



Myer Taub

**I am the Cup of Water without the Cup
[Or William Kentridge, Steven Cohen, Louis
Burke and Me (or William Kentridge, Steven
Cohen, Louis Burke and Him ...)]**

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Myer Taub is a Research Fellow at the Research Centre: *Visual Identities in Art and Design*, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Johannesburg. He is completing an artist's residency at The Bag Factory Artist's Studios in Johannesburg and teaches part-time in the Drama Department at the University of Pretoria.

→ **How do I see myself** – as I am: As shifting, fluid, resisting and accommodating; an integrated identity by negotiating what is me with others through a series of events that I respond to as they happen, as I make them happen thus informing me of how I see myself as I am. I am the upstart.

The title of this paper is derived from bohemian and poet Phillip O'Connor, who in his memoir *Memoirs of a Public Baby* (1958) wrote: “I was – and am –like a cup of water without the cup and dangerously flowed into other people’s being” (first cited in Andrew Barrow 2002:56). It is a witticism that provokes empathy of the self-asserted marginal and hopes to prove that even within the marginalised there are even further marginalised organisms (including how I see myself). How did I come to this? I trace this view with autobiographical events informed by redemptive criticism in an attempt to understand how I see myself as marginal and embrace myself as such. I intertwine this assumption with readings from Hannah Arendt, Della Pollack and Barbra Myerhoff.

Yet, reading Arendt, Pollack and Myerhoff is only a digression (part of myself) as I attempt to provide an example that has led me to question that this was not always so. I had always thought of myself as a Jewish theatre practitioner and dramatist, project maker and PhD scholar; but recently I was noticeably absent from a special issue of *Jewish Affairs* published at the end of 2006 that was dedicated to Jewish contribution to theatre in South Africa. This paper calls for a review of contemporary Jewish practice in the performing arts in response to how I see myself. I ask questions such as what is it to be a

Jewish practitioner now in South Africa? Is there such a thing as an African Jewish cultural activist?

I am intrigued and encouraged that reciprocating knowledge about one's identity and faith can be expressed implicitly in the place and space of performance. Theatre/Performance and the drama of my dialogue in this paper attempts to actualise seeing oneself through a process of creating and acting on narratives of the other: placating, opposing, exorcising, transforming, abjection and actualising. Here the 'other' is imbued with the complexities of seeing oneself as also marginal – of having fluidity and perhaps without any form in regards to being Jewish and non-Jewish and displaced and South African.

I am the Cup of Water without the Cup

[Or William Kentridge, Steven Cohen, Louis Burke and Me (or William Kentridge, Steven Cohen, Louis Burke and Him ...)]¹

For Andrew Lamprecht, May 2009

Introduction

On May 23 2009, I completed the last in a series of commissioned projects for Iziko Museums, Cape Town. The primary aim of these projects was to activate local museums and heritage sites through performance. The last project called *Implantation*, was an interactive treasure hunt in the Company Gardens and the museums that surround it. One of the objectives of this project was to demonstrate the infusion of identities – of cultural identities implanted onto each other – as well the exhibition of people performing not what they seem to be but who they imagined they are.

I performed in this project myself, as a clue in the treasure hunt, an imaginary character called *Sir Dirk E. Putt*, who is a slippery kind of treasure hunter, also gardener, and a romantic colonial desperado – someone who has lost his identity and so appeals to public participants to help him

find it. The participants, also treasure seekers, explored the interplay of thought and image, threaded in the narrative of place and in performance, to lead them to a point of discovery.

After recovering a key from the oldest well in the gardens, the seekers sought out various people performing in different times and in different museums, including *Miss Nothing*, an imaginary eighteenth century domestic servant from the Colonial Cape who diverted seekers with enchanting tales performed from the well in the courtyard of the slave lodge, *Alain Said*, an incompetent art historian who had lost several books and his *buchu* in the sculpture courtyard of the National Gallery, and *Anne Historical*, an enigmatic time traveler and custodian of discourse and theory who is caught in a time loop in the whale well of the South African National Museum. If the clues were appropriately assembled, the seekers were guided to the Company Memorial Rose Garden to find out that *Sir Dirk E. Putt* was actually Myer Taub whose identity had been buried under a rose called *Johannesburg Born*.

