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### Suggested Reference

Willis, E. C. (2015). Locating 'You' and 'I' in dramas of genocide and mass violence. In *Performance of Hope: International Applied Theatre Symposium*. University of Auckland, NZ. Retrieved from <http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/events/events-2015/11/the-performance-of-hope.html>

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## Locating 'You' and 'I' in dramas of genocide and mass violence

### Introduction

I want to preface my talk with a quote from one of the writer's whose work I'll discuss, Erik Ehn, as an acknowledgment of the ethical precarity in the works I'm going to talk about.

In representing genocide, we need to take great care that we are not trading on the double delight of witness to suffering – the enjoyment through moral filters of proxied power (and on the other side, moral surrender – the wish to be taken – to be taken from accountability); also the self-reward of a kind of colonial empathy – where the subject of witness becomes the virtue of the witness (replacing the suffering of what we see with the suffering of our seeing...) (Erik Ehn "Witness as Torture").

How do you put genocide and mass violence on stage? How can you possibly imagine what it was like to walk in the shoes of the real-life victims of violence? Is it a transgression to give perpetrators a voice on stage when they have denied voice to so many others? What does a play performed in a professional context have to contribute to social change?

Today I'm going to talk about playwriting that takes up the topics of genocide and mass violence with a focus on the creative strategies of the writers – how do they carry out this difficult work?

What is common to each of the plays is that fact that the writers are outsiders to their various subjects. I am interested in how they stage the perspective of outsiders and how they explore the responsibilities of distant bystanders and belated witnesses – those who come after or who watch from a distance. Each of the writers is interested in blurring the distinctions of then and now, here and there, you and I, often through the use of metatheatricality. Foremost I want to think about how we might read such blurring from an ethical perspective: who may speak for whom? To whom does the experience of suffering belong?

### The Plays

Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Afrika, From the German Sudwestafrika, Between the years 1884-1915* was first performed in Chicago in 2012. I saw a production later that year at the Soho Rep theatre in New York. The comic metadrama depicts a company of six young actors, three black and three white, attempting to devise a performance about the little-known turn of the century genocide of the Herero by German colonizers.

*Manifesto 2083* is a solo play devised by Christian Lollike, Olaf Hojgaard and Tanya Diers and based on the 1500-page manifesto of mass murderer Anders Breivik. It premiered in Copenhagen in 2012 and was performed in Auckland in 2015. The play self-reflexively depicts an actor grappling with how he is going to turn the manifesto

into a play, and even more problematic and how he is going to *become* Breivik on stage. What this might mean for this identity?

*Soulographie* is a cycle of seventeen plays by American playwright Erik Ehn. The cycle premiered at La MaMa Theatre in New York in 2012. Each of the plays offered a different perspective on genocidal violence, covering examples from Africa, Latin America and the US. While some plays use testimonial or historical material, others are much more poetic in form, and trace what Ehn calls 'shadow patterns,' looking at violence within families, for example, provocatively connecting such domestic violence and genocidal thinking. These connections suggest that genocide is not something that happens 'over there' or 'far away' but rather the obscene endpoint of a logic of violence that begins here and now.

Broadly, the plays are linked by

- Metatheatrical aspects
- Focus on the representation of perpetrators of violence as well as victims
- Their contemplation of the relationship between the writer and/or actor and the historical figures they seek to represent. As a character in one of Ehn's plays says of a woman convicted of crimes of genocide: she is someone nearly like me.

### **Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We are Proud to Present***

#### Introduce the play

The mass killing of the Herero and Nama peoples of Namibia by German colonizers has been called the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cooper 113). After rising up against oppressive German rule the Herero and then Nama were, 'systematically put down, by shooting or enforced slow death in the desert from starvation, thirst and disease (the fate of many women and children)' while 'those who still lived were rounded up, banned from owning land or cattle, and sent into labour camps to be the slaves of German settlers' (PPU). The genocide devastated the ethnic populations. After the Herero uprising, for example, there were only around 15,000 tribe members left alive.

#### Why meta-theatre? Problems and possibilities

Drury's play draws on the comic tropes of metatheatre that have appeared in playwriting from Moliere's *Rehearsal at Versailles* to Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* to explore this history. So why metatheatre? What does this have to offer to the problem of bringing a little known (to Western audiences) genocide to the stage? I think there are three interrelated reasons for the choice of metatheatre by Drury.

