

**Towards a preliminary taxonomy of Multi-Sensory
Deprivation/Stimulation Theatre for the analysis of
selected plays.**

by

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I, Nelien Smith, declare that the Master's Degree research dissertation or interrelated, publishable manuscripts/published articles, or coursework Master's Degree mini-dissertation that I herewith submit for the Master's Degree qualification Magister Artium Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

Miss N Smith

Abstract

Towards a preliminary taxonomy of Multi-Sensory Deprivation/Stimulation Theatre for the analysis of selected plays.

Despite the vast research into the separate senses and their different uses in the theatre, little is found on a complete study of all the combined senses in the theatre. Studies on the senses could easily range from medical dissertations to the arts. This is probably why so few artists and scholars study this field because of every individual's experience of the senses. The challenging part of this study was to see how subjective studies about the senses are, and how little is documented when it comes to the arts and senses. This study borrows theories from leading theatre practitioners and scholars like Carroll, Artaud, Banes & Lepecki and Welton. These chapters consist of literature studies where these theories are applied to the specific sense in question. All of these chapters are tied together with Shklovsky's twin terms: sensitisation and desensitisation. Van den Oever (2010: 62) explains these terms by saying that through time we have grown accustomed to the things that surround us, and that our perception of these things has been automatised, thus leaving most of these things unnoticed. This is where sensory theatre challenges our perceptions. It disrupts our automatized notions of *theatre*, sensitising us to how our senses react. This study aims to develop a framework in which artists can see what the possible effects are of stimulating or depriving the senses in theatre. This framework is then applied to three existing theatre productions from three different genres. This preliminary taxonomy will thus provide theatre practitioners and researchers one complete framework for all the senses, how they might be used in *theatre* and what effect this might have on attendants.

Key terms: Theatre, Sensory theatre, Sensitisation, Desensitisation, Senses, Stimulation, Deprivation, Theatre in the Dark

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background & Rational

“In an era of binge-watching, live-tweeting, and the Oculus Rift, how can theater compete as all-consuming entertainment? Perhaps it’s our desire to be more than spectators—to be sucked headlong into alternative worlds—that has fuelled the recent boom in immersive theater, which trades the fourth wall for winding hallways and dance floors, in the hope of giving audiences not a show but an ‘experience.’”

– Michael Schulman, The New Yorker

Theories on theatrical styles, acting and directing techniques and the reception of a performance by an audience are continually developing. With the developing styles and techniques, older theories have been used to develop more modern techniques in the theatre, sometimes drifting further away from more *classical* styles. This study researches the development of and the nature of multi-sensory deprivation/stimulation¹ theatre. The term multi-sensory encapsulates the primary five senses, stated in Laymen’s terms; sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. These senses will be looked through the eyes of theories such as; The Grotesque, Theatre of Cruelty and Phenomenology. The infographic below shows a visual representation of the development of theatre and the Post Post-Modern Theatre stage that we are currently are in.

It is important to know that the researcher is not trying to separate the senses from each other, as Schulze (2013: page 11 of 14), the senses can never be separated, although we like to think we can, the body as a whole is listening and sensing all the time. That being said, the researcher would like to show what happens to theatre attendants of artist practioners would like to stimulate or deprive certain senses.

¹ The theory around the positive effects of Multi-Sensory Environments originated with two American psychologists, Cleland and Clark, in 1966. These psychologists promoted the possibilities of improving development, communication and behavioral changes and relationships of individuals with developmental cognitive impairments, hyperactivity and autism through stimulation of the senses.

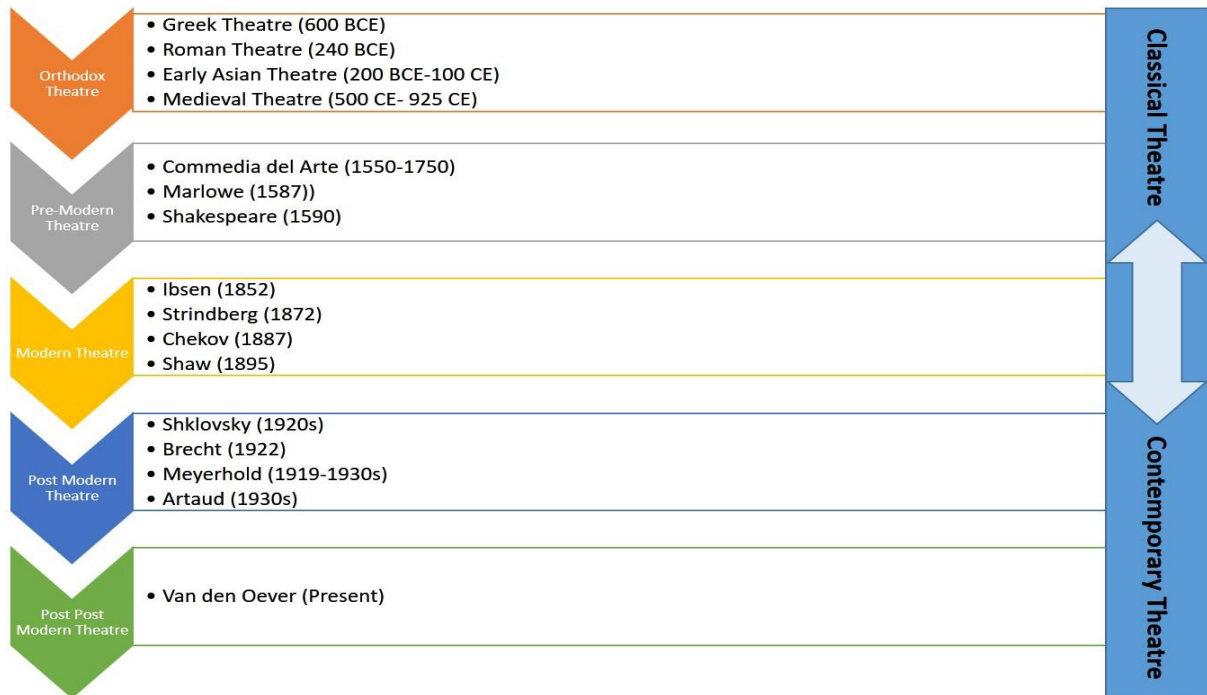


Figure 1: 1 - A graphic illustration of a simplified time line of the history of theatre. For the purpose of this study, the history of the theatre is divided into five categories; Orthodox Theatre, Pre-Modern Theatre, Modern Theatre, Post Modern Theatre and Post Post-Modern Theatre. Orthodox Theatre loosely consists of Greek Theatre (600BCE), Roman Theatre (240BCE), Early Asian Theatre (200BCE – 100CE) and Medieval Theatre (500CE – 925CE). The next phase, Pre-Modern Theatre, consist of Commedia del Arte (1550-1750) and theatre practitioners like Christopher Marlowe (1587) and Shakespeare (1590). Moving into the Modern Theatre era, playwrights like Ibsen (1852), Strindberg (1872), Chekov (1887) and Shaw (1895) dominated the realism theatre scene. After this breakout of realism, many theatre practitioners felt the need to break away from this rigid system, resulting in the Post-Modern Theatre era. Names such as Shklovsky (the 1920s), Brecht (1922), Meyerhold (1919-1930s) and Artaud (1930s) dominated this iconic period of theatre history. The Post Post-Modern era is where we find ourselves today and is the era in which the researcher would like to place Multi-Sensory Deprivation/Stimulation Theatre.

The term *classical* is defined as representing an archetypal standard within a traditional and long-established form or style. In relation to theatre, the Scottish Arts Council (2010: 1 of 2), explains the term as a theatre which is more text-based, the focus being on the language. The challenge arises when one takes the attendants out of the *classical theatre* scene and place them in a unique setting where they might not be able to rely upon their familiar everyday experience that has controlled their sensorial perceptions. Artaud (76) stated that for the past 400 years we have seen purely descriptive and narrative theatre. Thus, we need to *sensitize* attendants to new styles and concepts under the term, *theatre*. “Theatrical performance has the potential to change our experience of the world and therefore, the potential to change our ability to perceive the world in a new way” (Di Benedetto, 2010: 11). Di Benedetto² continues saying that the

² Stephen Di Benedetto is currently the Chairman of the Department of Theatre Arts and an Associate Professor of Theatre History at the University of Miami.

success of a theatrical performance relies on the subjective responses of the performances attendants. When dealing with terms such as *attendants*, a precise definition should be given. The word *attendant* is used to describe the audience, but for the purpose of this thesis, it will only refer to the researcher. At the end of the thesis in the case study chapter, the attendant will specifically be speaking out an attendant's viewpoint as the researcher witnessed the productions.

When working in *classical theatre*, the researcher, as artist practitioner, can use their conscious reception of everyday sensorial experience to create a personal understanding and unique experience of the theatrical situation in front of them. This is not necessarily the case for theatre in which stimulation and deprivation of the senses takes place. This being one reason why the need for a preliminary, all-encompassing taxonomy is so great as researchers can refer to the taxonomy when certain senses are used in theatre productions, seeing the possible reactions in the audience members. Ultimately, artists practitioners in general try to sensitise their audience members in theatre. This is emphasised when working with a combination of senses, deliberately overstimulating or depriving the attendant of them. When dealing with attendants and their perceptions of the theatre, other terminology comes to play. Shklovsky³ alleged that it is in "...art that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*" (Van den Oever 2010: 61). Shklovsky (1917: 3) coins the following twin-terms foreshadowing the principles of the above-mentioned alienation effect; *Habituation/ De-habituation* and *Automatisation/ De-automatisation*. Brecht's alienation effect later explained that that innovative theatrical techniques can be used to make the ordinary or familiar, strange. Reverting to Schlovsky's quote, the same analogy of the stone can be pulled through to theatre, turning *theatre* into the theatrical. Van den Oever⁴ takes it a step further by adding Sensitisation/*Desensitisation* to the

³ Viktor Shklovsky, Russian literary critic and novelist was a major voice of Formalism, a critical school that had great influence in Russian literature in the 1920s. Shklovsky argued that literature is a collection of stylistic and formal devices that force the reader to view the world afresh by presenting old ideas or mundane experiences in new, unusual ways. His concept of *ostranenie*, or "making it strange," was his chief contribution to Russian Formalist theory.

⁴ Associate Professor Arts, Culture and Media / Film, University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Extraordinary Professor Film and Visual Media, University of the Free State, South Africa. Director of the Master in Film Studies. Director of the Faculty Minor in Film Studies. Head of the Film Archive and Media Archaeology Lab, University of Groningen.

twin terms. These twin terms explain the sensations that attendants feel in a play, giving it a name and explaining what happens to the attendant when this sensation is felt.

SENSITIZATION

Sudden awareness of a stimulus. Sensitisation occurs when conventional norms are **disrupted**.
- Usually temporary
- When permanent, appreciation of distortions are seen.
- Seen as **new** or **strange** by viewer

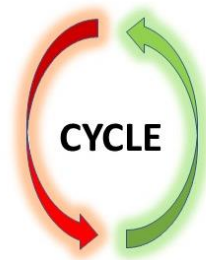
DE-HABITUATION

A person's reaction towards a known stimulus is enhanced.

DE-AUTOMATISATION

The breaking of an automatic response by a disruption.

TWIN TERMS



DESENSITISATION

To make emotionally insensitive or unresponsive, as by **long** exposure or repeated shocks. A **decrease** in sensitivity towards stimuli.

HABITUATION

A **decrease** in response to a stimulus after being repeatedly exposed to it. This concept states that an animal or a human may **learn to ignore** a stimulus because of **repeated** exposure to it.

AUTOMATISATION

To carry on automatically, **without** disruption.

Figure 1.2: Graphic representation of the Sensitisation/Desensitisation cycle.

Van den Oever (2010: 62) explains these terms by saying that through time we have grown accustomed to the stimuli that surround us, that our perception of these particular stimuli has been *automatised*, thus leaving most of these stimuli invisible. This is where sensory theatre challenges our perceptions. It disrupts our automatised notions of *theatre*, sensitising us to how our senses react. Brecht⁵ defines *theatre* as "...disconcerting but fruitful, which the theatre must provoke with its representations of human social life. It must amaze its public, and this can be achieved by a technique of alienating the familiar" (Brecht 1946: 192). The distancing effect, or as earlier referred to as the alienation effect, or more recently as the estrangement effect, is a performing arts concept coined by playwright Bertolt Brecht. Brecht's outlook on *theatre* was grounded in *alienation* (*vervremdung*) of the audience. By entertaining the audience, he would purposely expose *theatrical* elements to remind the audience that they were watching *theatre*, repeatedly *sensitising* them. Other contemporary theatre practitioners

⁵ German poet, playwright, and theatrical reformer whose epic theatre departed from the conventions of theatrical illusion and developed the drama as a social and ideological forum for leftist causes.

such as Meyerhold⁶ (Grotesque Theatre) and Artaud⁷ (Theatre of Cruelty) have also significantly contributed to this study of *Sensitisation* and *Desensitisation* in *theatre*.

Drawing back to this thesis and the study at hand, recently (Post Post-Modern Theatre) a great deal of research has been produced about each sense individually; auditory (Welton, 2012; Jones, 1976; Pines, 1995), visual (Claasen, 1993; Di Benedetto, 2010; Butterfield, 1993; Jay, 1993), olfactory, consisting of taste and smell (Banes, 2001; Caplan, 2006; Dyson, 1938; Reason, 2003), and the tactile sense (Fischer, 1997; Cowan, 2006). Each of these different senses entertains unique theories and practices, but seldom are they researched together as one corpus, ultimately forming a taxonomy to be used in the theatre. This thesis intends to bring clarity to the value of the combination of these unique theories in Multi-Sensory Deprivation/Stimulation Theatre for theatre practitioners and theatre researchers. This taxonomy will serve as a guide for researchers and practioners to use when multi-sensory stimulation and deprivation occurs in the theatre. The taxonomy will identify the sense and the corresponding effect it will possibly have on an attendant.

1.2 Research Problems & Objectives

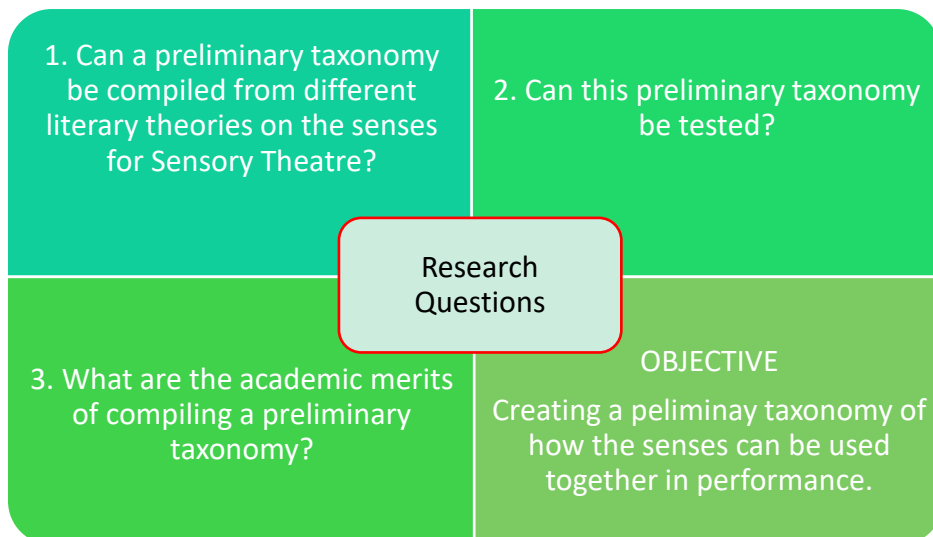


Figure 1.3: graphic representation of the research objectives and questions of this study.

⁶ Russian and Soviet theatre director, actor and theatrical producer. His provocative experiments dealing with physical being and symbolism in an unconventional theatre setting made him one of the seminal forces in modern international theatre.

⁷ French dramatist, poet, essayist, actor, and theatre director, widely recognized as one of the major figures of twentieth-century theatre and the European avant-garde.

The objective of the study will be to create a preliminary taxonomy of how the senses can be used together in performance. This taxonomy can then be used by theatre practitioners and researchers as a guide to how the senses work together in performance and what the effect can be on their audiences.

1.2.1 Aims

The first aim is to create a combined taxonomy of the five senses and their respective theories. Secondly, to apply the taxonomy to the analysis of the three selected performances. Lastly, the study will aim to test the validity/applicability of the production analysis.

1.2.2 Research Problem/Questions

1. Can a preliminary taxonomy be compiled from literary theories on the individual senses to create a combined taxonomy for Multi-Sensory Deprivation/Stimulation Theatre?

The study will firstly, document and discuss the literary theories relating to the individual senses. Secondly, a combined taxonomy will be compiled incorporating the knowledge obtained from the individual theories.

2. Can this preliminary taxonomy be tested?

The preliminary taxonomy will be tested by applying the knowledge obtained through the literature study on three existing theatre productions which exhibit the characteristics of stimulating and depriving multiple senses.

3. What are the academic merits of compiling a preliminary taxonomy?

The study adds to the existing scope of research done on the Grotesque (overstimulation and deprivation in the visual perception of theatrical productions), Theatre of Cruelty (overstimulation and deprivation in the auditory and tactile perception of theatrical productions) and Phenomenology

(overstimulation and deprivation in the olfactory perception of theatrical productions).

1.3 Research Design & Research Methodology

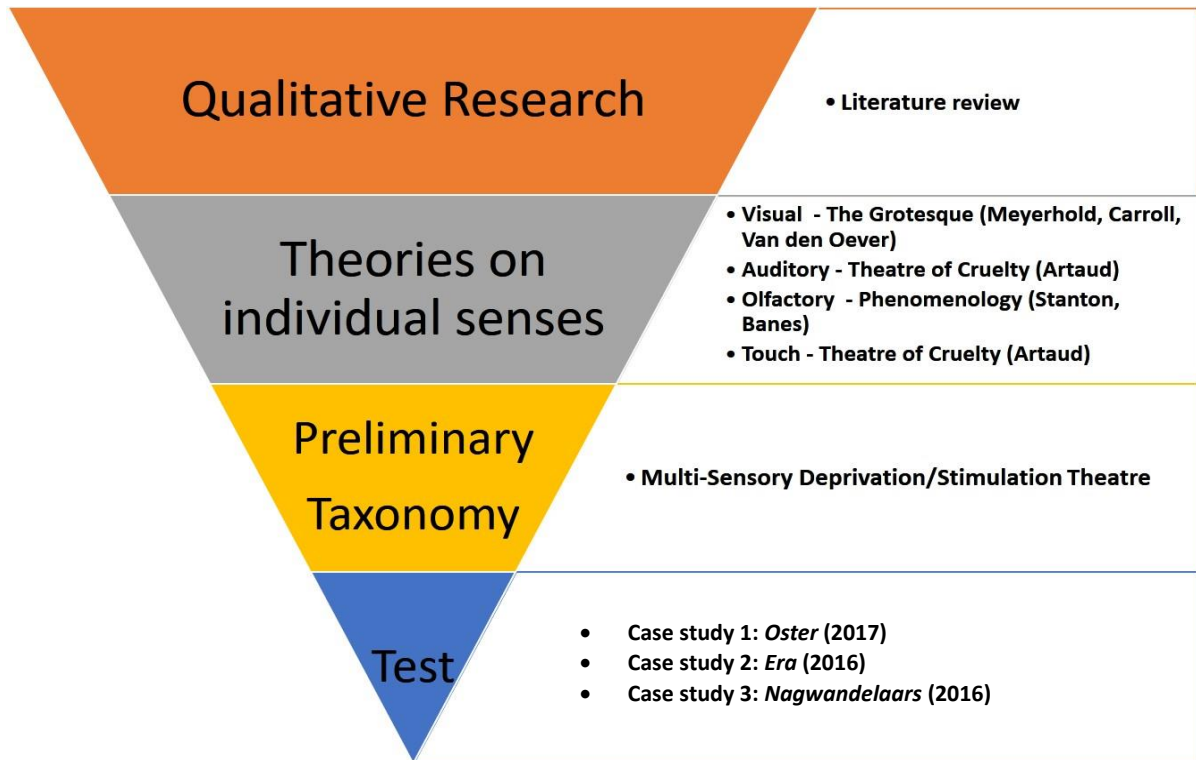


Figure 1.4: A graphic representation of the research design and methodology of this study

This thesis will use qualitative research in the form of literature reviews to compile a taxonomy of all five senses. This taxonomy will then be tested on three current *theatre* productions. Denzin & Lincoln⁸ (2011:3) describe qualitative research as research that discovers the observer or spectator in the world. These observers recreate the world through pictures, interviews, videos, and conversations. In the chapter dedicated to the three case studies, the use of media and text will be prominently shown.