In the context of who I am: I have spent the last five years investigating a particular kind of trans-disciplinary applied drama practice that has led me to ideas about the recovery of the self. With this paper, I continue the process as part

of my practice as research into the remaking of the self by exploring notions of absence and presence, reflexivity, enclosures, horizons, along with a discourse of marginality and the ‘prescient dimension of the imagination’. In this exploration, I take my cue from a quote from Nadine Gordimer (2005:130) who, in her 1994 Harvard Lectures, suggests:

Only in the prescient dimension of the imagination could I bring together what had been deliberately broken and fragmented; fit together the shapes of living experiences, my own and of others, without which a whole consciousness is not attainable. I had to be part of the transformation of the place in order for it to know me.

Producer – process – product

In my paper, I seek to perform a self-conscious interconnection between *producer*, *process*, and *product*.² *Producer*, here, is the self with a particular agenda that forms the thrust of the paper’s narrative. It is an agenda that is not merely accidental, but seeks an allegiance to a particular kind of discourse, a discourse that embraces and inverts the marginal and the pariah in order to express ways of seeing oneself – imagining and visualising – along with others. The agenda becomes an inquiry. The inquiry becomes an event. The event is performative. *Process* means to unravel an argument towards reflexivity. Through reflexivity, I want to adjust the process of reflection – bending it backwards and forwards towards critical assessment and transformation. The ultimate purpose is to connect the reflexive self

to a reflexive collectivism. In doing so I demonstrate that there are degrees towards reaching a collective paradigm that includes ways of seeing, imagining and visualising ourselves.

The integration of process and producer consolidates and becomes a product, and also a text. *Product* is a consolidation of process and producer, constituting an imperative to continue interconnections with others, in order to perforate the enclosure beyond the limitations of narcissism through enquiry; that is also to put forward an idea, or to settle an old score, a *feh-ribble*.³

Performing ideas

This paper is performative. As such, it assumes the shape emerging from Della Pollock’s (1998:73-103) tenets in her essay ‘Performing Writing’. Thus, the paper is evocative, because it “operates metaphorically to render absence present” (Pollock 1998:80). It shifts between tenses and time. It is metonymic: “It is a self consciously partial or incomplete rendering ...” (Pollock 1998:82) that takes its pulse “from what it is to be different” (Pollock 1998:82). It is critical. “It un-writes itself at the very moment of composition” – “It un/does itself” (Pollock 1998:83). It is subjective (Pollock 1998:86). It attempts to reaffirm the self and release the self from its own enclosure. It aims to provide access for others. It shapes the self in an ongoing process of (self) production (Pollock 1998:87; see Giddens 1991).⁴ It is a montage of subjective experience.



Fig 1: *Implantation*, Company Gardens, Cape Town, 2009. Photograph by Shruthi Nair, 2009. Courtesy of Shruthi Nair.



Fig 2: *Implantation*, Sir Dirk E. Pitt. Company Gardens, Cape Town, 2009. Photograph by Shruthi Nair, 2009. Courtesy of Shruthi Nair.

“It multiplies moving forward” (Pollock 1998:87) by providing email-chats, personal notes from journals, footnotes and descriptions of experience. It is nervous, and embodies what Pollock (1998:87) suggests of performative writing:

It anxiously crosses various stories, theories, intertexts and spheres of practice, unable to settle into a clear linear discourse, neither willing nor able to stop moving, restless and transitive, traversing, spatial and temporal borders, linked as it is in what Michael Taussig calls ‘a chain of narratives sensuously feeding back into the reality thus (dis)chained’.

The paper aims to be provocative, in turn, hysterical. It is about genealogy. It is citational. It operates “again at the interstice between writing and performance” (Pollock 1998:92). It is about rewriting (see Kushner 1996).⁵ It is reproductive. It is the “echo of the quotational meta-drama of a Brecht play” (Pollock 1998:92). It is “pastiche and parody with/without the punch” (Pollock 1998:92). It is playful. It is a site of return – an expression of the coexistence of ‘double movements’ and an interpolation of remedies.⁶ It is consequential. It is dramatic. It is accountable. It attempts “to operate within circuitries of a reader response” (Pollock 1998:95). It assumes there is a collective analysis of how I see myself; an analysis that becomes a methodology framed in a discourse of marginality, of both the pariah and the liminal, of the self being both nomadic and reflexive. The paper shapes the self in an ongoing process of (self) production.

