

TOWARDS MY IMAGINARY HOMELAND
CONTRAPUNTAL PLAY CREATION AND THE PALESTINIAN DIASPORA

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To my Sido Louis Francis Zeitoun

فأنت السبيل وأنت الدليل

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ABSTRACT

In his analysis of modern theatre aesthetics, Hans-Thies Lehmann notes that performance has the ability to “destabilize the spectator’s construction of identity and the ‘other’” (Lehmann 5). This research project endeavours to test Lehmann’s statement by applying it to the hybrid diasporic identity. Through the creation of a postdramatic performance text that focuses on the Palestinian diaspora and what Salman Rushdie refers to the longing for the ‘imaginary homeland,’ this thesis documents the creation of a performance text inspired by Edward Said’s contrapuntal analysis.

In the first chapter, I define diaspora and hybridity and I provide the necessary context for my hybrid identity: Palestine and its diaspora. I detail the relationship between postdramatic theatre and identity, and I explore how the hybrid identity can be embodied in performance through an understanding of counterpoint and Said’s contrapuntal analysis. In the second chapter, I explain the methods I used to create my performance text and to analyze my research and creative process. Finally, in my third chapter, I articulate the successes and failures of my research process and performance text through a final reflection.

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INTRODUCTION

“I don’t return. I arrive” (Darwish 91).

My grandfather was born in Mandate Palestine, a small country in the Levant that has captured the world's imagination for eons. At the time of my grandfather's birth, his homeland was under British control. However, it had many occupiers throughout history, spanning all the way back to the Roman Empire. When my grandfather was in school, Palestine once again was forced into occupation. The Zionist settler/colonial project that established a new nation on a pre-existing nation forced many of the indigenous¹ Palestinian people to leave their homes, where they became refugees, searching for a home across the world. This was known as *al-Nakba* (the catastrophe).

The ethnic cleansing of Palestine is what brought my family to Canada. Now, over 70 years later, I still feel deeply connected to Palestine and the Palestinian people. I still view Palestine as my homeland even though I have a home in Canada. I still long for the homeland on behalf of my grandfather and all those who were separated from it. Yet I've never been to Palestine, and the Palestine I know is one that has been cobbled together from the memories of others, from photographs, and from telegraphs. In my mind, there exists two Palestines: the real Palestine that I know about through the news and my research, and my Palestine, the Palestine of my family, frozen in time and frozen in memories. An imaginary homeland.

The author Salman Rushdie coined the term 'imaginary homeland' in his essay of the same name. He explains that "it may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being turned into pillars of salt" (10). This is the longing for imaginary homelands. The separation from homeland "inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely

¹ The definition of indigenous people relates to the settler/colonial dynamics and oppression. The United Nations defines indigenous people as the "inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live" (UN para 1).

the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands” (10). While I am not in exile, nor am I an emigrant or expatriate, I am a member of a diasporic community, separated from the homeland through geographical and generational divides. The part of me that is Palestinian is constantly searching for that connection to homeland, the one that can only exist within my imagination.

This is an experience that I am always trying to express: it is my story. I have often felt divided from my Palestinian culture because my ethnic makeup is hybrid: Palestine is only one of the homelands of my ancestors. My identity is often conflated with politics as well. I have often felt required to suppress my Palestinian identity because the public’s first connection to my identity is often about conflict, not about the culture or the people. I want to express my identity and my longing for my homeland, and I want to share this experience with others. Yet I am often at a loss as to how I can share my experience, how I can share an affective² experience rather than a historical one.

The reason I often struggle to express my identity is because of its hybridity. Homi K. Bhabha explained this phenomenon in 1994: “a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, [is] where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics” (37). Bhabha speaks directly to the postcolonial experience where two disparate cultures collide and create a new identity within individuals and the culture that encompass the two cultures. The irrevocable changes of colonialism affect the people as well as the land. At the point of colonization where culture A (the indigenous culture) is colonized by B

² Affective in this context refers to emotions (OED affective). My use of the word is inspired by the medieval term of ‘affective piety’, the emotional devotion to God to encourage people to engage with religion. This presentation of piety contrasted the ‘rational’ teachings of scripture done by priests in church (Noble 7).

(the colonial power), the people of the indigenous culture are forced to adapt to culture B. The identity of the indigenous people is no longer 'identity A,' it is now 'Ab,' a hybrid identity impacted by both the indigenous culture and the culture of the colonizer (the same is often true of the colonizers, who chose to incorporate elements of the indigenous culture into their own). This experience is also found in diasporic communities as well, where the diasporic community adapts to their host nation, making them paradoxically part of both culture while no longer being fully part of either. This experience of hybridity is alienating, and often only fully understood by those who experience it in the same measure.

I am Canadian (C), but I have Irish (i) and Palestinian (p) heritage, so my identity is C(ip): three strands of hybridity, where Canadian is dominant. However, because of my relationship to my Palestinian culture and family, my ties to Palestine feel extremely strong. This would make my hybrid identity C(iP). Still, this explanation feels lacking. Trying to express my identity through language and rational argument defeats the purpose of sharing it, because it removes the core of what makes it so important to me: emotions. This is why I want to create an affective representation of my identity and my longing for homeland. This is why I want to develop a performance that can share this experience with others, so other people like myself can understand or find comfort and power in the beautiful but alienating experience of hybridity.

Postdramatic theatre "has the power to question and destabilize the spectator's construction of identity and the 'other'" (Lehmann 5). This is because postdramatic theatre operates based on "de-hierarchization of theatrical means" (Lehmann 86). Postdramatic theatre does not refer to a period after drama, but rather a deconstruction, fragmentation, and questioning of the tenets of drama. In drama, 'theatrical means' (text, voice, movement, lighting, etc.) follows a specific hierarchy: for example, the text is the most important element of drama,

without a script, there is no play. Yet in postdramatic theatre, while these elements may still be present, there is no hierarchy. There may not be a script, or the story may be told primarily through lighting. It is because of this de-hierarchization that marginalized artists, or artists representing ‘the other’ are drawn to postdramatic theatre: this destabilization of form parallels the emotional experience of being othered.

I want to develop a postdramatic performance text to explore and express my Palestinian identity and its inherent hybridity. However, I still feel as though postdramatic theatre lacks the tools to express my hybridity. I want a methodology that reflects hybridity, not only a performance text that presents it. I believe that counterpoint, a musical concept wherein a musical theme is presented then layered and interwoven by different voices is an aural representation of the hybridity I feel. One of the founders of postcolonialism, and a Palestinian born academic, Edward W. Said also felt similarly. To conduct his comparative analysis of colonial and postcolonial texts within their contexts, Said developed a methodology of contrapuntal that was inspired in part by his own experiences of hybridity (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 90). I understand my own hybrid identity as contrapuntal, and I believe employing a unique contrapuntal method of performance creation will help me express my hybrid identity. Therefore, I ask the following question: **Can counterpoint be used to express my hybrid identity through performance?**

If we accept Karen Jurs-Munby and Hans Thies Lehmann’s statement that postdramatic theatre “has the power to question and destabilize the spectator’s construction of identity and the ‘other,’” (5) and is structured by “the de-hierarchization of theatrical means” (Lehmann 86), and we also accept that Said’s contrapuntal analysis is a reflection of intertwining themes of the hybrid identity (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 90) then the following hypotheses arise:

1. If postdramatic theatre relies on the relationship between different ‘themes’ or ‘theatrical means’ than postdramatic theatre can be contrapuntal.
2. If postdramatic theatre can be contrapuntal, then it has the ability to represent the hybridity of identity.

To test my hypotheses, I first explore the relationship between postdramatic theatre and counterpoint and develop a methodology for performance creation that centers around counterpoint. Then, I will embark on a Research Creation (RC) project and develop a unique performance text that explores my hybridity through counterpoint. My objective in creating this performance text is to develop a performance creation method that I can carry with me as I develop more work that centers around identity and hybridity. My interest is in the process of creation more so than its final product: i.e. a performance text.

I chose to embark on this research creation project because I felt a gap in literature and guides that would help me express my hybridity. I want to develop a process that speaks specifically to hybridity, and I want one that is informed by my own experiences. However, I believe that a creation process that reflects and presents hybridity as a valuable tool for anyone who wishes to understand or represent their hybridity. Furthermore, while counterpoint was adapted to explore literature by Said, it has not been developed to explore theatre. I believe that developing this connection between theatre and counterpoint is also fruitful and can be a good tool for performance creation.

For this project, my research is focused on postcolonial studies and diaspora studies. My research into these fields provides me with the context and resources to understand my hybrid identity and my family’s history of diaspora and exile. I rely on Helena Lindholm Shultz and Julianne Hammer’s book *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of*

Homeland to situate my experiences within the field of diaspora studies. Homi K. Bhabha's work gives me my definition of hybridity and Salman Rushdie's essay on the subject inspired my definition of the imaginary homeland. Edward Said's body of work is deeply influential to my research, including his books *Culture and Imperialism*, *Orientalism*, *Reflections on Exile*, and *The Question of Palestine*. I also employ Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* to clarify my definition of postdramatic theatre and its tenets to help me develop my performance text.

My research into diaspora studies and postcolonial studies will allow me to contextualize the subject of my creative project. This includes my research into Edward Said's contrapuntal analysis, its creation, inspirations, and function. Understanding the application of counterpoint will provide me with the background I need to explore my personal methodology for play creation. Furthermore, postdramatic theatre will allow me to address how I will develop my research subject into a performance text.

To develop my performance text, I embark on a Research Creation process, where I conduct research in tandem with the creation of my performance text. While my final result will be a performance text, what I am actually studying is my process of play creation. A successful performance text is a reflection of a successful contrapuntal performance process. To analyze my creative process, I employ an autoethnographic lens because it focuses on the role of the self in research, and its own history is closely tied to the themes of postcolonialism and hybridity. I present a detailed summary of my creation process and an analysis of its successes and failures to evaluate my research question and evaluate if counterpoint can indeed be used to develop performances about the hybrid identity.

This thesis is divided into three sections. In the first section, I define my key concepts and terms, including my explanation of the notions of imaginary homeland, diaspora, and hybrid

identity. I also explain the context for my personal imaginary homeland and hybrid identity, which is the inspiration for my play creation. I also define postdramatic theatre, its structures, and its relationship to the presentation and performance of identity. I explain the concept of counterpoint, including Edward Said's contrapuntal analysis and its relationship to the notion of hybrid identity. Finally, I explain how postdramatic theatre can be seen as contrapuntal, and how a contrapuntal understanding of postdramatic theatre can be used as a tool to represent the hybrid identity. In my second chapter, I define my methods and explain my unique methodology for play creation. I provide a summary of my creation process and its final output, my performance text. Finally, in the third chapter, I discuss my results and reflect on the effectiveness of my contrapuntal creation method.

CHAPTER 1

Investigating my Imaginary Homeland

An Epistemology for Performance Creation

“Every Palestinian remembers that he had a homeland and that he was exiled from it...For the Palestinian, the homeland is not a memory or an intellectual concept. Each Palestinian is a witness to the tearing apart” (Darwish 103).

My Imaginary Homeland: Hybridity in the Palestinian Diaspora

The Imaginary Homeland

“It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being turned into pillars of salt.... [This] inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands” (Rushdie 10)

The imaginary homeland is a concept driven by the experience of diaspora; it is a result of being severed from a homeland. Despite migration, there is always a connection to the homeland, there is always some sense of longing. However, the homeland that diasporic bodies long for is one of the past, a homeland calcified at the point of their departure. Leaving the space invariably means remembering it as it was, not how it grows despite the absence of the expatriate community. The imaginary homeland is a place that lives in memory, a palimpsest that defends itself against a community and a landscape that changes overtime. When exiles think back to their homeland, they think back to a past version, which, because of the erosion of time, is now imaginary, not tangible. The construction of and the longing for an imaginary homeland is a condition created by diaspora because of the separation from the actual homeland.

Diaspora

The word diaspora comes to the English language via ancient Greek. It is composed of the prefix *δια* (across) and the word *σπορά*: sowing or seed (OED *diaspora*). The modern definition of diaspora therefore refers to “any group of people who have spread or become dispersed beyond their traditional homeland or point of origin” (OED *diaspora*). This term was

expanded upon in academic discourse by William Safran in 1991. Safran maintained that diasporic communities share six common attributes:

- 1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “center” to two or more “peripheral,” or foreign, regions;
- 2) They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements;
- 3) They believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;
- 4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;
- 5) They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
- 6) They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (83-84).

To Safran, diaspora refers to the people and their descendants who have migrated from their point of origin (known as a homeland), and continue to maintain their traditions, cultures, and memories of their homeland despite living in a new place. Diasporic people feel as though their experience is a temporary one, that in the future they can return to their homeland, and they feel that their host nation does not fully accept them; that only in their homeland can their identity be accepted.

In 2005, Brubaker expanded on Safran’s definition, adding three core elements of diaspora: dispersion of space, orientation to a ‘homeland,’ and boundary-maintenance (5). To Brubaker, dispersion can refer to a “forced or otherwise traumatic dispersion” (5), like a diaspora caused by war or ethnic cleansing, but it can all be applied more leniently to refer to any minority population living outside of a perceived homeland. Brubaker’s second core element, the orientation to a ‘homeland’ is perhaps the most instable of the core elements, as discussions around the presence of homeland in diasporic communities have differing degrees of importance. Despite this, the presence of a homeland acts “as an authoritative source of value, identity, and

loyalty” (5). It is the homeland, whether it occupies a clear geographic space or a historical or imagined space, that acts as the centre from where the centrifugal movement of diaspora begins. Finally, Brubaker’s third element, boundary-maintenance refers to “the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis a host society (or societies)” (6). Belonging to a diasporic community inherently means that you exist as a minority within your host society, because you are removed from your own society. Yet, this is also complicated, as the diasporic identity does not always entail an existence entirely removed from your host society. Often, it implies a hybridity, as you exist within a liminal space where your identity is neither fully that of your homeland, nor it is that of your host society (6). While Brubaker’s definition of diaspora differs slightly from Safran’s, it also emphasizes the separation from a homeland, the longing for homeland (be it actual, or through cultural practices), and the fracturing of, or altering of identity.

In my thesis, when I speak of diaspora, I refer to a community of people who migrated from their homeland to a new space and continue, through generations, to maintain a connection to and a longing for this homeland through traditions and cultural practices. The diasporic identity refers to individuals who do not feel fully whole in their host nation, because they still maintain a connection or a longing for their homeland, resulting in a hybrid identity fixed in a liminality of being a/part of their ancestral homeland.

Hybridity

In 1994, Homi K. Bhabha explained a phenomenon of the postcolonial existence that he described as hybridity: the construction of a new identity in a liminal third space that exists not as a part of the colonial experience or the colonized experience, but a form of identity that

encompasses them both. In Bhabha's own words, "a place of hybridity, figuratively speaking, [is] where the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics" (37). The hybrid identity acknowledges that peoples' backgrounds and experiences inform their identities, and that identity is not fixed or singular. We can hold multiple different and sometimes warring identities within ourselves. For the postcolonial hybrid identity, colonial subjects' identities are comprised of their indigenous culture and the colonial culture that they were born into or lived through. While the colonizer and the colonized are dichotomous, living under colonial rule creates a hybrid identity that can hold the dichotomy. This is the same for diasporic identities. As a result of migration, diasporic people hold a dual identity that encompasses both the culture of their homeland and their host nation.