⁸ Norman K. Denzin is professor of sociology, cinema studies, and interpretive theory at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of several books, including *The Alcoholic Society*, *Children and Their Caretakers*, *Hollywood Shot by Shot*, *Sociological Methods*, and *The Values of Social Science*.

Yvonna S. Lincoln is Professor of Higher Education and Educational Administration at Texas A & M University. She is author, co-author, or editor of such books as *Naturalistic Inquiry* and *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (both with Egon G. Guba), and *Organizational Theory and Inquiry*. Dr. Lincoln coedited, with Dr. Denzin, the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

The thesis will consist of an introduction and three significant literary research chapters. A literary investigation into the theories of mainly Artaud, Carroll⁹, Banes¹⁰, Di Benedetto, Lepecki¹¹, and Welton¹² will be undertaken with the aim to create a feasible preliminary taxonomy. Each sensory chapter will describe current research as well as the different theories used by theatre practitioners. These theories and ideas will be placed in relation to how stimulating or depriving a sense, leads to disruption of *classical theatre* and how by doing this the three twin terms, namely *Sensitisation/ Desensitisation*, *Habituation/ De-habituation* and *Automatisation/ De-automatisation* have their effect. This taxonomy consisting of the different senses will be tested and later be reflected on. Specific theories that the researcher has identified will be discussed in relation to the different senses, namely visual, auditory, olfactory and the tactile sense. Different theories explain the value and functions of the different senses. By choosing specific theories, the researcher does not disregard other theories, she only acknowledges that these theories carry specific weight that is important for the study. It is important to note that the theories chosen for the study already have a framework in place, this makes documentation and integration into the greater taxonomy much more efficient. Sometimes more than one sense can overlap in theatrical theories like in Artaud's (1958) theory of *Theatre of Cruelty*, where he explains how the auditory and the tactile sense can influence the attendants, in this case, the artist practitioner. The olfactory sense uses phenomenology and perception (Stanton, G 1994:6) as a basis to explain six categories (Banes, S. 2001: 30) that are used in olfactory performance. These six categories include 1) to illustrate words, characters, places, and actions; 2) to evoke mood or ambience; 3) to complement or contrast with aural/visual signs; 4) to summon specific memories; 5) to frame the performance as

⁹ American philosopher considered to be one of the leading figures in contemporary philosophy of art. Although Carroll is best known for his work in the philosophy of film, he has also published journalism, works on philosophy of art generally, theory of media, and also philosophy of history.

¹⁰ Sally Banes is one of the leading dance historians in the United States. With such works as *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* and *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theatre 1962-1964*, she details the history of dance and explores issues of representation and movement in the art of dancing. She also examines the influence and aspects of feminist ideology related to dance.

¹¹ André Lepecki works and researches at the intersection of critical dance studies, curatorial practice, performance theory, contemporary dance and visual arts performance.

¹² Lecturer in Performance at Queen Mary, University of London, UK. His research centres on the sense in performance - in particular the condition of 'feeling'. This research also encompasses practice, and recent projects include working as a performer and deviser with Sound and Fury Theatre Company, UK, and Theater ASOU, Austria

ritual; 6) to serve as a distancing device. Lastly, the researcher's focus on the visual sense will use Carroll's taxonomy of the Grotesque (Carroll, 2013: 302) to explain what types of emotions are evoked from the attendants when watching visually depriving¹³ of stimulating theatre. Carroll (Carroll in F.S Connelly 2003:298) defines the Grotesque as an image of an animate being that violates our standing biological or ontological concepts and expectations. When these expectations are disrupted we elicit certain emotions; awe and wonder, horror and disgust and comic relief. These emotions are elicited by using different techniques like enlargement, deformation, and decolourisation.

These literature reviews will form the taxonomy (framework) that the researcher will test by analysing and describing the use of senses in three productions that can be identified as examples of multi-sensory theatre, namely *Oster* (2017), *Era* (2016) and *Nagwandelaars* (2016). *Oster* (2017), an interactive children's theatre production from the Puppetrix production house uses multi-sensory stimulation to create an immersive, interactive experience for their audience. Secondly, a physical theatre piece called *Era* (2016) makes use of olfactory stimulation to reference themes and give meaning to aural and visual signs. *Nagwandelaars* (2016) is a site-specific play performed at the 2016 KKNK¹⁴ in Oudtshoorn. This play stimulates all the senses while the audience members wait for the horror story to unfold. The researcher has outlined the structure of their thesis below through an infographic.

¹³ Sensory deprivation: an experimental situation in which all stimulation is cut off from the sensory receptors (Dictionary, 2016)

¹⁴ The Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (Afrikaans for *Little Karoo National Arts Festival* and usually abbreviated to *KKNK*) is an Afrikaans language arts festival that takes place yearly in the South African town of Oudtshoorn. The festival includes both the visual and the performing arts and is officially recognized by the South African government as a national arts festival. Based on the number of visitors, it is also the largest South African arts festival.



Figure 1.5: A graphic representation of the structure of this study.

1.4 Value of the Research

The value of this research comes forward through the compilation of a preliminary taxonomy. This taxonomy can then be used for the documentation of knowledge of the use of the senses in *theatre*. Further research utilising Performance Based Research can contribute significantly to the arts, using this preliminary taxonomy as a theoretical base. It is important to note that this preliminary taxonomy consists of the primary senses, namely; visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory. Each of these senses already has their taxonomies and theories. Theatre practitioners have been using the senses in performance without necessarily realising the importance of each separate theory. This preliminary taxonomy will thus provide theatre practitioners and researchers one complete framework for all the senses, how they might be used in *theatre* and what effect this might have on attendants.

CHAPTER 2: THE VISUAL SENSE

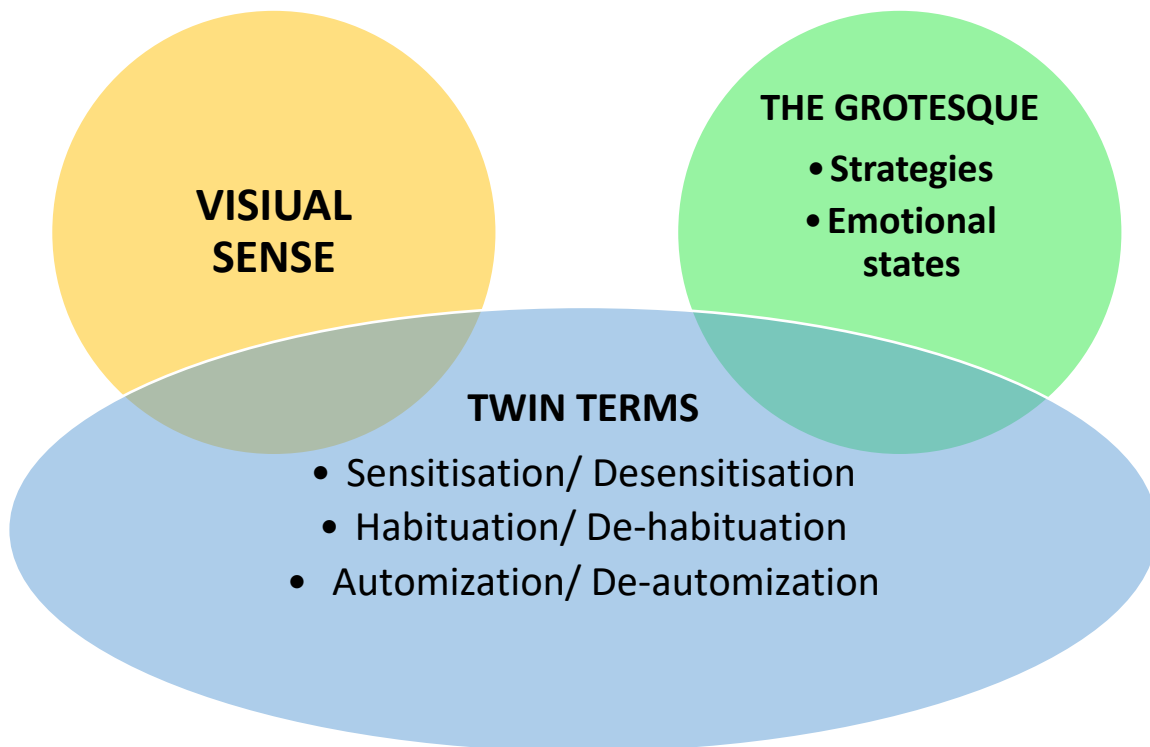


Figure 2.6: Infographic of Chapter 2: The Visual Sense

2.1 The visual sense in theatre

Consider this, when you walk into a dark room, the first thing you search for is the light switch to illuminate your surroundings and familiarise yourself with your environment. This might be true for traditional theatre experiences, but as Welton (2012: 52) states, most people see darkness in the theatre as limiting if not anti-theatrical. If we look at the consumerism market today, very little is produced that does not according to Welton, “glow, wink or gleam” (Welton: 2012: 52). This entails us to see darkness as an oddly unnatural state which needs to be rectified by switching on some light or multiple sources of lighting. The following chapter will discuss disruptions to the visual sense at the hand of the theory of The Grotesque. This theory was specifically linked to the visual sense as The Grotesque has been integrated into our daily lives without us knowing that our visual sense is constantly being disrupted. Specific examples of stage and film productions will be given where the researcher discusses the strategies

and emotional states of The Grotesque as outlined by Harpham. This existing framework will be the basis of this chapter as existing knowledge can be applied to everyday examples. Following this, a relatively new form of theatre will be discussed, *Theatre in the dark*, showing how Grotesque strategies can be applied to unusual, dark theatre and still challenge our biological and ontological notions.

When walking into a theatre, the audience has certain expectations; warm lighting, soft background music, the trademark theatre smells, etc. The audience might expect to notice these stimuli, but through time we get desensitized to the extreme that these trademark ‘*features*’ are accepted as a given. The moment the house lights go down, and something unfamiliar disrupts our ‘*normal*’ ‘*expected*’ experiences, this is the moment when we are sensitized again. The concept of de-sensitisation and sensitisation will be discussed throughout this chapter with relation to the visual sense as well as The Grotesque.

When looking at the *neutral* version of the visual sense in the theatre, it would be watching a well-lit performance where all the actor’s faces are seen, no physical body disfigurements, discolourment or abnormal enlargement. The *neutral*, visual theatre is well-known, but the researcher is much more interested in the disrupted version. These disruptions will range from the Grotesque to *dark theatre* or *theatre in the dark*¹⁵.

2.2 The mainstream Grotesque

In his article titled *The Grotesque Today, Preliminary Notes toward a Taxonomy*, Noël Carroll¹⁶ (2003:302) highlights that “kids have it easy”. He states that the Grotesque infiltrates our mass culture at an astounding speed. From television series: *The X-Files* (1993-2002), *Star Trek* (1966-69), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), *Friday the 13th* (1987-1990), to full length feature films: *Fantastic Four* (1994; 2005; 2015),

¹⁵ A rising tide of experimentation in theatre practice that eliminates or obscures light. It brings together leading and emerging practitioners and researchers in a volume dedicated to exploring the phenomenon and showcasing a range of possible critical and theoretical approaches.

¹⁶ Noël Carroll is an American philosopher considered to be one of the leading figures in contemporary philosophy of art. Although Carroll is best known for his work in the philosophy of film, he has also published journalism, works on philosophy of art generally, theory of media, and also philosophy of history.

Star Wars (1977), *The Hulk* (2003), comic books:, *The Grinch* (1955), cartoon series: *The Simpsons* (1989-present), *South Park* (1997-present), *Futurama*(1999-2013); print media: *Steven Kings' The Plant* (1982;1983; 1985; 2000), *Krondor: Tear of the Gods*(2000); and live theatre: *The Lion King* (1997- present), *Beauty and the Beast* (1993-2016), *Wicked* (2003- present), *The Wizard of Oz* (2001-2013 etc. We are bomarded with Grotesque imagery seeing as our perceptions of the physical world are changed by technology, pollution, urbanisation, and wars. It was not always this way as these disruptions appeared as distortions of the real world but are now perceived as the norm (Harpham¹⁷ 2014:463). In his article *Aesthetics and the Grotesque: Frederich Dürrenmatt*¹⁸, author Edward Diller¹⁹ (1966: 329) discusses how parody crept into all genres when man discovered that tyrants only feared mockery. Apparently, vast areas of music and paintings were taken over by this mockery. "By means of this parody, overnight the Grotesque has also intruded, even conquered; all of a sudden, it is simply here" (Dürrenmatt in Diller 1966: 329). If one looks at the date of this publication, 1966, it seems that a sort of *Grotesque revolution* has been coming a long time. According to Carroll (2003:304), "It has gone mainstream" he continues to say that our current period is obsessed with Grotesque imagery. This statement brings up the topic of sensitisation²⁰ and desensitisation. When placing these terms in a theatre context, one could say that the spectator is unaware of the sensory stimulus or is desensitised to the stimuli. This state of desensitisation ends when an element in the production, be it visual or any other sensory stimulation, disrupts the senses, sensitising the audience member. This sensitisation moment only lasts for a few moments until the attendant gets used to the disruption and is desensitised again. This is a continuing circle of events. Both

¹⁷ Geoffrey Galt Harpham is an American academic who writes about the Grotesque (On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature) amongst many other topics. One of the characteristics of his tenure was the encouragement of dialogue between the humanities on the one hand and the natural and social sciences on the other.

¹⁸Frederich Dürrenmatt was a Swiss author and dramatist. He was a proponent of epic theatre whose plays reflected the recent experiences of World War II. The politically active author's work included avant-garde dramas, philosophical crime novels, and macabre satire.

¹⁹ Diller won grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation for projects in film studies and for attempts to open lines of communication, especially about the humanities

²⁰ "Sensitisation, in psychology, refers to a non-associative learning process through which repeated exposure to a stimulus results in the progressive amplification (increasing strength) of the reaction to the stimulus. The organism is becoming more sensitive to the stimulus as time progresses" Psychology online dictionary editors (2017: page 1 of 2).

Harpham²¹ and Carroll address this issue by stating that one cannot be shocked forever "...and to the Parisian who strolls by Notre Dame on his way to work, even the gargoyles must seem as comfortable as old slippers" (Harpham 2014: 463). He continues to say that we "domesticate our Grotesqueries", by applauding, paying and admiring them, we ignore their deformities and what was once strange to us.

2.3 Defining the Grotesque

By stating that the Grotesque has gone mainstream, we need to examine the term Grotesque²². According to Harpham (2014: 467) during the Renaissance, the Grotesque was a creation of the "unruly imagination: fantastic, unnatural, bizarre" the dreams of painters. This is no longer the case as seen in the above-mentioned examples of the everyday Grotesque. He continues to say that in our current period the Grotesque is no longer "a method of portraying only the distorted inner landscapes of the diseased or neurotic imagination". Carroll (2003:305) takes us back to the root of the word Grotesque. Evidently, the term only came into circulation in the late fifteenth century as a way of describing ornamental frescoes which showed *fusion figures*²³ of animals, vegetable, and human forms. The term 'Grotesque' comes from the Italian word *grottesco* – meaning from the grotto. Over time, the term became more elusive. Some saw the term 'Grotesque' as an abusive term while others saw it as praise. Carroll (2003: 306) tries to encompass all the different elements of the definition and dares to say that the point of the Grotesque is to revel in the contrast and instability between images that can simultaneously elicit laughter and disgust, comic amusement and horror. Directly after this statement, he states that saying this excludes images that focus singularly on being horrific or comic. In his article titled *Grotesqueness and Injustice in Dürrenmatt*²⁴, Peter Johnson quotes Dürrenmatt's definition of the Grotesque:

²¹ American academic who until recently served as President and Director of the National Humanities Center. One of the characteristics of his tenure was the encouragement of dialogue between the humanities on the one hand and the natural and social sciences on the other.^{[1][2]} He is currently a Senior Fellow at the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University and also a Life Member of Clare Hall at the University of Cambridge.

²² "Comically or repulsively ugly or distorted" Oxford Dictionary (2015: 4 of 9).

²³ The amalgamation of human body parts with plant or animal parts – creating a new figure.

²⁴ Swiss author and dramatist. He was a proponent of epic theatre whose plays reflected the recent experiences of World War II. The politically active author's work included avant-garde dramas, philosophical crime novels, and macabre satire.

“... the Grotesque involves a comparison, a comparison usually invited by distorting an object or by compiling one from characteristics derived from various disparate sources. The observer is provoked into measuring the thing confronting him against the real object which has been distorted, or against the objects from which it has been compounded” (Dürrenmatt in Johnson 1962: 265).

Carroll raises the question “Is there any way to find unity in such an unruly concept? Is the concept of the Grotesque so diverse that it is Grotesque?” (2004:306). The problem occurs when one tries to identify the Grotesque with one function as its goal: “to elicit simultaneously comic amusement and horror or to allegorize the nature of art or the human condition” (Carroll 2004: 306). Meindl²⁵ very beautifully gives his definition of the Grotesque as an edgy blend of attractive and revolting elements, of comic and tragic parts, of absurd and horrifying features, emphasizing the brightness or darkness of the Grotesque (Meindl in Chao 2010:4). The researcher tends to lean more towards Wolfgang Kayser's²⁶ definition:

“The Grotesque is the alienated world... To this belongs that which was trusted and comfortable to us, which is suddenly revealed as foreign and sinister... The grey falls on us so strongly because it is our world, whose reliability shows itself as mere appearance” (Kayser 1957: 198).

2.4 Strategies of the Grotesque

Carroll rather extensively discusses the different strategies of the Grotesque, and once an audience member can directly link this concept or term to something familiar, it becomes easier to understand. He defines the structural and functional side of the Grotesque, the former being different strategies the Grotesque uses to elicit emotion

²⁵ Dieter Meindl is Professor of English at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg in Germany. He is the author or editor of several books, including a monograph on Faulkner's genealogical novels and a study of the American novel between naturalism and postmodernism.

²⁶ Wolfgang Kayser traces the historical development of the grotesque from the Italian Renaissance (which originated the word "grottesco") through the "chimeric" world of the *commedia dell'arte*, Sturm und Drang, the age of Romanticism and nineteenth century "realism," to its modern forms in poetry, dream narration and surrealist painting.

out of the viewers; fusion figures, disproportion, formlessness, and gigantism. The latter focusing on the emotions elicited; awe and wonder, horror and disgust, and comic amusement. Carroll informs us that something is only Grotesque when it violates our 'biological and ontological concepts and norms' (Carroll 2003: 308). These strategies are used to elicit emotion from the viewers.

2.4.1 Hybridisation

Fusion figures are not surprisingly the most discussed strategy of the Grotesque.

