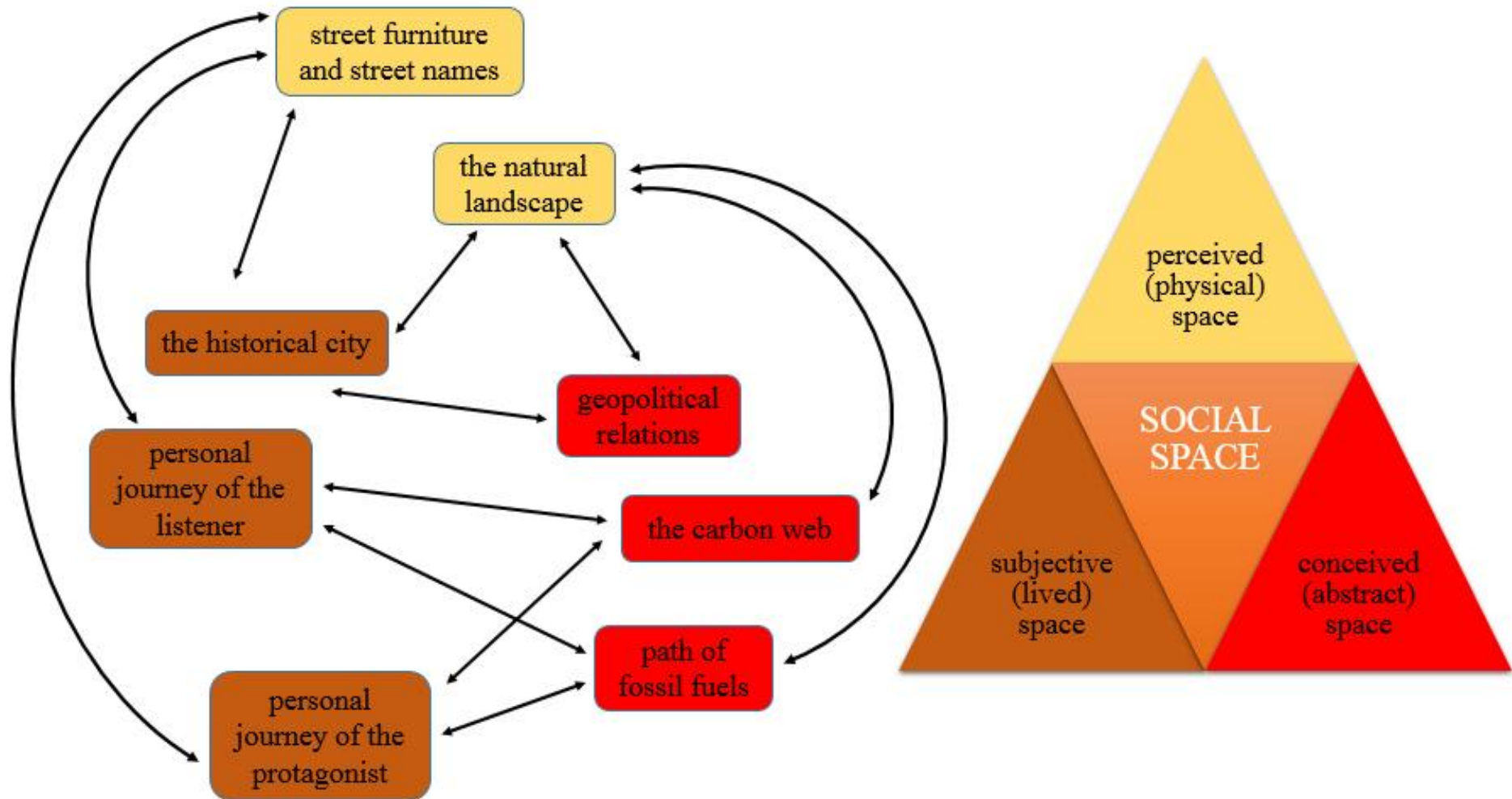


Figure 6: The dialectical interrelations of space in AWLB
 Source: Author's own illustration

My aim in *Figure 6* is to give some indication of how the three categories in Lefebvre's conceptual triad, when applied to the different spatial dimensions found in *AWLB*, can be understood to work together to give an enriched spatial experience – and thus an enriched social experience. I will elaborate on this diagrammatic description with a few specific examples below.

As a first step, let's look at physical space. Defined by the physical practices and everyday routines of people using a space – what Lefebvre (1991, 38) calls “spatial practice” – physical space is revealed through a society's “deciphering of its space” (ibid.). In *AWLB*, physical space is primarily encountered through street furniture such as railings, traffic lights and bollards, physical items that create networks and pathways through the City. However, there is a second, deeper physical space present in the piece too – that of the natural landscape, which can be found beneath the concrete and tarmac of the City. It too impacts spatial practice, even if in today's late modern world we prefer to ignore or deny it.

By presenting these physical spaces simultaneously – the man-made street furniture and the natural ‘furniture’ of the landscape – *AWLB* succeeds in expanding both the spatial and social experience of the piece. In other words, by explicitly positioning the listener in a broader spatial context, the piece also opens the listener up to a broader social context – in this case, the realisation (or reminder) that humans are not as separate from nature as our cities, towns and homes would have us believe. “As we head down into the valley,” says the hero near the end of *AWLB*, “at some point between here and the Thames we must cross the line of flooding. Someday a real flood will come, the North Sea rushing into the valley” (Marriott & Jordan 2006). To further illustrate the effect created at this moment, *Figure 7* shows a photograph I took while experiencing *AWLB* in March 2015; on the photograph is indicated the point at which I heard the words, “As we head down into the valley...” (ibid.).