This foundational information about the hybrid identity created by diaspora is what allows me to delve into the subject of research: my hybrid identity and my relationship to my diasporic community. Understanding the background of the diasporic existence is what allows me to understand and embody my personal imaginary homeland. It is what allows me to understand how I am connected to the greater experience and community of the Palestinian diaspora.

My Imaginary Homeland

A performance about my hybrid identity requires an understanding of my imaginary homeland, as it is the source of my sense of hybridity. I am a member of a diasporic community because my grandfather left his homeland to settle in Canada. By Brubaker's six criteria, I am a member of the Palestinian diaspora. My ancestor was dispersed from his homeland (1), my

family retains a collective memory of our homeland and its culture (2), I feel partially alienated from my host society because of my connection to the homeland (3), I believe in the inherent Palestinian right to return (4), I believe in the restoration of my homeland (5), and I continue to relate vicariously to my homeland through my family and the maintenance of our culture (6). Despite the geographical distance from his homeland, my grandfather maintained his connection to it by establishing cultural practices in his host country. That connection to and longing for homeland is what creates my hybrid identity. As a Canadian with Palestinian ancestry, my identity is made up of many different cultures and contexts: my Palestinian identity is one element of the complex interweaving of my identity. Yet, it is my Palestinian identity, born from diaspora, that I often feel the need to understand further. It is my Palestinian identity that feels the disquiet of longing for homeland whilst participating in the culture of community in which I live, a community that is also integral to the make-up of my hybrid identity. There is a part of me that will always be connected to Palestine, there is a part of me that longs for the homeland my grandfather lost. There is a part of me that feels as though this land I never set foot on is home, just as much as that place I was born is. It is this, my imaginary homeland, that I want to embody and portray in performance. I want to portray the exile of Palestinians like my grandfather, and how I, a descendant of the first wave of exiles, understand my connection to the homeland, its history, and its culture.

Palestine and the *Nakba*

Palestine has a history that spans several thousand years, and it has captured the West's attention for nearly as long. Between the occupation of the land by different empires, centuries of bloody crusades, and its present-day occupation by a settler-colonial power with a Zionist

agenda, Palestine has never been a sovereign nation by modern definitions. Yet according to Anderson, the idea of the nation is a relatively recent concept, and “nation, nationality, nationalism – [have] proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse” (3). The nation is not defined by constitutions or physical borders, but rather, the nation “is an imagined political community” (6). Anderson goes on to explain that the nation “is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of the communion” (6). Nations are not defined by the political governance over a specific area of land, a nation is a community of people with a cohesive identity and culture.

It is important to define ‘nation’ as an imagined community when discussing Palestine, because its complex history can be hard to track, and it has historically been under occupation by outside forces. Palestine is a nation because it is a community of people with a distinct identity and culture that is tied to a specific geography. While Palestine is not currently considered an autonomous country, the name Palestine is used to designate the geographical space that indigenous Palestinians inhabited and continue to inhabit.

In the case of Palestine, as in the case of most other Arab political entities, traditionally and through the Middle Ages the name Filastin³ had indicated both an exact geographic location and the identity of the (predominately, but not exclusively) Arab Muslim population (Masahla 211).

Palestine has historically been recognized as a community of people who share an identity, one that is tied to a specific geographical region that has also been referred as Palestine. Therefore, following Anderson’s definition of nation, Palestine is a nation, and has been for centuries, if not

³ In the Arabic language, there is no sound for ‘p,’ and as such Palestine is spelt with a ‘ف’ – an “F” sound, rendering it Filastin in the indigenous tongue.

millennia. Palestinians have a distinct culture and traditions that mark them as an imagined community beyond simply “Arab.”

The first wave of the Palestinian exodus began around 1948, and it is known as *al-Nakba*, or the catastrophe. The Nakba of 1948 was a direct result of the rise of Political Zionism in the late eighteen-hundreds. This modern definition of Zionism refers to the nationalist movement to create a Jewish state in Palestine, and to preserve the existence of this new state. It was coined by the Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodore Hertzl in 1897, who argued for the creation of the state in Ottoman Palestine. This movement grew, and when the Ottoman empire fell following the First World War, the empire’s territories were divided up amongst the European colonizing powers. Palestine became Mandate Palestine, a territory under British administration. Zionists allied with the British empire to establish a Jewish state, and in 1917, the Balfour declaration promised a Jewish national home in Palestine. The rise of anti-Semitism in the twentieth century, which culminated in the horrors of the Holocaust, reinforced the Zionist ideology amongst Jewish populations, who searched for a place to live in peace and safety⁴.

Hertzl, in his initial proposal for the creation of a Jewish homeland, suggested Palestine or Argentina as possible locations. While he argued for Argentina because it was sparsely populated, he conceded that Palestine would be a more attractive choice because of its religious and historical ties to Jewish people. Yet, the issue with the colonization of this new Zionist state lay in the existence of the Indigenous Palestinian people who lived on the land for over four thousand years. Zionist forces violently took over Palestinian villages and forced people from their ancestral home and replaced them with Zionist settlers. Over half the Palestinian population was expelled from Palestine during this time. Over the past 73 years, the Zionist settler/colonial

⁴ See *Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History* by Nur Masalha for more information on the history of Zionism and the creation of the Zionist state.

project has carved away at Palestinian land and continues to ethnically cleanse Palestinian populations. The *Nakba* continues to this day as Palestinians live under an apartheid regime⁵ or are ethnically cleansed and dispossessed⁶.

This brief history about my grandfather's homeland is important contextual information for my research project because this is the first part of the story I must tell. This historical context represents the process of becoming an exile, the reasons for said exile, and why, despite the passage of time, the descendants of these exiles still maintain their connection to the homeland⁷.

The Palestinian Diaspora

Using Safran and Brubaker's definitions of diaspora, the Palestinian Exodus can be defined as a diaspora. Safran acknowledges this in his article:

In several respects, the Palestinian diaspora resembles the Jewish and Armenian ones. Hundreds of thousands of Arab residents of what became the state of Israel were expelled, encouraged to flee, or impelled by conditions of hostility to leave. They have memories of their homeland; their descendants cultivate a collective myth about it; and their ethnic communal consciousness is increasingly defined by – and their political mobilization has centered around – the desire to return to that homeland (87).

Palestinians have a homeland that they were severed from, that they long to return to. It is passed down to their descendants, who continue to fight for the right to return. As the descendant of a Palestinian who lived through the *Nakba* of 1948 and was exiled from his homeland, I carry that fight within me.

⁵ See the report "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution." by Human Rights Watch and the Report "Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity" by Amnesty International for more information about Israel's status as an apartheid state.

⁶ See *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* by Ilhan Pappé for more information about the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

⁷ See *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine* by Rashid Khalidi for more information about the war on Palestine.

I long for my grandfather's homeland on his behalf. I long for my grandfather's homeland for the Palestinian refugees living in exile, many of whom only know their homeland through stories. There is a part of me that will always feel the rootlessness of the loss of homeland, even though I have a home. This is the condition of being a grandchild of the *Nakba*, this is the condition of the Palestinian diaspora. The longing for homeland and the longing to return to the homeland is so intrinsic to the Palestinian condition that "the term that the Palestinians have employed for their diaspora is 'ghurba', signifying estrangement from home and meaningful belonging" (Schultz and Hammer 91). To be a member of the Palestinian diaspora inherently means to long for homeland.

The condition of the Palestinian diaspora is therefore about exile. At its source, the Palestinian diaspora is contingent on this violent tearing apart of a homeland and the ethnic cleansing of its population. Palestinians living in diaspora view it as an exile because they were forced from their homeland and continue to be refused the right to return. Many Palestinians living under occupation and in the diaspora are older than the settler state and still, "behind every Palestinian there is a great general fact: that he once – and not so long ago – lived in a land of his own called Palestine, which is now no longer his homeland. No nuances are necessary for a Palestinian to make such a statement; very few conditions or qualifications seem attached to it" (*The Question of Palestine* 115). For Palestinians in diaspora, not only are they separated from their homeland, but their homeland also no longer exists. For Palestinians living under occupation, the exile is figured as a longing for "independence and freedom and self-government where they are" (*The Question of Palestine* 126). Palestinians living under occupation and in diaspora are exiles because

[e]xile means place-disorder, as home is out of reach and the exile is placed where home can never be restored. This disarray also denotes a temporal confusion, adding up to a

limbo condition, a state of not really being in the world. Life in exile has to the Palestinian refugees implied a temporal situating of meaning in the past and future tenses (Schulz and Hammer 93).

Palestinians living on their ancestral land are exiles because while they may inhabit the land of their ancestors, it is not their homeland anymore. Their homeland was lost in the creation of the Zionist State on May 15, 1948. For Palestinians and their descendants living in the diaspora,

[t]he exile condition is by necessity a rootless condition, a condition of ‘wandering’ and unwanted ‘mobility’. Rootlessness has a tendency to trigger sometimes desperate searches for roots that have been lost. A state of nostalgia, of sad interrogation of the past, of the homeland that is grieved and longed for is very much true of the Palestinian diaspora, nurturing a constant dream of reversing the present condition of denial, exclusion, humiliation and estrangement into a triumphant return (Schulz and Hammer 85).

To live in a diaspora means to live with a sense of liminality, a sense of rootlessness, of ‘inbetweenness’. In diaspora, you are no longer fully of your homeland, nor are you fully a member of your new host country. This liminal existence is characteristic of the postcolonial and diasporic identity, and as such, it is part of the Palestinian identity. It is the loss of land and the occupation of the homeland that “leaves the Palestinians in a floating concept of identity. On the other hand, and despite the denial of the present, the construction of meaning built around loss as a shared experience takes place in the present and through the absence of land” (Schulz and Hammer 96). To be Palestinian in diaspora, or to be a descendant of first-generation exiles, means living with instability and the loss of belonging. This is emphasized in the longing for homeland by the exile; there is no longer a stable homeland for Palestinians to return to as it is under occupation. Instead, Palestinians have a longing for an imaginary homeland, a memory of Palestine that is passed down through exilic generations.

My Hybrid Identity

I am often at a loss to describe what I am or how I see myself. I am not Palestinian in the sense that I was born in Palestine, indeed, most Palestinians are not 'Palestinian' by that definition, be it because of the refugee crisis, diaspora, or because they live in occupied territories that were once Palestine. Yet, neither am I fully Palestinian. I am Palestinian/Irish/English/Scottish, or simply put, I am Canadian. This is my experience; this is my identity.

I don't believe that the importance I place in my Palestinian culture and homeland diminishes because of my physical and general separations from the homeland. I am still deeply connected to my culture, and I still fight for the right to return for all Palestinians who lost their homes in the occupation. I understand my relationship to my identity as fractional; my whole being connects to my Palestinian heritage, just as it connects to my western heritage. These components of my identity are distinct wholes that blend and intertwine to create my whole identity.

This is what I want to articulate through performance. I want to develop a performance text and creation process that directly reflects on my hybrid experience. To develop my performance text, I want to focus on a process of creation that emphasizes the hybrid identity and can articulate that identity in performance. By connecting postdramatic theatre to counterpoint, I believe I can develop a process of play creation that suits my personal story and process.

Counterpoint and Postdramatic Theatre

Counterpoint and Edward Said

Edward Said was a Palestinian-American academic and professor of comparative literature whose works *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* were integral to the creation of postcolonial studies. In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said chooses to conduct a comparative analysis of imperial and anti-imperial texts using what he calls a contrapuntal analysis: “By looking at the different experiences contrapuntally, as making up a set of what I call intertwined and overlapping histories, I shall try to formulate an alternative both to a politics of blame and to even more destructive politics of confrontation and hostility” (*Culture and Imperialism* 18). As a classical pianist, it is unsurprising that Said borrows from musical theory. Developed in the Middle Ages, counterpoint refers to the presence of two or more melodies that are interwoven, creating a cohesive musical texture (ODM *counterpoint*). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said emphasizes the polyphonic aspect of counterpoint: how the different themes weave around each other, sometimes expressing a dominant theme, but always creating a sense of cohesion within the music. One of the most popular types of contrapuntal music is the Baroque fugue, “in which a single theme pervades the entire fabric, entering in one voice (or instrumental line) and then in another. [...] Its main theme, the **subject**, constitutes a unifying idea, the focal point of interest in the contrapuntal web” (Forney and Machlis 181-82). This definition of counterpoint relies on a main subject and its articulation through difference voices or themes.

It is in this blending and interconnectedness of musical themes in counterpoint that Said sees a space for the comparative analysis of literature, specifically the colonial and anti-colonial

texts that are often interconnected. Using this musical metaphor, Said's "contrapuntal reading takes both (or all) dimensions of this polyphony into account, rather than the dominant one, in order to discover what a univocal reading might conceal about the political worldliness of the canonical text" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 90). Said's contrapuntal reading allows him to look at imperial and anti-imperial texts in tandem, not in polarized opposition.

Said believed that "if at the outset we acknowledge the massively knotted and complex histories of special but nevertheless overlapping and interconnected experiences... there is no particular intellectual reason for granting each and all of them an ideal and essentially separate status" (*Culture and Imperialism* 32). By analyzing texts contrapuntally Said does not place a judgement on the texts or view them in comparison to one another, he views them like lines of music singing to one another, sometimes in harmony, sometimes with dissonance. Literature does not exist on its own, it is a product of a culture, and it is a product of history. In reading texts, we need to understand the complex elements that inform them and give it a context. In his contrapuntal analysis of literature, Said acknowledges the relationship between contrapuntal analysis and hybridity. Said's contrapuntal analysis of literature is more than a way to compare colonial and anti-colonial texts, it is a way to express hybridity.

Said's unique analysis reflects his own hybrid identity. In an essay entitled "Between Worlds," contained within his book *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Said provides a glimpse into the struggle that growing up with a hybrid identity can cause:

Although both my parents were Palestinian – my mother from Nazareth, my father from Jerusalem – my father had acquired U.S. citizenship during World War One, when he served in the AEF under Pershing in France...Besides, with an unexceptionally Arab family name like Said connected to an improbably British first name (my mother very much admired the Prince of Wales in 1935, the year of my birth), I was an uncomfortably anomalous student through my early years: A Palestinian going to school in Egypt, with an English first name, an American passport, and no certain identity at all. To make matters worse, Arabic, my native language, and English, my school language, were

inextricably mixed: I have never known which was my first language, and have felt fully at home in neither, although I dream in both. Every time I speak an English sentence, I find myself echoing it in Arabic, and vice versa (513).

Said is describing his hybrid identity, a mixing of Palestinian, American, British, and Egyptian. It is a blend of the culture of the colonized and the colonizer, just as Said's contrapuntal analysis understands literature.

Said's identity is a closely interwoven paradox of themes that create a whole. In their book on Said's scholarship, Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia further develop this connection between Said's sense of self and contrapuntuality. They argue that "contrapuntuality emerges out of the tension and complexity of Said's own identity, that text of self that he is continually writing, because it involves a continual dialogue between the different and sometimes apparently contradictory dimensions of his own worldliness" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 90). Said's identity is a blend of colonial and anti-colonial elements, that should exist paradoxically, and yet they do not. Identity does not exist within binaries, there is spaces for multiple unique configurations of identities created by different contexts and cultures. The hybrid identity refers to the way in which the different aspects of identity are interwoven like themes in a piece of contrapuntal music. The hybrid identity is contrapuntal. I understand my diasporic identity as a contrapuntal identity. Said has long been a source of inspiration for me, and his understanding of his personal identity bears parallels to my own; they are both developed from the same point of origin, our imaginary homeland.