Retracing the accidental

I am writing as if I remember. It is Chanukah/December 2006. I am in Cape Town, pontificating upon my doctoral thesis. I have become enclosed in a series of crises that my practice-as-research has provoked. Whilst working on an applied drama project in a Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) wellness clinic for Xhosa-speaking women who are beaders, the obstacles that our differences instigate has challenged me to search for alternate ways – for both participants and practitioner (myself) – to reflect in and upon as we practice.⁷ It is a weekday afternoon; I leave my desk where I have been struggling to write about these experiences, when by chance, on the corner of Hatfield and Roeland Street, I bump into Andrew Lamprecht, who is a lecturer in Art Discourse in the Visual Art Department of the University of Cape Town. Lamprecht is on his way to the Jewish Museum for the launch of a special issue of *Jewish Affairs* (2006) that

celebrates the contribution of South African Jews in South African theatre. Lamprecht has been invited. I have not. Lamprecht asks me to go with him and I agree. We enter the enclosed space of the museum, enshrined in security apparatus and pink Jerusalem stone. In the courtyard, sitting on a raised platform are the *Jewish Affairs* editors, contributors and members of the Jewish Board of Deputies. Lamprecht whispers to me that in this particular issue there is a section on contemporary Jewish practitioners working in South African theatre and I will be in that section. I shrug my shoulders with a kind of abject humility secretly hoping that I am; yet I am not included.

When the edition is made available to me by Lamprecht, I scour through the contemporary section compiled by its editors Percy Tucker and Alan Swerdlow. There is no mention of me in their compilation. I am absent in this listing of the thespian community in which I grew up, studied amongst and know. I suddenly become aware that I might be an unconscious pariah informed by my absence from an archive of contemporary South African Jewish theatre practitioners. I begin to question this absence in various ways. Firstly, have I been left out because my practice, often invisible, has enforced this absence? Secondly, have I been left out because the editors of the particular issue in question have been negligent? Thirdly, if this is negligence, has anyone who remotely deserves to be recognised, also been left out? Later on, I address this absence by communicating with the issue’s editor, Percy Tucker, by means of several emails including the one below.

An email (March 2007)

Dear Percy. Firstly, congratulations on your award duly deserved.⁸ I am sending along with this email my current biography as to inform you of the work I do and am doing. The other thing I was hoping to send you is a copy of my play, *Southern Born*, which was produced at the Artscape Arena, almost ten years ago, directed by Mark Graham with Michele Maxwell in the lead and it might be ready for a revival, so if you do have a mailing address, it might interest you, because the play’s themes are of a Jewish family coming to terms with life in a post-apartheid South Africa, this is still relevant. I have committed to co-present a paper at the *International Theatre Conference* in Stellenbosch with art critic Andrew Lamprecht. The focus of the paper is around performing invisibility. The paper will not be so much a response to the *Jewish Affairs* edition but will signify the work of alternative Jewish artists who do work in theatre or the performing arts like William Kentridge, Steven Cohen and ‘me’. I suppose this email is to continue the dialogue we have begun and hope it will continue. All the best and sincerest wishes, Myer Taub.

Performing against the horizontal

Tucker's (2007/03/08) response was apologetic, swift and short. He blamed my absence from his section on contemporary Jewish practitioners on a computer error. His excuse seemed almost ironic coming from the same person who had introduced a computer booking system to South African Theatres, known as *Computicket*.⁹ The Stellenbosch paper did not happen; instead Lamprecht and I transcended our relationship into other ways that interrogated invisibility by modifying our own pedagogy through performance using tricks, risks and treasure-hunts.¹⁰ Still my bewilderment at my absence from the *Jewish Affairs* archive became like a hydra of questions. These questions persistently persuaded my opinion that this particular list of contemporary Jewish practitioners was archaic, traditionalist and indeed nationalist. David Saks (2006), the overall editor of the special issue, in his preface writes, "Every effort has been made to be as thorough as possible in ensuring that these Jewish men and women who have contributed significantly to the local theatrical profession have at least received a mention". I question whose authority determines significant contribution. If the authority is a central Jewish authority as represented by the Jewish Board of Deputies, then this body has a particular allegiance to a homogenous framework of seeing and thinking. In order to delineate this argument, I refer to (and paraphrase) Leonard Quart (1991), who in his essay 'The Triumph of Assimilation: Ethnicity, Race and the Jewish Moguls' describes a mode of thinking that is