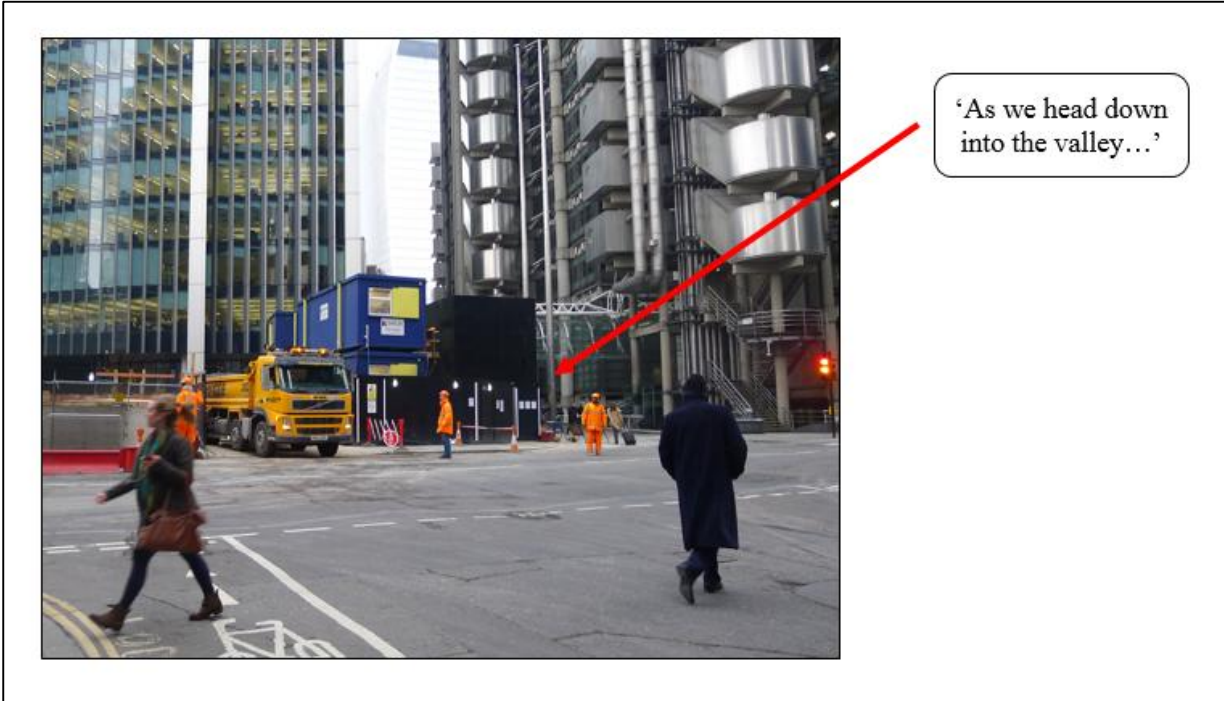


Figure 7: “As we head down into the valley”, view from St. Mary Axe across Leadenhall Street to Lime Street
 Source: Created from author’s own photograph (March 2015)

But while analysing *intra*-relations within one particular type of space is clearly revealing, as Lefebvre indicated it is far more illuminating to explore the *inter*relations between the different elements of social space – particularly in terms of abstract space. Lefebvre describes abstract space as the space of capitalism and neocapitalism, space founded on the vast network of banks, business centres and major productive entities, it is the power of money and that of the political state (Lefebvre 1991, 53). With this in mind it should come as no surprise that the abstract space in *AWLB* consists of the carbon web and geopolitical relations. Further, there is also already a sense of this space’s dialectical relationship with the physical space of skyscrapers and the symbols of power they represent.

The reason for my placing ‘the path of fossil fuels’ into the category of abstract space, however, may seem somewhat less obvious. But, according to Andreas Malm (2013) it is fossil fuels that permitted capitalism to move into abstract space at all. The discovery of fossil fuels (and the invention of the steam engine) freed 19th century British factory owners from the flow of water which forced them to go “reverently to the mountaintops and rivers” and establish their businesses there (Malm 2013, 54). With its transportable form of potential energy, “buried at a remove from the space of humans, as the relic of a landscape long dead

and gone... [fossil fuels were] the optimal raw material for the initial break-out into spatial abstraction” (ibid.).

However, as with any element of this type of space, fossil fuels’ abstraction is only an illusion: “even abstract space has to rest on nature” (Malm 2013, 54). And it is this that *AWLB* manages to convey through its myriad but coexistent spatial dimensions. By placing the abstract space of fossil fuels, the carbon web of institutions that fund and manage their extraction, and the geopolitical relations that legitimise it, in a relationship with the physical space of the City and the lived space of the hero, *AWLB* succeeds in reunifying what has been ruptured. Abstract space is tethered, made visible and infused with tangible meaning. “There’s a sprinkling of black dust everywhere” says the hero. “Deep inside me the Gulf of Mexico, Iraq, Nigeria, Siberia. Miniscule parts of these places are lodged in my lungs. Pumped, refined and burnt, from oil field to bloodstream” (Marriott & Jordan 2006).

Not only are these elements of abstract space revealed to impact physical space – locally in the City as well as far further away – they also have an effect on the social and bodily functions of lived experience, on the users and inhabitants of space. It is these types of spatial/social revelations that prompt the hero to act, to coax London “back from the brink of suicide...Help it navigate the new reality of the rising sea and burning sun” (ibid.). Further, as *Figure 8* below illustrates, by also engaging the lived space of the listener at moments like this, the anticipation is that they too will be prompted to act. This is something I will discuss in the next section entitled, “the relationship with the audience”.



Figure 8: “Black dust everywhere”, what I saw, smelt and felt when I heard those words
Source: Author’s own photograph (March 2015)

4.3. The relationship with the audience

Perhaps unsurprisingly, much discussion in theatre theory centres on ‘the audience’ – their role in, and relationship with, the piece being performed. Dolan (2008, 96) talks of how the audience’s *presence* is necessary to complete a loop of meaning. Similarly, Dunlop (2013, 73 emphasis added) describes theatricality as a mode of representation “in which the structures that create meaning are rendered visible and the *spectator’s role in the construction of this meaning* is exposed.”

Further, the cultural philosopher Jacques Rancière has dedicated a whole book to the subject, explicitly extending the discussion into the realm of power. In *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009, 22 emphasis added) Rancière calls for theatre spectators to become “*active interpreters*, who develop their own translations in order to appropriate the ‘story’ and make it their own”. “Emancipation begins,” he says, “when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that...seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection” (Rancière 2009, 13).