Postdramatic Theatre

To create a performance that explores the diasporic identity contrapuntally, I relied on the devices of postdramatic theatre. The expression, popularized by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his

monograph *Postdramatic Theatre*, refers to the growth of a new type of theatre following the “crisis of drama” in the 1960s. In her introduction to Lehmann’s book, Karen Jürs-Munby clarifies that the ‘post’ in postdramatic theatre “is to be understood neither as an epochal category, nor simply as a chronological ‘after’ drama, a ‘forgetting’ of the dramatic ‘past’, but rather as a rupture and a beyond that continue to entertain relationships with drama and are in many ways an analysis and ‘anamnesis’ of drama” (2). Postdramatic theatre is not an absence of drama and its history, but an active process of understanding a fragmented dramatic past. This positioning of postdramatic theatre as a rupture within the relationship is a conscious acknowledgement of the instability of drama and of its identity. It is unsurprising therefore that postdramatic theatre lends itself to the presentation of complex and hybrid identities:

“Feminist theory, queer theory and postcolonial theatre scholarship, as well as the more recent analyses of disability and performance and age and performance, have all pointed out that performance has the power to question and destabilize the spectator’s construction of identity and the ‘other’ – more so than realist mimetic drama, which remains caught in representation and thus often reproduces prevailing ideologies” (Lehmann 5).

Postdramatic theatre is able to embody fragmented and hybrid identities because it is also hybridized and fragmented.

Lehmann breaks postdramatic theatre into eight themes: “parataxis, simultaneity, play with the density of signs, musicalization, visual dramaturgy, physicality, irruption of the real, situation/event” (86). In postdramatic theatre, these theatrical means hold equal weight and importance.

The de-hierarchization of theatrical means is a universal principle of postdramatic theatre. This non-hierarchical structure blatantly contradicts tradition, which has preferred a hypotactical way of connection that governs the super and subordination of elements, in order to avoid confusion and to produce harmony and comprehensibility (86).

In postdramatic theatre, there is no hierarchy between the performance elements: speech does not hold privilege over lighting, text does not have privilege over sound and music. Each element is equally important. Postdramatic theatre removes the hierarchy of theatrical means. I prefer to refer to these theatrical means as themes, because as they are de-hierarchicalized and work together to create a cohesive whole (ie. a performance), they act in much the same way themes in a contrapuntal piece of music operate.

Parataxis, or the removal of the hierarchy of “themes,” allows the themes to operate in new ways. These themes create a cohesive performance that favours a contrapuntal relationship of the elements, allowing all to shine as individual whole, while simultaneously creating a larger whole. Simultaneity also resembles counterpoint, because unlike dramatic theatre where signs are ordered and individually emphasized, “the paratactical valency and ordering of postdramatic theatre lead to the experience of simultaneity” (87). Whereas parataxis resembles counterpoint because it does not create a hierarchy of theatrical means, simultaneity resembles counterpoint because the signs occur concurrently, just as separate themes of musical counterpoint occur.

Along with parataxis and simultaneity, for the purpose of my creative project, I focus on the following:

- Musicalization (the emphasis on auditory semiotics)
- Scenography, visual dramaturgy (the emphasis of the visual as equal in standing to text)
- Physicality (the importance of the body, not simply as the vessel for a character, but in its own right)

The use of musicalization, visual dramaturgy, and physicality have the greatest bearing to the creation of my performance text. As postdramatic theatre and performance does not delineate a hierarchy between the elements of theatre and all present elements are equally important I focus

on musicalization, visual dramaturgy, and physicality as they have the most bearing on the creation of my performance text.

Contrapuntal Theatre

When asked about his personal relationship to identity, the Swedish playwright Jonas Hassan Khemiri explained how he always understood his identity as an amalgamation of multiple separate identities:

I have never really understood the idea of a “true” self. One identity that is more real than the other ones. Maybe that’s why I keep coming back to the theme of identity in my writing. I find it rather fascinating that we have so many potential identities within us at the same time and that we are able to switch amongst them with lightning speed when asked (or forced) by the outside world (Sörenson and Khemiri 68).

Like Khemiri, I often return to the theme of identity in my work, as it is something I am always trying to understand better. As Khemiri says, there is no one part of our identity that is more ‘real,’ or more legitimate. Our identities are multifaceted and our representations of identity should reflect that. Just as our relationship to identity becomes a greater concern to people, so too do our methods of representation reflect the concern we feel about identity.

If we understand that postdramatic theatre has the ability to represent the ‘other,’ through the de-hierarchalization of theatrical means, then postdramatic theatre is equipped to explore the hybrid identity. However, as the de-hierarchization of theatrical means parallels counterpoint and counterpoint addresses the hybrid identity, then this parallel can intertwine to address postdramatic theatre about this complex identity. Contrapuntal theatre, or postdramatic theatre that investigates and explores the hybrid identity through counterpoint, can therefore help me answer my initial research question. To test my belief that the hybrid identity can be presented through counterpoint, I developed a performance using a unique contrapuntal process.

To engage with my identity in my creation process, I chose to understand the different elements of theatre as themes, each one serving as a representation of my it, and when interwoven in the performance, a representation of my hybrid identity. This is a contrapuntal relationship between theatrical elements, a relationship that is inherently de-hierarchalized because it is a conscious acknowledgement that no one element is fully capable of explaining my identity on its own. Only in the contrapuntal layering of elements can my hybrid identity truly be embodied because the format parallels the multiples of identity I house.

CHAPTER 2

Embodying my Imaginary Homeland

A Methodology for Performance Creation

“They began to follow my voice from one country to the other, as if my wandering was spreading their voice over the earth” (Darwish 77).

Methods

Research Creation

In order to develop a contrapuntal performance text that reflects my hybrid identity, I relied on a Practice as Research (PaR) method. My research concerns play creation, and my method of research much also reflected that. PaR justifies creative practice as a type of research in of itself. Robin Nelson defines PaR as “a research project in which practice is a key method of inquiry and where, in respect to the arts, a practice... is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry” (Nelson 8-9). PaR refers to a specific type of research methodology wherein the practice is evidence of the research process. According to Robin Nelson,

a PaR submission is comprised of multiple modes of evidence reflecting a multi- mode research inquiry. It is likely to include:

- a product (exhibition, film, blog, score, performance) with a durable record (DVD, CD, video);
- documentation of process (sketchbook, photographs, DVD, objects of material culture); and
- ‘complementary writing’ which includes locating practice in a lineage of influences and a conceptual framework for the research (26).

To present my research and my findings, I followed Nelson’s model. My performance text, situated in Chapter 3 of this thesis, is my product, it is the result of my creative research. The documentation of my process is included in this chapter. It contains a summary of both my process of creation and the development of my performance text. It also includes photos, examples of my progress, and my personal notes taken throughout the creation process. Finally, this thesis is my ‘complementary writing,’ as it is where I’ve outlined my influences and personal research methodology.

As PaR is a fairly new research method, it goes by many different names depending on the geography (Nelson 9). The term Research Creation (RC) is most commonly used by Canadian practitioners, and I therefore used it to define my research method. I relied on a definition

articulated by and standardized by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC):

An approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms) (SSHRC *Research Creation*).

RC is a methodological approach that focuses both on creative practice and academic research. It acknowledges the intersection of the two types of research and intertwines them. RC emphasizes the relationship between research and creation. I decided to follow SSHRC's definition of RC because it situates my work within the scope of Canadian research and provides a geographical context to my work, which itself is about the experience of diaspora in Canada. As my hypothesis aims to test the process of play creation, my methodology must reflect this need for creative practice. Allowing my creative practice to function as my research allows me to properly engage with my hypothesis.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that developed from ethnography and “a researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product” (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 273). I chose autoethnography as my method of analysis because of its emphasis on ‘auto’; on the self. The aim of this research creation project is to develop a performance text that reflects my hybrid identity, and as such, I needed it to both understand and analyze my process with an emphasis on my identity as well. Autoethnography was important to my research because “[it] is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the

researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist" (Ellis, Adams, and Bochner 274). I am conscious of the role of the self in my creative research and my analysis and using autoethnography allows me to engage with the self rather than separate myself from my emotions and identity. Furthermore, "autoethnography emerged in response to concerns about colonialism, the need to recognize social difference and identity politics, an insistence on respecting research participants, and an acknowledgement of different ways of learning about culture" (Adams, Jones, and Ellis 22).

To document my process of creation and conduct the analysis of my data, I chose an autoethnographic approach because it sees the value and the role of the self in the research process. Using this approach allowed me to embody my hybrid identity in my research, it gave me the space to create subjectively, despite conducting academic research in tandem. As I document the creation of a performance text about my hybrid identity, it is important that my relationship to the process is accounted for.

This process allowed me to develop a creation process that directly reflects my identity and the subject of my performance text. Developing postdramatic theatre based on an understanding of counterpoint is a new concept, but it is a natural progression for performing the hybrid identity. While in my research I focus on the analysis of my personal hybrid identity, this process, I argue, can be used by other individuals or communities. Creating theatre that is capable of embodying counterpoint can help creators develop performances that centre around the affective relationship to their hybrid identity rather than simply the historical. It helps artists communicate and share their emotional experience on living in in-between spaces.

Methodology for Contrapuntal Theatre

To develop my performance text contrapuntally, I first determined my subject, the main theme of my contrapuntal piece. My subject was my hybrid identity and my longing for my imaginary homeland, which I explore in-depth in the first chapter. With the subject of my performance text clearly defined, I next chose how I would like to articulate my subject using the different themes of counterpoint. Drawing from postdramatic theatre, I decided to present my subject through text, visual dramaturgy, musicalization, and body and movement. Following that, I conducted multiple experiments with form to determine how I would like to interlay my different themes, and I allowed the narrative of my performance text to develop through these exercises. My creation process using this unique methodology is articulated below.

The Creation Process

The Creation of the Performance Text

To expand upon my initial research question of ‘How can I represent my hybrid identity in performance?’, I began to question what about my hybridity I wanted to explore, and how I wanted to explore it. I knew that I wanted my play to reflect the hybridity of my identity as Canadian and Palestinian, and what exactly it means to be a Palestinian in diaspora. Diaspora, in its nature creates a hybrid identity because of the instability it poses on the community. The diasporic population becomes part of their host nation while still maintaining their connection to their homeland. I knew that my experience of being a part of the Palestinian diaspora hinged on my connection to my culture, and the instability that hybridity entails. I also knew that I was deeply concerned about my relationship to my grandfather’s homeland, and what that homeland means to me. I knew that I wanted to understand my relationship to my family’s diaspora and how this longing for homeland is maintained over time. Finally, I knew that I wanted to understand a way to calm the internal disquiet that arises from my identity as both Canadian and Palestinian. I wanted to understand how I could explore my identity as something hybrid, something that rests in a liminal plane, being neither fully ‘Canadian’ or fully ‘Palestinian’.

Therefore, I knew that while I wanted to represent my hybrid identity in performance, I wanted to specifically represent my longing for the imaginary homeland through a contrapuntal theatre process, and I wanted the performance to reflect my hybridization of colonizer and colonized. It is the process therefore that I am most interested in understanding.

My Contrapuntal Framework

As I undertook my research and developed my performance text, I realized that I wanted to distill my methodology for play creation into a workbook. My contrapuntal framework represents my creative process and details the steps I took to both record my progress and the analysis I conducted retroactively. It consists of three parts.

The first part of my framework represents the discovery period of my play creation. It contains a series of questions and prompts to aid the creator as they determine what their points of inspiration are, and what directions they wish to push their performance to. It represents my process of play creation, where I bring the elements I want to work with together as I try and understand what draws me to each element. The first part of the framework consciously acknowledges Lehmann's list of theatrical means, as it encourages the creator to think contrapuntally from the start, emphasizing the different elements of theatre.

The second part of the framework represents a period of experimentation. Drawn from my own dramaturgical process, this section contains prompts to guide the creator to experiment with different forms and mediums. The prompts and questions are intended to develop the contrapuntal process; they are divided into four themes: Sound and music, Visualization, Body and Movement, and Word/ Speech. By completing the exercises, the creator has a chance to understand the elements and themes they want to work with better and draw on the things they created through the experimentation process as they develop their performance.

The final section of the contrapuntal framework contains a worksheet meant to help the creator develop their performance contrapuntally. It asks the creator to write out the story they want to tell beat by beat, and to do the same with an element they want to incorporate into the performance (i.e., a found text). In this worksheet, they act as two themes. To view them

contrapuntally, the creator is asked to look for potential parallels between the themes, creating a space of harmony between the two disparate themes. From there, the creator can fill in the space between the two themes to create a contrapuntal weaving of the themes, and from there, a clearer idea of what the performance could take shape as. The results of this workbook are embedded into the description of my process below.

Information Gathering

The first thing I did to create my performance text was to write out the story I wanted to create. I wanted to understand as simply as possible what I wanted to talk about. To do this, I wrote out how I felt and what I was drawn to. I also thought about the reasons this story weighted on me.

What story do you want to tell?

By story, I mean what do you want this performance piece to be about. Try and explain it in the simplest terms possible. It doesn't matter how you want to tell the story, right now, just try to explain what story you want to tell, no matter what medium.

I want to tell the story of my grandfather leaving his home to settle in Canada, and how, all these years later, I am still looking to understand my connection to my grandfather and his homeland. I want to tell a story about loss and the longing to return. I want to tell a story about never feeling fully part of anything, as if a part is missing, tethered to a different space and/or time.

I can't imagine what it must be like to have to pack up everything you hold dear and bring it to a new place, to have to establish a new home as your ancestral home is lost and razed. Even so, I feel as though my grandfather passed on that longing to return or re-establish a connection. This internal feeling of displacement is hard to understand, and harder for me to explain.

Rather than explain it in words, I want to develop a piece that provides an affective explanation of my feelings of hybridity and liminality, and how I will always feel connected to my grandfather and his homeland.

After I had a clear understanding of what I wanted to create my performance piece about, I started to write out all the stories, elements, and ideas I was interested in. I also tried to explore the reasons I was drawn to certain elements.

What do you draw inspiration from?

This can be anything. What are you interested in right now? What topics or subjects do you want to explore? It can be found text, conversations, art pieces, etc. Write them out and try to write out why you are drawn to them.