relevant to a centralised and conformist mode of thinking often presented by authoritarian Jewish figures. This kind of thinking presents "an unwillingness to take political, aesthetic and intellectual risks that would possibly alienate the mass audience and endanger the economic position of the industry" (Quart 1991:9). It is what Homi K Bhabha (1994:141) describes in *Location of Culture* as a "horizontal" mode of thinking that resists integrating a dialectic of possibilities, of different conjectures, the doublings in narratives and complexities in reasoning that exist in a post-colonial landscape.¹¹

Horizontal as a limited mode of thinking, writing and seeing, recurs in the article in question on contemporary Jewish practitioners, for example in this problematic paragraph:

Many a local management has rued the loss of the younger generation to emigration, while theatre organisations in countries such as Australia and Canada have noted a discernable up-tick in numbers, which they ascribe to the influx of a generation of new immigrants of South African Jewish origin (Swerdlow & Tucker 2006:81).

This example reinforces the representation and aggravation of a diasporic and marginalised community in flux rather than one which actively creates work in a contemporary political place and context. The South African Jewish community might indeed be itinerant by nature, but the authors of the article in question rely on this nostalgic device to settle and contain the itinerant as itinerant (see



Fig 3: Exterior of Jewish Museum, Cape Town. Photograph by Meyer Taub, 2009.



Fig 4: Andrew Lamprecht as Alain Said, *Implantation*. Company Gardens, Cape Town, 2009. Photograph by Shruthi Nair, 2009. Courtesy of Shruthi Nair.

Huddart 2006:110). The itinerant, should by nature, resist this kind of horizontal display of inventorying for, if we are to take on the “traveling theory” as Bhabha (1994:141) proposes “we are alive to the *metaphoricity* of the peoples of imagined communities – migrants or metropolitan – than we shall find the space of the modern nation people is never horizontal” (emphasis in original).

Contemporary Jewish practice in South African theatre (past and present) is not fixed at a particular origin or reason. The patterning of specific cultural idioms is much more complex and political. Rather, these idioms are challenged by the locales of dispossession and possession, of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. To imply that there is homogeneity in both origin and idiom is to be horizontal; the remedy here is – as Bhabha (1990:293) implies – that “no single explanation sending one back immediately to a single origin is adequate – there are no simple discrete formations or social processes”.

What does occur in this representation of contemporary Jewish practitioners in South African theatre (past and present) is the cobbling together of an inventory of names, biographies and general theatrical categories. There is no interrogation of why these practitioners assume to embody a certain kind of practice in the way that they do. The categories themselves appear to be homogenised, traditional and, again referring to Bhabha (1994:201), the representation of this inventory does not take into account that there “are slippage[s] of categories – like sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia or ‘cultural differences’ in the act of writing a nation”. The appearance of slippage might wreck the homogenous appearance of this particular archival edition of South African Jewish theatre, an appearance that demonstrates an exclusivist agenda made apparent by an absence of others. It is nationalist in its suspicion of the ‘other’ that is also within. However, the alternate, the miscreant, and the pariah emerge conspicuously visible from an enforced invisibility. What is hidden does still exist within in the domain of the dissimulator.

I draw on Charles Van Onselen’s (2007) *The Fox and the Flies: The World of Joseph Silver, Racketeer and Psychopath*, to support my argument. Van Onselen (2007:63) argues at the end of his fantastical history of Joseph Silver how, “Nationalism, exclusivist by nature and guarded by zealots, tends to marginalise not only outsiders but also sections of its own citizenry”. It is precisely because Silver, as a nineteenth century Jewish thug and pimp, is marginalised that he is able to operate

effectively in the liminal space of the Jewish refugee crises, pre-1914. His is a morality tale that speaks of the ramifications of un-acceptance, because authority in turn intensifies and therefore ordains unacceptable action through imagining that whatever occurs on the margins to be invisible. Yet, what goes on unnoticed at the margins, still does occur. Similarly, the effect is a doubled enclosure, functioning like an inverted pincer – biting inwards and outwards – and operated by both parties concerned, the marginaliser and the marginalised. My argument suggests that if the archive remains particular to its own exclusivity then it will indeed marginalise from within and thereafter protract into a kind of archaic, dead space that only speaks of its horizon.