Bakhtin²⁷ (1965: 334) describes these figures as a transgression of the limits. This leads to the fusion of the two (biological and ontological) creating something new and completely different. Chao (2010: 7) defines the term as 'interstitial beings': interstitial defined as *in-between*. This he says makes these beings even more horrible, as they are unrecognizable. These fusion or hybrid figures were first seen in the frescos excavated in the Golden Palace of Nero (Carroll 2003: 305). These fusion figures were called the plant-boys as they were humans from the waist up and foliage from the waist down. Carroll discusses the objective of these fusion figures, what their purpose was. He states that they serve different functions, they can be ornamental, illustrate religious doctrine or be a social satire.



Figure 2.2: The Tin Man (Jake Haley): Wizard of Oz (1939)

These functions do not elicit the same effect. Carroll continues to list the effects; firstly, playfully delights the eye, secondly terrifies, and thirdly he says that they promote a 'cruel, dark, indignant humor' (Carroll 2003: 307).

²⁷ Bakhtin is perhaps best known for his theories of the grotesque and the carnivalesque, both of which are related. He put forward these ideas as part of his doctoral dissertation, which proved controversial among some of the professors; as a result of this controversy, Bakhtin was denied a doctorate. Due work remained unknown for many years until it was finally published as a book in 1965, titled 'Rabelais and His World'

2.4.2 Decolourisation

Another form of fusion could be by using colour to fuse together a living being and a colour associated with something inanimate. The figure below shows *Elphaba*, The wicked witch of the West, in *Wicked* (2003). The main character was born green because of a potion her mother drank when she conceived her. The colour green is usually associated with jealousy²⁸, Elphaba being jealous of everyone around her who is normal.



Figure 2.3: *Elphaba: Wicked the Musical* (2003)

2.4.3 Disproportion

Disproportion²⁹ as defined by a figure or an object that is too large or too small in comparison to something else. In the below, the direct contrast can be seen between the *Dr Frank- N-futter* to the rest of his minions in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (2014). This is exaggerated by the height of his hair and his large bone structure.



Figure 2.4: *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (2014) South African cast.

2.4.4 Deformation

The term *formless*³⁰ is defined as “without a definite shape or form; amorphous” Once again, the contrast to a ‘normal’ figure or object should be emphasized. This is commonly seen in many Science-Fiction and animation films.

²⁸ In the 16th and 17th centuries, authors such as Shakespeare and Chaucer wrote of characters who were green with envy. Shakespeare uses this comparison in Othello, Iago refers to the ‘green-eyed monster.’ In Anthony and Cleopatra, Shakespeare wrote of the ‘green sickness,’ meaning jealousy. And in Merchant of Venice, he used the term ‘green-eyed jealousy.’ (Smith 2018: page 1 of 4).

²⁹ Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2015: 1 of 2)

³⁰ Collins online dictionary (2015: 1 of 2).

2.4.5 Enlargement

Gigantism, as described by Carroll (2004: 307) is fundamental to the structure of the Grotesque as it goes beyond the boundaries of our imaginations. Chao³¹ (2010: 7) disagrees by stating “what is impossible is not necessarily Grotesque”. He uses the example of Ron Mueck’s giant human sculpture, *Boy* (2006), he states that this piece of art looks incredible and impossible, but not necessarily Grotesque. Carroll emphasizes that all these strategies are “violations of our standing categories or concepts; they are subversions of our common expectations of the natural and ontological order” (Carroll 2003:307). The figure below illustrates the effect that enlargement can have. By using cloth and lighting design, *Elphaba* looks gigantic in comparison to the people below her. Although her upper body has not been enlarged, the tightly pulled cloth creates the illusion that she is now more powerful than before.



Figure 2.5: *Wicked the Musical* (2003)

2.5 Emotional states associated with the Grotesque

By using Carroll’s model of emotions (horror and disgust, comic amusement, and awe and wonder), we can see what structural element or strategy the Grotesque uses to draw out the emotions; horror, comic amusement, and awe and wonder (Carroll 2003:310).

³¹ Author of *Rethinking the Concept of the Grotesque* (2010), Chao succeeds in it to define the grotesque, give insight into its use of visual and verbal media, and demonstrate its progression through time.

2.5.1 Horror and disgust

Horror and terror would probably be most people's first response to the Grotesque. Horror naturally contains the element of fear, but Carroll (2003: 311) states that this horror elicited by the Grotesque is more than fearsomeness. We may find something fearsome but not horrific. He then poses the question "what needs to be added to fear in order to add up to horror?" and generously gives us the answer: disgust. Carroll explains that horror is a combination of fear and disgust. Disgust being mostly associated with blood, faecal waste, mucus and other bodily fluids (Carroll 2003: 301). According to Burke³² (1990:35), the impurity of the images can spark off the fear of pain, sickness, and death. He continues to say that this fear comes from the awareness of self-preservation and therefore "fills the mind with strong emotions of horror". Carroll states that the physicality of the Grotesque becomes more horrible when 'impure' or harmful elements such as decomposition, bodily waste or dangerous animals are seen (Carroll in Chao 2010: 12). The difficulty comes in when discussing what is horrifying for different people. Not all people shed the same types of emotions in the same situations,



Figure 2.6: *Sweeney Todd* (2008)

whereas laughter could maybe be a little more predictable. The figure on the right shows the body parts of *Sweeney Todd*'s victims, which they made into pies and sold to clients.

2.5.2 Comic amusement

We do not always react with fear towards the Grotesque; it is often with laughter. The idea that comic amusement can be associated with the Grotesque is evident in the

³² Burke established a close relation between the sublime and the grotesque, enabling us to draw direct connections between the fantastic and the grotesque. (Miron 2009: 1)

association with caricature, parody, and satire. According to Carroll clowns are a prime example of this. Their features are “wildly exaggerated and misshapen, while their biological and cognitive capacities are humanly anomalous” (Carroll 2003: 303). Bakhtin (1965: 305) states that the *comic* generally plays with the contrast between pleasure and displeasure. According to Harpham (1976:463) laughter as a result of the Grotesque is “reductive or ambiguous, innocent or satanic” all these contrasting poles depends from what view you look at the image. Harpham continues to discuss what Baudelaire³³ states: comic expression appeals to mans need to be superior to others, to laugh at their misfortunes. This is not always the case as Harpham states that laughter is also a response to weaken the horror and make the nightmare more bearable.

In the figure below, the character of *Riff-Raff* can be seen in the South-African production of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (2014).

Riff-Raff is a perfect example of a Grotesque figure that evokes comic amusement, as he is the quintessence of Baudelaire’s statement above: we laugh at other people’s misfortunes. *Riff-Raff* looks drained and emotionless, thus making us feel superior to him.

Both comic amusement and horrific disgust states Carroll (2003: 319) involves the element of rejection. We want to reject or expel disgust from our bodies; the same can be said of laughter: it is an expression of expulsion. Awe and wonder do not have an expulsion element but rather an acceptance of the absurd (Carroll 2003: 320).



Figure 2.7: The character Riff-Raff (Andrew Laubscher) from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (2014)

2.5.3 Awe and Wonder

The creation of awe and wonder lies in the miraculous. Once again Carroll (2003: 318) emphasizes that this miraculous be only achieved when there is a violation of the biological and ontological, something contrary to nature. Awe and wonder can be

³³ Charles Baudelaire is usually seen modern poet, whose work ushered in a new era of French literature. But the common emphasis on his use of new forms and theories of the grotesque overlooks the complex role of the past in his work (Swain 2004: 1).

experienced when film and theatre use techniques like editing, lighting, make-up, narration, scale, character-gesture and musical commentary. He sums it up and states that the miraculous is “mysterious, inexplicable, baffling, unexpected, astonishing, and impossible” but the reaction or experience of awe is both of curiosity and appreciation (Carroll 2003: 318). *Lion King (1997)* the musical’s breath-taking costumes, make-up and character-gesture make it an awe-inspiring viewing experience.



Figure 2.8: *Lion King the Musical (1997)*

2.6 Theatre in the dark

“Where once light in the dark was a novel, spectacular experience, today, I suggest, it is darkness that finds itself optically charged” (Welton 2012: 52)

From here we move from the Grotesque to an experimental style of theatre called “Theatre in the dark”. Firstly, we need to establish what ‘dark theatre’ or ‘theatre in the dark’ is. The term ‘theatre in the dark’ was first used by UK based theatre company *Sound & Fury*³⁴ when they premiered their “theatre in the dark season” in 1998. As the name suggests, ‘theatre in the dark’ uses little to no light during the performances, sensitizing the remaining senses of the audience member while depriving them of a primary sense: sight.

³⁴ Sound & Fury is a collaborative theatre company whose artistic interest is in developing the sound space of theatre and presenting the audience with new ways of experiencing performance and stories by heightening the aural sense.

When we look at the word 'theatre'³⁵ is defined an "open-air place in ancient times for viewing spectacles and plays,". The Greek word '*theatron*' or 'place of seeing' was a place of light, with the harsh sun beating down on actors and spectators. When we talk about the people viewing these plays, we usually say *audience members*. The etymology of the word *audience* focuses solely on hearing, the action of hearing or persons within hearing range, assembly of listeners. Different parts of the world obviously have different words to describe *audience members*, in my native language, Afrikaans, we say *die gehoor* which loosely translates to *the hearing*. In certain parts of the world, audience members will be referred to *spectators*, *viewers*, *watchers*, although this is more to describe the crowd at a sporting event. It appears the most recognised term would be 'audience' even though very little scholars or theatre practitioners focus on the hearing rather than the seeing when discussing theatricality. Theatres today are much darker and more protected from the elements allowing theatre-makers to experiment with different times and settings. Martin Jay³⁶ in his study titled *Downcast Eyes* (1993), explains that in the last hundred years or so, Western thought has placed a sort of decency on seeing in the theatre. This is obviously complicated by the significance of the act of hearing as it is the central participatory part of the *audience*. When placing these terms in relation to the *theatre in the dark*, these artists chose to exclude the visual to an extent and focus solely on the hearing. Neutral, classical theatre would ensure that the audience members become habitualised the moment they enter the theatre, as they are familiar with their surroundings. The moment they are placed in the dark, they become sensitized, de-habitualised and de-automatised to every aspect of the show.

"[I'm] urging people not to come see the play, [rather] come hear the play" (Sossi in Raden 2012).

According to Welton³⁷ (2012: 52), theatrical darkness is most often an effect, rather than a state. In other words, theatrical darkness, like blackouts, is to create a specific

³⁵ online etymology dictionary (2001-2015)

³⁶ Martin Jay turns to this discourse surrounding vision and explores its often-contradictory implications in the work of such influential figures as Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, Guy Debord, Luce Irigaray, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida.

³⁷ Martin Welton is a Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Performance Studies in the Department of Drama at Queen Mary University of London, UK. His research is concerned with practical and critical

effect and not usually used as a fixed state. He continues saying that these blackouts are usually the signalling marker of something else, something bigger, rather than a condition to be appreciated on its own. Alice Rayner³⁸ suggests, however, the effectiveness of blackouts in the theatre have more to do with the audience and the stimulating effect they have than their servicing of action on stage: "The effectiveness of the blackout...as both metaphor and event rely upon its suddenness in the sense of shock of the disorienting plunge into darkness" (Rayner 2006: 158). This sense of shock is placed in reverse when looking at *Sound & Fury's* work. Welton describes what takes place in a 'dark theatre' piece: "...the shock to the vision of the darkness in which it was played, and the additionally jolting oddness of the lights which occasionally penetrated it" (Welton 2012:152). In other words, we see that just as darkness or a blackout is used to accentuate something happening in light, light is used to accentuate something in the dark. Most *theatre in the dark* productions would not 'go dark' for the entirety of the play, instead use light as punctuation marks to continually re-sensitize the audience. Welton describes that the same thing happens to your body with blackout shocks as well as light shocks. These light shocks and the way the characters look in these bright moments can be Grotesque if they make use of the disruption techniques.

Drawing back to the Grotesque, this shock can either elicit awe, horror or comic amusement. The use of blackouts or in the case of *dark theatre*, light, can only enhance the Grotesque images, sensitizing the audience. Once light shocks are used while Grotesque figures are in the theatre space, intense emotions of horror and disgust can be elicited. Once combining Grotesque figures and *dark theatre*, you take away the possibility of the audience becoming de-sensitized to the Grotesque images, as the light is not stationary on the figure. This leads to further disruption of the ontological and biological notions of the audience's world. It is inevitable that your audience members will be de-sensitized to their usual biological and ontological notions of the theatre. The moment the house lights are turned off, and they are left in utter darkness, this is the moment of sensitisation to the visual sense. Preconceived

approaches to movement and the senses in performance. He is the author of the monograph *Feeling Theatre* (2011).

³⁸ Alice Rayner is associate professor of drama at Stanford University and author of, most recently, *To Act, To Do, To Perform: Drama and the Phenomenology of Action*.

notions about sound will be disrupted by challenging their notions with these elaborate soundscapes. As mentioned earlier, it is a never-ending cycle, once sensitised, a few moments will pass before desensitisation occurs.

Revisiting what the researcher highlighted earlier about the heightening of the other senses, it is essential to note that elaborate sound systems are used to immerse the audience into a digital soundscape to make up for the 'missing' sense. Many *theatre in the dark* productions makes use of informal, site-specific theatre spaces to enhance the other senses.

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the strategies and emotions associated with the Grotesque and the visual sense. It is important to note that the Grotesque theory does not directly link to *theatre in the dark*. The only way that the Grotesque applies to this theatre-type is when the characters on stage or in the theatre space are already 'disrupted' in a way. It is important to remember that the Grotesque theories can only be applied to living things, in this way, characters need to be disrupted. Because the audience members are already de-habitualised and sensitised to this new theatre medium, distorted characters will only deepen their sensory response and their immersion. There is still a lot to learn from this theatre medium and the possibilities that a closer relationship to the Grotesque can bring.

CHAPTER 3: TACTILE & AUDITORY SENSES

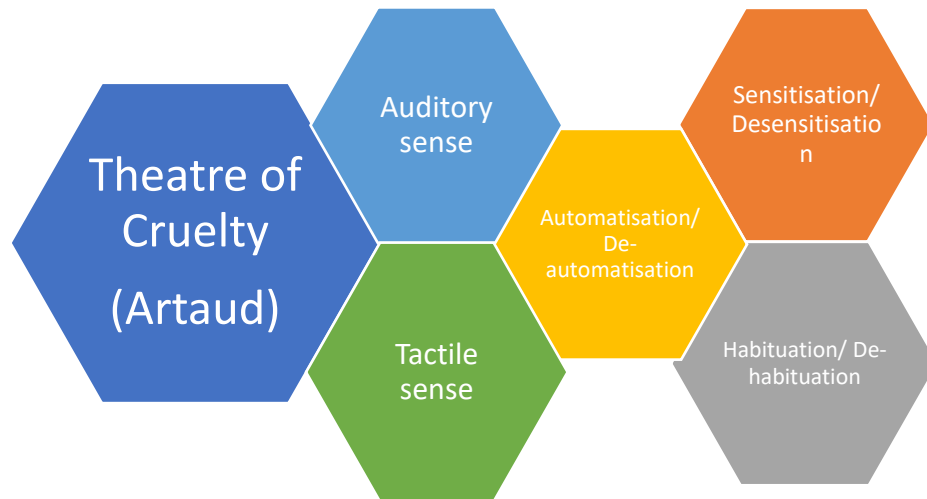


Figure 3.1: Infographic of Chapter 3: Tactile & Auditory senses

In the following chapter, the auditory and tactile senses will be discussed with relation to Artaud and *Theatre of Cruelty*. Firstly, a comprehensive review of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty will be made, followed by an in-depth literature review of the auditory and tactile senses focusing specifically on different conditions of the somesthetic sense. Lastly, the twin terms: sensitisation/ desensitisation, habituation/ de-habituation, and automatisation/ de-automatisation, will be used to weave the literature theory of *Theatre of Cruelty* together with the auditory and tactile senses.

3.1 Artaud: Theatre of Cruelty

In the mid-1930s, Artaud started practising a form of theatre with the objective to cleanse, transfigure and exalt. He wanted the theatre to move away from its reliance on the text, instead forming a new language which is half gesture and thought (Artaud 1938:89). This he would achieve through introducing cruelty into the theatre. Artaud named his short-lived theatre company *Theatre of Cruelty* but did not seem to achieve the ambitious programme he was striving for. To some, the word *cruelty* sounded restrictive and uninviting. He constantly defended his topic by substituting words for cruelty with terror, violence, and danger. Artaud (1938:3) stated in his manifesto that

Theatre of Cruelty was theatre difficult or cruel for oneself not blood and gore necessarily. The irony is, he did not intend that a sort of punishment be practised on the audience, rather having them experience a “beneficent punishment” (Bermel³⁹ 1997: 14). Artaud stated that life is a lot of evil and ugliness, both, man-made and natural. Theatre of cruelty’s objective was to expose the spectators to these dangers and free them from it. Artaud (1938:79) states that theatre was created to teach us that the sky can still fall on our heads, that we are not free. Artaud had to make it known that this theatre was not a form of torture, “but a facing of the worst that could happen, followed by a refreshing release from it” (Bermel 1997: 14). Reading what Artaud had in mind for his theatre, the researcher would contest that many were extremely confused and anxious about attending such a performance. Artaud (1938: 85) would tackle famous personalities, atrocious crimes, superhuman performances and treat them as mankind does with rebelliousness to social and ethical norms.

Knowing the background of the style of theatre, an analysis of the three main features of Theatre of Cruelty can be made. According to Bermel (1997:15), **it does not involve any physical or spiritual mistreatment**. It instead expresses situations that artistically express the rigour, urgency, and stubbornness of life. Secondly, this theatre **gravitates to the individuals or collective dreams**. It will provide each spectator with their most carnal obsessions, fantasies or their most undesirable situations or events. Artaud (1938: 86) states that the use of cruelty and violence confronts these above-mentioned situations and shows us all the possibilities. These situations pour out, not on an illusory or false level, but rather an interior space within every spectator. Lastly, Theatre of Cruelty **works on the nerves and the senses rather than the intellectual aspects of man**. Artaud’s objective was to include all men because it invades anxieties common to all, the general public. These three features being the reason *Theatre of Cruelty* was chosen as the theory for this chapter. Not only does it not intend to harm the attendants, but it focuses on the senses of the individual and their most private fears or instincts.

³⁹ Albert Bermel looks closely at Artaud's work as a playwright, director, actor, designer, producer and critic. Tracing the theatre of cruelty's origins in earlier dramatic conventions, tribal rituals of cleansing, transfiguration and exaltation, and in related arts such as film and dance.

A few years later, Artaud encountered *The Balinese theatre*⁴⁰ which sparked his imagination. Artaud (1938:92) describes *The Balinese theatre* as having nothing to do with entertainment but managed to achieve a state of “ecstasy, delirium, intoxication, trance, and propel their audience members into the same mood of spellbound alertness”. Artaud described this theatre as being awake in a dream. Apparently, the Balinese achieve this state of delirium by creating a new language that is without meaning except for the circumstances on the stage. This is achieved by relying on mime, movement, and space.

Artaud contrasts *The Balinese theatre* with western theatre and states that the former creates life whereas the latter, imitates life. Contrasting the intellectual capabilities of the two, he states that western theatre seeks to define the words of the playwright. Whereas, *The Balinese theatre* ‘causes thinking’ within their audience members, causing vibration in every aspect of the mind.

When looking at the initial concepts of *Theatre of Cruelty*, *The Balinese theatre* succeeded in what was initially the objectives of *Theatre of Cruelty*. Just like *The Balinese*, he wanted to evoke wonder and create his languages specific for single moments on stage. A theatre for everyone to experience life at its worst, being rewarded the feeling of ecstasy from the relief afterwards.