<p><i>Ovid's Metamorphoses</i></p>	<p>I've always been interested in the classics, and they featured heavily in my childhood. Including Classical myths feels like an ode to who I became. Furthermore, I am really interested in change, how we grow, and how outside forces change who we are.</p>
<p><i>Titus Andronicus</i></p>	<p><i>Titus Andronicus</i> is one of my favourite plays, and I think there is a lot worth investigating in it. I am especially interested in its classical inheritance, like <i>Metamorphoses</i>. I was also interested in the connection between the occupation of Palestine and Lavinia's assault that Hamamra put forth in his article "Violence and Violation: A Palestinian Reading of Rape and Revenge in <i>Titus Andronicus</i>."</p>

Mahmoud Darwish's poetry	Darwish is one of my favourite poets, and he is the national poet of Palestine. I want to explore his work further because I love it and I think it also provides an intimate insight into the experience of exile and diaspora.
Curation + Museums	I am interested in how we construct and present stories and narratives and I think that is something that museums do. Especially when grappling with a story rooted in history, it is interesting to see how museums approach the construction of or the presentation of a narrative. Furthermore, I am deeply interested in the role museum historically played and continue to play in the proliferation of colonialism.
The Body	I am very interested in the presence of the body in performance and how it is a space to express narrative and embody a story. I am also interested in how a body holds trauma and memories.

Embroidery	I've always loved working with textiles, and I am really interested in learning more about Palestinian <i>Tatreez embroidery</i> .
Medieval Music and Chorality	I love medieval music, but I am especially interested in polyphonic music which has multiple different melodies that intersect and fill space. It is an ethereal sound that contains both harmony and tension.
My Family's olive tree	My great-uncle planted an olive tree in my family's backyard, a connection to our family name and to the homeland. I always see it as a connection to my grandfather and to Palestine
Language (and the loss of it)	I am interested in the cycle of the loss of language through migration and the subsequent attempt to regain language, as I am attempting to do.

After I had a clear understanding of the elements I was interested in working with, I wrote out a few sentences of how my story could take shape.

What do you want to do? Why?

Unlike the question about what story you want to tell, this question aims to make you think about how you want to tell your story. After deciding what story you want to tell, what inspires you, and what elements you want to work with, can you see a story taking shape? Do you have any ideas about how you want to tell your story? Write them out below.

I want to create a performance piece that focuses on the body, using dance and movement instead of dialogue. I want to incorporate visual elements with embroidery, and I want to include musical elements, specifically interlapping choral elements.

I think the story of Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a good starting point because the story is about the violation and alteration of a body, which can serve as a metaphor for the occupation of Palestine. Following the Ovidian theme, rather than turning into a bird, I think Philomela should turn into a tree, specifically an olive tree as a symbol for Palestine and its endurance.

I want to play with a tension between two characters that can represent Palestine and the diaspora, and I think I would like to incorporate embroidery and music to articulate their constant connection despite distance. I also think I could include a call and responses in Arabic and English to show the loss of language through exile, and the subsequent attempts to regain it.

With a clear idea of the story I wanted to tell, the elements I was interested in incorporating, and a sense of the ways in which I wanted to express them, I began a process of experimentation to learn how I would like to fuse my ideas together. Concurrent to my process

of experimentation, I also began writing drafts of my performance text, allowing my writing and my experiments to inform each other.

Experimentation and Writing

I began my writing process by blending it with small experiences and activities that would allow me to understand the non-textual elements of my performance text (the movement, the embroidery, and the music). These exercises helped me understand how to translate the non-textual elements of my piece into textual cues. As I conducted my experiments and research in tandem with my writing, I have provided a detailed summary of them together.

Experimentation

This section is designed to give you space to experiment and develop ideas for your performance. It is divided into postdramatic themes of sound, visualization, body and movement, and words. These sections are designed to give you space to explore different elements of performance.

The prompts given in this section are designed to aid you in your writing process. Keep the prompts that serve you and add any others that will help you with your process. The effects of these experiments should be reflected in your performance development, and as such there is no need to articulate the results or progress of your experiments within this workbook.

I knew that I wanted to use the story of Philomela as a point of inspiration for my performance text. With this in mind, I mapped out the ways in which I understood parallels

between the story I want to tell and the story of Philomela. I wanted to use a classical text as an inspiration because this melding of classical literature and Shakespeare with my Palestinian culture represents my hybrid identity, as I belong to both the ‘east’ and the ‘west’. However, it also references the history of western colonialism in Palestine, where western literature like Ovid and Shakespeare were used in colonial educations to ‘civilize’ the colonized populations. To combine my Palestinian and western methods of storytelling, I created a template that would allow me to look at these contrasting stories together to help me find the through lines.

Contrapuntal Framework Template

This exercise is designed to help you understand your source material contrapuntally by placing the important beats of your story and inspiration in contrast.

Theme 1 (The Story of Philomela)	Theme 2 (The <i>Nakba</i> and Diaspora)
Philomela is attacked	Historical Palestine is under British Rule
Philomela is mutilated, her tongue is cut off <i>Lavinia’s hands are also cut off</i>	The Zionist attack, and claim the state of Israel in historical Palestine in 1948
Philomela reveals her attacker by weaving <i>Lavinia reveals her attackers through literature</i>	The first <i>Nakba</i> exodus of Palestinians
Philomela’s sister helps her seek revenge	Palestinians in diaspora long to return

4. Find your story in the gaps, write out the story in the intersections of theme 1 and 2.

Theme 1 (The Story of Philomela)	Performance (text)	Theme 2 (The Nakba and Diaspora)
	HOMELAND sings her story	Historical Palestine is under British Rule
Philomela is attacked	HOMELAND is attacked, but fights back	The Zionists attack, and claim the state of Israel in
Philomela is mutilated, her tongue is cut off <i>Lavinia's hands are also cut off</i>	Homeland is hurt, she bleeds threads from her hands, and loses the power of speech, but she still sings	historical Palestine in 1948
Philomela reveals her attacker by weaving <i>Lavinia reveals her attackers through literature</i>	EXILE springs from HOMELAND and carries threads to the periphery, attaching them to embroidery, singing a call and response with HOMELAND	The first <i>Nakba</i> exodus of Palestinians
	EXILE disappears, and DIASPORA takes up EXILE's song	Palestinians in diaspora long to return
Philomela's sister helps her seek revenge		

The First Draft

With an idea of the structure of my story, I wrote my first draft, trying to include the elements I wanted to work with.

In an article published in 2020, the Palestinian academic Bilal Tawiq Hamamra explored the connection between Palestine and Shakespeare's revenge play *Titus Andronicus* (2). A brutally gory play, it is often ignored or derided by established Shakespeare scholars for its unpolished and violent plotlines. However, kinder readers over time have made space in Shakespeare's canon for more nuanced approaches to the text. These new approaches often focus on the excess of violence, trauma, and transgression within the play. It is in these nuanced readings that Hamamra believes that "to a Palestinian reader, the invasion of Lavinia's body by the Goths represents the violation of the homeland Rome and Jerusalem's invasion by the Israelis signifies the violation of Palestine" (9).

My first performance text was an adaptation of Lavinia's assault in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. It was an initial attempt to explore the connection between Lavinia and Palestine that Hamamra first posited (2). It was a multimedia performance piece, that relied on the repetition of the moment of assault through video footage. The video footage would distort and change until it became clips of the war in violence in Palestine. Like Lavinia, this character's hands and tongue are cut out, but instead of bleeding, the appendages spout embroidery threads which would fly away like bird. This was a reference to Philomela and Procne as well as Palestinian embroidery. The Lavinia in my performance text then begins to sing a wordless song. The character of Marcus enters, and joins in a duet, singing the words of Marcus' monologue in *Titus Andronicus* (II.iii.11-57). In Lavinia, Shakespeare created a tragic female character whose violation and dismemberment irrevocably altered her identity. Inspired by Lavinia, I wanted to

draw from her pain, but also her resilience to represent Palestine and its diaspora. Without a tongue or hands, Lavinia persisted, refused to be silenced, and learned to communicate again.

However, while I agreed with Hamamra's statement that drew a comparison between Lavinia and Palestine, his article analyzed this connection through the scenes of Lavinia's assault alone, and the argument degrades when put into the context of the play. I therefore decided to focus less on creating an adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, and instead use it as point of reference and inspiration for my original performance text. I also returned to the story of Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* as a major inspiration because while it also serves as inspiration for the character of Lavinia, it lacks the complex context that the play *Titus Andronicus* requires for the character of Lavinia. I was still inspired by Lavinia, but my inspiration manifested as an extension of the story of Philomela rather than a direct point of reference.

The Second Draft

I decided to make my new draft more personal, one that speaks to my family's history of displacement and exile. The second draft of my performance text was no longer a Palestinian-centric adaptation of *Titus Andronicus*, and instead Shakespeare's character Lavinia became a point of inspiration to tell my family's history and my longing for the imaginary homeland. I started to include more elements of Palestinian culture into my draft, and I separated my performance text into two distinct acts. I made the connection to Palestinian embroidery more apparent, I added poetry by Mahmoud Darwish, Palestine's national poet, and I included a direction to display personal photographs and objects.

The first act is set up like a museum exhibit, but it shows the story of the Palestinian *Nakba* through photos, texts, and objects. This was done to provide context for the performance of the second act, but also emphasize a sense of liminality. I wanted to create a sense of in-betweenness for the spectators, one that parallels the liminality that many exiles and diasporic people feel in their host communities. Creating an exhibit like space that transforms into a performance and art installation space was my attempt to create that liminality.

Photographs and Memories

I felt it was important to add photographs and artifacts from my family to represent the ways in which I have always engaged with my family's history. This performance text is my attempts to understand the emotional weight I feel from these photographs and their stories.

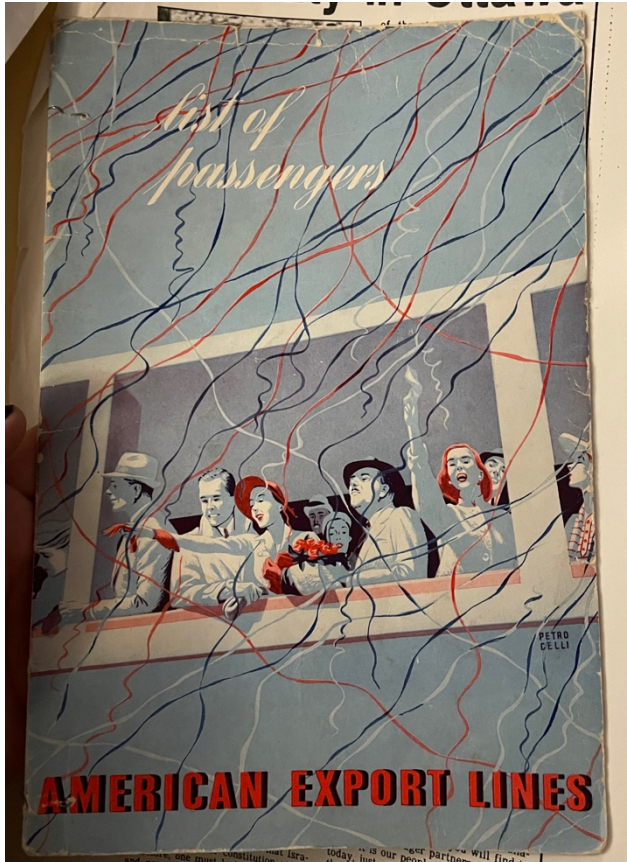


Figure 1

The passenger list for the boat my grandfather took to immigrate to North America.

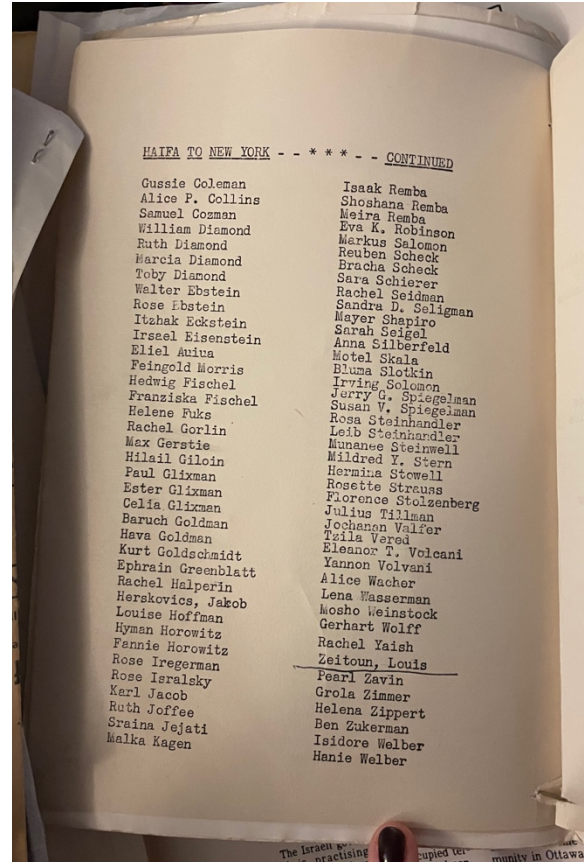


Figure 2

The passenger list for the boat my grandfather took to immigrate to North America.



They Led School of Social Welfare—Heading graduates of St. Patrick's College School of Social Welfare at convocation last night were these brilliant students, Louis Zeitoun of Nazareth, Jerusalem, winner of the Catholic International Fellowship valued at \$1,400, and Miss Rose Black of Winnipeg, winner of the gold medal in social research.
—Photo by Newton

Figure 1

My grandfather's graduation from his degree in social work.

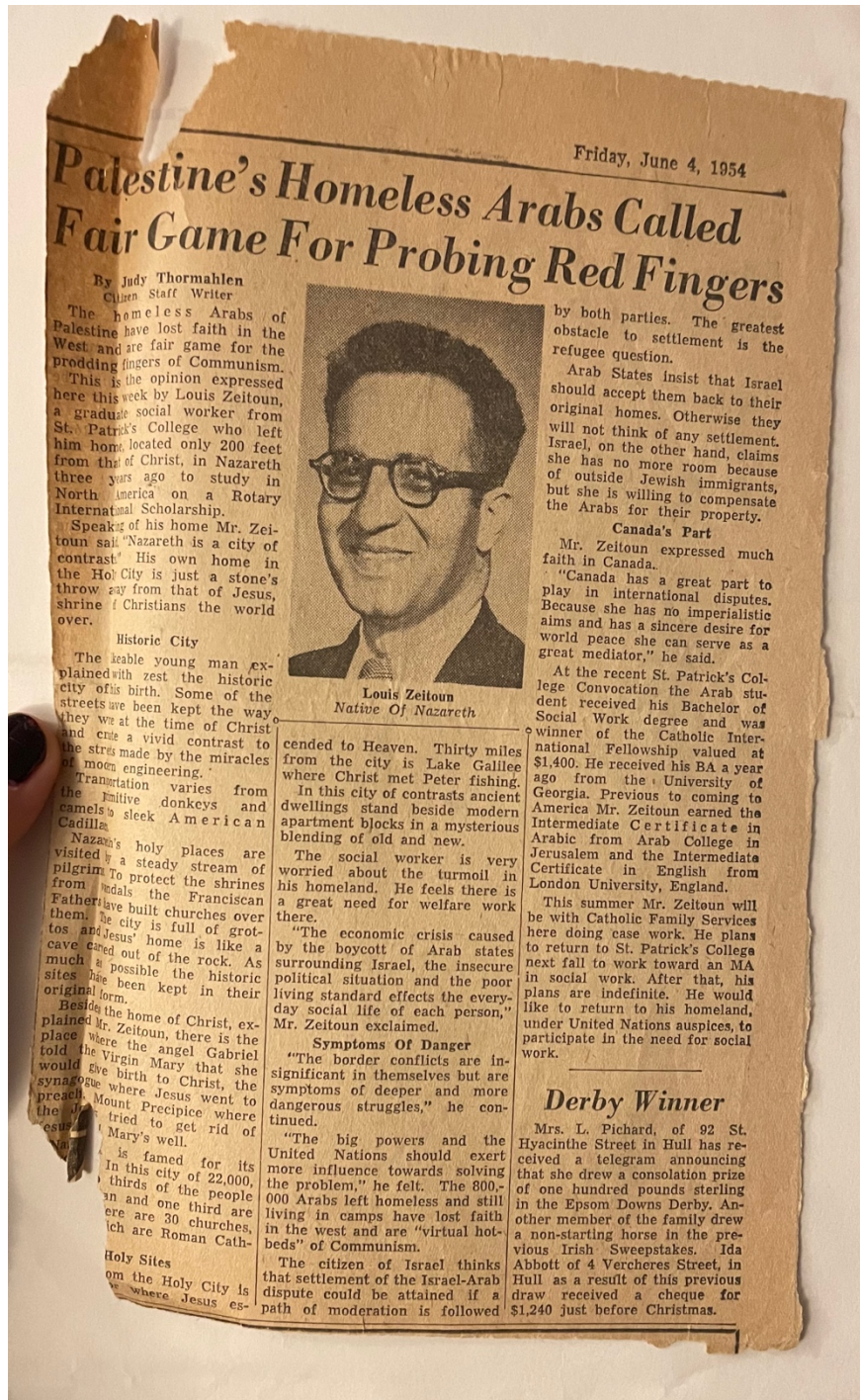


Figure 2

My grandfather continued to advocate for Palestinian rights even as he built a life in Canada.