Performing the pariah

Hannah Arendt’s (1944) essay ‘The Hidden Jew as Pariah’ is crucial to my reflexive investigation of this issue of *Jewish Affairs*. Her essay provides an epistemological framework for understanding how the concept of the pariah might function as an aide in evaluating the absent and how they function as pariah. Arendt portrays the pariah as a politic in becoming a conscious and alternate embodiment of the self; that is at once both a strategic act of resistance and a tactic act of the imagination, which might supplement an affect of enforced marginalisation. In order for the pariah to evolve, it must sublimate away from its dehumanising effect and recur re-nominated, in Arendt’s (2007:276) words, as a “human type”.

Arendt conceives of four types that she creates from the original term pariah. These four types are alternate portrayals that “accomplish a transvaluation of value” (Kaminsky 1992:31). This is accomplished by re-enacting the pariah, specifically through translating pariah-like qualities into socially interactive terms that also correspond to social inversion. These four types are: the *schlemiel*, the political rebel, the suspect and the man of goodwill. There is a progressive movement between these types that actively utilises imagining as a social construct in order to provide “creative opposition” (Kaminsky 1992:34) against oppression. The *schlemiel* is at first the fool.¹² The fool becomes the poet, characterised by Arendt’s example of Heinrich Heine. As “‘lord of dreams’ he stands outside the real world and attacks it from without” (Arendt 2007:280). The rebel is Bernard Lazare.¹³ According to Arendt, he is the conscious pariah who, “cut loose from the world of fancy and illusion” of the *schlemiel*, strives for political action but fails and becomes a *schnorrer*.¹⁴

Arendt (2007:285) writes: “Once he adopts the role of *schnorrer*, the pariah becomes automatically one of the props which hold up a social order from which he is excluded”. The suspect is exemplified by Charlie Chaplin and, according to Arendt (2007:287), “is called upon to bear the brunt of much that he has not done”. For Arendt, Franz Kafka is the man of goodwill, who retreats into intellectualism as an act of self-preservation that in turn informs his quest for normalcy. Each of these types seem to correspond to each other, suggesting a doubleness that is portrayed by the inversion of social misfits and the performing of parody, affected onto the self and onto others as strategies of resistance – these are inculcations away from and within the margins.

I use these types in order to assist in my extrapolation of William Kentridge, Louis Burke and Steven Cohen and myself, all of whom I have noticed are absent from the special issue of *Jewish Affairs*. This not to provide a biographical voice in their absence;¹⁵ rather it is to explain how I have imagined their absence occurred, not only through neglect but because these practitioners embody Arendt’s translations of the pariah – as being and making creative oppositional acts so as to invert the marginal and parody the very act of marginalisation. In doing so, they challenge the horizontal (traditional) archive and provide my own self-reflexive journey with further collective exchange and experience: one that remembers Kentridge, re-traces Burke and re-presents Cohen – respectively as accidental, hidden and imaginary.

Remembering Kentridge

As I remember William Kentridge: visual-artist, video-artist, sculptor, opera director, performer – a theatre-maker. As a child, I remember or am told I remember

Kentridge performing in children’s theatre at the Wits Nunnery Theatre for the Junction Avenue Theatre’s production of *The Goat that Sneezed* (1975). I remember how his theatrical designs for Handspring Puppet Company’s *Woyzek on the Highveld* (1992) made an impression on my understanding of theatre as place of shadow and spectacle. I remember teaching drama students about his collaboration with Handspring Puppet Company and Jane Taylor to conceive the theatrically iconic *Ubu and the Truth Commission* (1996). I remember listening to his testimony on video at the Apartheid Museum at Gold Reef City, where he described his version of enclosure as an ironic place in a free South Africa, where work is created from within. I remember his recent exhibitions in Cape Town, (*REPEAT*) *from the beginning* (Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, 2009) and *I am not me, the horse is not mine* (Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, 2009) where I observed the doubling effect of being, and distancing of the other, which was infused with a highly charged theatrical temperament, incorporating traces of the Soviet Avant-Garde, absurdism, Brechtian technique and a profound, unsaid, yet startling Jewish-ness.¹⁶