The effect a performance can have on audience members was also a subject that came up during a number of my interviews. Rachel Briscoe commented²⁹, “I think the [performance] arts can, in a really massive way, create space for people to be more curious, be more aware, notice things they wouldn’t notice”. Bill Aitchinson³⁰ elaborated on this theme with the words: “I think [performance] work which encourages people to think and feel for themselves and encourages our ability to deal with complicated mixed ideas, emotions and situations is good. I think work which makes us more willing to make decisions rather than just to go with the flow I think...that’s highly to be encouraged.”

With this context in mind, it is pertinent to explore the differing relationship *2071* and *AWLB* have with their audience, and the effect this creates. By exploring questions of ‘liveness’, ‘immersiveness’ and agency in each of the performances, you will see, the points made in this section of analysis and discussion consolidate much of what has already been said in the sections of analysis and discussion above.

4.3.1. *2071*

Despite the fact that the real-life Chris Rapley sits in front of a living, breathing audience throughout *2071*, questions can still be asked about how truly ‘live’ his performance is when the 65-minute monologue is delivered with the support of an autocue. This is a fact noted by a number of reviewers, including Kate Kellaway of the *Guardian* (2014) and Dominic Cavendish of the *Telegraph* (2014)³¹ and it signifies a desire for the production to present as uniform an experience as possible. By definition this diminishes the agency of the audience in the performance, collapsing the ‘loop of meaning’ between spectator and actor into a one way exchange.

As Bill Aitchinson³² elaborated in our interview, such an attempt destroys the “equality of status” that truly ‘live’ performance creates; “the fact that you’re in a space with other people and none of you quite know how it’s going to finish”, not even the performers. The result is

²⁹ Rachel Briscoe, interview by author, 16th March 2015

³⁰ Bill Aitchinson, interview by author, 30th March 2015

³¹ Legitimate questions can also be asked about whether *2071* is even a performance at all if we consider Chris Rapley is ‘playing’ himself. However, a discussion of this sort catapults us straight into complex sociological questions on the nature of performance in everyday life (see for example, Burke 1972; Goffman 1959) that are not in the scope of this thesis.

³² Bill Aitchinson, interview by author, 30th March 2015

that, instead of ‘emancipated spectators’, *2071* creates a homogenous audience that is forced to obediently comply with the structure of domination and subjection inherent in the opposition between viewing and acting. Instead of creating a space for people to be more curious, and think and feel for themselves, it creates a space infused with passivity, engineered for the transmission of information and the promotion of trust in science for the discovering of ‘truth’.

Further, even *2071*’s immersive, cinema-sized screen of swirling visuals can be defined as disempowering. Immersion tends to be characterised by bodily submergence and heightened sensory engagement (*OED* 2002). Yet by depicting only lines, planes, diagrams and graphs, *2071*’s video-graphic element is an assault of abstract space and thus immersive in a way that is entirely disembodied and devoid of emotion, denying fundamental elements of human experience. The effect is exacerbated by the fact the audience has no control over how long these visuals are thrust in front of them for.

The performance does, however, end on a question: “What sort of future do we want to create?” Rapley asks of the dark and silent room (Macmillan & Rapley 2015, 28). Yet in a piece that has as its first line “I’m here to talk about the future” (*ibid*, 1) before embarking upon a myopic monologue drenched in the discourses of domination and control, it is hard not to view the question as at best rhetorical and at worst derisive. Throughout *2071* Rapley has made his opinions on the sort of future he wants to create explicitly clear – and by binding them up in assertions of objective truth and logical givens he leaves little room for questioning and creativity. Further, his assertion that it is “governments, investors and the engineering profession” that will carry out this change is wholly incompatible with the vision for collective collaboration that his final questions claims to call for, raising the question: just who is this ‘we’ he is talking about. The result is a piece of performance that creates the effect of encouraging agency and action in its audience, while actually working in a way that actively denies it.

4.3.2. *AWLB*

At this point in the thesis it should not come as a surprise to hear that the relationship between *AWLB* and its audience is starkly different to that found in *2071*.

First, the spectator has a significant role in the construction of meaning in the performance – so much so that the term ‘participant’ is perhaps more accurate here. As Tompkins (2011, 238) notes, “every participant who experiences *And While London Burns* constructs a new interpretation, depending on the weather, external sounds, and the always-changing mise-en-scène of London itself”. This effect is intensified in a space like the City of London, which, as James Marriot says, is so “constantly contemporary” (Bottoms, Evans, & Marriott 2012, 129). Even as the Platform team was making *AWLB*, pieces of street furniture disappeared and new buildings surged up into the skyline³³. Certainly in the years between the production’s creation and my experience of it there have been huge shifts in both the physical and political fabric of the City; perhaps the most profound being the 2008 financial crash, which fundamentally reshaped many of the City’s institutions – most notably the colossal government bail-out of the Royal Bank of Scotland³⁴. A more concrete example of transformation is the *Temple of Mithras*, which features in the first act of *AWLB*. When I completed the walk in March 2015, the location was a huge building site, prompting a friend who experienced *AWLB* around the same time as me to comment meaningfully, “nothing is sacred in this city.”³⁵

The overall effect is one of fluidity made tangible. As James Marriott commented in our interview³⁶, “one of the nice by-products of actually doing it [*AWLB*] is that it made me personally much more acutely aware of the fact that...the point of the most intense concentration of capital is also the most intense [point] of transformation...the thing is like a fucking doughnut. It's the most molten bits in the middle”. Such reflections bring to mind Bauman’s (2001, 35) assertion that, in a late modern, late capitalist world, “Escape and evasion, lightness and volatility have replaced weighty and ominous presence as the main techniques of domination.” The result is an experience that encourages the *AWLB* listener to at least question – and perhaps even challenge – the abstract and evasive organisation of space favoured by the current systems of power. As you will see, this effect is enhanced by the increased sense of agency the listener gains throughout the performance.