Firstly, in a general sense, metatheatre allows artists to circumvent the ethical and aesthetic problems of representing violence directly – i.e., how would you show it – and should you. As with classical tragedy, acts of violence either take place off stage or are deconstructed in such a way that the not-realness of the violent action is foregrounded. We are not meant to be absorbed by the violence in a realist sense.

Secondly, the framing device of the play-within-a-play explores the political limits of theatrical representation through playing with the questions of who is able to represent whom. Significantly the actors in the play are not named, merely known as Actor 1/white man, actor 2/black man and so on. This allows Drury's characters to move between their roles as American, German and Herero, playfully blurring the distinctions between them.

Lastly metatheatre almost inevitably generates self-reflexivity in the audience; they are made complicit through their 'insider' position. Drury's play certainly exploits this self-consciousness: Are we meant to be laughing at what we see? How far will the author take the joke?

SHOW CLIP FROM FORTHCOMING CANADIAN PRODUCTION, to be staged at The Theatre Centre in Toronto November, 2015.

### Walking in someone else's shoes

Throughout the play we watch the actors fail at turning their limited historical knowledge into drama. Drury describes this failure as mirroring her own struggles as writer, commenting that the 'actors [are] failing to make the same kind of play that I failed to make' (*In Conversation*). Uncertainty, hesitancy and equivocation characterize the action of the play as the actors try to figure out to stage the history of the Herero genocide. One of the key problems lies in how to understand the personal experience of the Herero without any substantial testimonial accounts. What are the limits of the work of the imagination?

For example, the following speech is given in a scene where a white male actor plays the deceased grandmother of a female black actor. The female actor has just admitted that the story she had told minutes earlier, where she found a picture of her grandmother, a Herero tribeswoman, in a magazine, was lie. In her defence she explains that 'that picture could have been my Grandma' and that she was 'just taking a walk in someone else's shoes' (100). Grandma replies:

You better shut your mouth and listen to me girl.  
You can't take no walk in somebody else's shoes and know anything.  
You ain't bought those shoes,  
you ain't laced those shoes up,  
you ain't put those shoes on day after day,  
you ain't broken those shoes in.  
Now, you can borrow someone else's shoes, and  
you can walk as long as you want,  
they ain't your shoes.  
You can go ahead and steal somebody else's shoes and guess what?  
They ain't your shoes. (101)

This passage reflects Drury's interest in the question of who is able to speak for whom, which also extends, implicitly, to the audience – are we able to imaginatively identify with the experiences depicted? One might borrow or steal, but one may never own the shoes of the other. Yet the message of the shoes in this play is fundamentally

ironized through the appearance of the actor who delivers its truth: a young white man playing (wearing the shoes of) an elderly black woman.

### Playing the other/becoming the other

In addition to teasing at the question of who can speak for whom, the play scrutinizes the qualifications required for understanding the experience of others. That is – how much do we need to be *like* another person, or to have undergone similar experience, in order to understand them? For example, after a number of scenes where the actors devise scenarios inspired by the German soldiers' letters, one of the black characters, ACTOR 2, asks: 'Where are all the Africans [...] I think we should see some Africans in Africa.' When another actor replies 'I think we have to stick with what we have access to' he defends:

No no no. This is some Out-of-Africa-African-Queen bullshit y'all are pulling right here, OK?

If we are in Africa, I want to see some black people. (86).

The troupe concedes and the black actors go on to improvise a scene as Africans. Drury notes in the stage directions – 'ACTOR 4 adopts an "African" accent. It's not okay' (89). For example, 'I hunt de lion, hunt de jaguar. I hunt de tiegah' (89). An arguments subsequently erupts amongst the black actors with ACTOR 2 stating that, 'black people can understand what black people went through [...] All I'm saying is we all should be thinking about being black right now (92). The argument demonstrates a slippage throughout the play between the history of black American discrimination, which continues into the present, and African history.

### The audience

This reaches a climax in a scene that happens very near the end of the play where the boundaries that divide the worlds of rehearsal and performance completely collapse. In the action leading up to it, things had reached an impasse. One of the actors states that now is the time to stop talking and 'stay in it' (160). Two actors playing Herero men exiled from their land walk towards the dangerous German-built wall. One by one other actors enter the scene. The white performers take on the role of German soldiers (colonial occupiers) and begin a chant: 'Round them up. Chain them up. Lead them up. Lock them up' (165). This is set against a slave song sung by the black actors, which suggests the American South. The action slowly transforms the setting with the white performers becoming racist Americans; the play is now in the American South. The action builds in intensity until two white performers put a noose around a black character's neck. At the climax of the action there is an irresistible pull towards what is unresolved within the setting of the play – racial politics in contemporary America. The desire to create a play about the Herero has become a foil for the real play, which in fact stages a type of return of the repressed. The stage direction note: 'They [white actors] threaten and terrify him [black actor] and enjoy his fear' (174). All are completely absorbed in their roles until fear overwhelms the actor with the noose around his neck. He stops the action, shattering the tension of the scene – the first time there has been an instance of 'real' drama.