bell hooks (1998), in an interview with the artist in 1998, says: “As a white male raised in a progressive household informed by Jewish life in the Diaspora, William Kentridge chose not to avert his gaze”. It is by Kentridge being apart and yet committed to the act of witnessing that speaks to me of Arendt’s description of the *schlemiel*, one who moves from in amongst the people but is also aloof in order to witness; enclosed within and yet distant like the lord of dreams, a mercurial kind of shape shifter who through his gazing is rendered inert. Like Arendt’s (2007:281) description of the poet Heinrich Heine, who views life “through a long range telescope, and not through the prism of ideology and was able to see further and clearer than others, and takes his place today amongst the shrewdest political observers of his time”.

Re-Tracing Burke

I trace the telephone number of Louis Burke’s theatrical partner Joan Brickhill to a Johannesburg address.¹⁷ I call her. We speak twice on the phone. Both times are not very successful. This is not because there is no desire to talk and listen, but talking and listening long distance demands an almost impractical responsibility to ethics in locating a precision to the listening, an engagement in the talking and accuracy in recording. In our conversations, I note several things including Brickhill’s surprise



Fig 5: Kentridge, W.
Video still from installation
*i am not me, the horse is
not mine*, (commissariat
for enlightenment) 2008.
Courtesy of William
Kentridge and the
Goodman Gallery.

at Burke's absence from Swerdlow and Tucker's lexicon of contemporary South African Jewish practitioners. Brickhill (2009) says "... but then not many people knew he was Jewish on his mother's side ... In fact his Jewish background is far more interesting, and that is important ... His mother danced with Anna Pavlova, his aunt was Muriel Alexander".¹⁸ What is apparent here is how a profound sense of absence is made known, not only in the omission of Burke from the issue of *Jewish Affairs* but perhaps in Burke's self-denial of himself, in keeping himself hidden.

Re-presenting Cohen

Steven Cohen [sa] on his website, says this of his performance art in relating it to theatre:

I believe I have found a new form of expression in art beyond performance art. I call this Living Art. People don't come to an appointed place like a gallery or at times (and place) like theatre these are not scheduled performances, but non-contractual public interventions. And in non-art defamed areas, which are in fact, art-unlikely.

People of the outside step right into the work.

While transgressing these tensions of difference, Cohen affects what is apparent separateness onto a

convergence of doubling through narratives, places, peoples and cultural identities. There is no place for passivity in his work, often the viewing, when difficult, demands collaboration. Cohen, in his particular performative style of abjection, releases an idiom that is so painfully and paradoxically, so celebratory Jewish. This is a signpost of derision, and of legacy; this is the yellow star and the star of David necklace; this is reminder of the dehumanised and the paradox of the gentry; this is the *kugel*, the drag queen; the circumcised and the dildo; this is the genealogical and the ghetto; the concentration camp and the camp that enacts being queer and flirtatious; and this is the African antelope horns Cohen sometimes adorns marking both cruelty and mythology. He performs these cultural references as a composite of interconnecting differences that trouble, startle and engage in suspicious ways. By suspect, I am referring to Arendt (2007:288) who says that we recognise, in the suspect, the images of what society has done to us.

In all of the above trajectories, there is something that is uniquely, specifically and peculiarly theatrical. The re-presentation of Cohen in a theatrical milieu, or Cohen's influence on South African theatre, can be seen as a contribution that transgresses the enclosed space of separation and difference by performing the



Fig 6: Myer Taub with Joan Brickhill, 2009. Photograph by Myer Taub, 2009. Courtesy of Ms Brickhill.

imaginary, similarly explained by avant-garde theatre director, Terayami Shuji (2005:287) in his manifesto:

Theatres are neither buildings nor facilities. They are ideological 'places' in which dramatic encounters are created. Any place can become a theatre, and any theatre is merely part of the scenery of everyday life until a drama is created there.