Despite *AWLB* involving no live performance in the traditional sense, the performance creates a close connection between the fictional hero and the listener right from the outset. At

³³ James Marriott, interview by author, 17th March 2015

³⁴ For more information, see for example, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/3182806/Financial-crisis-Government-to-take-majority-stake-in-RBS.html> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

³⁵ Max Wakefield, conversation with author, 20th March 2015

³⁶ James Marriott, interview by author, 17th March 2015

first the effect is a mirroring where something the hero says or does is echoed for the listener via the directions of the guide. The example below comes just five minutes in:

Hero: Oh my god, is that really the time? I really can't face going back into work.

Guide: Stop. Look just ahead. See the glowing clock? That's Morley Fund Management. One of the City's largest fund manager companies with £156 billion to invest.

Hero: Oh fuck it, I need some air. It'll wake me up.

Guide: Walk out of the building to your left. (Marriott & Jordan 2006)

As the performance progresses, the relationship between the listener and the hero intensifies until the two become practically merged (*Figure 9*). Near the end of the second act, beside the glass façade of The Gherkin, the hero interrupts the steady voice of the guide to shout:

“Stop. Stop walking. Stop where you are. So you in there. I'm here. In here, between your ears. Inside you. Look in the windows of the restaurant. Do you see me? There, look. The transparent me. The thin sliver of me in the glass, right there. Look, look at the reflection. Is it me? Or is it you?” (ibid.)



Figure 9: “Is it me? Or is it you?” My reflection in the glass façade of The Gherkin

Source: Author's own photograph (March 2015)

From this point on the guide disappears and the hero's journey becomes the listener's too. Not only is the black dust that's lodged in his lungs also lodged in theirs, but together they travel down into the valley to follow the line of the flood and together they spiral the 311

steps to the top of the Monument to the Great Fire of London, blood pumping, to reach the euphoric finale (*Figure 10*).



Figure 10: “Up, up up”, the view from the top of Monument down its spiral staircase
Source: Author’s own photograph (March 2015)

The hero’s last words are “Up up up” and it is then only soaring orchestral and operatic sounds that accompany the listener, until they emerge, breathless into the elements, a view of the city, the river and its valley, spread out beneath them . The effect of this total immersion – emotional, psychological and physical – into the fictional ‘Hero’s Journey’, is that the listener is implicated as a potential hero too, also imbued with the power to help “build a new city” (Marriott & Jordan 2006).



Figure 11: “Love this city”, the view from the top of The Monument to the Great Fire of London

Credit: Mike Peel (image licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike licence)

4.4. The heterotopic experience

Through an analysis and discussion of three major elements of performance – the story told, the space it’s told in and the relationship with the audience – I have developed an engaged and critical reading of both *2071* and *AWLB* and their relationship with dominant social norms and systems of power. In this final section of the chapter I will return to my research questions and discuss how these three elements work together in each of the performances to create a ‘heterotopic experience’. I will also discuss what type of heterotopias they are and what role, if any, they play in invoking the radical imagination and inspiring new human-ecological norms.

True to the definition of heterotopia, both *2071* and *AWLB* can be understood as creating spaces of alternate ordering that bear the prints of the ‘here and now’ of Britain at the beginning of the 21st century, while remaining somehow separate. However, the type of heterotopias they produce are wildly different – and thus the effect they produce is too.

The performance of *2071* presents a perfection of the dominant social order. The effect it creates is homogenous, hierarchical and exclusionary, one that denies sensory engagement,

emotion and embodied experience, naturalises and neutralises violence (to both the planet and its people) as well as global inequality, and enforces a spatial ordering that is abstract and elusive. Further, it places an already powerful (white male) figure in a position that artificially increases his influence through an absence of alternative agents – both in the piece’s story and in the audience – and an excessive claim over knowledge and truth, buttressed by a hegemonic order of discourse.

Yet despite all this, *2071* also maintains the appearance of being a revolutionary and transformative piece of work. Not only is it performed in a physical space that claims to foster progressive theatre and radical thinking³⁷, but it is defined by its director as “agitprop” (Katie Mitchell qtd. in Murray Brown 2014). Today this term refers to “political propaganda” (*OED* 2002) in a general sense, with no explicit definition as to whose politics it propagates. However, as a word that originated in Russia in the 1930’s (ibid.) it is impossible to ignore its Communist roots and its role, therefore, in rousing workers to revolt against capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The result, then, is a piece of theatre that is *officially framed* as radical, restless and free thinking, *officially defined* in terms that align it with a leftist revolutionary cause, yet can be *critically read* as repressive, supportive of dominant systems of power and perpetuating damaging norms, values and behaviours. Further, even the objectively simple step of placing a real-life scientist in a real-life performance space, contributes to *2071*’s revolutionary appearance due to the dominant dualism separating ‘science’ from ‘art’.

It is, then, the collision of these two contrasting types of social ordering that creates *2071*’s heterotopia; and its effect is to make manifest one way in which systems of power consume their internal contradictions. By this I mean *2071*’s heterotopic zone can be described in terms of Gramsci’s (1992 [1930], 110) “passive revolution”, a process by which the dominant capitalist system “absorbs even the so-called representatives of [its] antithesis” (ibid.), incorporating, subsuming and neutralising them in order to re-establish its own system of power. By playing out this process at the theatre, *2071* offers the audience an opportunity to ‘rehearse’ their response to it – perhaps even influencing their reaction to it once outside the walls of the playhouse.

While such an experience is unlikely to invoke the radical imagination in audience members, it is I think possible to envision it encouraging (some) individuals to at least critically question the taken for granted norms, values and behaviours that construct their

³⁷ <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/about-us/> [last accessed 18th May, 2015]

understanding of the world and their position with it. Certainly the profound discomfort the piece conjured in me stimulated a deeper and more complex engagement with dominant systems of power and their structures of control, particularly those relating to the human-human and human-environment relationships.

But despite this, I do not see *2071* creating the space for *new* human-ecological norms to evolve. It presents a contradiction that has the capacity to operate in a destabilising way and inspire questioning and curiosity, yet it offers no room for alternatives and no tools for change. Further, it is of course possible (perhaps even probable) that *2071*'s playing out of the passive revolution goes unnoticed by (the majority of) audience members and achieves its aim of disguising its hegemony beneath a radical façade.