Gradually, with very little language, the scene returns to the rehearsal room setting. Then there is silence in which Drury writes:

Something starts to happen. The actors start to process what just happened. And there is something... Discomfort. Frustration. Awkwardness. Nerve. Adrenaline. Uncertainty. Buzzing. Embarrassment. Guilt. Shame. Anger. Excitement. Something... '(175).

One by one the actors leave the space, ending the play, until finally, the last actor on stage, 'looks to the audience...

He tries to say something to the audience  
but...  
He might produce the air of a word  
beginning with the letter 'w' like  
We or Why or What.  
He tries to speak, but he fails. (176)

Of the ending, Drury said: 'It's easy to sit in judgement and it's hard to look inside... I wanted to make sure that everyone was culpable in creating that final moment ... everyone is implicated in that' (*In Conversation*). What issues from the play are a series of questions, beginning with: what just happened and what is my relationship to it? At a performance talkback an audience member commented: 'I felt like I wanted to say something at many points and be part of the presentation, particularly when they walked out [at the end]. It was just silent and I was like, ok, come on, can we all just like have a conversation? By the end of it I was really in that place where I wanted to speak to everyone about what I was feeling.'

When I viewed the play, there was a palpable sense of something torn apart in that final scene, where pretended violence became real, and in the quiet contemplative aftermath that followed. Out of the games and the jokes came a 'shock' of sorts.

But what of the history of the Herero? Does the play treat this very real genocide too lightly? Is it sufficient for it to function as the pretext for a work that, in the end, becomes about the racial politics of contemporary America? Whilst the play certainly teeters on the edge of solipsism, in the end it seeks to demonstrate a continuity of violent thinking and does this very successfully. Despite its comic framework, it demonstrates the ethical and aesthetic challenges – as well as necessity – of engaging with such history despite its difficulty. The play leaves us with questions, rather than answers. Or, as Erik Ehn says of Drury's play, it's like a 'ven diagram in motion. These worlds are rotating around each other, influencing each other, so it's going to have to remain complicated' (*In Conversation*).

### ***Manifesto 2083***

While I've just focused on what works about Drury's use of metatheatre, equally there are problems when it comes to using the form to explore violent histories. The first is the inherent solipsism of the genre. This can have the effect of making the violent or catastrophic event more about me – the imagined bystander, than you, the real victim.

*Manifesto 2083*, hovers on the brink of such a charge. Like *We Are Proud to Present*, the play turns the writer and actor's stories of attempting to make the play into the play itself. What is very different is the tone of the work – it is much more serious in its approach as it has to be: the events are much more recent and well-known. What the work becomes about, therefore, is *proximity*. As the actor states:

Could I get closer to Anders Breivik. Closer to understanding why. I wanted to be him; to see the world through his eyes. I simply had to enter into his darkness. (Section 4)

In a section in the play entitled, “Me too,” the actor draws multiple parallels between himself and Breivik, subtly suggesting that audience members too might be more like the killer than they would care to admit. This section is followed by “Method acting”, where the actor details his affective transformation into Breivik:

These ideas and thoughts began to invade me. I felt my sensible super-ego slowly giving way [...] I began to see the world through Breivik's eyes. (Section 11)

The performer details his method-like immersive acting attempt to get inside the mind of Breivik: isolating himself in an apartment, playing the computer games the Breivik played, working out according to the instructions in the manifesto, taking steroids, engaging in meditation techniques designed to suppress emotions, taking firearms lessons and reading right-wing hate materials.

The journey of the actor from distanced researcher to affective container for Breivik's thinking culminates in what the script describes, without any further elaboration, as ‘break down.’ This happens about two thirds of the way through the play, when the actor imagines himself as the subject of interrogation, completely collapsing the distinction between perpetrator and self.