I track down Cohen from an email address on his website. I send him a long email, part of which asks for his response to a review of contemporary Jewish practice in the performing arts in South Africa. Cohen (2009/04/30) responds with a short email titled: "on being glaringly invisibilised". I send another long email back to him. He responds with another, even shorter email, calling it "imagining myself more capable than I am" (Cohen 2009/05/04). I then send another, asking if I can "transcribe this chatting since the inquiry is a performance event ... ?" (Taub 2009/05/04). There is no further dialogue.

Doubling the imaginary: A conclusion

A correlation has occurred in identifying the absence of my self and others from this particular archive. The correlation has produced a movement from seeing myself to imagining others, and begins to assert how the interconnections made between the self and others is a simultaneous ongoing project that steps outside in order to understand within, and integrates within, in

order to see, imagine and visualise externally.¹⁹ It is a reflexive project. A project of the double narrative space because, as Bhabha (1994:145) suggests:

It is precisely in reading between borderlines of the nation-space that we can see how the concept of the 'people' emerges within a range of discourses as a double narrative movement. The people are not simply historical events or part of particular body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference: the claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification and discursive address.

The title of this paper is derived from the writings of bohemian poet Phillip O'Connor, who in his memoir *Memoirs of a Public Baby* (1958) wrote: "I was – and am – like a cup of water without the cup and dangerously flowed into other people's being" (Barrow 2002:56) – a witticism that provokes empathy of the self-asserted marginal. This is a person who has no place, no enclosure, only a kind of cleverness that is part of a life force – part of the imaginary. It suggests a being that is a fluid phenomenon like an amorphous shape of water. From it, there is an academic, if not ironic, disposition to prove that any kind of definition will enclose and limit the hopes of self-recognition and attempt to deny the imagination to reach beyond the horizon. This paper has performed a dialectic of movements beyond such a horizon, for that is how I imagine – we imagine – what it is to visualise ourselves beyond the limitations of absence and enclosure.

Endnotes

1. This group consists of white Jewish South African males who have contributed to South African theatre. In this context, 'contribution' refers to influence. Similarly 'theatre' means the enclosed place of making and seeing the dramaturgical. It is a place that incorporates artists/directors/writers/performers working in a post-colonial South African landscape.
2. This tri-medium of transmission – producer, process and product – originates from a modification made by Barbara Myerhoff and Jay Ruby (1992:310–311), who have borrowed from Johannes Fabian's modes of communication, in which the forms are modified through outcomes of transmission. Myerhoff and Ruby suggest these three modes are less about the control of meaning and more about assuming that to be reflexive "is to conceive of the production of these communicative statements as 'interconnecting'".
3. Phonetically spelt feh-ribble or feh-ribel. The first part of this compound is Yiddish and is an "exclamatory expression of disgust" (Rosten 1968:116).
4. Anthony Giddens (1991:32) asserts that the self might re-make itself by nominating it as "something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual".
5. Tony Kushner (1996:125) writes: "Judaism has a distinguishing feature, its unreasonable difficulty. It is unappeasably hard. You must remember. You must remember everything. You must write down what you remember. You must read what you have written every year. Not once a year but a whole week. And even worse you must *understand*. And even worse you must elaborate on that understanding".
6. Homi K Bhabha (1994:141) introduces the notion of 'doubleness' as a metaphoric movement in writing: "a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a centred casual logic. Such cultural movements disperse the homogenous visual time of the horizontal society". Double time in narrative suggests a co-existence of double or split narratives that are not counter-productive but might be supplementary. This double narrative is also performative because it is a "repetitious, recursive" narrative strategy that operates in tandem with the continuous project of the "pedagogical" not only to constitute the notion but to redeem and reiterate it as reproductive process of "double time" (Pollack 1995: 102; Bhabha 1994:145).