3.2 The Tactile Sense

When imagining how you would react to being deprived of a certain sense, you would, for example, close your eyes to simulate blindness or close your ears to simulate deafness. While this can be done for most senses, “you can’t turn off touch, it never goes away” (Linden in Stomberg 2015: page 1 of 5). Linden elaborates that all information received from touch is ever-present. According to Fischer (2007: 167),

⁴⁰ Balinese theatre and dance are intimately linked. Indeed, Balinese use the same word - *sesolahan* - for both. Until the conquest of Bali in the early twentieth century and the arrival of Europeans, almost all performance was dramatical, often involving a combination of dance, singing and acting that went on all night, and drawing upon a vast literary canon which included Indian and Indonesian epics and stories from elsewhere. Europeans however wanted short attractive pieces without narrative or dialogue that required no cultural background or understanding. So Balinese distilled pure dance from the existing theatrical and religious performance and choreographed entirely new pieces - so creating one of the world's most vibrant and spectacular virtuoso dance repertoires.

Marinetti, a futurist artist, claims that touch surpasses all the other senses as it can be tapped into and explored.

In 1906, Bailey introduced the term *somesthesia* into the English language and two years later introducing the term *somesthetic senses*. These senses are roughly described as the senses of touch or the body senses. This term draws its meaning from the word *soma* meaning *body* and *esthetic* meaning *feeling*. Under this term, three different types of sense systems were identified; the skin sense, the kinesthetic sense, and the vestibular sense. These senses will be discussed later in the chapter.

Without being aware, you are desensitised to everyday tactile stimulation, for example by thinking about how your feet are touching the floor or your hands on the keyboard; you re-sensitise yourself to the familiar concept of touch. These concepts and other facts all interlink and will be discussed in this chapter advances.

If we start to look at the concept of tactile stimulation in the theatre, not many examples of such stimulation arise. However, taking it step by step, certain aspects continually stimulate. When you buy your theatre ticket, the feel of the thick cardboard-like paper gently orientates your brain to the location of the theatre. Once the ticket has been torn by the usher, the ridges on the edge of the ticket lead you to the correct seat where you sit down and most often feel the plush upholstery under your seat. Jackets tend to be taken off, and whether you are a nail-biter or a fidgeter, people seldom sit still in a theatre. If the play were emotionally charged, tissues would wipe away the wet tears streaking down your face, sensitising you to how much water a tear contains. The tissue starts to get all flimsy and wet with tears and mucous, and before you know it, the play has ended, and you applaud loudly with a half tore wet tissue in your hands. This brings us to the first fact: **your emotional state can modulate your perception of touch**. Linden elaborated by saying, your emotional state can alter specific tactile experiences depending on what your state of mind is. He uses the example of a gentle caress of a loved one, warm and familiar on your arm. Place the same touch in an argument and a sense of repulsion and irritation may quickly arise. **Touch also shapes how you feel about people**. Linden states that an experiment was done with

hot and cold beverages. The people who held the hot beverages before shaking the hand of a new acquaintance was perceived as warmer and friendlier.

In Jennifer Fischer's article, *Tangible Acts Touch performances* (2006), it is interesting to note that her practical examples of tactile theatre are all *Performance Art* based. These performance pieces that she analyses experiments with pain, pleasure, desire, healing, and knowledge. According to Fischer (2007: 165), these different reactions can be achieved by using different textures; rough to soft intensity, cool to an uncomfortable heat. Most performance artists use these tools in gestures of greeting, ritual hostility, arousing play, or aggravating spatial boundaries.

Fischer (2007: 166) states that *The Enlightenment period*⁴¹ brought with the realisation of touch, that is was not just the absence of vision. Futurist artist, Marinetti was inspired by the First World War to write his manifesto, *Tactilism*. This 1924 manifesto tells the experiences that Marinetti had while crawling through the darkness of a dugout. Suddenly he collided with "cold, steel bayonets, sharp-edged mess tins and the bristly heads of sleeping soldiers". Being entranced by the range of these sensations, Marinetti stayed up that night obsessed with "feeling and classifying" his vivid experiences that he would later coin as "a tactile art" (Marinetti (1971 [1924]: 109). Marinetti's experiences of *tactilism* are quite remarkable as he describes how he activated his body as a "sensing apparatus" and deliberately started feeling these spaces between himself and other people and objects.

Bridging the gap to Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*, Linden (Stromberg 2015: 2 of 5) states that your **emotional state can maximise pain** to torture just by altering their emotional state. If someone is sleep deprived, threatened or is unaware of impending pain, this will make the pain more painful. In contrast, you can modulate negative touch through positive experiences like exercise or meditation. The body knows when a particular touch can be friendly or dangerous. Thus, there are two touch systems according to Linden (Stromberg 2015: 2 of 5), one system gives the facts – location, strength, and movement of the touch. This system is called the **discriminative touch**

⁴¹The Enlightenment is not only a historical period, but also a process of social, psychological or spiritual development, unbound to time or place.

system or known as *the skin* in the somesthetic senses. According to Fischer (2007: 166), Marinetti⁴² delves a bit deeper, calling this *contiguous* touch. This touch system involves the uneasiness towards cold, smooth, lukewarm, irritating, warm surfaces and contexts. The **kinesthetic sense** is described as the movement orientated sense. For example, when you lie down and lift your leg towards the ceiling, you know it is lifted upwards. This is the kinesthetic sense telling you the relation of your limbs to your body. Lastly, the **vestibular sense** orientates your body in relation to the ground and the movement of your head. For example, when you close your eyes and spin around in a circle and stand up straight, the gelatine-like liquid in your otolith sacs, just behind your cochlea, vibrates through the movement of the crystals. This vibration sets off tiny receptors in the inner surface of the sacs telling the body that he or she is moving forwards, backwards, sideways, or up and down.

The other system that Linden identifies is the **emotional** touch system and conveys data much more slowly to the brain. This system registers if a touch is emotionally charged, sexual to dangerous. According to Linden (Stromberg 2015: page 3 of 5), some people do not experience the emotional part of touch. They know that a particular tactile stimulus should hurt, but they do not feel the pain associated with it. Marinetti calls this system the *affective* touch. This touch involves experiencing feelings of excitement, sensuality, wit, certainty or abstraction. According to Linden (Stromberg 2015: 2 of 5), people can be **touch-blind**. He studied a woman who could only feel one tactile stimulation: if you were to caress her leg or arm, she could roughly tell you where it was and that it's pleasant. Linden continues saying that she had to learn an emotional touch system.

According to Fischer (2007: 166), Marinetti describes touch, like all other sense to be engraved in human physiology, but can also be trained, disciplined and practised. Linden describes that the **emotional touch system can be extremely underdeveloped in children who are not touched enough**. By depriving a child of physical contact, their development both cognitive and physical will be

⁴² an Italian poet, editor, art theorist, and founder of the Futurist movement. He was associated with the utopian and Symbolist artistic and literary community Abbaye de Créteil between 1907 and 1908. Marinetti is best known as the author of the first *Futurist Manifesto*, which was written and published in 1909; and also of the Fascist Manifesto.

underdeveloped. This was seen in the Romanian orphanages where there weren't enough caregivers to hold the babies in a day, most of the children would go days without any physical contact. This led to mental disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression.

When comparing Linden and Marinetti's systems, we see that the former analyses touch on face value, whereas Marinetti is much more interested in the way touch affects us. How we feel when we touch certain surfaces. Marinetti created the concept *touch-scape* which allows the contiguous and affective touch systems to work together and be dependent on each other. When seeing the two systems work together, a touch harmony is developed. According to Fischer (2007: 167), Marinetti's troubling colonialist stereotypes should not pull focus from this *touch-scape*. Marinetti (1971 [1924]: 110-11) analyses three different places; Sudan, the Mediterranean Sea, and Paris. Sudan is described as "crude, greasy, rough, sharp and burning", whereas the Mediterranean Sea is felt as "slippery, metallic, cool, elastic". In contrast to these two, Paris is experienced as "soft, delicate, warm and cool, artificial, and civilized". Marinetti's "touch-scape" promotes "a visual sense born of the fingertips" (1921) (Peripheralfocus.net, 2018: page 3 of 5).

According to Linden (Stromberg 2015: 2 Of 5), **not all parts of the body have the same amount of touch receptors**. The lips, for example, have a lot more receptors than your thighs or your chest. Linden states that there are four varieties when it comes to your tactile receptors: one for sensing vibration, one for tiny amounts of slippage, one for stretching of the skin. The last one is called *The Merkel ending*⁴³ which is used to feel something delicate – like your fingertips or lips. When applying this to the theatre, it is essential to see that different tactile stimulations will be absorbed by different parts of the body. If your production makes use of extremely delicate textures, it is essential to know where the correct area it should be used to achieve the correct stimulation. The last stimulating fact has to do with your age. **Your tactile sense worsens as you age**. This process of tactile loss happens very slowly, and over an

⁴³ Friedrich Sigmund Merkel (1845–1919) was an outstanding German anatomist of the late nineteenth century. He described cells in the skin of amphibians, birds, and mammals and referred to them as *Tastzellen*, or 'touch cells.' The cells were given the eponym Merkel cells in 1878 by Robert Bonnet (1851–1921).

extended period, one starts to lose your pain and temperature receptors. These facts may be worthless to some, but to an artist practitioner dealing with the stimulation of the senses, it is vital to know which group could be immune to your tactile stimulations.

Continuing with audience's response to tactile stimulation, Fischer (2007: 172) discusses two types of touch that can take place in a theatre: *recovering touch*, and *immersive touch*. As stated earlier, Fischer only discusses performance art pieces which makes use of tactile stimulation. At the hand of these performance pieces, recovering and immersive touch will be discussed.

Before reading Fischer's paragraph on *recovering touch*, the term lends itself to be self-explanatory. Art that uses touch to bridge a gap between two beings or ideas, healing the gap between. A performance art duo *Praxis*⁴⁴ focuses on in-your-face sincerity and this healing process. The duo's performance of *The New Economy* lasted two and a half years, their goal: the intimate care of strangers. This performance piece lasted from 1999-2001.



Figure 3.2: *The New Economy* (1999-2001)



Figure 3.3: *The New Economy* (1999-2001)

⁴⁴ Praxis is a two-person collaborative that was formed in 2000 and was first featured in 2001 in PS1/MOMA's Greater New York show, and in 2002 they were in the Whitney Biennial for their visual art and a series of performative actions. They are a husband and wife team – Brainard and Delia Carey.

The New Economy greeted their 'audience members' in this case people passing by with a sign that read: "Welcome, free hugs". There was no monetary gain for the duo



Figure 3.4: *The New Economy* (1999-2001)

only the exchange of hugs, foot washes, band-aid applications with kisses or one-dollar bill gifts. After 9/11, the piece offered a broken society healing by caring for wounds, physical or emotional and provided an antidote to the shock. These simple acts performed by the duo offered healing and alleviated anxiety. Although the

duo did not reinvent the wheel, if the wheel was complex intercultural struggles, they managed to make a tactile contribution to the climate of recovery.

Immersive touch, on the other hand, is not all hugs and band-aids. This type of touch in performances open the audience to more forceful, diverse tactile stimulations including weight, pressure, and temperature. Fischer (2007: 174) continues to state that these immersive performances force audience members' bodies to make decisions that evoke feelings of uneasiness or pleasure. In a performance piece by Marina Abramovic⁴⁵ and Ulay⁴⁶ in 1977, they emphasized the physicality of immersive touch. Both artists mentioned was nude and faced each other with a locked gaze at the entrance of an art gallery. The visitors had to make a choice, who would they face when they rubbed against their flesh to enter this doorway. Being much more direct and confronting than *recovering touch*, *immersive touch* as in this performance piece, *Imponderabilia* (1977), allows for emotional, libidinal and cultural boundaries to be tested.

⁴⁵ Working in a wide range of media, Marina Abramović is best known for her provocative performance works, employing her own body as both subject and medium.

⁴⁶ Ulay is the pseudonym of Frank Uwe Laysiepen. Ulay was formally trained as a photographer. In the early period of his artistic activity (1968-1976) he undertook a thematic search for understandings of the notions of identity and the body on both the personal and communal levels, mainly through series of Polaroid photographs, aphorisms and intimate performances.



Figure 3.5: *Imponderabilia* (1977)

Because the senses are so integral in our daily lives, Sensory Processing Disorder⁴⁷ affects many people. This disorder prevents the brain from receiving the correct signals with regards to the sense. Tactile dysfunction has three sub-categories; hypersensitivity to touch, hyposensitivity to touch, and poor tactile perception and discrimination. Hypersensitivity or tactile defensiveness is seen when someone is fearful or anxious about being touched. This is common in adults who avoid physical contact with their partners and in daily situations. On the other end of the spectrum is hyposensitivity to touch also explained as under-responsive. People suffering from this dysfunction, crave touch. These sufferers are also not aware of being touched or bumped unless done with excessive force. The last category is poor tactile perception and is quite self-explanatory. These people, mostly children, according to the Sensory Processing Disorder website of Australia⁴⁸ (2017: page 1 of 2), have trouble with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping or fastening clothes.

⁴⁷ Sensory processing disorders were first described in-depth by occupational therapist Anna Jean Ayres in 1972. According to Ayres's writings, an individual with SPD would have a decreased ability to organize sensory information as it comes in through the senses.

⁴⁸ The Sensory Processing Foundation aids to help raise awareness of this disorder to help parents and teachers better understand and help the children suffering from this disorder.

3.3 The Auditory sense

“A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine”

(Beckett 1980 in English.txstate.edu, 2018: page 1 of 1)

Sound has always played an essential role in theatre but always secondary to the text and spectacle, but the question remains: can a *theatre of sounds* exist? Can a production focus solely on aural stimulation without any other sensory stimulation? The concept of sonic fiction explains this essential role that sound plays in our lives by saying that whatever we do, whether we write, dance, listen to music, sing etc. we are given an opportunity to express our auditory experiences (Schulze⁴⁹ 2013: 11 of 14). Drawing it back to the question at hand, the theatre experiences we are discussing here focuses on disrupting normal auditory experiences. So, can we have an entire theatre experience made solely out of disrupted auditory experiences? I believe that a theatre experience like this will definitely challenge the attendant but can exist and will be shown in the discussion on Karanth below.

According to Sahai⁵⁰ (2007: 80), to look at sound in the theatre, a shift needs to be made to look at *sound as theatre*. The theatre has different spaces, a performance space, and an audience space. The moment when sound is seen as theatre, we create a new space: the sound world. This world is formed inside each audience members imagination; no two spaces could ever be identical. If an empty stage were to be translated into the sound world – silence would equate to emptiness. “All sound, noise, music, and utterance begin and end with silence” (Kendrik & Roesner 2011: xvii). Another comparison between the stage and sound world would be the text. The text and words on stage would translate to the composition and the arrangement of the sounds. Sahai (2007: 81) elaborates on the sound elements which will make up for the body of the actors: pitch, tone, intensity, volume and dimension of sound. All these elements together with the actor’s voice and melodious music will form the soundscape.

⁴⁹ Holger Schulze is visiting professor for sound studies at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Kulturwissenschaft and associate professor at the Universität der Künste Berlin. He is founding member of the European Sound Studies Association. Recently he published the third and final volume of his *Theorie der Werkgenese*, a generative theory of artifacts.

⁵⁰ Theatre and Performance art scholar, School of Arts and Aesthetics, New Delhi. Published in: Motje Wolf (Ed.) *Proceedings of Sound, Sight, Space and Play* 2009.

“Let the meaning of the words and visual signs communicate the intellectual idea. They are much better at that. Begin by focusing the sound on manipulating the emotions of the audience” (Thomas in Sahai 2007: 84).

A clear example of this type of sound manipulating the audience, according to Sahai (2007:84), can be seen in the work of Indian director, actor, and musician, Karanth⁵¹. He re-interpreted sound in the theatre by rearranging the relationship between the different sound elements: language, song music, and sounds. He concentrated on the rhythm of languages instead of the words itself, allowing musical rhythms to form of how a language sounds, instead of what it says, allowing sounds to speak more than the words itself. Allowing the visual and textual to convey intellectual ideas and the sounds to touch the audience's emotions. Thomas⁵² (2000: 1) discusses Appia's⁵³ *Hierarchy of Drama* (1918), rephrasing Appia's point of view, stating that, the script and spoken words are only the outward manifestations of the characters inner life. The script and words are powerless to express the entire inner life of the character. Music, on the other hand, expresses that inner life directly, and can't express something else. On the other hand, one element is missing from music: “intellectual discourse” (Thomas 2000: 2). Appia countered this statement by acknowledging that language can communicate precise intellectual ideas, he said: “to define his expression, the musician needs the poet” (Appia 1962: 45).

If sound would move from the outskirts to the centre of the play, would it still be within the boundaries of theatre, or would it be considered radio? To answer this question, one needs to look at the *theatrophone*. According to Sahai (2007:81), Paris in 1881,

⁵¹ Babukodi Venkataramana Karanth was a noted film and theatre personality from India. Throughout his life he was director, actor and musician of modern Indian theatre both in Kannada as well as Hindi, and one of the pioneers of Kannada and Hindi new wave cinema. He was an alumnus of the National School of Drama (1962) and later, its director. He has directed many successful plays and has directed award-winning works in Kannada cinema.

⁵² Author of *The Function of the Soundscape*. Originally presented at the 2000 OISTAT Scenography Symposium, Bregenz, Austria.

⁵³ Adolphe Appia, was a Swiss architect and theorist of stage lighting and décor. Appia is best known for his many scenic designs for Wagner's operas. He rejected painted two-dimensional sets for three-dimensional “living” sets because he believed that shade was as necessary as light to form a connection between the actor and the setting of the performance in time and space. Through the use of control of light intensity, colour and manipulation, Appia created a new perspective of scene design and stage lighting.

saw one of the earliest engagements of theatre through sound. The 'theatrophone' made it possible for people to listen to the live theatre performances through a telephone. In the case of the *theatrophone*, it did not alter or recreate the live performance in any way. Instead, it was a reconstruction of the actual event. Here theatre was experienced primarily through sound. This foreshadowed audio theatre which would later make its appearance with radio. What differentiates radio dramas and sound-centric performances, is the element of liveness. According to Sahai (2007:82), the presence of the live bodies of the actors and the actual-time of the produced sounds gives the play liveness, distinguishing it from radio dramas. Liveness is not just the actual production but the 'theatrical event' and the presence of audience members. Whereas in radio dramas the audience is not present at the event, sound-centric performance allows the audience members to observe and to be immersed.

"If music stays 'in me', then the sound attached to the visuality and the stage gestures 'enters me', only to 'come out' and 'circulate' inside all that I perceive onstage and in the world, thus enabling me to travel within these musical spaces, places that are both real and imaginary. It is up to me to understand what the sound material is telling me beyond its textual dramaturgy" Pavis⁵⁴ (2011: xii).

More recently, a company called *Sound & Fury* works on "developing the sound space of theatre and presenting the audience with new ways of experiencing performance and stories by heightening the aural sense" (Sound & Fury Website: page 1 of 2). This London based company focuses on creating theatre in the dark with immersive soundscapes and elaborate surround-sound effects. The company uses headphones to convey these immersive sound-scapes to the audience, isolating them from their fellow audience members and placing them in the middle of the performance space. This breaks the *fourth wall*⁵⁵ and creates a new space for audience members to

⁵⁴ Patrice Pavis is one of France's most brilliant academics and a leading expert internationally in the theory of theatre.

⁵⁵ The invisible 'wall' dividing a theatre audience from a performance, especially that taking place in a three-walled box set of a proscenium theatre. The idea of such a division is usually attributed to Diderot, who wrote in 1758: 'When you write or act, think no more of the audience than if it had never

experience the play. Not all their work is in the dark, as they use lights as effects rather than prolonged states. The company aims to create the scenes in the mind's eye of the audience member. They strive to create an audio-image instead of a visual image. "Theatre of sounds is an emotional, intimate, powerful theatre. It is a theatre of screams, whispers, words and silence" (Sahai 2007: 84).