#### SHOW PROGRESSION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND CLIP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkVFxW70hOI>

Given the play's closeness to real-world events, the occasion of its original performance elicited a range of responses, which the text incorporates: ‘I hope the Breivik play is the last you ever get to perform in your short, pathetic so-called acting “career.”’ ‘May you and your family burn in hell’ (Section 6). Although the play effectively grapples with the limits of our understanding of perpetrators of extreme violence – in the performance I saw it certainly captivated its audience – it also highlights the ethical problems of hermetically sealing the conflict of the play within the experiences of the self-conscious actor/writer. This can have the effect of turning the suffering of others into the material for a dramatic game, or even inadvertently glorifying the perpetrator. The play addresses this very directly:

Was it your goal, Anders Breivik, that your manifesto was to be read, and your thought be multiplied? That you were to be talked about? Was it your greatest wish to take over the television screens and burn images of pain and horror into the retinas of millions of people? Am I your useful idiot? Are you

sitting there in your cell rejoicing? “I did it! There’s a man in a minor Copenhagen theatre readings my writings aloud. He is me. I am fiction, a myth, a brand. (Section 8)

But the actor is also a proxy for us. We are watching, very uncomfortably at times, a deconstruction of the actor’s process of ‘becoming’ his character. Just as the actor discovers the similarities between Breivik and himself, we can identify certain similarities between the actor’s fascination and curiosity and our own: after all, we paid money to come and see this play. The discomfort, for me in any case, arises in response to the sensational aspect of what we are seeing, which can only take place precisely because we are there to watch. Our own watching becomes highly self-conscious. It is impossible to be neutral or passive. We are fundamentally involved in the piece-by-piece transformation of everyday thinking into unspeakable violence.

### **Erik Ehn’s *Soulographie***

#### Introduce the plays with focus on insider/outsider relationships

Where *We are Proud to Present* and *Manifesto 2083* use explicitly metatheatrical frameworks to explore violent ideology, Erik Ehn’s plays are much more opaque in their construction, highly poetic in their use of language, and diffuse in their employment of conventional narrative structure. What they have in common, however, is a desire to open up the spaces in which violence dwells. This is what I would like to focus on in talking about his work.

*Soulographie* was the fulfilment of almost twenty years of writing for Ehn, Professor of Playwriting at Brown University.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLCEHACgdWs>

#### *Introduce the concept of subjective drift*

In the preface to the published collection of *Soulographie* plays, Ehn describes what he calls drifted subjectivity. He writes that this is where, ‘I,’ and ‘you,’ are ‘nicely confused’ (*Soulographie* 8). He suggests that this subjective drift is a central element of what he calls an, ‘effective speech for trauma’ (6). What does this mean?

We can look firstly at some of the titles of the plays: *Every Man Jack of You* – Jack is everyman, he is of us; *Yermedea* fuses the names of the characters Yerma and Medea, who themselves overlap within the play. Who is ‘you’, and who is ‘I’, is often uncertain. In *Yermedea*, the Nurse asks herself, ‘what person do I use?’

Throughout the plays the borders between individuals, their worlds and the people around them are porous. In *Diamond Dick*, Eufala says: ‘My brother dresses for prom with his three friends. They are one man, expanded’ (26). The plays show us landscapes of uncertain cartography. At times Ehn’s own voice as writer punctuates the stage directions, underscoring uncertainty. In *Every Man Jack of You*: ‘I can’t see a thing’ (14), ‘Really can’t see’ (15).



This porous or drifted quality is also applied to the use of historical materials and verbatim accounts as Ehn weaves together ‘real’ words and his poetic responses to their force. Of *Thistle*, which is based on a verbatim account of a sole survivor of an El Salvadorian massacre, he remarks: ‘I address the testimony with the nontestimony of my incomprehension, hopefully architecting a simulation for her [Rufina’s] words that doesn’t interfere with them, but provides them with hospitality,’ continuing to say that he wants to, ‘repeat back to her not her own words, but the ways her words fly apart in me’ (“Channels of Witness” 71).

Drifted subjectivity is also expressed through the ways in which language is transmitted and moves *through* characters. One of the devices for this is the radio (a disembodied voice), which features in a number of the plays. In *Thistle*, the protagonist, a young American girl who figures as a type of historical spectator, is connected to the history of the El Salvadorian massacre through the radio – expressed by the character of Broadcaster. When the Girl asks, ‘How did you find me,’ the Broadcaster replies: ‘You found me. The way you moved, you moved right into me. Your heart is a crystal Lanced by our signal. Neither of us has a choice in this’ (*Soulographie* 105) Later stage directions read that the girl ‘*tunes the radio with her body*’ (109). Once the signal of the radio enters into the girl, she is compelled to tell the messages she has received: ‘The story must be told by means of every truth there is. Radio plays through you my one. You tell’ (116).