7. To best describe these crises, I refer to Michelle Fine's (1998:147) "anxieties of dis-integrity" as states of anxiety projected by the researcher onto the subject of research itself. This occurs because of the unconscious anxiety instilled by the researcher's own anxieties about the subject's apparent condition. The point of this crisis within my research was that I unconsciously created and projected my own anxieties and fear of HIV/AIDS onto the women whose bodies and predicament were an example of my anxieties, which were in danger of becoming reinforced. This predicament presented yet another crisis. The attempt to embrace the 'other' within myself and to acknowledge that I, as a white, Jewish, gay, HIV-negative male, with a specific vocabulary, also wanted to attempt to heal and repel what was the 'other' (of gender-disease-race) located within the subject-black, Xhosa, Christian, HIV-positive, indigent women and therefore possibly 'dangerous'. Fine (1998:148) does not offer tangible solutions to this crisis except perhaps to "come clean" about the contradictory stances, politics, perspectives and histories we import to our work".
8. Percy Tucker received, amongst other awards, a special merit lifetime achievement award from the Western Cape's *Fleur de Cap* Theatre Committee in 2007 for his contribution to South African theatre. See <http://percytucker.com/awards.html>.
9. Tucker's *Computicket* was "the first company in the world to successfully develop a computerised reservations system, changing forever the way entertainment would be marketed worldwide" (Saks 2006:24).
10. Lamprecht created a character called *Alain Said*, a pseudo academic art historian from New Zealand, who roams the world searching for lost art and hidden histories. Lamprecht, as Alain Said, performed in two interactive theatrical treasure hunts that I was commissioned to create: *In-Hiding* for the 'Out of the Box Festival', Cape Town, in 2008 and *Implantation* for Iziko Museums, Cape Town, in 2009.
11. Bhabha (1994:141), who, I imagine, has stretched 'horizon' from the Greek word meaning 'limiting' continues: The secular language of interpretation needs to go beyond the horizontal critical gaze if we are to give 'the inconsequential energy' of lived historical meaning and subjectivity its appropriate narrative authority. We need another time of writing that will be able to inscribe the ambivalent and chiasmic intersections of time and space that constitute the problematic 'modern' experience of the western nation.
12. Arendt (2007:277) cites Heinrich Heine for the origin of this Yiddish word. She writes: Shelumeil ben Zurishadai is mentioned in the Biblical Book of Numbers as the leader of the tribe of Simeon. Heine relates his name 'schlemiel' to the humorous supposition that by standing too close to his brother chieftain Zimri, he got himself killed accidentally when Zimri was beheaded by the priest Phinehas for dallying with a Midianite woman.
13. Bernard Lazare (1865-1903) was a French poet, critic and anarchist. He was an ardent supporter of Alfred Dreyfuss during his trial and conviction by the French military courts See *Bernard Larzare: the first Dreyfussard*. [Sa]. [O]. Available: <http://www.dreyfus.culture.fr/en/dreyfus-and-his-family/the-support-of-family-and-friends/bernard-lazare-the-first-dreyfussard.html>.
14. In Yiddish, as in German, *schnorren* means to beg (Rosten 1968:369).
15. Comprehensive biographies of both Kentridge and Cohen are available on their websites. Kentridge, W. [Sa]. [O]. Available: <http://williamkentridge.net>; Cohen, S. [Sa]. [O]. Available: <http://www.at.artslink.co.za/~elu/stevencohen>. Kentridge, in particular, clearly declares his place in theatre by listing, in detail, his contributions to South African theatre.
16. The Jewish idiom emerges in three of Kentridge's figurative characters: "Soho Eckstein, a South African fat-cat industrialist known for his pinstripe suits, and Felix Teitlebaum, a more delicate artistic type prone to sexual fantasies" (Finkel 2009), and in his most recent proposal of Shostakovich's *The Nose*, with Kentridge (cited in Finkel 2009) saying that when he conceived it, "I wasn't going to draw a snub nose or a Roman nose. I chose a good Johannesburg Jewish nose".
17. Louis Burke's career in South African theatre can be traced through Joan Brickhill. Brickhill's biography is available online: see Brickhill, J. Ms Joan Brickhill (*Profile*) *Who's Who of Southern Africa* [Sa]. [O]. <http://www.whoswhosa.co.za>.
18. Brickhill refers to Anna Pavlova (1881-1931), the Russian Ballet dancer who was celebrated for her role in *Swan Lake* and Muriel Alexander (1884-1975), doyenne of South African theatre, who is also Jewish.
19. One kind of interconnection is indicated by the further interactions I had with Joan Brickhill. I had dinner with Brickhill prior to my presentation of this paper (5th June 2009), at her Parkhurst home. She is 85 and wheelchair bound. Our conversation lasted longer than five hours, ending with her rhetorically asking: "When does research ever end? When can you do enough?" I wanted a photograph (Fig. 1.6). She wanted the candles to make the image more theatrical.

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