To many, an experience like this can be extremely stressful but, according to Suedfeld⁵⁶, sensory deprivation has the possibility of being incredibly calming. In a study conducted in 1997 of well over one thousand descriptions of sensory deprivation indicated that more than 90% of subjects found it deeply relaxing. In fact, it was so relaxing, that in the late 1970s his protégé Borrie⁵⁷, renamed the experience "REST, or Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy" (Fan 2014: 1 of 2). Although this may seem very comforting, there is a negative side to sensory deprivation. According to the American Psychological Association's (APA) definition of sensory deprivation in culture, short periods of sensory deprivation can be incredibly relaxing, extended deprivation can result in anxiety, hallucinations, bizarre thoughts, depression and antisocial behaviour. APA continues to say that deprivation experiments have proven that humans need a constant sensory contact to function. When reading this definition of the APA, it seems quite risky to embark on the journey that is *theatre in the dark*, because of the possible dangers of deprivation. Thus, *Sound & Fury's* productions do not last for more than 20-30 minutes. One example of this is *Charlie Ward (2014)*, which only lasts for 16 minutes. The play is set in a makeshift hospital ward: C Ward. 1914. In this hospital ward, behind the front lines, casualties are treated. Apparently, films of Charlie Chaplin⁵⁸ were shown on the ceiling of this ward to boost morale. Using total darkness and minimal lighting of the flickering screen, patients, i.e., audience

existed. Imagine a huge wall across the front of the stage, separating you from the audience, and behave exactly as if the curtain had never risen.'

⁵⁶ a pioneering psychologist in the field of sensory deprivation

⁵⁷ Roderick A Borrie, Ph.D. is a Clinical Psychologist at South Oaks Hospital, Amityville, New York. He began his exploration of therapeutic uses of Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy at the University of British Columbia with Dr. Peter Suedfeld and continues to use it in current work with patients suffering chronic pain and illness.

⁵⁸ Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin, KBE (16 April 1889 – 25 December 1977) was an English comic actor, filmmaker, and composer who rose to fame in the era of silent film. Chaplin became a worldwide icon through his screen persona "the Tramp" and is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the film industry. His career spanned more than 75 years, from childhood in the Victorian era until a year before his death in 1977 and encompassed both adulation and controversy.

members are escorted to their own bed with its own immersive sound system. The play deals with the conversation between two subconscious levels. Because of this highly personal, interactive setting, the play is limited to such a short amount of time. *Sound & Fury's* work will be discussed in the practical chapters.

“The theater, which is no thing, but makes use of everything – gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness – rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express its manifestations [...]. To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theatre” (Artaud 1938).

3.4 Twin terms

3.4.1 The twin terms with relation to the tactile sense and Theatre of Cruelty

Artaud stated that theatre must disturb the senses and not the intellect of the attendant. By knowing the above-mentioned conditions and tactics, artist practioners can disrupt the senses of the attendant. If researchers were to place each type of tactile stimulation: immersive touch, and recovering touch, into a box, their labels would be entirely different. The first box would be the *Sensitisation, De-automatisation, and De-habitation* box. In this box, audiences are sensitised to new stimuli as ‘*normal*’ or ‘*regular*’ experiences are distorted, ‘*normal*’ and ‘*regular*’ experiences can be seen as ontological and biological notions. When analysing *immersive touch*, one sees that the bodies of audience members are forced to make decisions that evoke feelings of uneasiness or pleasure as in *Imponderabilia* by Abramovic. Immersive touch sensitizes the audience with tactile elements such as; force, weight, temperature, various stimulations, and pressure.

Desensitisation, automatisisation, and habituation would form the label of the second box. In this box, there is a decrease in sensitisation, and audience members are immersed or absorbed into the represented. As the researcher stated above, in *The New Economy*, recovering touch is used to ride the gap between two beings or ideas, healing the gap between. Here, the audience members were only sensitized to the hug for a moment before they were absorbed by what the tactile stimulation

represented. The moment the audience member is immersed, *desensitisation*, *automatisation*, and *habituation* are in the foreground.

3.4.2 The twin terms with relation to the Auditory sense

“It is truly amazing to sit for hours in the natural world with your ears technologically sensitized to be more on a par with the other forms of life around you... This means of focusing technology towards a kind of expansion of consciousness gives us access to listening beyond the boundaries of our usual human perception. It applies current technological breakthroughs in music and sound art towards a non-human centred and environmentally relevant art practice.” (Dunn⁵⁹ in Cummings 2006: page 1 of 5)

Looking past the fact that Dunn is not a theatre scholar or practitioner, his perception of sound and his enthusiasm towards the field of sound art is truly contagious. Firstly, discussing the quote “having your ears technologically sensitized”. Placing this in the context of *Sound Theatre*, the immersive soundscapes playing through your headphone sensitizes your aural sense in such a way that it completely emerges you into the scene. These headphones isolate the audience members from each other, only exposing their aural sense to the soundscape. Secondly, “focusing technology towards a kind of expansion of consciousness gives us access to listening beyond the boundaries of our usual human perception” (Dunn in Cummings 2006: page 2 of 5). If you had to read this without knowing Dunn was contributing to the field of etymology, this quote strongly supports *Sound Theatre*. This quote describes what immersive soundscapes can achieve in the theatre, enabling technology to take us beyond our biological boundaries of what we can hear and expands our consciousness with new sounds.

If we had to apply the same ‘box’ labels to the aural sense, *Sound Theatre* would be placed in the *Sensitisation*, *De-automatisation*, and *De-habituation* box. Sound

⁵⁹ David Dunn has been an especially curious listener, recordist, and engineer. His most recent project delves deep into the bioacoustics of a species of bark beetle that is devouring our indigenous piñon pine forests; his recordings clearly suggest a diversity of sounds that are worthy of further research by entomologists.

engineers use tools like; pitch, tone, intensity, volume, and sound dimensions to create this surreal world. These tools together with the actor's voice form the complete soundscape. The audience members ontological boundaries are disrupted by placing them in a new space, isolation them from other audience members and using unknown sound techniques and systems, and the outcome is them being *sensitised, de-automatised and de-habitualised*. This allows the audience to use the aural stimuli to create images in their mind's eye.

Artaud (1938: 5) states that *Theatre of Cruelty* deliberately disrupts your world, that the theatre must leave a scar, penetrate through our skin and address all our senses. With the examples discussed above in both the tactile and auditory senses, it is shown that firstly, the skin is a major receptor of stimuli and what can happen to a person when certain areas are stimulated. Secondly, that the tactile sense is much more than touch, that it confronts ideas and notions about who a person is and being placed in performances like the examples mentioned above, primal actions can surface. The researcher observed that both tactile and auditory stimulation can be anywhere on a scale of soothing to torture. A drop of water falling in a bucket will only be soothing until it is used to mentally torture someone, the same thing applies with a feather being brushed against one's arm. Artaud (1938:94) set out with the idea that theatre needs to wake us up. By introducing tactile stimulation into the theatre, practitioners will already be disrupting the boundaries of the attendants. With the auditory sense, a disruption will be more difficult to achieve, but with the use of soundscapes used in direct harmony with the other senses, a disruption could be much bigger than expected. Like the researcher stated in the beginning of the thesis, the senses can never be split from each other.

In conclusion, this chapter identifies a significant gap in the aural and tactile stimulation in theatre. The effect of this type of stimulation goes far beyond our current knowledge. Limited research on tactile stimulation in theatre is currently available and is mostly limited to immersive touch and recovering touch. *Sensitisation* and *desensitisation* of the tactile sense will have to be explored in further research and performances. The tactile sense mostly revolves around concepts, age groups or tactile disorders as discussed in the nine facts stated by Linden. If researchers were to identify target

group suffering from a disorder or a specific age group, the field could grow exponentially. On the other hand, the sound-based theatre has started to make significant strides, leading theatre discussions with a sound only approach. This theatre style immerses the audience in a new space where their imaginations create their own visual narratives.

CHAPTER 4: OLFACTORY SENSES

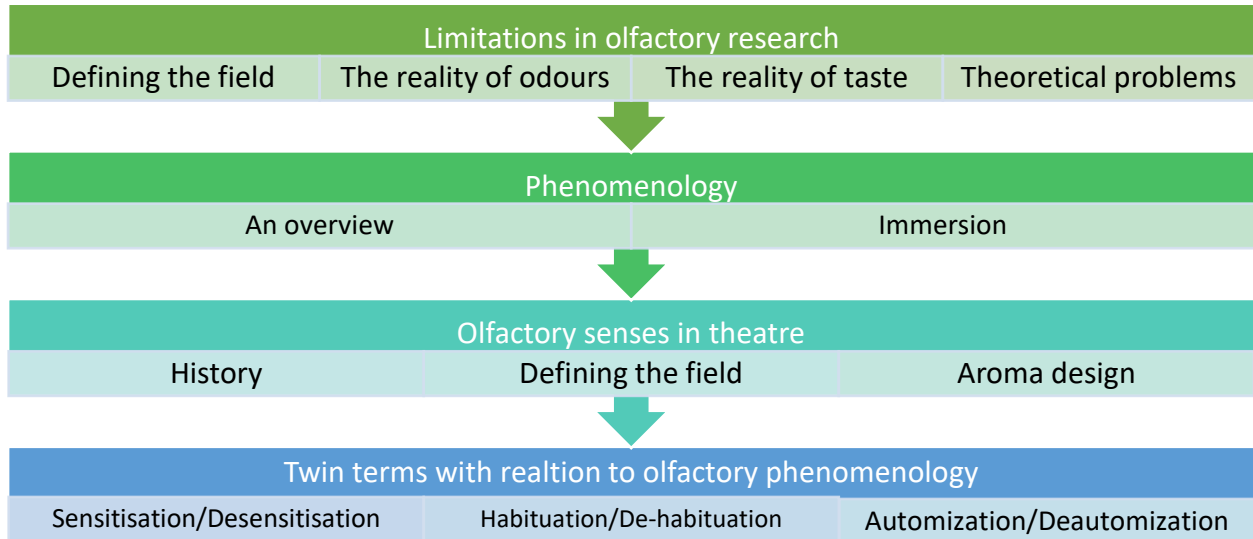


Figure 4.7: Infographic of Chapter 4: Olfactory senses

4.1 Limitations in Olfactory research

4.1.1 Defining the field

Throughout this chapter, theories about olfaction, phenomenology and performances will be presented without any string to tie it all together. The twin terms; sensitisation/desensitisation, habituation/ de-habituation, automisation/ de-automisation, will later serve as this string. Refer to the infographic above for visual clarity about the chapter.

According to Carvalho (2014: 45), we connect a great worth to our olfactory experiences. Thousands are spent to mask natural body odours by strong perfumes. Additionally, significant pleasure is found in inhaling expensive wines to discover the different aromas, but like wine or coffee tasting, no two people experience the same olfactory experience. As a result, a particular smell can bring back childhood memories and transport us to another time and place. Aromas and taste have strong emotional associations, while on the other hand, a pungent smell can repel people. Chalmers states that "smell has little in the way of apparent structure and often floats free of any

apparent object, remaining a primitive presence in our sensory manifold” (1996:8). Making this an incredibly tricky sense to give structure to, as unlike the other senses, smells cannot be measured or recorded.

4.1.2 The reality of odours

We perceive the world through all our senses, but it comes as no shock to say that the most weight is given to sight and hearing. According to Almagor⁶⁰ (1990:256), the sense of smell is seen as primitive or old-fashioned. In contrast to this, the sense of smell plays a crucial role in internalizing one’s culture as well as moulding one’s identity. This is proven by studies with anosmic patients, patients who lose their sense of smell. According to Van Toller⁶¹ in Carvalho (2014: 50) patients who lose their sense of smell feel lost, unmotivated and show signs of severe depression. Patients describe their situations as colourless and struggle to connect to the outside world. This reveals what a crucial role olfactory stimulation plays in making humans feel at home in the world.

Elaborating further on a person’s identity within the olfactory sense, Almagor (1990: 257) states that a child learns to associate certain smells with different contexts through unorganized and limited exposure. This type of learning takes place in the community and interaction with the people. Additionally, how the community classifies certain smells is linear to how the child will classify these smells. A type of non-verbal, unconscious association exists when associating components of reality with specific odours. Furthermore, as children grow up, these essential associations of their childhood are engraved in their memory, as children experience the world by allocating qualities to various things.

Odours become part of our daily routine. Consequently, very little attention is paid to them. We use smells to place ourselves and others in the larger world, through contextual odours. As said above, such meaning is part of our routines and is unconsciously perceived through association with odours and context.

⁶⁰ Uri Almagor a Hebrew University professor of sociology and social anthropology

⁶¹ Sensory psychologist Steve van Toller of the University of Warwick, UK. Dr Van Toller has been investigating how our emotions are affected by smell. More than any other sense, a particular smell can trigger off memories.

When questioning the perception of odour and the subjective sense of reality, you have to look at different dimensions of odour perception which should be differentiated to see their different application in everyday life. According to Almagor (1990: 257), three dimensions exist. Firstly, **odours whose combinations give the aroma of culture**. These aromas characterise a community or society. The aromatic combinations consist of spices, cooking, vegetation, patterns of sanitation, humidity and temperature. These specific odours are taken for granted, only when a person would move away and come back to the specific place you would be desensitized to these aromas. These aromas are part of the community and are experienced collectively by everyone living there. The second dimension is **a combination of collective experience and private experience**. This dimension is derived from odours connected to an individual's experiences; this dimension is part of the shared knowledge of the community. The smell of freshly baked bread, for example, is part of the shared knowledge, so is an unaired room or the smell of rotten fruit. Most individuals have experienced these aromas, and if they have not, they cannot share that knowledge with the rest of society. The third dimension is **purely individual, smells that an individual has stored and has created their connotation to it**. The smell of a baby's feet that is connected to a warm stone or the smell of rain in May are all individual experiences. This dimension could be described as more poetic and describes an ambience rather than an odour, but it ultimately describes the individual's experiences.

“...meaning of certain smells lies in the life experience of individuals, some smells inevitably carry connotations unique to each person's biography; hence, odors enable one to shift from one situation in the in the objective reality to a subjective one, which evokes something different from the situation in which the odors were inhaled. (Almagor 1990: 263)”

4.1.3 The reality of taste

As with the sense of smell, taste is as subjective. Furthermore, eating and drinking will produce unique experiences in your mouth. Like some of the aromas we smell, these experiences can be fleeting. Although fleeting, we immediately decide if we like or

dislike a specific taste. According to Smith⁶² (2013: 294), we experience basic tastes; bitter, salt, sweet, savoury, sour, and metallic. These are the basic tastes, but this is probably not the extent of what this sense is capable of. He explains that we can taste ripe mangos, garlic, onions, peppermint or aniseed, and states that these are flavours. The ability to taste these flavours does not only depend on our mouths or taste buds, but rather a fusion of elements or a complex interaction between the different senses. Smith (2013: 295) states that this fusion is between taste and smell, the combination of smell allows us to not only taste the basic tastes but flavours as well.

Smith (2013: 296) discusses Paul Rozin's (1982) two senses of olfaction: *orthonasal*, and *retronasal*. The former allows us to inhale odours from our environment. In contrast, *retronasal* olfaction is when the odour is perceived as arising from the mouth. *Orthonasal* olfaction allows individuals to detect environmental stimuli: smoke, food, mates, and predators, whereas *retronasal* olfaction allows us to assess what we are eating and swallowing and whether we like it or not.

4.1.4 Theoretical problems

When discussing a possible theory to use as the base of this study, a few problems arise, because, the olfactory sense is tied directly to the part of our brain involved with memory and emotion. Almagor (1990: 253) begins with stating four problems we encounter when wanting to attach a theory to the sense. Firstly, is the Western bias over emotion. According to Overing (1985: 9), we study reason and not emotions. Secondly, odours and an individual's feelings towards odours cannot be measured. Unlike colours and sounds, odours do not have a universal standard. Thirdly, odours are directly tied to early exposure of the individual; everyone will perceive odours with different emotions and actions. Lastly, unlike other sensory stimuli, odours cannot be compared or measured. On the other hand, the social sciences have narrowed it down to four different approaches. Firstly, a structuralist distinction which all cultures have between 'attractive' and 'repellent' smells (Almagor 1990; Crocker 1985; Detiene 1977; Levi-Strauss 1970). Another approach is semiotic, seeing smell as a signal of communication (Gell 1977; Sperber 1975). The aesthetic approach, examines the

⁶² Barry C Smith is a professor of philosophy and director of the Institute of Philosophy as well as the founder of the Centre for the Study of the Senses, which pioneers collaborative research between philosophers, psychologists and neuroscientists.

effect of odours on people, mainly perfumes (Lounert, 1974; Osborne, 1977; Shulman, 1987). Together, these approaches can explain various roles of odours in society, but they alone cannot explain the important role that odours play in a person's life. The first approach cannot account for odours that are neither bad or good. The semiotic system, "...we do not discover the meaning of a smell by distinguishing it from other smells" (Gell 1977:27). The aesthetic approach falls short when the emphasis is placed mainly on pleasant smells, whereas bad smells are ignored. All of these approaches fall short as they only deal with one aspect. The emotional, cognitive and existential overtones that are inherently connected to a person's reality can only be described by the phenomenological perspective.

4.2 Phenomenology

4.2.1 An overview

Like most phenomenology research in theatre, the focus is on the play, either the written work or as stage productions. The focus for this chapter being on the stage production and the live witnessing of the play whilst experiencing the sensory stimulation and deprivation.

According to Sorfa⁶³ (2014: 353), phenomenology is the philosophy of experience. Sousa⁶⁴ (2017: 88) states that phenomenology rose from the need to study mental processes parallel to philosophical principles. Phenomenology, in essence, is the meaning of human experience or intentional experience, its objective to study human consciousness. It tries to investigate the frontier between the self and reality, stripping away the excess, leaving the quintessential part: our experience. Sorfa (2014: 355) state that when we experience something, we experience ourselves experiencing. Importantly, not explaining why something is there, instead describing it as accurately

⁶³ Senior Lecturer in Film Studies, University of Edinburgh

⁶⁴ In 2005, Sousa earned his Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the Faculty for Social and Human Sciences at the New University of Lisbon. The next year he enrolled in the Master's course of Aesthetics in the same faculty. After completing the first year of the Masters degree, he was awarded a doctoral grant from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. In 2014, he was awarded a grant for the development of a post-doctoral project revolving around Merleau-Ponty's reformulation and critique of Husserl's phenomenological project.

as possible. Husserl⁶⁵ stressed in his findings in relation to phenomenology that all consciousness is the consciousness of something. "Acts of consciousness such as perception, imagination, memory, and hallucination, are intentional as they direct themselves, or *aim toward*, an object – the intentional object" (Sousa 2017: 88). In other words, for a phenomenological effect to take place, there has to be a relationship between an act of consciousness aimed at an object. Furthermore, Husserl states that one does not merely hate, love, hallucinate or imagine, but one hates something, loves someone, hallucinates on something and imagines a wish. This type of thinking places all experiences in relation to something, explaining the basis of phenomenology. Once this concept is understood, the perspectival concept can be explained: we are not only aware of that object, but we are aware of it in a particular manner, a specific experience of that object. Two terms are introduced by Sobchack⁶⁶ (1992: 34): *noema*, and *noesis*. The former states the phenomena of our experience, while the latter describes the mode of our experience. Loosely put, one perceives *noema* through *noesis*.

Husserl's phenomenology is divided into two separate methods: the static method, and the genetic method. The former remains formal and abstract and seeks to investigate the conscious act of forming meaning while the latter is directly connected to the time consciousness theory. This theory centres on the idea that the *now* or *living* present automatically involves not the *now* but also the *past* and a part of the *future*. This will be further discussed later in the chapter when the olfactory sense and the theory of phenomenology connect.