Subjective drift is both a kind of philosophical starting point as well as a creative approach. Foremost what it attempts to do is to bring ‘you’ and ‘I’ together. In one sense, this is a political stance that speaks against the violence enabled by a dis-identification of the other. In Rwanda, for example, Tutsi were known as ‘cockroaches.’ Through attempting to create a space in common, in which distinctions between you and I are blurred, Ehn is encouraging a kind of interdependent thinking where my welfare and your welfare are intertwined. He writes: ‘The self is now an organized set of fragments [...] So rather than being people, per se, we are what we piece together from what was ourselves and what was someone else’s’ (9).

The plays are interested in encouraging what Judith Butler describes as ‘risking ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness’ (136). Ehn’s writing attempts to bring the ‘unknowable’ into representation but to let its ‘too big-ness’ inform or infect the text. In dwelling in the space of the other’s suffering, our sense of ourselves and our understanding of the world is shaken. What such a writing strategy finally means is that mercy and empathy are, in Ehn’s words, ‘impersonal’ (*Soulographie* 8). That is, empathy is collective in character and arises through and because of the driftedness of subjectivity – the sense in which you and I are not separate, but interdependent. Conversely, violence arises through ‘immobility,’ and when we are the ‘citizens of our own states’ (10).

The most challenging aspect of Ehn’s entanglement of you and I arises from his representations of the perpetrators of violence. He asks that we ‘go there,’ that we sit with those characters and dwell in the space of genocide. The play *Maria Kizito* provides a very clear example of this. The narrative revolves around a young American nun, Theresa, who journeys to observe the trial of Rwandan nun, Maria Kizito, who is being tried for crimes of genocide.

TERESA (*to her unseen superior*): May I have your permission? Your permission to travel? To travel to Belgium? To see the young nuns? My father will pay. May I deceive you? May I leave aside the veil and stay in a narrow hotel near a construction site? May I take an unscheduled leave to see Maria Kizito? May I watch and discover what our sister was thinking? There are enough dead finally to make one wonder. She is enough an individual to expose something in myself, or, well, someone nearly like me (181).

While Teresa yearns to understand her connection to Kizito, the visit is at the same time a secret that must be withheld: fear, shame and desire comingle as Teresa sits in the courtroom gallery. In an interview Ehn described Teresa as a foil for Maria's mind but also an expression of his own encounter with Sovu's bloody history, calling the play both confession and self-examination – a kind of anxious contemplation that takes on the moral confusion and dubious allure of genocide as subject (Ehn personal interview). He writes:

The play is not meant as an explanation – not even as a condemnation.... It's meant to provide a space of time in which we can be with Maria. I try not to judge her guilt. I try to let us be with her in her guilt, because her kind of guilt is a key to understanding who we are in the world today (qtd. in Edmondson 70).

By including both victims and perpetrators in his plays, and asking us to dwell in the interior psychic space of those perpetrators, Ehn asks us to consider the relationship that we have to those who carry out acts of violence. For him the juridical process of testimony, whilst important, 'removes the teller from the audience.' ("Channels of Witness" 77). The role of theatre, then, is to return to the audience to the teller. That teller may be a victim of genocide, but, equally, he or she may be its perpetrator. Importantly, the relationship between the teller and the listener is neither innocent nor neutral: 'If by giving witness to genocide we are confessing a relationship with it, of whom are we asking forgiveness? Less the victim, from whom too much has been asked already; more the perpetrator – we are better off asking the perpetrator to forgive us for being in a relationship to perpetration, for recognizing perpetration because we know it in ourselves' ("Channels of Witness" 79). To have dwelt in the space of genocide, in Ehn's plays, means responsibility whether in the theatre or in life.

### **An ethics of imaginative symbiosis**

There is an intriguing similarity between what Ehn calls subjective drift, and what Italian psychotherapist Gaetano Benedetti describes as therapeutic symbiosis, of which Francois Davoine writes: 'Benedetti wants the analyst to become the pole of otherness that no one else dares inhabit' (7). In very simple terms, both endorse a kind of transgression of the boundaries of self and other, which is framed in psychological terms as empathetic identification: a space where I and you are confused precisely in order to construct an 'effective speech' as Ehn calls it, for trauma (*Soulographie* 8). I am certainly not making claims for the therapeutic value of writing such as Ehn's, nor am I drawing parallels between schizophrenic patients and violent figures such as Kizito or Breivik, but I am interested in the way in which

these writers engage at a deeply personal level with the social pathology that the real-life figures represent. The psychological perspective gives us a useful series of images and metaphors that help illuminate what these writers are doing.