In act two, I developed my characters: they were no longer called Lavinia and Marcus, now they were called HOMELAND and DIASPORA – allegorical figures inspired by Medieval morality plays. I found that the addition of the allegorical figures helped me to answer my research question because they helped me to personalize the concept, and distance it further from the original inspiration.

Medieval Drama and Allegory

I have long been interested in medieval drama and the role it played in medieval society. Medieval morality plays “are entertaining and instructive portrayals of a representative human figure who faces a choice between body and spirit, this world and the next. This choice is made more difficult by the competition for his soul between the parties of sin (the vices and devils) and redemption (the virtues and angels)” (Bruster and Rasmussen 2). Morality plays were spiritual education tools that helped the audience understand Christianity and the ways in which to live a godly existence, and how people can fall prey to sins. What interests me particularly about morality plays however, is the allegorical figures. The human fighting against sin is an allegorical representation of all people. In one morality, he is literally called Everyman. In *Everyman*, “things and ideas come to life as moving, speaking figures” (Bruster and Rasmussen 42). These are allegorical figures. I knew in my performance piece I wanted to represent allegorical figures as well. It is for that reason my characters are called HOMELAND, EXILE, and DIASPORA. They are allegorical bodies that represent concepts. However, my interest in allegorical figures goes beyond medieval theatre.

The introduction of allegorical figures encouraged me to explore the relationship between the body and allegory further. My research allowed me to investigate the history of the body

politic, how bodies have historically been representations of nations, governments, or a community, and how these allegorical bodies were explored in postcolonial contexts.

The Body and the Nation

The representation of nations through bodies is woven throughout western political thought, even expanding into imperial domains. In both colonial and postcolonial narratives, the nation is also often figured as a body. Yet, unlike the body politic, it is not metaphor to explain the function of a nation, but rather, a metaphor to explore desire and conquest from opposing angles.

Often, this metaphor of the body in post/colonial narratives is explicitly female. This is especially true about the female body within diasporic and postcolonial communities, where longing for the ‘motherland’ is evident. Thus, “the image of the mother invites connotations of origins – birth, hearth, home, roots, the umbilical cord – and rests upon the frequent, and some might say ‘natural’, identification of the mother with the beloved earth, the national territory and the first-spoken language, the national tongue” (Boehmer 27).

Images and representations of the mother in connection to land emphasize the connection to a lost or altered homeland. This gendering of the nation pertains to the postcolonial experience as well. In the yearning for what is lost or changed amongst postcolonial populations, as

The female body form, for example, that most fetishized and silent of body symbols, as has been seen, figures prominently in early nationalist/postcolonial representations. National wholeness, fusion with the maternal and national body-land, suggests a hoped-for plenitude, a totality with which to subsume the denial that was colonized experience (Boehmer 132-133).

In postcolonial renderings, the female body/nation metaphor and its mothering acts as a way to reconnect with a violated land and people.

It in effect, is an attempt to overwrite the colonized experience. Yet, processing the colonized experience requires more than simply developing a maternal narrative about land.

The act of transgression against a colonized people and land is violent and has lasting consequences. When “Images of the body of the other are conventionally conflated with those of the land, unexplored land too being seen as amorphous, wild, seductive, dark, open to possession” (Boehmer 129). The feminization and sexualization of the colonized land propagate a false and dangerous narrative that it is a place to be consumed and controlled.

I removed the clips of war and violence because I realized I didn’t want to talk explicitly about the violence. The story of Palestine is usually talked about in terms of its perpetual occupation (incorrectly referred to as the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict). I didn’t want to talk about war, I wanted to celebrate Palestine and Palestinian culture. For that reason, Homeland’s attacker is not a given form, as their identity is not important to the story. What is important is that Homeland is hurt, not who hurt her. My performance text began to take shape as a dance/movement piece with music and art installation.

Dramaturgical Consultations

While I wanted to create a performance text that relied heavily on dance and movement, my experience in dance is somewhat limited, and I never actually wrote a script for dancers to interpret. I therefore decided to enlist the aid of my colleague, the dramaturg and dancer Chelsey Fawcett. I started meeting with Fawcett on a monthly basis to discuss the development of my performance text and she worked with me to enrich the writing from the perspective of a dancer.

She provided a much-needed insight into the artistic process of the dancer and helped me understand how best to write for dancer, as I was only familiar with writing for actors. My previous experience in playwriting focused heavily on dialogue, and oftentimes neglected stage directors to allow the actors more freedom to interpret their lines. However, for a dance/movement piece without dialogue, stage directions are integral. Fawcett helped me develop stage directions that allow dancers and choreographers to interpret my stage directions and translate my narrative into choreography.

I began experimenting with movement to study how my body moves and how I could best describe movement prompts in writing.

Body and Movement

Examples and prompts to follow to develop visual elements

Sit in front of a mirror and watch your movements. What do you look like? How do you move?

Photograph yourself throughout your process.

Dance

Dance your writing.

Where my previous draft had Lavinia sing a song without words, Homeland sings a song in Arabic. I decided to choose a poem by Mahmoud Darwish because he is Palestine's national poet and because he experienced pre-*Nakba* Palestine and also experienced life as an exile following the Zionist State's occupation. His personal story, and the stories he tells in his poetry, reflect the very story I want to tell. In the collection of his interviews, *Palestine as a Metaphor*, the title is explained in the introduction: "Palestine as metaphor means that the poet recreates Palestine through poetry. He immortalizes it by revivng its history, preserving its past, and transmuting its present" (Darwish xv). Darwish poetry is an inspiration to me and represents what I am attempting to achieve through my performance text. At this point I had not chosen a poem; I only knew that I wanted it to be sung in Arabic. I cannot speak Arabic, and while it is something I am actively working to correct, I think the loss of language over diasporic generations is telling in of itself.

Language and Voice Experiments

At this point of my writing process, I began experimenting with my grasp on language. I practised my Arabic to gain a stronger understanding of the language, and I spent time to try and read Arabic poetry to learn more about the flow of the language. I also made up short melodies based on Arabic harmonics to develop a sense of how I wanted to explore the language in the performance text and how music and voice would interconnect.

For that reason, I wanted HOMELAND to sing in Arabic. After HOMELAND loses her tongue, she sings without words, just like in the previous draft, and like how Marcus sings with Lavinia in the first draft but adds lyrics, in this draft, when HOMELAND loses her words, DIASPORA duets her, sings a new Mahmoud Darwish poem, this time in English. While I still

had not decided on a poem, I knew I wanted DIASPORA to sing in English to show the loss of language and the attempt to keep communicating despite the new barrier that was presented.

Sound exercises

Examples and prompts to follow to develop visual elements

Listen. What do you hear? How do you feel?

Record the world around you. Write out what you recorded, why, and how it makes you feel.

Find a story, a poem, a letter, etc. Sing it. What kind of song is it?

Find sounds, music, instruments. Play them together. How does it feel?

Like Lavinia in my previous draft, HOMELAND is attacked, this time by the unseen figure, and she once again loses her hand and tongue. Again, rather than blood, red embroidery threads pour from her wounds.

Tatreez

Tatreez is a traditional type of embroidery that is unique to Palestinian culture and it “is the chief expression of nationality, identity, and artistry in Palestinian culture” (Ghnaim 14). Palestinian embroidery is a representation of the Palestinian identity, and it is a representation that persists in diaspora. In her book *Tatreez and Tea: Embroidery and Storytelling in the Palestinian Diaspora*, Wafa Ghnaim explains why her mother was keen to teach her children *tatreez* in the diaspora: “My mother taught us that *tatreez* is the silent language of a Palestinian woman’s soul. But I always felt that *tatreez* was the voice of our soul; a loud expression of identity that yearned for connection to our land, our ancestors, and to ourselves” (7). Ghnaim’s statement articulates what draws me to *tatreez*. Not only is it a representation of my culture and my inheritance, it signifies the connection to our land, it voices our yearning. To develop the elements of *tatreez* in my performance text, I practiced my embroidery, and consulted several guides.

Along with Ghnaim’s work about *tatreez* in the diaspora, I consulted with Widad Kamel Kawar’s *Threads of Identity: Preserving Palestinian Costume and Heritage* to learn more about the regional styles and the history of Palestinian dress and Margaret Skinner’s *Palestinian Embroidery Motifs: A treasury of Stitches 1805-1950* to learn more about the design of the embroidery.

In this draft, the character that was once Marcus is instead named DIASPORA and DIASPORA picks up the threads HOMELAND bleeds and connects them to pieces of *tatreez* embroidery that hang around the room.

Tatreez Experimentation

Using my tatreez books as guides, I began to practice my embroidery. Below are examples of the work I created.

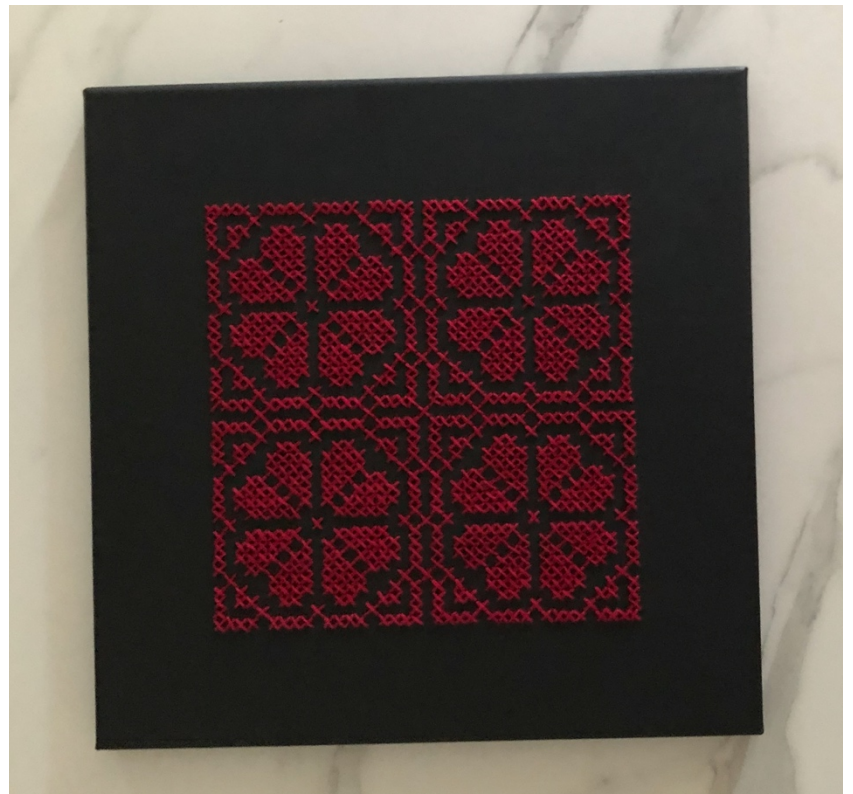


Figure 5

*A half completed tatreez project.
The pattern is taken from Tatreez
and Tea*

Figure 6

*Four damask roses with red thread on
black canvas.*



Visualization

Examples and prompts to follow to develop visual elements.

Make art.

Collect photographs and tell a story with them.

Gather found object you're drawn to. Bring them together.

As DIASPORA sings back to HOMELAND in English, HOMELAND metamorphosizes into the olive tree.

The Olive Tree

In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, the transformation into tree is not irregular. Myrrha transforms into a myrrh tree, Attis transforms into a pine tree, and Cyparissus transforms into a cypress. Yet, it is perhaps the story of how Daphne transforms into a laurel tree to escape the god Apollo's attempted rape that is the most popular of these tree related metamorphoses. Similar to the story of Philomela and Terus, this story of Daphne and Apollo serves as an inspiration and point of reference for the character of Homeland. When Homeland transforms into a tree, it is a conscious reference back to this transformation in Ovid. The language of Ovid's poetry figures Apollo as a predatory animal who chases Daphne like "a beagle sees across the stubble/ A hare and runs to kill" (533-34). Daphne is figured as Apollo's conquest, a creature for the god to conquer.

In *Orientalism*, Said explains how in colonial narratives, the strange and 'exotic,' Orient was often described as a space to be conquered. This narrative of conquest often delineated colonized spaces as sexual, where the 'other' was fetishized and lusted after. This fetishization and sexualization was neither fantastical nor benign. The sexual exploitation of the people was seen as part of the right of conquest, and "just as the various colonial possessions... were useful places to send wayward sons, superfluous populations of delinquents, poor people, and other undesirables, so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experiences unobtainable in Europe" (*Orientalism* 190). The Orient represented not only a material conquest, but a sexual one as well.

While the grips of active colonial power wane, these damaging connections to the colonized 'other' have not abated. In *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said wonders "why the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire, deep generative energies, is something on which one could speculate" (188). Orientalist figurations of the Middle East view the space as a place to conquest, laced with thinly veiled sexual and predatory metaphors. Implicating the story of Apollo and Daphne into this performance piece is a conscious reference back to the interpretations of the 'Orient' as a place to be conquered. However, the metamorphosis of Homeland is not a replication of Ovid's story, but an expansion on it. Homeland turns into an olive tree, rather than a laurel tree.

The olive tree is one of the most important symbols to Palestinians living in exile and within the region of historical Palestine. Trees, and their roots, are often imbued with metaphorical significance, and to Palestinians, the olive tree is no different. Trees are inherently tied to land. The roots of trees dig into the earth and grow, ensuring the longevity of a tree's life, and providing it with sustenance. In Palestine, olive trees are a part of the landscape, and the cultivation and farming of olives has long been a major facet of the region's economy. It is because of this that "in Palestinian nationalist discourse, the olive tree is particularly meaningful, symbolizing both 'roots' and identity and serving core functions of production" (Schulz and Hammer 102). The olive tree represents the agricultural history of Palestine, while also emphasizing the roots Palestinian people feel towards their land, an intrinsic part of the Palestinian identity. Olive trees can live for thousands of years, and because of that, "Palestinians draw connections between their ancient presence in Palestine and that of the ancient olive tree rooted in the land of Palestine" (Abufarha 353). The Olive tree represents the endurance of presence.