4.2.2 Immersion

Phenomenology consists of many different aspects of the viewer's experience, the genetic method as discussed above and the static method which is more abstract. The static method allows us to analyse the forming of meaning in the experience. A big part of the individual's experience is their ability to be immersed in the performance.

⁶⁵ Although not the first to coin the term, it is uncontroversial to suggest that the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), is the "father" of the philosophical movement known as phenomenology.

⁶⁶ Sobchack's work on science fiction films and phenomenology of film is perhaps her most recognized. She is a prolific writer and has authored numerous books and articles across a diverse range of subjects; from historiography to film noir to work on documentary film, new media, and film feminism. Her work has been featured in such publications as *Film Comment* and *Camera Obscura*. She is the author and editor of many books on film and media.

This state of immersion, according to Seo⁶⁷ (2011: 8), happens when bodily, conscious and pre-conscious states intertwine with the world. The problem with this definition is the subjectivity. Just like the olfactory senses, immersion cannot be measured as it differs from person to person. It is a “paradoxical perception of vastness and proximity that occurs at the same time” (Seo 2011: 8). Because of the nature of this intangible state, its meaning remains vague and is most often described by the literal meaning of the word: absorbed or embraced. Throughout the study of immersion, different definitions have been created for the sole purpose of that specific field. Seo, focusing predominantly on virtual reality immersion draws from previous scholars for a broader viewpoint of the field. Another scholar gives this physical and mental absorption a name “kinaesthetic immersion”. Harris who coined the term explains immersion as “experiences of just a few seconds duration that are so qualitatively distinct and sublime that they are still registered indelibly in people’s memories decades later” (Harris 2011: 132). With this definition, some of the olfactory theories pop out. Similarly, experiencing a fleeting moment which can be engraved in a person’s memories.

Undeniably, the state of immersion is a sensory trigger. Grau (2003:13) calls the state of immersion an overwhelming sensory experience. With this being said, Seo (2011: 21) deliberately states that this type of sensory immersion is not easily obtained in standard architectural structures where we live out our regular routines. Site-specific theatre and ‘sensory theatre’ have found a way to exist in a fruitful relationship. Preconceived ideas in ‘normal’ places come with a history of sense memory and future expectations, in essence, the time consciousness theory.

The London based theatre collective, *Fuel*⁶⁸, have reached the perfect balance between artistic vision and practical application in the theatre. The two directors, Louise Blackwell and Kate McGrath, have been instrumental in bridging the gap

⁶⁷ Jinsil Seo (2011) is a scholar of Aesthetics. Her dissertation titled: Aesthetics of immersion in interactive immersive environments: A phenomenological case study of *Light Strings*. School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University.

⁶⁸ Fuel responds to ideas, to artists and to projects, making them happen as best it possibly can, providing whatever is needed for that to happen – from fundraising to moral support, tour-booking to being a sounding board for ideas, dramaturgy to photocopying. Fuel is not a service provider but an initiator, a driving force, a producer in the original sense of the word.

between the company, artists, theatres, arts organisation and ultimately, the audiences. Mark Epsiner of *Sound & Fury* comments "They enable, provoke and challenge us. They take a holistic approach. They act as producers, dramaturgs, agents, and mentors. We could never have done what we do without them. They understand the research and development process" (Gardner 2014: page 1 of 2). Sound & Fury in collaboration with Fuel intriguingly staged *Charlie Ward (2014)*. "...the piece where you turn up, get taken to a hospital bed in a WWI ward built in a tent at the Cinema Museum and get shown a short Charlie Chaplin film. Why on earth you'd want to watch a film while lying in a hospital bed may be beyond some people, but we're guessing it will bring something of the atmosphere of what it was like in medical wards during WWI and demonstrate how they boosted morale" (Time Out online 2018: page 1 of 3). The de-habitation of the audience sensitizes them to this unfamiliar space and concept. Seo (2011: 21) states that when we are habituated with the specific space, we rarely concentrate on the connections we make with the specific space and the environment, making it more difficult to be immersed.

Different types of immersive states can be experienced. For example, dream-like states of consciousness occur with immersive art. Whereas interactive art, audience members are required to be involved and participate, steering the consciousness or state of mind towards awe. This is ultimately the preferred state, drawing back to the Grotesque theory of awe and wonder.

Returning to the phenomenon of immersion, it is understood that it is a phenomenological state between an environmental space and an individual where mental and physical states merge. This is ultimately the desired effect when working with aroma design. Instead of just hearing about a landscape in a play, aroma design has the ability to make that landscape a reality, connecting environment and a mental state. Once this connection is made, an olfactory effect is achieved, allowing the audience member to recall memories or connect with the characters and places.

4.3 The Olfactory Senses

4.3.1 History

According to Banes (2001: 29) scented performances and perfume shows thrived in the nineteenth century, but the introduction of the fourth wall in the twentieth century killed the need for a more enriched theatrical experience. Di Benedetto⁶⁹ (2010: 105) says that the Modernist⁷⁰ practitioners⁷¹ started experimenting with olfactory stimulation early in the twentieth century, this included the symbolist Mary Fleischer. She describes aroma in the theatre:

“Smell might well have been the Symbolist sense par excellence. While the Naturalists and the Realists used detailed descriptions of smell as literary device to imbue the environment with moral atmosphere or to enrich the verisimilitude of their works, the Symbolists used smell in suggestive, mysterious, and expansive ways to dissolve barriers between subject and object, individual and environment” (Fleischer 2007: 105).

By doing this, the Symbolists⁷² created a way to mystify the theatre in the same way that lighting and other effects did. With this, they tried to emphasize the subjective of interpretation, making the traditional theatre techniques strange, ultimately losing their audiences along the way. According to Di Benedetto (2010: 106), the failure to control the scent after it has been dispersed into the crowd signed this type of theatres death note. After the opening of the 1891 play *Cantique des Cantiques*, Claude Schumacher wrote about the audience's reactions: “a bewildered audience was doused with perfume and left choking in fumes of incense which the ventilation system in the theatre was unable to cope with” (Di Benedetto 2010: 106). Over the next few years, artists, both mainstream and avant-garde, tried to rekindle their love of olfactory

⁶⁹ Author of *The Provocation of the Senses in Contemporary Theatre* (2010)

⁷⁰ Modernism was closely associated with the idea of the avant-garde, a term applied to artists involved in introducing original and experimental ideas, forms and techniques, usually with an implication that these ideas anticipated significant directions in the development of modern art and would gradually become more widely accepted.

⁷¹ Luigi Pirandello in Italy, Thornton Wilder in America and Jean Cocteau in France

⁷² As a movement, symbolism is very close to romanticism. A desire to contact a reality beneath or beyond that accessible to reason and everyday observation leads to an art of indirection, suggestion, ambiguity and elusiveness. Oscar Wilde and W. Yeats were Symbolist playwrights, to name a few.

performances, but sadly enough, the hopeful trend never indeed received any criticism or scholarly attention, leaving a significant gap in the study of these senses in performance.

In contrast, taste and performance have a primarily shared history starting in the late fifteenth century. According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett⁷³ (1999) (Banes & Lepecki 2007: 71) in this time, theatre and taste were inseparable, until artists started to separate the senses, creating specific genres for specific art fields. Various components of each performance were isolated, and performances became “sense-specific art forms in dedicated spaces (theatre, auditorium, museum, gallery)”. At this point, food disappeared from performances, and no food or beverages were allowed in these spaces.

Going back to the fifteenth century, to a musical banquet named *Tish*. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1999) (Banes & Lepecki 2007: 72) continues, the name is a direct Yiddish translation for a table. During this banquet, the charismatic leader would bless the food, sing and dance with his followers. Although the food was not particularly tasty, it served a more ritualistic purpose. With this banquet, it was custom for musical plays to be performed to the leader, the actors facing the leader and the leader facing his followers. This essentially put the leader and his reactions at the centre of the performance. This banquet would apparently last until morning. The banquet best encapsulated all the senses in one performance, a fusion of art, music, food, painting, costume, dancing and poetry. According to Toepfer (1991: 134), not only did these banquets include these elements but also sexual activity, making the orgy between the senses even more complete.

If the banquets in the fifteenth century were characterized by abundance, the banquets in the sixteenth century were characterized by rarity and refinement (Wheaton 1983: 52). The banquets culinary-focused increased. This was due to higher proficiency in the culinary art, moving away from the Italian traditions. According to Wheaton in

⁷³ Professor of Performance Studies at New York University since 1981 (and distinguished University Professor since 2002), she is best known for her interdisciplinary contributions to Jewish studies and to the theory and history of museums, tourism, and heritage. She is currently Program Director of the Core Exhibition for the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1999) (Banes & Lepecki 2007: 73), although these banquets were documented, no descriptions were made about how the food tasted. Most of these banquets were more concerned with the rarity of ingredients and opulence than the taste of the dishes. These performances were watched by thousands from a distance, not tasted, so in effect, the spectacle had to be bigger than the taste.

4.3.2 Defining the field

If we start to consider the importance of the olfactory senses in performance, few people would see the need of adding this to a theatre piece. As stated above, the olfactory senses have always been seen as an 'unimportant' sense, in comparison to sight and hearing. The moment you start to analyse the amount of olfactory stimulation in your daily routine, the more important the sense becomes. If we briefly look at the Roman Catholic church or any ritual, the olfactory senses are prevalent. The church uses the incense burners to deepen further the religious experience. According to the St Paul Catholic webpage (2018: page 1 of 2), the burning incense is seen as the prayers of the faithful drifting up to heaven, thus calling incense 'prayers in action'. According to Lowman (2010: page 1 of 23), in many cultures and religions, it is a common practice to burn herbs. Burning sage is one of the first and untainted methods of cleansing a person, group of people or space. While Native American sage burning is the most commonly known today, many different cultures have adopted this practice.

A theatre smells a certain way, just like it sounds and feels a certain way. "We cannot escape the smells of the theatre" (Di Benedetto 2010:105). The olfactory senses are always alert, warning us of any danger before we could see or hear it. Why not utilise the power of the olfactory senses to deepen the experience of the audience member?

4.3.3 Aroma design

Due to the lack of research and scholarly attention to this field, the 'olfactory effect' as Banes coins it, is largely unexplored and the 'aroma design' that was used to create this effect. A few problems arise when using aroma design as there is no way to control the scent in the theatre, probably another reason artists and scholars alike dismissed it. Despite its low status, the aroma can be used in the *mise en scene* like any other

element and can be interpreted and analysed. Desperate for a structure of some sort, Banes⁷⁴ created a taxonomy of aroma design which encapsulates the desired effects when using the olfactory senses in performance. The first category illustrates words, characters, places, places, and actions. Secondly, olfactory sense stimulation is used to evoke a mood or ambience. The third category allows this stimulation to complement or contrast aural or visual signs. The fourth category enables audience members to summon specific memories. The second to last category frames the performance as ritual and the last category uses olfactory stimulation to distance the audience.

Each of these categories creates a certain effect on the audience member, enhancing and immersing them further into the performance. According to Banes (2001:31), the first two categories. A practical example of the first category is the South African play, *Tjop & Dop* (Nieuwoudt 2013: page 1 of 3), written by award-winning director and writer, Christiaan Olwagen and actor De Klerk Oelofse. The play is set at a 'braai' with friends. Onstage a gas barbeque cooks a chicken while the three actors talk about life. Throughout the play, this chicken gets cooked, and the smoke of the gas barbeque fills the auditorium. This creates an overpowering aroma in this theatre and helps to illustrate the setting of the play while complementing the aural and visual signs.

⁷⁴ Sally Banes, co-editor and writer of *The Senses in Performance* (2011), a ground-breaking anthology is the 1st to be devoted to assessing significantly the function of the human sensorium in functionality.



Figure 4.8: *Tjop & Dop* (2013)

At the start of the play, this very familiar aroma summons specific memories of family time and time shared around the fire. After a while, the aroma starts to overpower the play, serving then as a distancing device. This experience of this aroma in the performance works its way through five of the six categories, allowing the audience members olfactory senses to climb each step.

Another South African example is *Die dag is bros* (2016) by Wessel Pretorius. This heart-wrenching play is set in the kitchen of a mother who recently loses her son to a gang murder in



Figure 4.9: *Die Dag is Bros* (2016)

Cape Town. The striking performance of Sandra Prinsloo shows this mother's grief and flashback memories of her son and their time together. It is set in the evening while

she is cooking for a boy whom she took in after her son was killed. Throughout the play, the pasta is being cooked and the salad made.



Figure 4.10: *Die Dag is Bros* (2016)

As she speaks the steam from the water rises and aromas of mince being fried fills the theatre. The familiar smells of spaghetti bolognaise float around in the theatre illustrating the place and actions of the actress. Even though the genre is ultimately realism, the aroma design breaks the fourth wall entirely, creating a specific ambience in the theatre. Naturally, the aroma design complements the visual signs onstage while summoning specific memories of time spent cooking with loved ones. This specific play never uses the aroma as a distancing device nor are the aromas ritualistic in any way. Even though the narrative line takes unexpected turns, the aroma fills the theatre lovingly.

The fifth category is explained by Banes as having less to do with what's represented by the aroma and has more to do with the contextualizing condition that this aroma has on the rest of the representations in the performance. For example, *Vrek* (2013), written by Helet De Wet, an eco-spectacular theatre piece on fracking and the human condition. This *Avant Garde* performance is rooted in the ongoing natural gas fracking in the Karoo. While this overpowering, word storm is thrown towards you, the sweet smell of syrup fills the tiny theatre. This syrup is mixed with black food colouring,

creating the illusion of oil. While the performance continues, one character eats this black slime and lets it drip down his body.



Figure 4.12: *Vrek* (2013)

This is not the only piece of the aroma design, as a raw cows tongue is used throughout the daring scenes, the metallic smell of blood combined with the sweet smell of syrup hangs thickly in the air.



Figure 4.11: *Vrek* (2013)

Not only does this distance you, but the pungent smell and visual cues turn this

aroma into a ritualistic representation of what is happening with the earth as she is penetrated to release this gas. The metallic blood aroma signifies the loss of animals on these farms as the water supply is contaminated, turning the metallic aroma into a ritualistic representation of loss and destruction.

When thinking about food and theatre in a modern context, there aren't many artists who use gustatory⁷⁵ design to enhance their productions. In contrast, dinner theatre is alive and well in the theatre scene, but the meal rarely emphasizes location, characters, mood, memories, etc. One specific play the researcher experienced that included gustatory design as an emphasis of the play was at the University of the Free State titled, *bru:d/* (2014). Part of the *Avant-Garde* module of the third-year students of the Drama & Theatre Department at the University of the Free State, this specific group of students used bread as part of their performance. This play was based on

⁷⁵ Concerned with tasting or the sense of taste.

the Greek myth of *Cronus*⁷⁶. The students then decided to link this eating theme to consumerism, highlighting the hunger and poverty crisis and the greediness of humans. During the duration of the play, large chunks of bread were passed through the audience to eat. Spread throughout the small theatre was candles omitting the aroma of freshly baked bread, while pictures of starving children hung from the ceiling. The purpose of the gustatory design was to highlight mans' ability to cut off and desensitize themselves from the pressing issue of hunger and poverty. Most of the audience members struggled to eat the piece that they were handed, while others took second and third helpings.

4.4 Twin terms with relation to olfactory phenomenology

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, different theories and performances have been presented without any string to tie it all together. The twin terms; sensitisation/ desensitisation, habituation/ de-habituation, automisation/ de-automisation, serves as this string. All these twin terms have come forth in this chapter, followed by this conclusion.

When analysing the olfactory senses in theatre, it has been stated above that it is very subjective as each has a different experience. The experience of these senses in a performance immerses the audience member or completely sensitises them. When the audience member is desensitised/ habitualised/ automatised, they are immersed and experience this performance on a sensory level. In contrast, when the individual is sensitised/ de-habitualised and de-automatised they experience a different type of sensory stimulation and immersion. The former allows the four of the six categories to be explored; to illustrate words, characters, places, and actions, to evoke a mood or ambiance, to complement or contrast with aural/visual signs, and to summon specific memories. The fifth ritualistic category can sensitize, but as the researcher explained earlier with *Vrek*, it can be extremely sensitizing. The latter mainly inhabits the last two categories, to frame the performance as ritual, and to serve as a distancing device. With the olfactory sense, the chances of sensitisation are much more significant as

⁷⁶ Cronus learned that he was destined to be overcome by his own sons, just as he had overthrown his father. As a result, he devoured them all as soon as they were born to prevent the prophecy.

everybody has their olfactory sensorium. The individual could have been completely immersed, and a new aroma could pull that individual out of that immersion, and within seconds they can be sensitized. This is probably why so little artists use the olfactory senses in their performances, as it is a guessing game as to which is going to work. With gustatory performances, the chances that the individual will be sensitised/ de-habitualised and de-automatised are quite significant, as these gustatory performances go hand in hand with aroma stimulation. This sensitisation can happen rather quickly as both olfactory senses are stimulated simultaneously, smell and taste. As stated with *bru:d* /, the artists used the gustatory and olfactory stimulation as a commentary on the themes highlighted in the play. This caused the audience members to think about what they are eating, connecting it to the aural and visual signals.

When dealing with sensory performances, it is best, as was stated earlier, that the performance does not take place in the traditional theatre. This could help with the habituation and de-habituation. By placing someone in an unfamiliar space, immediate de-habituation takes place. Once the performance has started, and the audience member gets familiarized with the space, habituation takes place. This habituating immersion could also be changed within seconds, de-habituating the individual.

Full automatisisation seldom occurs within the sensory theatre, as the individual's senses are either bombarded or deprived continuously. It is safe to say that sensory theatre and especially aroma design can have the opposite effect in a matter of minutes. This is not a bad or good thing necessarily. It is worth noting that the olfactory senses should be used sparingly as sporadic stimuli and not as a continuous stimulus.

To conclude, the olfactory senses have a unique way of creating lots of problems for scholars and artists but is ultimately extremely rewarding when the aroma design works in every aspect. The most important part of this chapter is the individual's experience in the performance, and as this is qualitative research and not quantitative, concrete resolutions are difficult to obtain. A full state of immersion is not easily obtained primarily when you are experiencing a performance in a phenomenological way: experiencing the experience of you experiencing. The olfactory senses in theatre

and the individual's experience of these performances is untapped and waiting to be further explored by scholars and artists alike.

CHAPTER 5: PRELIMINARY TAXONOMY

5.1 Introduction

The following taxonomy was combined with the previous research about the senses. This framework includes the relevant elements of each sense, the presence of these elements, and analysis of these elements in the case study.

Recalling the research about *theatre in the dark*, the visual chapter should start with the element of complete darkness. This deprivation of visual stimuli is described as 'theatre in the dark' where no theatrical light is used, leaving the audience in darkness for the duration of the performance. The visual sense draws upon the Grotesque theory discussed in chapter 2. These elements include the strategies and emotions associated with the Grotesque as identified by Carroll. Firstly, hybridisation explains the fusion between the biological and ontological, creating something new and completely different. Secondly, de-colourisation is explained as a fusion between a living being and an inanimate colour. Thirdly, the disproportion is defined by a figure or an object that is too large or too small in comparison to something else. Fourthly, like disproportion, an object or being that is deformed must be placed in contrast to something *neutral*. Lastly, gigantism or enlargement is seen when a living being is enlarged to the point that their structure is beyond the boundaries of our imagination. The second part of the elements in the visual sense is the emotions associated with the Grotesque. These elements include; horror and disgust, comic amusement, and awe and wonder. Firstly, horror naturally contains the element of fear, but Carroll (2003: 311) states that this horror elicited by the Grotesque is more than fearsomeness. We may find something fearsome but not horrific. To elicit the feeling of horror from the audience, disgust must be added. Carroll explains that horror is a combination of fear and disgust. Disgust being mostly associated with blood, faecal waste, mucus and other bodily fluids (Carroll 2003: 301). Secondly, comic amusement is obtained through caricature, parody, and satire. Lastly, the creation of awe and wonder lies in the miraculous. This miraculous is only achieved when there is a violation of the biological and ontological, something contrary to nature.