For instance, Benedetti puts forth the metaphor of a membrane to explain the difference between the schizophrenic and non-schizophrenic experience of the world:

The basic biological conflict of all living beings – how to modify themselves upon contact with the surrounding environment and, at the same time, maintain unaltered their own structure – is exacerbated and becomes dramatic in psychosis. Here, the lack of membrane of symbols of the self exposes the inside of the self [...] directly, and without any mediation, to the impact of the world. The centre of the self thus pours out and spreads itself projectively outside. (qtd. In Koehler 77)

In Ehn's plays we can see the ways in which the social membrane that structures and makes sense of the world is pierced by the writing. This is something that he calls 'dog language.' He writes: 'Sometimes dog language – moaning, ripping – is the best match for the scene; language of witness martyred down to dog' (*Soulographie* 5). Dog language features throughout the texts not just in rhythms, but also through dog imagery. Dogs bark persistently as a reminder of violence, 'He can't shut those dogs up. He won't shut those dogs up' (120). In *Drunk Still Drinking* Mazout says: 'So speaks to a damaged dog in damage-language' (121). Dogs also speak: 'I don't want to hurt you. It's just that I'm so, so hungry. You can hear me speak dog language when I breathe through your throat' (138). In *Double Aspect Bright and Fair*, dogs again appear as relentless figures: 'After that her dogs never stopped barking. (*Rory and Xela, distant, bark in tandem.*) Even after their voice boxes blew and no sound came out, they kept moving the muscles for barking at three times heart rate, dog's heart rate' (176). Dog language, in the plays, fractures sense-making and draws the audience into worlds in which self-certainty is undone.

Ehn's use of dog language functions as what Benedetti calls a transforming image, an image that is created from inside the space of psychosis, or in Ehn's case, inside the space of violence. Just as Ehn writes: 'Enjoy the poetics of fear. By the same poetry, the same drift, allow Disaster to move into you' (7), Benedetti writes:

Therapeutic transforming images [...] derive from our ability to identify ourselves with the catastrophes occurring within the patient, to "live" them as if they were, in a way, our own – perhaps even dreaming about them at times; they derive from our ability to absorb the patient into ourselves, to the point that our latent psychotic nuclei are mobilized to some extent. These nuclei then lose all their power to harm us, precisely because they are now part of the dialogic interweave [...] (qtd. in Koehler 86)

Both Ehn and Benedetti point to the ethical significance of empathic or imaginative symbiosis. Where *Manifesto 2083* and *We Are Proud to Present* dramatize the dialogic interweave, exploring the precarity of the enterprise, in Ehn's plays such symbiosis is more fully realized. What follows from drift and symbiosis, ideally, is the constitution of new subjectivities: 'The self is now an organized set of fragments

[...] So rather than being people, per se, we are what we piece together from what was ourselves and what was someone else's.'

*Soulographie*, *We Are Proud to Present*, and *Manifesto 2083* each in their own way attempt to enter into the space of violence in order to meet and know it. This is what creates the greatest impact in the work, but also the greatest tension. We perceive a transgression, particularly in attempts to enter into the fictive psychic space of perpetrators of violence. Yet Benedetti writes of the significance of engaging with negative images, suggesting that transformation comes from, 'taking notice of these negative images, not by contradicting them, but by extending them towards new horizons' (qtd. in Koehler 86). Similarly, life-long mediator and peace-builder Paul Lederach writes:

To fully understand the moral imagination we will need to explore the geographies of violence that are known and the nature of risk and vocation, which permits the rise of an imagination that carries people toward a new, though mysterious, and often unexpected shore. (39)

To return to the beginning, metadrama allows dramatists to foreground the ethical and ontological problems of depicting both violent action and violent ideologies on stage. Spectators are able to clearly perceive the manner in which the extremity of violence challenges representation. Yet such self-reflexive aesthetics remain limited in their impact unless they are able to transgress their own self-knowing and enter into the shattered zone of what we might call the psychotic social. For it is only by inhabiting such a sphere that dramatic transformation is able to take place. The climax of Drury's play provides a very explicit illustration of this. It is only when the 'latent psychotic nuclei are mobilized' in the actors, as Benedetti might put it, that the truth of play emerges: violence is not somewhere else at some other time, it exists always as a potential in the here and now, and therefore always also as a common concern and common responsibility.

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