In *AWLB* the heterotopia is found in the merging of the participant and the protagonist's minds and bodies – it is a heterotopia of action and experience. To return to Lefebvre's (1991, 39) concepts for a moment, this fluid assimilation of lived space helps to make visceral the understanding that space in its entirety is not the stable, singular concept we conceive it to be. By presenting numerous spaces folded into and on top of each other, *AWLB* reveals the city to be not something within we must fit, but something that we can change and rebuild, a place with “hope and possibility” (Marriott & Jordan 2006). It is myriad and in flux, dependent on our perceptions and our imaginings, dependent, in short, on the social world and how *we* choose to order it.

What is made clear through *AWLB*'s heterotopic experience, then, is not only that the dominant social norms and systems of power, particularly those relating to the human-environment, are distorted and destructive, but that there are alternatives within our grasp. By accentuating the city's lived space, a space Lefebvre (1991, 39) believes “the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” – a space “of resistance and counter-discourses” (Butler 2012, 41) – *AWLB* creates room for radical alternatives to be imagined and rehearsed.

My response to *AWLB* as I travelled through its version of the City and saw it with the hero's eyes was to truly understand and really feel, at first the desperation of the current situation, but also the euphoria that comes with recognising that the radical acts required to change things, while subjectively huge can be objectively small. Simply experiencing the world differently can be the beginning of a radical shift. Immersing oneself fully in your environment, *particularly* if that environment is a built one (as so many people's are today) can invoke the radical imagination and inspire the radical act. The radical becomes

accessible, tangible and meaningful – and the revolution, as the fictional hero illustrates, becomes people digging their heels in and grabbing for the emergency brake.

4.5. Implications

By illustrating two very diverse forms of heterotopia that can be found in performance work and the effect they can create, it is clear that the method of heterotopic analysis is a productive one in this context. While of course not all performances lend themselves to this type of interpretation, I would argue it is one that should be kept in mind by anyone interested in offering a deeper explanation of the structures of power and knowledge that produce culture – and through this working to change them.

Further, encouraging an increased focus on heterotopias in performance will also likely serve a generative ambition to increase the critical clout of the art form in a late modern world that appears intent on securing its commodification, commodification that stifles its radicalism in the very moment of its birth (Kershaw 1999, 29). As I have shown in my analysis of *2071* it is possible to view a piece that explicitly claims itself to be ‘unpolitical’, while being officially framed as radical, to in fact be drenched in the hegemonic discourses of capitalism, growth, human superiority over nature, male superiority over female, the primacy of reason over emotion and the erasure of difference in lived experience. It is imperative that anyone with an interest in subverting dominant norms and developing alternatives that will help secure a social and ecologically just and justifiable world focuses their attention on and employs all the tools available to them, to reveal, and thereby weaken, these pervasive and insidious systems of domination and control.

Finally, by bringing concepts like heterotopias and the radical imagination, which are more readily taken up in research on social movements (see for example Chatzidakis, Maclaran & Bradshaw 2012; Crane 2012; Haiven & Khasnabish 2014), into the artistic domain, my aim is to not only broaden the analytical lens through which the latter can be looked, but to offer another way for these two vibrant realms of society to work together in the project of radical, critical and creative change.

The scope of this thesis has not been able to reach beyond a small portion of the available material that allows me to engage with *2071* and *AWLB*’s heterotopias and the effects they can have. To better understand their power and the power of other performances like them, it

would be necessary to extend my research into an in-depth exploration of how other audience members understood and responded to the pieces. While they may not have recognised the heterotopias specifically, it is possible that feelings connected to a heterotopic experience could have been evoked. Finally, it would be interesting to engage with a broader range of performers and performance makers to understand their responses to the heterotopic creations, adding an in-depth ‘insider’ experience to a broader ‘outsider’ one.

5. Conclusions

This research has taken a close and critical look at two pieces of climate change performance produced in Britain in the last decade. Not only does it offer a detailed snapshot of some of the types of stories being told about climate change at this time, but also the norms that produce them. Having outlined a theoretical framework connecting norm circles, heterotopias and the radical imagination, I have tried to encourage a closer consideration of the way both stories and the imagination play a constitutive *and* reflexive role in society. This is particularly significant when applied to the arts and culture sector, arguably society’s main depository of such things.

It is inevitable, indeed necessary, that the creative arts will seek to respond to the challenge of climate change – and much work has already and will continue to be done here. My aim was not to arbitrate on what stories should be told and by whom, nor was it to preside over what can be considered a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ artistic response. What this research aims for instead is to call for increased critical engagement with what is produced in order to encourage reflexivity in our story-telling and story-listening, and a recognition of the types of world they are producing (and reproducing).

As the threat of climate change continues to increase, the urgency with which we engage with it – both politically and culturally – will no doubt also increase, and performance is just one space where conversation and contestation on the issue can be encouraged into existence. Ensuring this happens in as productive and progressive way as possible is vital if we are to truly tackle the trials that lie ahead. Heterotopias offer a valuable tool for revealing the contradictions that are often disguised or neutralised by the machinations of systems of power and thus play an integral role in the invocation of the radical imagination and inspiration of new human-ecological norms. Through a dual process of revelation and rehearsal, they can

serve to not only equip people with the vision of alternatives, but the tools with which to achieve them.

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7. Appendices

Appendix I: Background and contextual information on *2071* and *AWLB*

2071

Background

Co-written by dramaturge Duncan Macmillan and climate scientist Chris Rapley, and directed by Katie Mitchell, *2071* was first performed at the Royal Court (Jerwood Theatre Downstairs), Sloane Square, London, on 5th November, 2014 and then ran from 30th November, 2014 to 24th January, 2015.

Narrative structure

Described as a “performance lecture” in the “agitprop”³⁸ genre by director Katie Mitchell (qtd. in Murray Brown 2014), *2071* is the product of months of intensive research (Duncan and Chris spoke at least once a week for eight or nine months (Macmillan et al. 2014)) and sits somewhere between science and storytelling. While its content is undeniably focused on climate science and aims for “thoroughness” and “accuracy” over interpretation (Mitchell qtd. in Murray Brown 2014), its structure is narrative in form.