Within Palestine, the olive tree represents the endurance of the people and their relationship to the land. Palestinians in Palestine are still rooted to the land, and “the subject of rootedness remained dominant in occupied Palestinian’s articulation of identity and its symbolizing inside Palestine” (Abufarha 352-353). This connection between Palestinians and their land, the place where their roots are planted is clear, and it is a threat to the colonial Zionist narrative because

The olive tree symbol was brought to the fore in response to the attempts of the Zionist movement and the state of Israel to deny the very existence of Palestinians. Palestinians learned of phrases such as “a land with no people for a people with no land,” which was a propaganda tool used by the Zionist movement in the Western world to legitimize the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine (Abufarba 356).

The rootedness, the ever-present symbol of Palestine and Palestinians is a threat to the Zionist government’s attempts at erasing Palestine. Yet olive trees, which are so connected to the land, are palimpsests that remain defiant in the face of the Zionist attempts to evade history in favour of a settle-colonial narrative. The metaphor of the olive tree is especially important to me, as my mother’s family name is Arabic for olive. Not only does the olive tree represent Palestine, it represents my family.

In my grandparents’, my great uncles’, my cousins’, and my parents’ backyards lie olive trees. To Palestinians, the olive tree represents rootedness. To my family, those exiled and the generations that never knew Palestine outside of their imaginary homeland, the olive tree is a conscious acknowledgement of the rootlessness of exile, and creation of roots outside of the homeland. The olive trees in our garden keep us rooted to our homeland, even when we cannot be rooted to the land. It represents our hybridity in diaspora. We carry with us a symbol of our homeland and we lay its roots in our new homes, on the land we now call home in the absence of our homeland.

By turning into an olive tree, Homeland experiences both the attempts at conquest and control, like the story of Apollo and Daphne, and the transformation into the imaginary homeland. The rootlessness caused by exile and the search for roots manifests by connecting Diaspora to Homeland, no longer a body, no longer equal to Diaspora, but as a tree, as a representation of what Homeland was, and what Diaspora is looking for in Homeland. This metamorphosis occurs on page 2 of act 2 of my performance text, *The Song of the Nightingale*:

“She struggles, alone on stage, and screams. She is wounded – gone is her tongue, gone are her hands. Her wounds bleed threads that pour from her injured hands.

She continues to sing her song, but it is anguished, and the words are gone.

Forever altered, but she never leaves.

The bodies of EXILE spring from her as she slowly begins to metamorphosize into an olive tree”



Figure 3

My family’s olive tree in mid-winter

The Third Draft

In the new draft of my performance text, I developed the didascalia to give the performers more freedom to understand and interpret my words. I wanted to impart the emotions of the characters and their situation into the didascalia, and to do so, I began writing short essays and pieces of poetry that connected to my emotional relationship to my story as I worked on my drafts.

Words

Examples and prompts to follow to develop visual elements.

Sit in a calming space and write. Sit in an uncomfortable space and write.

Write a poem. Keep writing.

Write and record your thoughts.

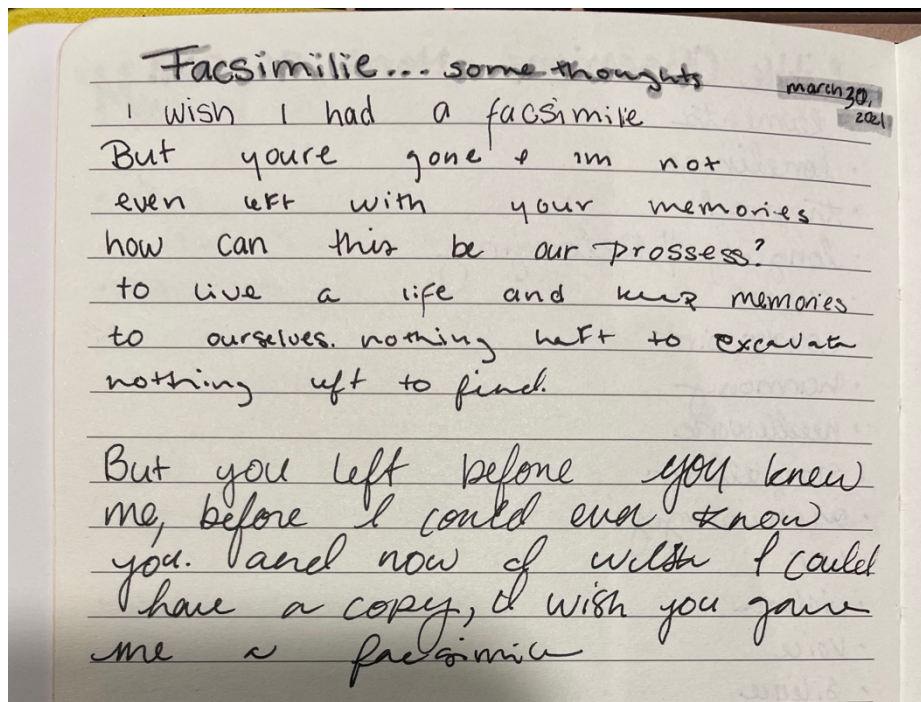


Figure 4

Excerpt from my process journal

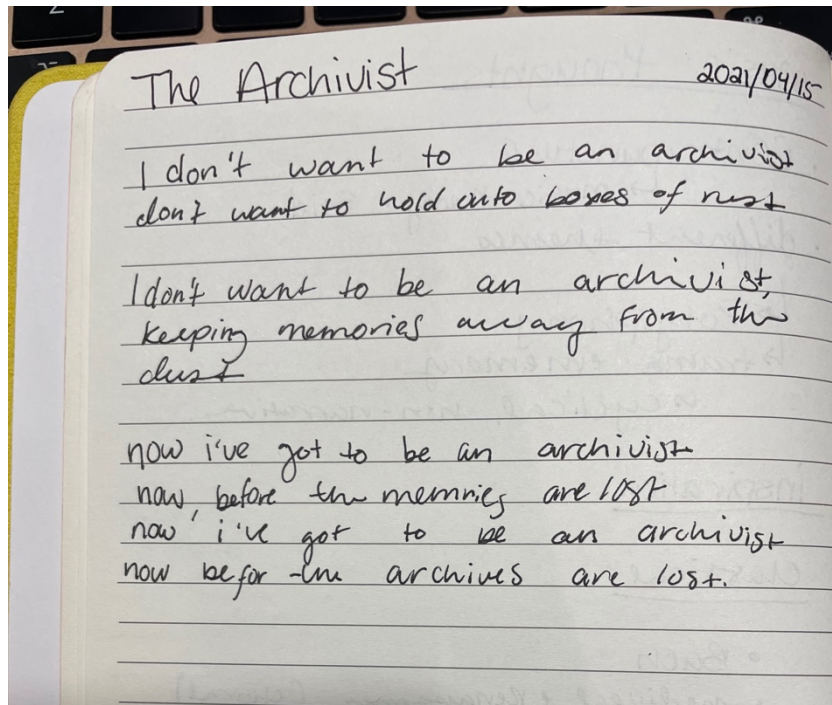


Figure 5

Excerpt from my process journal

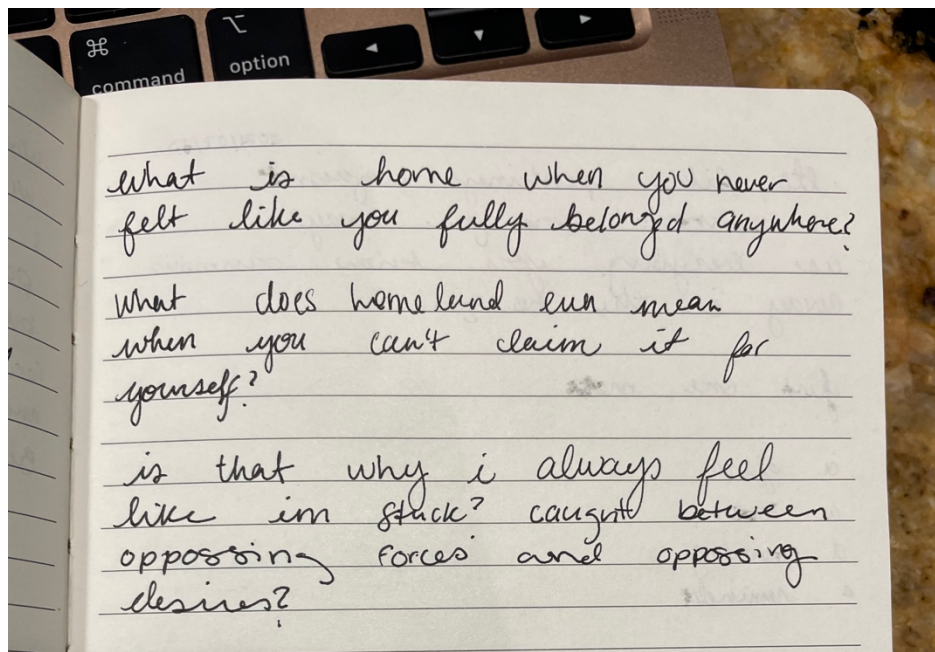


Figure 6

Excerpt from my process journal

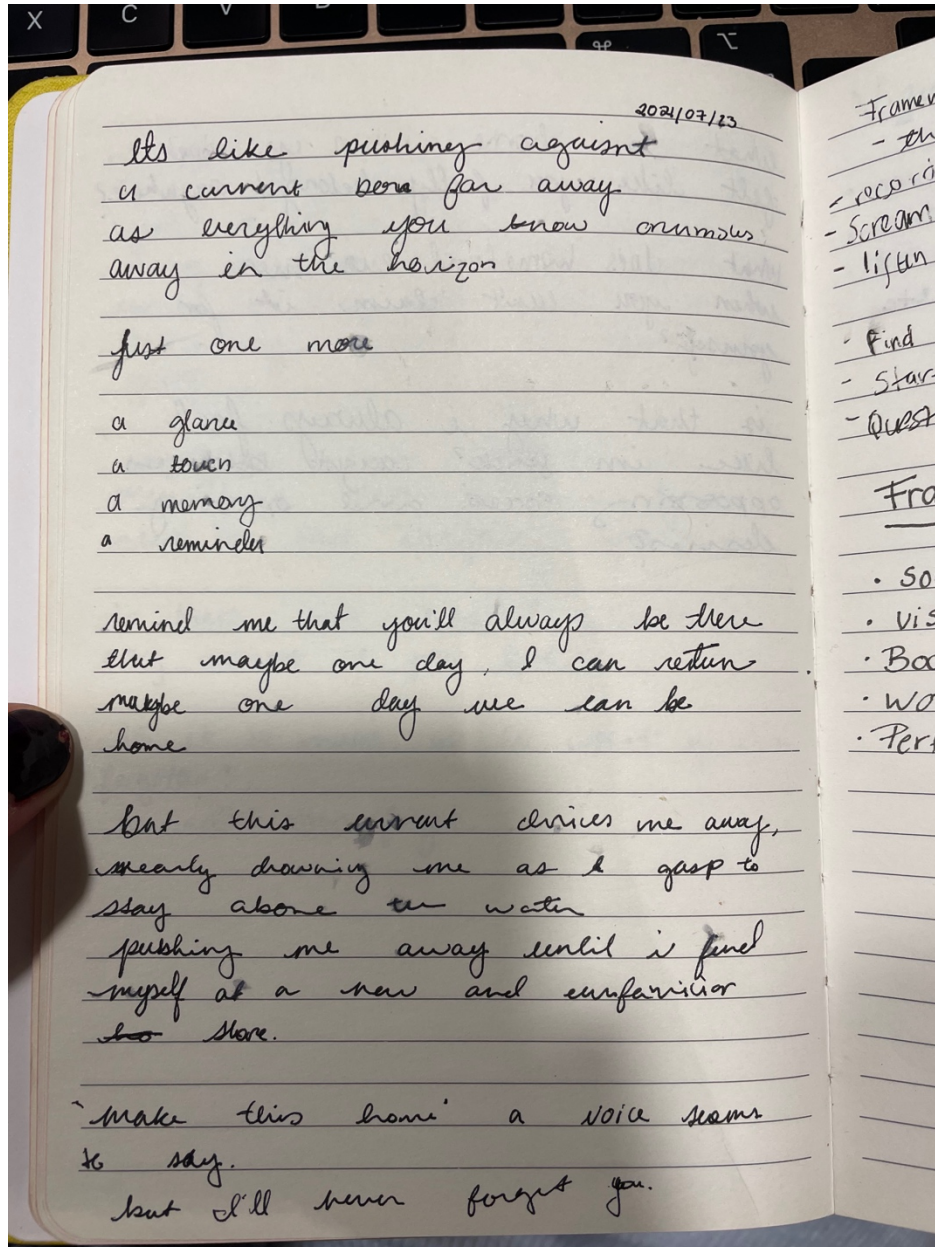


Figure 7

Excerpt from my process journal

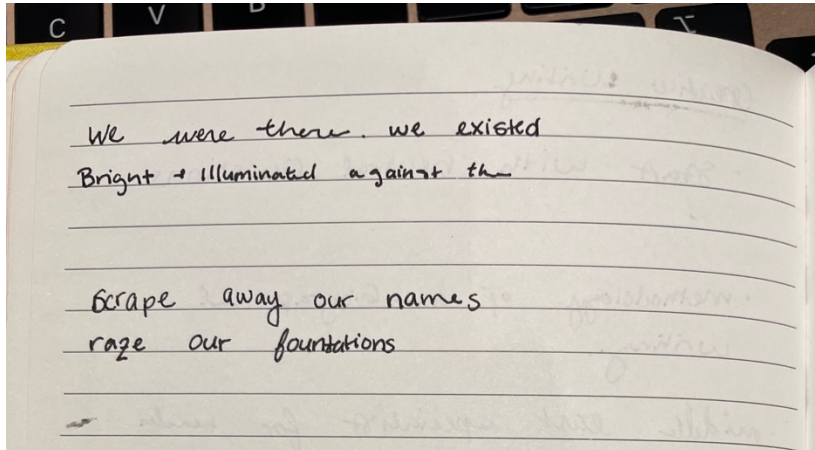


Figure 8

Excerpt from my process journal

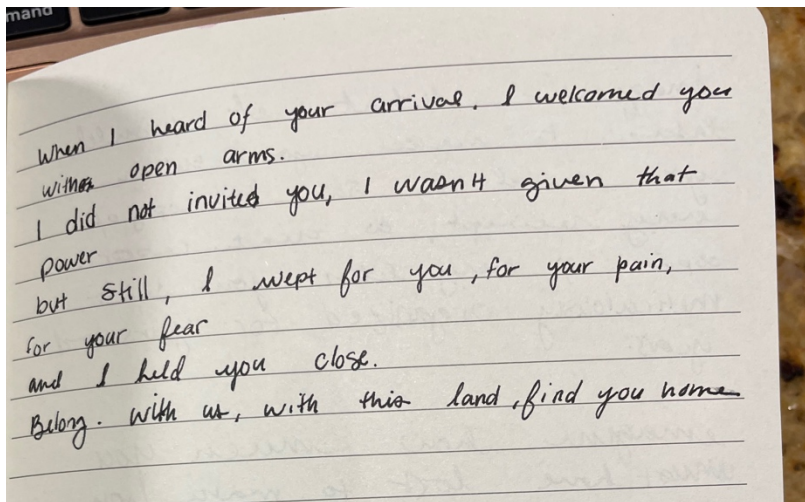


Figure 9

Excerpt from my process journal

I added two new Darwish poems to the first act: *This is Forgetfulness* and *In her Absence I Created her Image*. In the poem I chose to finish the first act with *In her Absence I Created her Image*, the need to remember is emphasized. While the first poem urges the spectators to not forget, the second poem speaks to the process of having lost, having forgotten, and then trying to reclaim what has been lost, just as I aim to do. For that reason, I felt this poem was an apt introduction to my second act.