The auditory sense consists out of four elements. Firstly, as this is a study about the senses, the absence of sound serves as an element of this framework. The complete deprivation of the auditory sense is seldom experienced in the theatre, but moments of silence can be experienced in performance art or physical theatre. Secondly, the standard use of sound in the theatre is also considered in this taxonomy as it is the norm. Thus, the monophonic and stereo sound is commonly found in the theatre and stimulates the auditory sense. The disruption starts when immersive sound systems are incorporated in performances. These immersive systems or polyphonic sound overstimulates the auditory sense. This type of system is commonly used when the visual sense is deprived, and the sound has to overcompensate for the lack of visuals. Lastly, the rearrangement of sound elements can be heard when language is translated into musical notes or specific tones. Taking a characteristic of one recognised type of sound and rearranging it, forming a new type of sound, representing something else.

Tactile stimulation encompasses three elements: no tactile stimulation, the discriminative touch system, and the emotional touch system. Firstly, the standard tactile stimulation in the theatre would be no stimulation. Thus, the deprivation of the sense is essential. The discriminative/ contiguous/ immersive touch system includes feeling the sensations; cold, smooth, lukewarm, irritating, and warm surfaces. This system also helps us identify location, strength, movement of tactile stimulation. Secondly, the emotional/ affective/ recovering touch system is more emotionally connected. This system assists the feeling of excitement, sensuality, pain, pleasure and also if tactile stimulation is either sexual or dangerous.

The last sense of framework is the olfactory senses. These chemical senses are directly connected to the brain and the individual's memories and past. Firstly, as with the senses above, the absence of olfactory stimulation is also notable. Thus, with the following six elements of stimulation, the neutral state of no stimulation is significant. Six elements can occur when olfactory stimulation takes place; to illustrate words, characters, places, and actions, to evoke a mood or ambience, to complement or contrast with aural/visual signs, to summon specific memories, to frame the performance as ritual, and to serve as a distancing device.

5.2 Combined taxonomy

VISUAL SENSE		
Element	Presence	Analysis
The absence of visual stimulation		
Strategies		
• Hybridization		
• Decolourisation		
• Disproportion		
• Deformation		
• Enlargement		
Emotional states		
• Horror and disgust		
• Comic amusement		
• Awe and wonder		
AUDITORY SENSE		
Element	Presence	Analysis
The absence of aural stimulation		
Standard		
• Monophonic		
• Stereo		
Polyphonic		
Rearrangement of the relationship between elements. (language, song, music, and sounds)		
TACTILE SENSE		
Element	Presence	Analysis
The absence of tactile stimulation		
Discriminative/ contiguous/ immersive touch system (location, strength, movement) (cold, smooth, lukewarm, irritating, warm surfaces)		
Emotional/ affective/ recovering touch system (sexual to dangerous) (excitement, sensuality, pain, pleasure)		
OLFACTORY SENSES		
Element	Presence	Analysis

The absence of olfactory stimulation		
To illustrate words, characters, places, and actions.		
To evoke a mood or ambience.		
To complement or contrast with aural/visual signs.		
To summon specific memories.		
To frame the performance as ritual.		
To serve as a distancing device.		

CHAPTER 6:

CASE STUDIES: THREE PRODUCTIONS EVALUATED ACCORDING TO THE COMBINED FRAMEWORK

The combined framework established in Chapter 5 will now be applied to three different South African productions. All three productions have different genres: children's theatre, physical theatre, and site-specific dramatic theatre. The reason for the wide variety of different genres is to establish that multi-sensory theatre can be applied in any genre.

The layout of each case study will be initiated with an overview of the artist and an introduction to the production in question. After the background information is given, the production will be evaluated in table format by completing the empty columns in the combined framework. Each sense is divided into separate sections showing the different sub-headings of the framework. Three questions should be answered in each sub-heading within the sense: is the heading present within the sense, how does it manifest in the production, and how is it interpreted. Three different colours will be used to portray the strength of the sub-heading in a sense. Red will be used if there is no presence, orange for a medium presence and green if the sub-heading in question has a strong presence in the production. After the combined framework is completed, a brief discussion will follow about each sense in the case study.

All three case studies' findings will be based on the subjective experience of either participating in the production as an actor or experiencing the production first hand as a spectator. Additionally, reference may be made to scripts supplied by the artist, photos and video material where available.

This chapter seeks to establish the multi-sensory capabilities productions in different genres have, ways to identify these capabilities and the possible effect it can have on audience members.

6.1 Case study 1: Oster

6.1.1 Puppetrix

Puppetrix is an interactive children's theatre company based in Bloemfontein, South Africa focusing on interactive Puppet-driven productions. Founding member, Schoeme Grobler, prides herself on creating educational as well as artistic puppet shows, placing the experience of the child in the centre of the production. The company strives to make the theatre a playground for children when experiencing a Puppetrix production. As the child is the primary focus of the production, they are often given the opportunity to become characters or decide the in which direction the story should go. Knowing the value of multi-sensory stimulation in the theatre, Puppetrix tries to combine as many senses as possible in every production, this also helps to keep the attention of the children, making them participate in the journey of the characters.

Because children are constantly stimulated by the television or other media, Puppetrix allows the children to interact with the set of the play and often hands props to the children. This allows the child to participate actively and plays in the theatre, disrupting their preconceived notions of the theatre. The constant media stimulation is another reason why their plays are short and concise as children are easily bored because of their shorter⁷⁷ attention spans. To retain their attention, physical exercise is included in the production. Exercise comes in the form of dances or movement that accompanies a song that the children need to learn. Not only does this keep their attention, but most often teaches them problem-solving skills or morals. These exercise routines often release much excess energy, helping the children to focus on the story without being rowdy or a disturbance to the other children.

This theatre playground usually poses a challenge to the creative team of Puppetrix as conventional theatre spaces are often restricting. Most often, the spaces are rearranged to utilize every possible corner or wall. This helps the children to disregard

⁷⁷ A Pew Internet survey of nearly 2,500 teachers finds that 87% believe new technologies are creating an "easily distracted generation with short attention spans" and 64% say today's digital technologies "do more to distract students than to help them academically." (Graber 2014: Page 1 of 4).

their notions and rules of theatre, helping them to interact with the puppets, set and characters.

6.1.2 Oster



Figure 6.1.1: Oster & Wolla Wolkie (2017)

Being an interactive theatre company specializing in puppetry, *Oster* (2017) the main character, is a lifelike puppet, the same size as a child. The name *Oster* derives from the myth that pagan children would present eggs as a gift to the goddess in return for the coming of the spring. In the performance, *Oster* is the Easter bunny who faces a dilemma; all his eggs were broken by the antagonist, the rat. The performance starts with shadow puppetry portraying *Oster* planting his eggs and waiting for the seasons to pass before the eggs come up. Once his eggs were fully grown the shadows show the rat breaking the eggs that *Oster* planted. *Oster* walks out of the shadow frame onto the performance area where his imaginary cloud and best friend *Wolla Wolkie* waits for him.



Figure 6.1.2: Oster & Wolla Wolkie (2017)

Oster, only speaking in rhyme tells *Wolla* what the rat did, and *Wolla* decides to cheer *Oster* up. *Wolla* takes *Oster* to the butterflies, and here we see the presence of the olfactory stimulation. Here the butterflies, also puppets manipulated by puppeteers, spray spring flowered scented mist through the audience.



Figure 6.1.3: *The butterflies (Oster 2017)*

Wolla: Die winter was baie lank en koud. Een oggend word Oster wakker met die reuk van blomme en die klanke van die Lenteliedjie wat die skoenlappers sing.

Enter skoenlappers. Sing tussen kinders. Lekkerruikgoed en streamers word hier gebruik.

Hier is 'n stukkies vir jou
en 'n stukkies vir my
almal mag 'n stukkies Lente kry

Vlinder: (giggel) Oster paashaas geniet jy die lente? Ruik bietjie aan die pragtige blomme! (Vlinders exit)

(*Oster* 2017: 3)



Figure 6.1.4: Oster, Wolla Wolkie & Willemien (2017)

Once the butterflies exit, *Oster* and *Wolla* walk past the audience smelling the flowers and interacting with the audience. Suddenly they smell carrots and is confronted with *Willemien*, the carrot farmer. *Willemien* sees *Oster* and starts chasing him around the



Figure 6.1.5: Willemien (2017)

farm. *Wolla* tries to protect *Oster*, but because she is imaginary, *Willemien* cannot see her. *Oster* confesses that he is the Easter bunny and a friendship is born between the two of them.

Willemien offers *Oster* a carrot, and here the tactile stimulation is seen. The carrots are placed in the audience area in pots. *Willemien* asks the children to bring her the carrots. These carrots work with a pop-up system as seen in figure 6.1.6. Here the children play with the carrots and help *Willemien* to place all the carrots in the basket.

Willemien: Hello julle wille wragtige! Welkom op Willemien se wortelplaas. Het julle my pragtige wortels gesien? Ag asseblief help vir Willemien om hulle uit die grond te kry. Dan kan ek hulle groentemark toe vat!

(Oster 2017: 4)



Figure 6.1.6: Child handling the carrot (Oster 2017)

Oster continues to tell *Willemien* about his problem with his eggs, and *Willemien* takes *Oster* to the farm and helps him plant new eggs. Here the children have to stand up and do a dance with *Oster* and *Willemien* to plant the new eggs. As stated above,

Puppetrix combines exercise in their performance to retain the attention of the children as well as to get their blood flowing.



Figure 6.1.7: Children dancing (Oster 2017)

In order for the eggs to grow it first has to rain. Here *Wolla* hands each child a wind maker. The children make the wind with as the wind brings the rain. This wind maker consists of blue plastic strips that they have to shake and wave in the air. This wind maker serves as the second tactile stimulus in the performance. *Willemien* and *Oster* walk back to the farmhouse as it is time for bed. Here, *Wolla* asks the children to lie down and sleep as well. Here the children get the chance to relax while the lights are entirely dim. *Wolla* wakes the children up with a flashlight in the dark and tells them to



Figure 6.1.8: A lightened photo of the egg dance (Oster 2017)

wake *Oster* up because there is something happening with the eggs. The children wake him up, and *Wolla* shines her flashlight on the eggs which start to come to life and dance. Here the only light on the eggs is the flashlight, hiding the puppeteers behind them.

Because it is children's theatre and the antagonist was introduced to the children. He shows up to once again steal the eggs, but at the beginning, *Wolla* told the children that *Rowwe Rot* is deadly afraid of the wind. Referring to this, *Wolla* asks the children to blow the rat away from the eggs and farm. Once the rat is defeated, *Wolla* and *Willemien* set off to deliver all the eggs to the children and shops.

6.1.3 Combined framework evaluation

VISUAL SENSE		
Element	Presence	Analysis
No visual stimulation		Throughout the production, the visual sense is stimulated. Even when the eggs dance in the dark, a light from a flashlight is shone on them.
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hybridisation 	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> Hybridisation is seen with <i>Wolla Wolkie</i>; Here, a human form is fused with clouds, creating the character. It is also seen in the rat as the actor wears a mask symbolising the rat. This mask is accompanied with white gloves. The last example of this image is seen with the eggs. Here, the inanimate eggs are given arms and legs and dance.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The Grotesque image of hybridisation is portrayed with the fusion between the living and inanimate. Here the living is represented by the actor and their features like hair and limbs, whereas the inanimate is represented by the clouds that <i>Wolla</i> wears and the mask that the rat has on. The magical eggs, fuse living features such as arms and legs with an inanimate egg-shaped body. If the eggs were only to remain in their pots throughout the play, it would not have been Grotesque, but by animating them and giving them human features, they</p>

		come alive. This fusion between the two concepts allows the characters to be more caricature-like and magical.
• Decolourisation	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The decolourisation is once again seen with <i>Wolla</i>. The actor uses blue, white and grey makeup to discolour her face and hands. Another example of decolourisation is seen with the eggs. All three eggs are different colours with matching patterns. These colours include purple, pink and blue.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>Being a caricature and a hybrid between a human and a cloud, a decolourised face makes the cloud part of the hybrid more believable. Because the costume is covered with blue and white clouds, a human face on the character didn't portray the caricature that well. The moment the make-up was added to the character, the children saw <i>Wolla</i> as magical. The inanimate colours that are given to the eggs portray them as magical and help the children to identify with them as they help <i>Oster</i> choose the most beautiful colour.</p>
• Disproportion	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>Disproportion is portrayed through the size of the eggs body and their arms and legs.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>Here, skinny arms and legs are seen on the bodies of the eggs. Their bodies are big and bulky in comparison to their skinny arms and legs. This emphasises the awe and wonder that is linked to the eggs. Nothing about these eggs are realistic, not their size, colour, proportion or how they grew.</p>
• Deformation	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>There are two examples of de-formation in <i>Oster</i> (2017). Firstly, <i>Oster</i> is de-formed as he is made to look more like a cartoon than a real rabbit. The second example of deformation is the rat.</p>

		<p>Because of the rat mask and the human body, this fusion between human and animal makes the rat look unrealistic.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> Both examples prove that these animals don't look realistic, but rather deformed versions of the real animals.</p>
• Enlargement	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> A few examples of enlargement are seen in <i>Oster</i>. Firstly, the cloud costume of <i>Wolla Wolkie</i> enlarges her body to make her look soft and puffy like a cloud. The second example is the carrots. Some of the carrots are extremely large, and some are small. Another example of enlargement is the body of the eggs. The body of these eggs has been enlarged to a size that is roughly bigger than a person's head. <i>Oster</i>, the main character, is enlarged to the size of a five-year-old. The last example of enlargement is the butterflies. Here, the butterflies are enormous as they fly over the children.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The costume of <i>Wolla Wolkie</i> enlarges the actor's body to make them seem softer and cloud-like. This enlargement also takes away the natural body form of the actor. The carrots are enlarged to emphasize the carrot farm and <i>Oster's</i> love for carrots. The carrots are also oversized to facilitate the interaction between the children. If the carrots were too small, the magic of pulling this carrot from the ground wouldn't have come across. The enlarged eggs emphasize the magic of the Easter bunny, whilst complimenting the other strategies of disproportion and decolourisation. <i>Oster</i> is roughly the size of the target audience as he is the character that the children must trust and relate to the most. Lastly, the enlarged butterfly puppets that fly over <i>Oster</i> and the children create a sense of awe and wonder; this can be seen in figure 6.1.3.</p>

Emotional states		No emotions of horror and disgust were elicited from the children,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horror and disgust • Comic amusement 	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> Because most of the characters are caricatures, many of the scenes lend themselves to be comically interpreted. <i>Wolla Wolkie</i>, <i>Willemien</i>, and the rat all have comic moments. When <i>Wolla</i> tells the children how many days and nights passed before the rain came, she plays a game with the children, making them jump up for day-time and bend over when it is night-time. <i>Willemien</i> is a comical character as she portrays the stereotyped farmer. Her love for carrots and farming is amusing to the children, especially when they pop the carrots out of the ground. Even though the rat is the antagonist, the Cape Town accent provides many comic moments.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The children always like the main character, that is why <i>Oster</i> didn't need to be comical. Comic amusement is used by children's theatre actors to win the favour of the children. Therefore, <i>Wolla</i> and <i>Willemien</i> have comical moments. The rat, on the other hand, does not want the children to like him, but because of his accent and the familiarity of it, they find him amusing. By giving the rat a comical accent, it lessens the fear of the character, making him seem more human.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awe and wonder 	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> Awe and wonder are portrayed through every character in <i>Oster</i>. Because the puppets are so life-like, they seem magical to the children. <i>Willemien's</i> carrots have a wonderful element because the children get to pop them out of the ground themselves. <i>Wolla</i> is magical from the beginning because only <i>Oster</i> and the children can see her. Lastly, the eggs are magical because of the fusion between the living and the inanimate.</p>

		<u>Interpretation</u> <i>Wolla</i> portrays the imaginary world to the children, making her hybrid between cloud and human more magical. None of the real-world rules applies to <i>Wolla</i> , so handing out pieces of wind and making it rain with the children does not seem far-fetched. <i>Willemien</i> is the most realistic character, but her enlarged carrots supply the necessary dose of magic to her world. Lastly, everything about the eggs is magical as they are first grown from a dance. Secondly have magical bright colours and patterns and lastly, come alive and dance.
AUDITORY SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
No sound		From the start, the aural sense is stimulated. Even when the only visual stimulation is shadows, <i>Wolla</i> narrates the story.
Standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monophonic • Stereo 	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Monophonic sound is emitted from the actors, puppeteers, and ukulele that <i>Wolla</i> uses. Whereas stereo sound is heard from the two speakers pointed to the audience. <u>Interpretation</u> Because it is a versatile space, the sound cues heard from the speakers only serve as background music. This stereo sound fills the spaces between the monophonic sound heard from the actors and ukulele. A ukulele was used to arrange some of the dialogue pieces, to create sound effects and serve as an accompaniment when the characters and children would sing along.
Polyphonic	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Because the structure of theatre in the round was used, the children regularly had to turn their bodies to where the characters were in the space. Sometimes, the children would be faced a certain way, and other characters would speak from different spots in the space. This provided the opportunity for polyphonic sound to enter the space, as

		<p>it the children were surrounded by many voices or sounds at once.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The use of polyphonic sound ensured that the audience was placed in the centre of the storyline, by literally being surrounded by the characters.</p>
<p>Rearrangement of the relationship between elements. (language, song, music, and sounds)</p>		<p>Nowhere was the relationship disrupted between the different sound elements. Conventional words and music were used.</p>
TACTILE SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
No tactile stimulation		Tactile stimulation was present in the production.
<p>Discriminative/ contiguous/ immersive touch system (location, strength, movement) (cold, smooth, lukewarm, irritating, warm surfaces)</p>	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> The carrots served as the first part of the tactile stimulation. Here, the children had to use their hands to pop the carrot out of the ground. These carrots had straw-like hair to simulate the ground in contrast with the smoothness of felt that represented the carrot. The second tactile stimulation was with the wind makers. These wind makers, consisting of plastic strips, was waved back and forth to simulate the wind. The plastic was smooth and cold to the touch, whereas the movement created soft touch when waved around. With this the rain was made by rubbing their hands together, followed by snapping their fingers. Once the raindrops were made, <i>Wolla</i> would spray water mist onto the audience, simulating rain. There was no ventilation in the theatre space, so the water mist was cool and refreshing.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The interaction with the children makes it easier to incorporate tactile stimulation. The carrots had a bottle and stick mechanism. Thus, you had to push the stick up into the bottle for the carrot to pop out. The contrast between the smoothness of the carrot against the rough texture of the straw hair sensitized</p>

		<p>their tactile sense. Secondly, the wind makers required lots of interaction as the strips of plastic and had to be handed out to the children. <i>Wolla</i> would then show them how to wave the strips back and forth. This movement allowed the smooth, cool plastic to softly touch the hands and arms of the children. This wind simulation was followed by instructions on how to make the rain. The act of rubbing your hands together creates a smooth sound that was followed by the snapping of the fingers. These clicks represented the raindrops that fell. The water mist that was sprayed onto the audience represented the rain that they just made with their hands. Often, the children would lift their hands to feel the cool, wet mist on their palms. The tactile stimulation creates interaction and enrichment in ordinary situations.</p>
<p>Emotional/ affective/ recovering touch system (sexual to dangerous) (excitement, sensuality, pain, pleasure)</p>	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>All the tactile stimulants elicit emotions of excitement in the children. The popping out of the carrots combined with the contrast in textures excited the children, as this was a learning experience. The wind makers excited them as it was a physical action that they could control. They were able to control the strength of the wind and the sound that the plastic strips were making. The mist came as a surprise to them. <i>Wolla</i> was still busy creating the raindrops when they were suddenly sprayed with the mist. This caused excitement in the crowd as they wanted to feel the mist on their faces and hands.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>By first allowing the children to experiment with the carrots and how to get them out of the ground and then later showing them what to do, created a learning and play environment. The tactile stimulation of the wind makers enabled them to control what was physically happening to the piece of plastic, transforming an ordinary object into something living. Lastly was the mist</p>

		that surprised them. Because so little tactile stimulation is used in conventional children's theatre, the mist was unexpected and caused more excitement as they were trying to catch the mist and feel the coolness of the water.
OLFACTORY SENSES		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of olfactory stimulation		Olfactory stimulus is present in the performance.
To illustrate words, characters, places, and actions.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The spring flowered scented mist is sprayed through the audience to create the illusion of the flowers that the butterflies are singing about.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>This spring flower aroma illustrates a few things. Firstly, it illustrates the words that are sung by the butterflies and the words <i>Oster</i> says when he tells the butterflies what kind of flowers he is smelling. Secondly, it illustrates the field in which they are or the specific place. The aroma places the children with them in the field. Lastly, it illustrates the actions of smelling the flowers in the air. These actions are initiated by the butterflies, followed by <i>Oster</i> and repeated by the children.</p>
To evoke a mood or ambience.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The aroma is sprayed at a specific time during the performance. At this time, the aroma of spring flowers evokes a mood of calmness.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>This aroma creates the illusion that they are in the field smelling these flowers. This creates an ambience of calmness and tranquillity within the audience.</p>
To complement or contrast with aural/visual signs.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The spring flower scented spray complements the aural and visual signs of both <i>Oster</i> and the butterflies.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>Here we see that the suggested aroma opens the imaginations of the children</p>

		and when asked what they smell, many answered with specific flowers. This aroma complements the visual signs in confirming the scent of flowers when they do the action of smelling them.
To summon specific memories.		When the aroma is sprayed through the audience, the children are still getting to know <i>Oster</i> and his journey. If the cent was used later to remind him of the butterflies or a place that he visited, that would also allow the audience to reminisce. Seeing as it illustrates a specific place on their journey, its' function isn't to summon specific memories.
To frame the performance as ritual.		The aroma used has a definite meaning in the performance. The characters are referring to flowers and the smell of spring, and that is what the aroma smells like.
To serve as a distancing device.		Because the aroma is only used once in the production, it is essential that the children interact with the characters about the aroma. Thus, making it part of the immersion rather than distancing them.