The message of the piece is clear: climate change is happening, humans are the cause and humans have the power to take action against it. As Rapley states on page 2 of the play text: “I’m here to communicate the results of the science, their implications, and the options we have before us” (Macmillan and Rapley 2015).

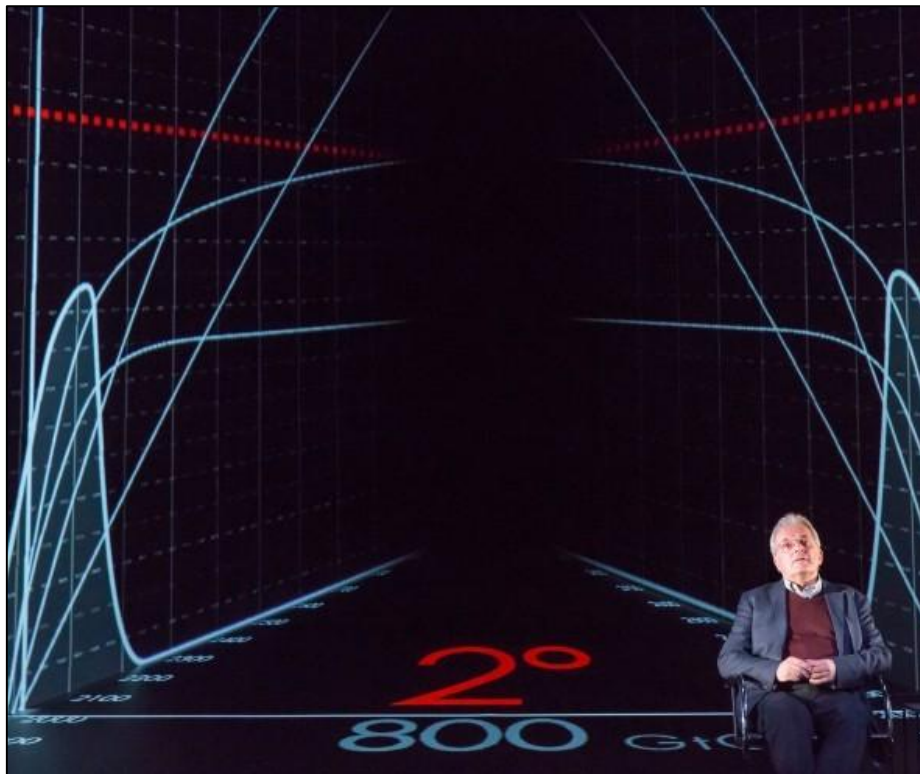
Theatrical form

2071 is a 65-minute monologue, methodically delivered via autocue by Chris Rapley, who plays himself. There is no interval. It takes place in a traditional theatre space, with Rapley on stage in front of an audience seated in the dark. The only on-stage props are a chair, in which Rapley sits throughout, and a small table with a glass of water on it that Rapley occasionally sips from. The space is all black except for a large screen hanging behind Rapley which, throughout the performance, displays large monochrome graphics – monochrome except for when the 2°C ‘guardrail’ is indicated – that correspond to his words (see the image below).

³⁸ The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) (2002) defines “agitprop” as “political propaganda, especially in art or literature”. The word originated in Russia in the 1930’s and is traditionally used to describe work of a Communist nature.



Chris Rapley in 2071 with monochrome graphics
Credit: Stephen Cumminskey



Chris Rapley in 2071 with the 2°C 'guardrail'
Credit: Stephen Cumminskey

AWLB

Background

AWLB was created in 2006 by the award-winning arts organisation Platform and co-written by James Marriott and John Jordan. Described as an “operatic audio-walk” (Marriott & Jordan 2006) it takes its ‘audience’ through the City of London, London’s financial district (also known as ‘The Square Mile’). Listeners are able to download the piece’s sound file for free to their own device and can experience it at any time they like during a weekday; on weekends and evenings some of the sites and routes are closed.

Narrative structure

Part fiction, part fact, *AWLB* weaves stories of the City of London, its history, its future and its impact on climate change into three acts – Fire, Dust and Water. The fictional story is that of an unnamed male financial worker in existential crisis over lost love, lost hope and impending environmental disaster. Alongside this runs a factual account of London’s ‘carbon web’³⁹ told by an unnamed female ‘guide’. A third story is that of the listener themselves and their experience – physical, psychological, emotional and sensory – as they travel through the City, led by the two narrators. “We were trying” says James Marriot “to find a way that deals with the issues surrounding global warming and carbon emissions but in a way that makes you feel something for it, something other than fear that is” (qtd. in (Brown 2006)).

Theatrical form

The audio-walk lasts 70 minutes and takes the listener on an engaged and engaging journey through the City of London. With no actors and no stage (in the traditional performance sense) to speak of, it is a mobile and shapeshifting piece that relies on the cooperation of its ‘audience’ to succeed. “Listening to the piece without doing the walk will be like watching TV with the images turned off” announces the production’s website⁴⁰. Further, due to a rapidly changing cityscape – both in the physical sense and in the way its institutions are structured – experiencing the piece today is strikingly different to experiencing it when it was first made.

Appendix II: My initial reflection on 2071

Published at: November 14th, 2014

Published on: www.climateoutreach.org.uk/what-sort-of-story-is-climate-change-and-how-should-it-be-told/

What sort of story is climate change and how should it be told?

By Kate Monson

Theatre land’s latest offering to the climate change conversation started at the Royal Court last week. Created by Katie Mitchell, of Ten Billion fame, and written in collaboration with the influential climate scientist Chris Rapley (former Director of the British Antarctic Survey

³⁹ The network of oil and gas companies, government departments, regulators, cultural institutions, banks and other institutions that surround and support them. For more information see

⁴⁰ <http://www.andwhilelondonburns.com/download/>

and, more recently, the Science Museum), *2071* is described as “a new piece of theatre...where the science is centre stage.”