In the second act, HOMELAND once again begins by singing in Arabic, however, by this point I settled on a poem: *To Our Land* by Darwish. This poem is an ode to homeland, a love letter to Palestine, and for that reason I felt it was the right choice to introduce the second act. To contrast the moment HOMELAND is attacked, I wanted her to first express herself with a sense of freedom, love, and reverence – a glimpse into her character, not simply her attack. I also chose a poem for DIASPORA's response, *I Come from There*, once again by Darwish. It fits the narrative literally, as DIASPORA comes from there (HOMELAND) and the poem emphasizes the enduring relationship between the HOMELAND and DIASPORA despite the distance and time.

I also started to develop the directions for the performers. I tried to be more descriptive, to write out how I wanted the performers to act in a scene. Otherwise, this third draft was fairly similar to my second.

I continued to practice *tatreez*, and over time, I developed a prototype for the art pieces I wanted to include in my performance text. Rather than embroidery thread, I used thin crochet yarn, because I wanted to develop larger *tatreez* patterns, where the cross stitching was evident. I also decided to embroider directly onto black canvas rather than on material. I developed my patterns on Excel, and I copied the design onto graph paper, which acted as a grid for my needle

to follow. I lined up my template on my canvas, and I poked holes into the material where my needle and thread would pass. From there, I cross stitched my pattern as I would on traditional fabric. I chose to embroider poppies, a symbol of Palestinian Indigeneity.

I also began thinking of the kind of music I would like to incorporate into my performance text. I wanted to cultivate an environment of reverence and revelry; I wanted to share a story of Palestinian love, not of war. I was immediately drawn towards medieval polyphonic chants. Not only do these sacred pieces invoke a sense of reverence, but their history also parallels the role my music will play in my performance text. Medieval chants were used to spread Christianity across Europe after the fall of Rome: they represent a process of cultural movement. Likewise, in my performance text, music is the primary mode of communication between the characters, and it is used to articulate the journey through exile and diaspora. Furthermore, as polyphonic music refers to the presence of multiple interweaving themes, rather than a theme and supporting harmonies, the complex texture of the music emphasizes hybridity. It was because of my interest in using medieval polyphonic music for this performance text, that I decided to return to Edward Said's book *Culture and Imperialism*. In that book, Said outlines his methodology for comparative analysis, especially in the context of colonial and postcolonial literature. He refers to it as 'contrapuntal analysis,' borrowing a term from music that explains a type of polyphony. That connection made me realize how apt Said's contrapuntal analysis is to describe postdramatic theatre and the dehierarchization of theatrical means. I also realized that my process of play creation was also contrapuntal. My methodology of research creation allowed me to conduct academic research for my performance text in tandem with my process of writing. It also allowed me to do research for this thesis as I was writing the play. My process of play creation and research intersect contrapuntally, they act as two themes that intertwine to create my

methodological process and my results. Furthermore, as I was creating a performance text about the hybrid experience of the Palestinian diaspora, Edward Said was a natural addition. He is himself a member of the Palestinian diaspora who wrote and spoke at length on the experience of being hybridized, of being connected to both the colonizer and the colonized.

The Fourth Draft

With this knowledge, I went back to my performance text. I met with Chesley Fawcett again, and she explained the importance of language to cue dancers. While I had no intention of writing out a choreography for the performers, I did need to make the performers understand my intention when they would in turn interpret my text. Fawcett encouraged me to exercise my poetic voice, and step away from the text I was writing, and simply write the story I wanted the performers bodies to tell, rather than the movements they would need to do. This led me to create several pieces of poetry and prose that developed the story of my characters and allowed me to view them as characters in their own right, rather than only embodied allegories. From that, I was able to write stage descriptions in a narrative way that dancers would be able to embody. It was in this process that I discovered that there were three characters in my performance text, not two. I knew that HOMELAND and DIASPORA were two allegorical figures, but the character of DIASPORA was actually filling the space of another character: EXILE. I was working on this play to articulate my longing for the imaginary homeland, not my grandfather's longing for the homeland he lost. I wanted to talk about the passage of time and its effect on diasporic communities. It is for that reason that in my final draft it is EXILE who springs from HOMELAND, and it is DIASPORA who takes up EXILE's voice. The voices of DIASPORA take on the song of EXILE because they represent the generations of Palestinian who live in

diaspora because their families became exiles during the 1948 *Nakba*. As EXILE fades away at the end, leaving only the voices of DIASPORA to sing with HOMELAND, it represents the passage of time and the loss of both family and a direct connection to the homeland. To those who grew up only knowing diaspora, their ancestors' homeland can only ever be an imaginary one. The voices of diaspora represent my perspective, and the perspective of people like me who still continue to try and keep their connection to the homeland alive.

The performance begins with HOMELAND and ends with DIASPORA, it parallels the historical story and personal story that I want to tell, but it is also an active representation of my imaginary homeland. In this performance text, I have created a homeland based on the stories my family told me and the research I have done, the goal of this performance text is to explain the longing for the imaginary homeland, but in creating it, I also created a representation of that imaginary homeland.

The Song of the Nightingale

By Sarah A. Haley

Act 1: Prelude

The spectators enter a what appears to be a wing of a typical museum or art gallery.

On the walls, artifacts are presented in rigid black frames or on pedestals in glass cases. They present the story of the 1948 Nakba and the journey through exile.

Each artifact is connected to the next by red thread that imposes itself like vines, ignoring the confines of the frames, cases, and artifacts.

The layout is jumbled, organized but not chronological, like the pieces of a mystery waiting to be solved.

The first artifact is a rendering of This is Forgetfulness by Mahmoud Darwish.

This is forgetfulness around you: billboards
Awakening the past, urging remembrance. Reining in
The speeding time at traffic lights,
And closing up the squares /

A marble statue is forgetfulness. A statue
Staring at you: Standing up as I do to look like me.
And place roses at my feet /

A hackneyed song is forgetfulness. A song
chasing the housewife in celebration of the happy
occasion, in the bed and in the VCR room,
And in her vacant salon, and in her kitchen /

And a monument is forgetfulness. Monuments
on the roads shaped like bronze trees
Adorned with eulogies and eagles /

And a museum empty of tomorrow, cold,
Narrating the seasons already chosen from the start.
This is forgetfulness: that you remember the past
And not remember tomorrow in the story.

*The final artifact is a rendering of In Her Absence I Created Her Image, by Mahmoud
Darwish.*

In her absence I created her image: pit of the earthly
The hidden heavenly commences. I am here weighing
The expanse with the Jahili odes... and absence
Is the guide, it is the guide. For each rhyme a tent
is pitched. And for each thing blowing in the wind
a rhyme. Absence teaches me its lesson: If it weren't
for the mirage you wouldn't have been steadfast...
Then in the emptiness, I disassembled a letter from one
of the ancient alphabets, and I leaned on absence. So who am I
after the visitation? A bird, or a passerby amid the symbols
and the memory vendors? As if I were an antique piece,

as if I were a ghost sneaking in from Yabous, telling myself:

Let's go to the seven hills. The I placed
 my mask on a stone, and walked as the sleepless
 walk, led by my dream. And from one moon
 to another I leapt. There is enough of unconsciousness
 to liberate things from their history, And there
 is enough history to liberate unconsciousness
 from its ascension. Take me to our early
 years- my first girlfriend says. Leave
 the windows open for the house sparrow to enter
 your dream- I say...then I awaken, and no city is in
 the city. No "here" except "there". And no there
 but here. If it weren't for the mirage
 I wouldn't have walked to the seven hills...
 if it weren't for the mirage.

Music plays softly through a speaker system, an overture to the music of Act 2. Overlapping with the music, a voice gives words to the framed exhibit.

When I close my eyes, I can see it. Feel it. Smell it. Taste it.

There is a gentle summer wind that embraces me, enveloping me in the dusty sand. The palm trees, heavy with dates, sway with the breeze, and the cedars' sweet fragrance lingers in the air.

There is a hustle and bustle about in the street: vendors all around selling little trinkets to tourists, trips to the ancient world, and little snacks, warm pockets of dough filled with cheese, meat, herbs, spinach. Outdoor clay ovens smoke, feeding whole communities.

Outside the cities, in the desert, Camels slowly walk along the shifting sand dunes as the sun set in the distance painting the sky orange and pink.

On the farms, acres of citrus trees, with their flowers blooming, ready to harvest and distill with water. Roses bloom against homes made from the caramel. Bubbling creeks mark the boundaries between homes, and olive trees abound.

This is my homeland.

My imaginary homeland.

Not a place I've visited, but a place out of time, out of geography.

Pieced together from stories I've been told and photos I've seen.

It's not even really my homeland, but my grandfather's.

And he's gone.

And soon his homeland will be too.

And all I have is this cobbled collection of memories that aren't mine, grainy photos, and telegraphs so old they seem to crumble with touch.

Soon that will be the only thing that will remain are imaginary homelands. All that will remain of my grandfather's birthplace.

For years I have tried in vain to explain my relationship to Palestine. It has consumed me wholly, influencing the plays I create, music I listen to, the people I admire, and from a young age to this day.

What can be defined easily enough through lineage never felt like it fully encapsulated how I felt. 'I may be one quarter Palestinian' I'd think, 'but it's an important quarter.'

My grandfather, Louis Francis Zeitoun was born on the third of November 1925, in Nazareth, Palestine. There are seldom few things I know about him. He wore glasses, he smoked a pipe, he was a social worker. He spoke three languages, Arabic, English, and French. And he died of esophageal cancer sixth months after he retired at the age of 66.

My grandfather would have been called Sido, at least to my sisters and I. But I never knew him as that. My grandmother would call him "Louis," and my mom would call him "dad." That was only if he was brought up.

Grief settles upon us and locks away those we love, and sometimes we can hardly speak the words.

If I ever brought him up at all, I would speak about him formally, like the stranger he was.

"My grandfather"

If spoke to my mom, it was always

"your father."

I would void my own connection to him because I did not know who he was. He was just a figure of the past.

He and his brothers all had a poster of Nazareth in their homes. The church of the annunciation was the focal point, but my great uncle would always point out were their childhood home was, just south of the church. They used to climb the roofs and leap across the roofs to get to class. As the occupation started, they had to study at a girls' school run by nuns because their own school closed.

My grandfather was studying in Jerusalem at the time of the occupation. I have some of his schoolbooks from that period. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare. I'm told that my grandfather also loved Shakespeare.

My great-grandfather worked for the government and was able to send a tank to my grandfather to get him to Nazareth as the city was overtaken. Soon after, he moved to north America to finish his education, eventually settling in Ottawa.

I still have family in Nazareth. And Nazareth is still under occupation. It was a link to a lost home, a connection that stayed strong through the traditions and culture, through food.

But memory can be a locked archive.

And we are losing that key.

As the years go by, the connection to Nazareth, to Palestine fades.

As the years go by, Palestine disappears.

Gone for maps, rewritten and renamed in books.

Ignored by politicians and policies.

Wars are forgotten, protests ignored.

I can't help but wonder when we will forget it completely.

When the internationally sanctioned apartheid and genocide will finally destroy my family's home, rendering it into my imaginary homeland forever.

All while the world turns a blind eye.

That's why I write.

I can't speak Arabic, I'm not from Palestine. I only know this ancestral land and culture through what stories and traditions that my family was able to be maintained over years of diaspora.

It's my connection.

Maybe if I share enough stories, maybe one day the world will remember. Maybe one day, they won't forget.

Because time erodes, memories are lost, cultures disappear, civilizations are forgotten. And every day I am terrified because I see it happen around me each and every day. It doesn't take thousands of years to forget, only a couple of generations.

Generations have already passed.

How many are left?

The spectators cycle through the exhibit and make their way to act 2, in the next room.

Act 2: Fugue

The spectators enter a new gallery room, however this one is empty of all artifacts and display pieces. Slowly, a solitary body in the centre of the room begins to bring the exhibit of act 1 to life.

HOMELAND begins to sing a song in Arabic. She celebrates her life, her love, and her free spirit.

(English translation of To Our Land by Mahmoud Darwish)

To our land,
and it is the one near the word of god,
a ceiling of clouds
To our land,
and it is the one far from the adjectives of nouns,
the map of absence
To our land,
and it is the one tiny as a sesame seed,
a heavenly horizon... and a hidden chasm
To our land,
and it is the one poor as a grouse's wings,
holy books...and an identity wound
To our land,
and it is the one surrounded with torn hills,
the ambush of a new past

To our land, and it is a prize of war,
The freedom to die from longing and burning
and our land, in its bloodied night,
is a jewel that glimmers for the far upon the far
and illuminates what's outside it...

As for us, inside,
we suffocate more.

As HOMELAND sings, she begins to move and dance, embodying the music. First free, expressive, and unburdened.

A friend arrives, unseen.

No longer a friend, an attacker.

The attacker wants her, tries to consume her, tries to take her place.

She begins to move more robotically, as if a puppet on a string, performing an orientalist version of her dance. She tries to push them away from her, trying to keep them away. She fails and is captured by her unseen figure.

She struggles, alone on stage, and screams. She is wounded – gone is her tongue, gone are her hands. Her wounds bleed threads that pour from her injured hands.

She continues to sing her song, but it is anguished, and the words are gone.

Forever altered, but she never leaves.

The bodies of EXILE spring from her as she slowly begins to metamorphosize into an olive tree. Fighting to stay close to HOMELAND as she continues to transform, EXILE is pushed away as if HOMELAND and EXILE have become like poles of magnets, fighting against

a field keeping them apart. HOMELAND tries to bring EXILE back, but it is futile. Her feet have already become roots. Soon her arms transform into branches, immobilizing her.

EXILE tries to push back against the field, to reunite with HOMELAND, but the magnetic field separating them keep expanding, pushing them apart. EXILE is forced backwards as they fight against the current.

Carried by EXILE, the threads move towards the periphery, weaving around the room like a network of webs landing at the cardinal point. The ends of the thread become tattered artwork hanging across the room, connected directly by the thread to HOMELAND.

HOMELAND metamorphosizes fully into the olive tree, Only her voice remains, still wordless, she continues to sing.

EXILE takes up HOMELAND's song. They sing back in English, the lyrics taken from Mahmoud Darwish's I Come From There.

I come from there and I have memories

Born as mortals are, I have a mother

And a house with many windows,

I have brothers, friends,

And a prison cell with a cold window.

Mine is the wave, snatched by sea-gulls,

I have my own view,

And an extra blade of grass.

Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,

And the bounty of birds,

And the immortal olive tree.
I walked this land before the swords
Turned its living body into a laden table.
I come from there. I render the sky unto her mother
When the sky weeps for her mother.
And I weep to make myself known
To a returning cloud.
I learnt all the words worthy of the court of blood
So that I could break the rule.
I learnt all the words and broke them up
To make a single word: Homeland.....

From speakers placed around the room, more voices, the choral voices of DIASPORA join in, layering over EXILE, adding a complex counterpoint. Each speaker broadcasts a different voice, and a different harmony. Some sing in English, some in Arabic, and some simply vocalize. EXILE and their voice slowly fade away, no longer present. EXILE and HOMELAND remain forever embodied in the voices of DIASPORA.

The song playing through the speakers continues to play as the spectators are given the opportunity to walk through the exhibit one final time.

CHAPTER 3

Reflecting on My Imaginary Homeland

A Discussion on the Process and Results

“A homeland cannot be reduced to what it is objectively, for the poetry opens the homeland onto the infinitely human, on the condition that the poet succeeds in carrying it there” (Darwish 17).

The Performance and Its Structure

The performance text *The Song of the Nightingale* represents an attempt to portray the experience of hybridity through performance. Inspired by the story of Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and traditional Palestinian *Tatreez* embroidery, this performance text aims to present the hybrid experience and the process of performance creation for the hybrid identity. This is done through postdramatic theatre and a unique contrapuntal methodology. Set in a gallery space and divided into two rooms that correspond to the different acts of the play, this performance text takes the intended audience through an exhibit of family photos and artifacts that tell the story of Palestine, my grandfather's exile, and my life in diaspora. In the second act, as the spectators move into a new room, they are presented with a dance/movement and installation piece. This second act represents the same story presented in the first act, but rather than artifacts and a monologue, it attempts to explain the narrative through an affective performance that aims to share my emotional experience rather than a generalized historical narrative. The story I explore in multiple ways in my performance text is what I refer to as the contrapuntal 'subject.'

The separate acts of the play are named "Prelude" and "Fugue." This is a direct reference to Baroque musical forms, specifically J. S. Bach and his collection of preludes and fugues entitled *The Well-Tempered Clavier vol.1 &2*. This reference was important to me because it represents the two modes of storytelling I employ in the two acts. A prelude is short and simple piece of baroque music. It is homophonic, meaning it contains a single melody and its harmonies. In the case of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the prelude precedes a fugue written in the same key. Where the prelude introduces a single melody which it supports throughout the piece, the Fugue

introduces a subject that navigates through different voices, creates contrast, and overlaps upon itself.

The reference to preludes and fugues explains my intentions with the separate acts. In the first act, the prelude, a single subject is presented: my connection to my imaginary homeland and my hybrid experience. I set it in a pseudo-curatorial environment, mimicking a museum because I wanted to represent the subject in a familiar and linear fashion. As you walk through the exhibit in a straight line, the artifacts are also presented chronologically. Beginning my performance with a museum setting was important to me because it is the way in which we are accustomed to learn about histories that are not our own. In this context, the audience enters the space to learn about my unique history.

The prelude attempts to frame the overarching subject as a linear narrative with the use of artifacts. It tells the story of my family in Palestine, the *Nakba*, the new life in Canada, and eventually my own life and connection to the homeland told through a monologue. While it deals with an emotional story, it is told in reserved fashion, one that tells the chronological story, but neglects the emotional experience.

This linear narrative also represents a colonial method of storytelling (Veracini 99), whereas Indigenous methods of storytelling across the world engage with narrative in different means that play with form and linearity. It is especially difficult to share a story that is inherently emotional and based on memory through a linear format because this format does not translate into the ways in which we experience events or how we process memories.

This relationship between colonial and Indigenous storytelling parallels Lehmann's distinction between "drama" and "postdramatic theatre," where postdramatic theatre

differentiates itself from drama through the de-hierarchization of theatrical means, literally removing the hierarchy of linear narration and theatre elements.

The shift between the Prelude and the Fugue represents the shift from a linear historical narrative in the first act, to the performance in the second act. In the linear narrative of the Prelude, artifacts are the only method used to convey the subject in the beginning of the exhibit. However, as the exhibit continues, the weakness of this method of storytelling is exposed. Music starts to play, a monologue about the longing for the imaginary begins to play from speakers, and *tatreez* begins to intersect with the display. This is the transition into the liminal space of performance.

The Fugue introduces the subject first presented in the Prelude, but it incorporates it contrapuntally, given the subject to multiple themes: body/movement, visual dramaturgy, musicalization, and text and language. Each of these elements tell the same story (the subject), but they do so in different ways and at different times. This interconnectedness of themes is a contrapuntal layering of performance elements, each exploring the subject in different ways.

The 'subject' of my contrapuntal performance text is the story of the *Nakba*, the dispersion of Palestinian people and the maintenance of Palestinian culture and the connection to the homeland. To express this subject contrapuntally in the second act, I divided the elements into themes: Body and Movement, Musicalization, Visual Dramaturgy, and Speech and Language. Each of these themes articulates the subject in its own medium, creating a tapestry of elements that combine to tell one full story.

Theme: Body and Movement

Through dance and movement, the bodies of the performers present the subject. As it is inspired by the story of Philomela, when HOMELAND fights against an unseen attacker, it represents the fight against the Zionist colonizers. In her fight, HOMELAND isn't seen as herself, but as a representation of how people see her, a romanticized and fetishized version, without autonomy. When she is injured in the attack, it is a direct reference to the myth of Philomela, expanded on by the story of Lavinia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. These injuries also represent a loss of culture; the loss of tongue represents the loss of language, and the loss of hands represents the loss of cultural traditions, like embroidery. HOMELAND's body is violently altered and severed, just as Palestine was violently colonized. The bodies of EXILE that spring from HOMELAND are representations of the exilic populations forced to leave the homeland during the 1948 *Nakba*. The narrative follows the exilic population who try to return to HOMELAND but are refused the right to return. When HOMELAND turns into an olive tree, it represents how EXILE sees HOMELAND. HOMELAND changes and alters as EXILE is pushed away, but she stays rooted and strong, continuing to act as a beacon for EXILE, she is EXILE's imaginary homeland. When EXILE disappears, it represents the loss of the original generations Palestinians, both under occupation, and in exile. It represents the generation that lived before the occupation, the generation that remembers their homeland before its occupation.

Theme: Musicalization

The use of music as a subject is constructed through a contrapuntal choral piece. The Subject, which originally appears as a simple instrumental theme in the Prelude, is sung by HOMELAND. The lyrics are taken from Darwish's poem *To Our Land*, and they are sung in

their original Arabic. When EXILE parts from HOMELAND, EXILE takes up a new musical theme, developing the contrapuntal musical texture. Together, they create a call and response motif that represents their attempts to stay connected, despite being physically separated. When EXILE is pushed to the edges of the room, more voices join in on the song. These disembodied voices broadcast from speakers are the third allegorical character, DIASPORA. Each speaker around the room plays a different contributing harmony or variation of the main theme. Through the music, this represents the voices of the diaspora following the initial generations of exiles. They are placed throughout the room and contain different musical lines because it represents the diversity of the diasporic community and its geographical dispersal. These voices of DIASPORA continue to sing with HOMELAND to show that they are still connected, they still sing together, despite the time and the distance. When the spectators walk through the space, the song and its dominant melody will change depending on what speaker you are close to. The closer to the center of the room, where HOMELAND stands, the closer the spectator is to hearing all the voices balanced together in harmony.

Theme: Visual Dramaturgy

The references to future installation elements of this performance text represent the subject through visual dramaturgy. When HOMELAND is injured, she bleeds red thread, which connect to EXILE. These red threads physically represent blood, but they also act as a metaphor for the severing of the land and swaths of its population, the exiles. It is for this reason that the red threads that pour from HOMELAND's severed hands are attached to EXILE. The bodies of EXILE are still connected to HOMELAND, even if they are now physically separate entities. When EXILE reaches the edges of the room and turns the embroidery thread into *Tatreez*

artwork, they are putting down new roots, creating a foundation for a new community that will become DIASPORA. The *tatreez* artwork that remains connected to HOMELAND, creating a web around the room, symbolizing the lasting connection between DIASPORA and HOMELAND. The artwork represents the continued cultural practices and connection to the homeland despite time and geography.

Theme: Text

The prelude breaks down the difficulty in conveying this subject through words. Yet language plays an important role in the Fugue. When HOMELAND first sings, she sings in Arabic, her native tongue. However, when she is attacked and loses her tongue, she also loses her language. This represents the loss of language that occurs because of the separation from the homeland and the Exilic need to integrate into its host community, something that often weakens the use of exile's native language. This is represented in the call and response, as HOMELAND sings without words and EXILE responds in English, giving words to HOMELAND's melody. It is this switch from Arabic to English that represents the loss of language in diaspora. The voices of DIASPORA sing in English and Arabic, creating the complex musical texture. This emphasizes the hybridity of language and the attempt of diasporic communities to regain or preserve the language of the homeland.

At present, text or dialogue of the fugue appears only through the lyrics of the song. These lyrics are placeholders that capture the spirit of the song. The lyrics must be developed in tandem with the musical score. As a place holder, I chose poetry from Mahmoud Darwish because he is a Palestinian poet of the Exilic generation that knew a Palestine before occupation and knew the experience of being exiled from his homeland. His poetry captures the essence of

what the future lyrics may describe. The poem that HOMELAND sings, *To Our Land*, is a short poem by Darwish that begins as a praising description of the land and shifts into a description of the land as a place torn apart by violence and blood, one that through the seizure of Palestine, traps its inhabitant within a state that suffocates the land and its people. To the people who are stuck longing for Palestine from the outside still see the beautiful land that they lost. The narrative of this poem articulates the love Palestinians feel for their land, the tragedy of its violent occupation, and the longing to return to the beautiful land. It is the same narrative that this performance text's subject aims to embody. The second poem, *I Come from There*, articulates this same story, but it speaks from the point of view of the exile. While this second poem is also a representation of what the lyrics may be, this poem acts as a good placeholder for future lyrics because it is about belonging to a place (Palestine) and being separated from it. This poem explores the memories of and longing for home, and emphasizes how, despite the distance, despite time, the speakers are eternally connected to the homeland. This poem speaks the words that EXILE embodies through movement.

Findings

The greatest weakness in this creative process is its end point. As a performance text, it lacks the knowledge and development granted through workshops and rehearsals of the performance. This performance text cannot definitively illustrate that contrapuntal performance is a productive way to develop performances about hybridity. To continue to test my theories on contrapuntal theatre, working beyond the page and transitioning into a rehearsal space is necessary. As a performance text, *The Song of the Nightingale* represents the starting point of an eventual performance. Its use in a rehearsal space is as a point of reference during the

development of the performance as the performers and the creative team will continue to experiment and expand on the prompts given in the performance text. I believe that this performance text successfully presents a script that merits further development.

I was successful in approaching the creation of the performance text contrapuntally, and that contrapuntality is present in the performance text. The elements of postdramatic theatre operate effectively as subject and themes of counterpoint. I believe that this method of approaching postdramatic theatre is effective and serves as a good articulation of postdramatic theatre aesthetics. However, I do think that its value in performing hybridity is lacking.

I created this piece with the intention of presenting my hybrid identity, and in my opinion, I did achieve this goal. However, I think that the emphasis on my own hybridity isn't clearly explored. I chose to work with texts like Shakespeare's play, Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, with western music, and medieval philosophies and art. These elements represent my Western identity and upbringing, which blends with the Palestinian elements in the performance text. However, I don't believe this is clear in the performance text. This contrapuntal performance must articulate the presence of hybridity better for it to fully be successful. However, I believe in my artistic process, I was able to successfully incorporate my hybridity. I developed a process for looking at different elements contrapuntally, and I used it successfully to develop the basis of the Philomela/Palestine parallel.

Overall, it is my opinion that this experiment reveals the potential of the contrapuntal approach. My performance text creates a space to develop a methodology of contrapuntal play creation and further explorations of contrapuntal performance. While there is a weakness in the execution of the contrapuntal dramaturgy and its value to the performance of hybridity, there is

space to develop and refine it further. It is my opinion that it serves as a fruitful starting point that merits further exploration and development.

CONCLUSION

“Memory must become more fertile, to be transformed in its identity as a witness of history”

(Darwish 80).

I embarked on this research creation project because I wanted to develop a performance text about my hybrid experience wherein the creation process was also a reflection of hybridity. I created a performance text that reflects my emotional relationship to my imaginary homeland and my experience of hybridity, and I achieved it by looking at my identity and my creation process contrapuntally.

By drawing a parallel between the de-hierarchization of theatrical means in postdramatic theatre and the relationship between the subject and themes in counterpoint, I was able to understand postdramatic theatre contrapuntally. From there, I determined the elements of performance that I wanted to focus on for my performance text: body and movement, musicalization, visual dramaturgy, and text. These became my themes. My subject, my longing for my imaginary homeland, was translated into each of these themes.

My final performance text is an articulation of that same subject through my different themes. I presented my subject through body and movement by creating a movement piece that explores the separation from the homeland and the longing to return. I presented my subject through musicalization by creating a contrapuntal choral piece that shows how the diaspora is always connected to its homeland even as time passes. I presented my subject through visual dramaturgy by including installation elements created through Palestinian embroidery, representing the connection between the homeland and the diaspora, and emphasizing the attempts to maintain the homeland's culture in diaspora. Finally, I presented my subject through text, but rather than through a script with dialogue, this text appears first in the Prelude as a monologue that presents the failure of words to fully capture the experience of hybridity, and then in the Fugue, where it appears through the lyrics of the choral pieces, sung in Arabic and English to represent both the native tongue and the host nation's tongue. Each theme tells a story,

but by interweaving them, I was able to achieve a representation of hybridity as a contrapuntal experience.

While I believe my creation process and my performance text were successful, I also believe that they need to be developed further. This creation process may prove valuable to other people who exist with hybrid identities, and I would like it to be accessible to anyone who struggles to represent their hybridity. At present, my process is a direct reflection on how to present my identity, and I think it should be developed further to allow a greater nuance and diversity of perspectives and experiences.

In an academic context, I would like to investigate the relationship between the body or physicality and the creation of plays about hybrid bodies further. I'm interested in looking at metaphors of the body and the relationship between trauma, violence and the body. I would also like to investigate the postcolonial ramifications of this work to a greater extent and work to tailor my research and the framework to different populations and to different needs. I especially would like to investigate the relationship between postdramatic theatre about the diasporic identity and its relationship to colonial structures and colonial art, including its relationship to Aristotelian ideals. Lastly, I am interested in the relationship between performer and audience. I would like to look into the difference between the audience and the spectator and what the role of the audience has in performance. I would like to look at the ethics of spectatorship.

My ultimate objective with this thesis is to help provide a space for people who identify as 'othered' in some way to articulate their voice and their story through performance. I also wanted to provide something to aid and guide them on that journey. I believe that my thesis has indeed done this, and that exploring this work further would be valuable to artists, the artistic community, and to fostering greater diversity of people and stories in the world.

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