And centre stage the science – and the scientist – certainly are, in a production that is more suited to a lecture theatre than a playhouse. Rapley, grey suited, in a blue shirt but no tie, sits almost static throughout the production in the type of chair you’re likely to find in a doctor’s waiting room, only pausing in his impressive, methodical, 70-minute monologue to take the occasional sip of water. Behind him dance epic monochrome graphics – maps of the Antarctic, swirling weather systems and stylish illustrations of what happens when glaciers melt. Monochrome that is, until the 2oC “guard rail”, as Rapley terms it, is depicted graphically in alarmist red, warning us of exactly where we’re going wrong.

Rapley and the team at the Royal Court should certainly be applauded for attempting to bring science and storytelling closer together. Few other scientists have ventured outside the academic sphere to speak out on this issue. It’s a vital task if we are to find new ways of engaging people with climate change and encourage positive action as our report *Science & Stories: Bringing the IPCC to Life* produced this summer illustrates.

But I’d also like to unpack the production a little more carefully...here we are presented with a scientist of the most reputable kind (the production begins with Rapley running through his impressive CV) but also the most typical in profile (age, gender, race and class), if not in practice. He delivers a very measured and inoffensive lecture (in a tone he himself describes as “dispassionate and objective”) on how the most complex natural system on earth, the global climate, works and how humans are changing it. It’s a story of sorts, certainly. But is it the type of story that will inspire those who aren’t already involved to help change its ending...?

This feels unlikely. *2071*’s story isn’t wrong or ineffective, it’s just limited – most likely appealing to people who are already engaged with climate change and hope to leave the theatre better armed with the facts.

Much of the social science and psychology research indicates that the climate change conversation needs to be broadened beyond these ‘usual suspects’. And further, that doing this requires new narratives and new ways of presenting information. Our co-founder, George Marshall, recently wrote a book – *Don’t Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change* – discussing some of these questions too. You can see a video of last week’s launch here.

Chris Rapley understands the importance of this better than most, having headed up a significant report on science communication earlier this year – *Time for Change? Climate Science Reconsidered* – with the aim of helping climate scientists get their message across. It’s essential reading for everyone who works in climate science and anyone who is interested in the communication and the psychology of climate change. Attempts at following these report recommendations are undeniably evident in *2071*. However, writer Duncan Macmillan just doesn’t take them far enough to be successful for the non-converted.

For example, *Time for Change* calls for climate scientists to “employ the elements of successful narrative including personalizing their story, drawing on emotions and expressing their opinions”; and recognises that, “the public discussion of climate science is as much

about what sort of world we wish to live in, and hence about ethics and values, as it is about material risks to human well-being.” It also specifically encourages climate scientists to collaborate with those who have experience in public narratives, such as the arts and museum community.

To the first point on ‘personalising the story’: as mentioned above, Miller’s script sees Rapley stating early on in his 2071 monologue that, as a scientist his role is to be “dispassionate and objective”, not emotional and opinionated. And while the production’s title does offer a personal touch – 2071 is the year Rapley’s eldest granddaughter will be the age he is now – it is one of only a few such references in the play, and is as vulnerable to submersion by the ocean of information presented as South Pacific archipelagos are to rising sea levels. Further, the year 2071 also lies well beyond the scope of the average human being’s temporal understanding – when pressed people struggle to envision a time 20–30 years in the future, let alone 40–50...

As for the second point, referring to what sort of world we wish to live in: again the production makes a nod to this, with Rapley restating this sentiment almost verbatim from the report near the end of the performance. Under the weight of all the graphs and maps, however, there has been so little build up to a comment on ethics and values that one could be forgiven for missing it completely.

And finally, to climate scientists collaborating with the arts community: there is no doubt that 2071 is a product of this, at least in the sense that it was conceived by a theatre director, a scriptwriter and a climate scientist. But placing a science lecture – albeit with uncharacteristically stylish graphics – in a theatre doesn’t feel like a particularly ambitious realisation of this type of partnership. I would have expected the outcome to be something unusual, something that sheds light on new ways of thinking and acting. A focus, to put it more poetically, on a respons-*ability* to climate change, rather than a respons-*ibility*.

Despite a different setting and some attempts to break out of the mould, 2071 appears to fall squarely into science’s persistent safety net – ‘the information deficit model’. Traditionally hailed as the holy grail of climate change communication, it has now been well and truly debunked. People are complex and often perverse beasts. Simply offering up more of the ‘right’ information does not mean we will make more of the ‘right’ decisions. In fact, it often has the opposite effect for the unconvinced. Instead, messages need to be linked to what’s meaningful for the audience. Finding out how the people you’re speaking to think and focusing on what they care about will take you far closer to telling a successful story than ensuring you’re well-versed in climate science. That’s not to say that a cogent and comprehensive understanding of the science isn’t important; it’s just not enough.

As I mentioned above, bringing the scientific and artistic community closer together is vital if we are to take on the challenge of climate change with any real vigour. This project is clearly attempting to do this and Rapley needs to be credited, along with a growing number of creative people focusing their energy and ingenuity on this endeavour. One recent result is the *Culture and Climate Change: Narratives* report published by the Open University’s Open Space Research Centre. The group behind the project believe climate change requires multiple framings and perspectives, and that these need to be provisional and evolving. “Only

some voices have so far had the chance to speak” they continue “and the stories that have been told represent only a fraction of the ones that might be available to us.”

We’ve also teamed up with the Royal Society of Arts on an innovative project to explore this. It develops the idea that the climate change challenge is not only (or even mostly) about ‘saving the environment’ and all the clichéd ideas that come with it. Instead, it should be viewed as a multi-faceted challenge with seven main dimensions, all of which speak to a different aspect of human existence: science, technology, law, economy, democracy, culture and behaviour. It’s this type of thinking that pushes COIN into new and exciting areas, such as our latest work with young people and, previously, the centre-right. And it’s this type of thinking that we need much, much more of if we are to succeed in Rapley’s call for “the greatest collective action in history.”

Appendix III: List of interviewees and interview information

	Rachel Briscoe	James Marriott	Wallace Heim	Bill Aitchinson
Role/title	Creative Director, fanSHEN; Director of Theatre, Ovalhouse	Platform; co-writer of And While London Burns	Writer, researcher and educator in performance, ecology and philosophy	Performance artist and writer
Date of interview	16/3/15	17/3/15	18/3/15	30/3/15
Length of interview	1:15	1:20	1:55	0:30
Interviewed in person or by Skype?	In person	In person	In person	By Skype
If not interviewed by Skype, where did the interview take place?	At the Ovalhouse Theatre in London	At the Platform office in London	At Wallace’s home	N/A
Directly involved in theatre and performance?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
If so, is this with an environmental or ecological focus?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Direct experience with:				
2071?	No	No	No	No
AWLB?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix IV: The spatial dimensions of AWLB including examples from text

Spatial dimension in AWLB	Location in Lefebvre's triad	Examples from the AWLB text
The carbon web	Abstract space	<p><i>Guide:</i> We're going to walk together through the web of institutions that extract oil and gas from the ground...This web of companies I call the carbon web.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> Morley's [one of the City's largest fund manager companies] holds 2.1% of all BP shares. It effectively owns over 2% of this oil and gas giant.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> Sumitsomo Mitsui Banking Corporation...provided a loan of \$143 million for BP's massive gas scheme at Tangu in West Papua...BP comes to the City to woo the likes of Sumitomo and Sumitomo comes to London to court the likes of BP.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> RBS...the second largest bank in Europe, is positioning itself as the oil and gas bank. February 2004, Steve Mills at RBS gave a loan of \$100 million to BP to help construct the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> RBS and BP hold each other in a warm embrace. Tom McKillop, Chairman of RBS, sits on the Board of BP, whilst Peter Southerland, Chairman of BP, sits on the board of RBS.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> This is Deutsche Bank...yet another thread in the carbon web...It is difficult to say where the banks end and the oil companies begin. The carbon web just entangles everything.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> That's the Gherkin, the Swiss Re Building...They are the insurers who insure the insurers...There's more knowledge available in this tower about the reality of climate change than virtually anywhere else in this country. And there's a crushing paradox in Swiss Re's position. In order to ensure they have sufficient funds to meet the claims from a disasters, the company invests the capital their clients place with it – and this investment is strongly in the oil and gas industry, whose very profitability depends on an activity that is driving forward climate change.</p>
The historical city	Lived space	<p>The Temple of Mithras <i>Hero:</i> I've looked down on these ruins for month. During the Roman Empire this temple would have been underground. Dark inside. Filled with anxious young men crowded round a glowing fire. Waiting for the secret ceremony which would propel them into the clutches of Mithras.</p> <p>The Great Fire of London <i>Hero:</i> I've just stepped over what he [his father] calls 'The Line of Fire'. The line that marked the edge of where the Fire of London stopped after burning for four days, ravaging everything.</p>
The natural landscape	Physical space	<p>The River Walbrook <i>Hero:</i> I used to know an electrician who worked there [at the Bank of England]. He told me that the gold ingots stored underneath the bank glowed in the dark and the only thing that could break into the vaults was the rising water of the buried River Walbrook after a downpour.</p> <p>The Thames River Valley</p>

		<p><i>Hero:</i> As we head down into the valley, at some point between here and the Thames, we must cross the line of flooding. Someday a real flood will come. The North Sea rushing into the valley.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> See the gentle dip down towards the river?</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> We can really feel the valley now. Let's follow it down. Keep walking towards the river.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> They built this city on a pair of hills but this time, the sea will surge up the valley of the Walbrook.</p>
Street furniture and street names	Physical space	<p><i>Guide:</i> See the little birch tree just there? Turn left. Follow the railings along.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> At the end of the railings, see the Underground entrance on your right, turn right here and enter Bank station.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> See the traffic light to your right? Go to it and push the button and wait until you can cross the road. Meet me on the other side.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> Keep going straight, pass under the footbridge.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> See those trees beyond the bollards on the other side of the road? Come with me to the trees.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> Come across Lime Street, the lane we just walked down. Let's head towards the traffic light opposite. We'll cross the road here. Fenchurch Street. On the other side we're gonna turn right.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> Keep walking, past the Post Office...Let's turn left at the cash points onto the cobbles of Pudding Lane.</p>
Geopolitical relations	Abstract space	<p><i>Guide:</i> Do you hear the gentle roar of the traffic? Can you smell the sweet exhaust? If you look closely at the fumes, you can see the geology of other countries disappearing into thin air. The petroleum rocks of Azerbaijan, from deep beneath the Caspian Sea, turning into gas. London uses the same amount of energy as the whole of Portugal or Greece.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> There's a sprinkling of black dust everywhere...Deep inside me the Gulf of Mexico, Iraq, Nigeria, Siberia. Miniscule parts of these places are lodged in my lungs. Pumped, refined and burnt, from oil field to bloodstream.</p>
Path of fossil fuels	Abstract space	<p><i>Guide:</i> BP's massive gas scheme at Tangu in West Papua...extracts carbon from beneath the sea and delivers it to the industries of China.</p> <p><i>Guide:</i> [The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline] carries oil from beneath the Caspian sea, through the farmlands of Azerbaijan, the mountains of Georgia and the villages of Turkey to the cities of Western Europe.</p>
Personal journey of the hero	Lived space	<p><i>Hero:</i> I used to work here [the Royal Exchange] in 1989 when it was the Futures Exchange. [It is now a luxury dining and shopping centre] I haven't been back here since I bought the engagement ring for Lucy.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> My father was fascinated by 17th Century London. Used to tale me on walks across the City, telling me stories about the Great Fire and Pepys. The Plague.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> I just wanna disappear. Vanish. Dissolve into this crazy city without trace or footsteps. I could jump into the Thames, feel the current pull me down.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> This tower [the Swiss Re building] is where Lucy worked. This is where she worked it out. I came to a Natural Catastrophes Modelling seminar here. High on the 35th floor and when she walked into the room I just couldn't keep my eyes off her.</p> <p><i>Hero:</i> The Monument of the Fire of London, topped in gold. Dad took me up there when I was a child.</p>