6.1.4 Case study 1 explained: *Oster*

Being a newly written text, *Oster* (2017) had the opportunity to be multi-sensory and interactive. The use of all the senses enabled the actors to stimulate and immerse the audience through new sensory techniques and not just stimulate them aurally and visually.

Even though all the senses were stimulated, the visual sense did not lack in grabbing their attention. The use of puppets and caricature characters enabled the use of Grotesque images in the production. Here, several Grotesque strategies were used to elicit the emotional states linked to the images. Firstly, hybridisation was prominent in *Wolla Wolkie*, the cloud. Here, a definite fusion was seen between a human and a cloud. This was achieved by dressing the actor in an oversized, fluffy one-piece costume that was covered in cloud-like material and batting. This oversized costume enlarged the character as well, enhancing the puffiness of the cloud. Along with this

costume, the actor used grey, white and blue make-up to de-colour her face. This enhanced the costume of the actor, making her look more magical.

Grotesque strategies like hybridisation, decolourisation, disproportion, and enlargement can be seen with the eggs. These enlarged bodies emphasise the decolourisation and disproportion as their arms and legs are skinny. When these hybrid figures are introduced to the audience, the only light on them is that of a flashlight. This bright light enhances their colours. The eggs elicit emotions of comic amusement and awe and wonder in the audience as their unrealistic appearance, and dance moves make them unbelievable.

Other examples of enlargement can be seen in the size of the carrots and butterflies, both have been enlarged to create awe and wonder in the audience. The interaction and educational moment allow the children to touch and manipulate these large carrots. The butterflies interact directly with the audience as they fly over the heads of the children and speak to them directly. The main character *Oster* is the second character that the children meet that is enlarged, the first being *Wolla Wolkie*. As *Oster* is the protagonist, the children need to be able to relate to him the most. Thus, he is enlarged to the size of the target audience.

Although the rat is not seen often, his character and hybridised appearance are responsible for many comic moments. The mask that the actors wears only covers half of her face, this enables her to be mean with the children without them bursting into tears, as they can see it is still a person. The rat also has a strong Capetonian accent, making him seem more comic as slang and certain comedic expressions are used.

The aural sense is stimulated by three different types of sound: monophonic, stereo and polyphonic sound. The monophony sound is produced by the actors, puppeteers, and ukulele. The stereo sound originates from the speakers pointing at the audience, emitting mostly background music and character theme songs. Lastly, the polyphonic sound is produced by the actors speaking from different spots in the space. For example, if the children were facing *Oster* and *Willemien* speaks to him from behind

their backs, the polyphonic sound is experienced. The polyphonic sound is possible here because the theory of theatre in the round⁷⁸ is used.

Instead of using the conventional approach to theatre in the round where the audience surrounds the acting space, *Oster* (2017) is played in reverse. The diagram bellows shows the conventional approach to theatre in the round.

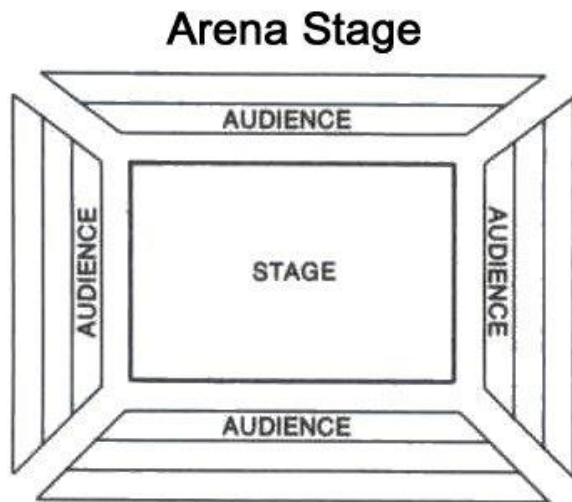


Figure 6.1.9: Conventional theatre in the round stage plan.

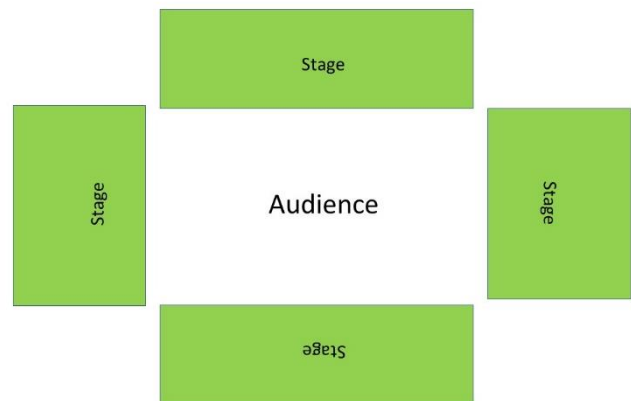


Figure 6.1.10: Reverse theatre in the round stage plan used for *Oster* (2017).

The tactile sense is stimulated through three different stimuli, the first being the carrots. Because the children can interact with the set and props, the opportunity for tactile stimulation is more significant. When the children enter the space, the carrots are already pre-set in the seating area. Once *Willemien* asks the children to help her harvest the carrots, she gives them the opportunity to figure out how to get the carrot out of the ground. When she shows them how to extract the carrot, they have been sensitized to the rough texture of the straw hair and ground that surrounds the carrots. Once the carrots are out of the ground, the children are exposed to the smooth texture of the felt covering the carrot. This elicits emotions of excitement and surprise within the children, as something new is introduced to them. Secondly, the smooth, cool strips of plastic accounted for the second tactile stimulus. These pieces of plastic were

⁷⁸ Theatre in the Round offers the audience a closer intimacy with the stage than proscenium theatre, and it also puts the audience in direct view of each other. A 360 degree sight line means that large scenery is out of the question unless it is suspended above the actors' heads and out of the audiences' view. Theatre in the Round tends to be a format chosen for intimate productions, although some large scale operas and theatre productions have also used the format.

held in their hands and waved in the air simulating the wind. The waving of the plastic made a cool breeze in the audience as the children became more and more excited. This excitement was followed by the surprise of water mist sprayed onto the children. They immediately accepted that this spray was the rain and stretched out their hands to the bottle to feel the cool, wet mist on their palms.

The olfactory sense was the least stimulated of all the senses. The spring flowered scented mist is sprayed through the audience to create the illusion of the flowers that the butterflies are singing about. This mist is only briefly sprayed over the audience to illustrate words, characters, places, and actions. The aroma of scented flowers emphasizes the words of the song, the field where *Oster* and the butterflies are in and the action of smelling the flowers. This aroma also compliments the aural and visual signs that the characters give. The aural sign would be the song that the butterflies sing, and the visual smell would be the action of smelling the flowers.

The use of the senses in *Oster* (2017) allowed the characters, set and props to interact with the children, making it much more immersive. A company like Puppetrix ignores the concept of the fourth wall, making the children part of the narrative. This immersion was deepened by incorporating all the senses.

6.2 Case study 2: Era

6.2.1 Mark Dobson

Mark Antony Dobson (1991-) is one of the founding members of *The Vukollective*, a collective of creatives joining hands with a shared vision through the arts, marketing, conceptual theatre and new media. Dobson specialises in choreography and physical theatre despite being a trained stage actor and dancer. Drawing from his classical background, Dobson lately mainly focuses on conceptual art⁷⁹. Most of the work Dobson produces under *The Vukollective* uses physical theatre to portray universal themes.

Dobson received his Masters degree in Drama & Theatre Arts from the University of the Free State titled *Bausch and the Grotesque Image*. The aim of his Masters degree was to equip students of Film and Theatre so that they will have a viable example of how to combine different mediums to create an interdisciplinary study which will broaden the knowledge on Bausch and The Grotesque Image to dancers, choreographers and scholars.

6.2.2: Era

Era (2016), a physical theatre piece conceptualized and directed by Mark Antony Dobson portrays several aspects of life from different points of view. Dobson, using devised theatre⁸⁰ as the base of the creative process, gives voice to each dancer and actors inner struggles and demons. This visual masterpiece deals with universal themes like loss, suicide, depression, and bullying. Dobson, drawing inspiration from his actors' emotionally driven stories and experiences, uses this information and translates it into elaborate physical theatre numbers. The devised theatre process is

⁷⁹ Conceptual art is art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object. It emerged as an art movement in the 1960s and the term usually refers to art made from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s

⁸⁰ Devised theatre is "a process in which the whole creative team develops a show collaboratively. From actors to technicians, everyone is involved in the creative process."

somewhat gruelling and emotional, but Dobson found a way to use the smallest detail and translate it into a movement piece with meaning.



Figure 6.2.1: The cast of Era (2016)

The performance starts with the cast entering the performance space one by one, sitting down and waiting for something to happen. As one of the performers, this starting process took the longest as the concept of waiting had to be established.

Visually, **Era** is evocative from the start. In the pre-set state, the cast enters one by one, costumed in rich maroon satin and chiffon textures, balanced against woven straw hats, glittering gold belts or embroidered grey vests.

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The performance would continue with a deconstructed conveyor belt carrying our luggage. Each performer would collect their bags and start their search for meaning through choreographed dance sequences. Through the devised process, Dobson would let the actors lie down on the ground asking us specific questions and applying movement to the answer. These individualised movements would then be combined

into a sequence that is frequently repeated throughout the performance. These movements were individualised portraying the actor's feelings and experiences. Each scene throughout *Era* (2016) was based on an actor's experiences. For example, one actress lost her nephew to suicide, this scene was portrayed through movement with a chair and dealt with emotions of loss, fear, and love. This scene can be seen in figure 6.2.5.

The central theme around which these episodes unfold, is the state of being in limbo. Melded into this is explorative expressions of anxiety, uncertainty, fear, and dealing with loss and rejection.

(Roberson 2016: page 1 of 5)

Dobson focused on making the actors universal even though the scenes portrayed were highly personal. This process involved making the actors faceless through many of the scenes by using the grey net material to cover the faces. This Grotesque image made the actors inhumane especially when we had to represent the masses or the outside world. This Grotesque imagery can be seen in figure 6.2.2. Dobson asked the cast to keep a journal throughout the workshop process, making notes of emotions felt and experiences that the actors wanted to tell. One scene was comprised of one of the actors reciting a deconstructed piece about the world in a godlike manner.



Figure 6.2.2: The cast of *Era* (2016)

Accompanied by this powerful speech black cloth was manipulated by the other actors whilst water like movements were projected onto the cloth.

In another scene, one performer who speaks as if a god, talks about giving humans the means to make art so that they might make something eternal. With material simply swished around and good lighting, a magical place formed on stage.

(Roberson 2016: page 1 of 5)



Figure 6.2.3: Marli van der Bijl (Era 2016)

Dobson wanted to bring across a message about religion and the afterlife, even though the actors never made any explicit statement. The opening scene of waiting for the luggage was followed by two characters explain to the audience and actors that nothing can be taken with and that all gold items were to be handed to them. Although it is not said, references were made to the Egyptians and their fascination with gold and belongings.

My thoughts jump immediately to religious connotations of the Catholic kind when I hear “limbo” yet **Era** didn’t seem to deal openly with any religious material. There were undertones which faded in momentarily – mentions of punishment, “...follow the light...”, and some ritualistic evocations such as the careful collection of beaded

necklaces resembling rosaries, which are placed over the heads of the two faceless, eerie figures who throughout **Era** act as spirit guides of sorts.

(Roberson 2016: page 1 of 5)



Figure 6.2.4: The watchers (Era 2016)

The final scene of the performance escalated to physically draining movements which left the actors empty and emotional, only to be followed by the two speaking characters seen in figure 6.2.4 telling the actors that it is time to leave all their belongings and walk into the light. An image of desertion was left on the stage as one actor stayed behind screaming to the others as they walk away.

Before the audience entered the theatre, incense was burnt. The use of this olfactory stimulus enabled *Era* to be classified as a multi-sensory performance.

6.2.3 Combined framework evaluation

VISUAL SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of visual stimulation		Throughout the production, the audiences visual sense is stimulated.
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybridisation 		Era does not make use of any fusion figures as the actors on stage portray realistic people and situations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decolourisation 	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Decolourisation is achieved by pulling grey mesh material over the faces of the actors. This combination of a living person with an inanimate colour makes the actors look inhumane. <u>Interpretation</u> This decolourisation is effective as the mesh covers the face, only slight features can be seen through the grey. This gives the illusion that the actors are faceless. This emphasises the universal themes of the production, making it applicable to any audience member.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportion 		There are no examples of disproportion in Era as the actors on stage portray real people and situations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deformation 	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Deformation is only prevalent in this one example. As seen in figure 6.2.5, the two <i>watcher's</i> bodies are cut off under the chest area. The reason why this classifies as de-formation is because the neutral figures are there to compare these tow figures with. <u>Interpretation</u> This example of the deformation places emphasis on the relationship between the characters and these watchers and what it could possibly symbolize.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlargement 		<i>Era</i> has no examples of enlargement as the actors on stage portray real people and situations.
Emotional states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horror and disgust 		The strategies used in <i>Era</i> elicit no reactions of horror and disgust. The decolourisation might bring brief moments of shock, but this fades as the

		audience is desensitised to the Grotesque image.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comic amusement 	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The first example of comic amusement involves the male actors showing each other who is more masculine. In this scene a 'pissing-contest' is simulated, this combined with physical movement declares one man the winner. The second example of comic amusement involves a tap dancer and a stranger who falls in love with her shoes and ultimately steals them when she isn't looking.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>Because <i>Era</i> (2016) makes use of powerful, mostly sombre themes, comic amusement was used as a tool to lighten the mood. This is done so that the contrast between happiness and sadness is enlarged. These two scenes are strategically placed in the episodic structure to reinforce this contrast.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awe and wonder 	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The decolourisation and disproportion all elicit feelings of awe and wonder in the audience. The decolourisation is shocking at first sight, but when the audiences get desensitised to the sight, the more profound meaning sets in. The brief disproportion of the watching characters desensitises your vision to the proportion differences on stage.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>When this brief desensitisation of the disproportion is over, and you focus on the dancers in front, the watchers at the back keep pulling your attention away. This along with the decolourisation in the characters violates ontological and biological boundaries, allowing the audience to elicit emotions of awe and wonder.</p>
AUDITORY SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of aural stimulation		Throughout the production, the aural sense is stimulated with music, speech, and song.

Standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monophonic • Stereo 	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Monophonic sound is produced by the actors when they speak or sing. In contrast to this one source of the sound, stereo sound is used to score these speeches or dominate in movement driven numbers. <u>Interpretation</u> If only monophony sound is produced by the actors, the audience gets desensitised to the sound, the same applies to stereo sound. Once these two are used in combination with each other, the audience gets sensitised for a few moments, before being desensitised again.
Polyphonic		<i>Era</i> (2016) does not make use of polyphonic sound, as elaborate multi-directional sound is not necessary to portray the themes of the production.
Rearrangement of the relationship between elements. (language, song, music, and sounds)		<i>Era</i> (2016) does not rearrange the relationship between elements of language, music, song or sounds.
TACTILE SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of tactile stimulation	X	<i>Era</i> (2016) does not provide the audience with any tactile stimulants. Because the themes are portrayed with visual and aural stimulation, no tactile stimulation is necessary.
Discriminative/ contiguous/ immersive touch system (location, strength, movement) (cold, smooth, lukewarm, irritating, warm surfaces)		<i>Era</i> (2016) does not provide the audience with any tactile stimulants. Thus, the discriminative touch system is not applicable here.
Emotional/ affective/ recovering touch system (sexual to dangerous) (excitement, sensuality, pain, pleasure)		<i>Era</i> (2016) does not provide the audience with any tactile stimulants. As there is no tactile stimulation, the discriminative touch system is not applied here, resulting in the absence of the emotional touch system.
OLFACTORY SENSES		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of olfactory stimulation		Olfactory stimulation is used in <i>Era</i> (2016)

To illustrate words, characters, places, and actions.		The incense burned in the theatre does not illustrate anything, instead complements visual/ aural signs, evokes an ambience and frames the performance as ritual.
To evoke a mood or ambience.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> The olfactory stimulant used here was incense that the director burnt in the theatre before the audience entered. Once the audience was inside, the incense was put out.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> Once the audience entered the theatre, they were sensitised to this new aroma. After a while, they were desensitised to this aroma. This initial sensitisation sets the mood and ambience of the play about to start.</p>
To complement or contrast with aural/visual signs.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> Incense was burned in the theatre before the performance started. Once the mood was set and the watchers started to speak, the faint aroma of incense complimented the aural signs. The visual signs were emphasised at the end of the performance when the characters walked into the light.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The smell of the incense is not descriptive like in <i>Oster</i> (2017), but rather eludes to a more in-depth religious meaning or sign. This olfactory stimulant is never mentioned by any character.</p>
To summon specific memories.		The purpose of this aroma is not to summon specific memories; instead, it enforces broader themes in the performance.
To frame the performance as ritual.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> As stated in the olfactory chapter, the burning of incense is used in many cultures and have different meanings in each of them. Here the aroma allowed the audience to connect certain cultures and religions to different themes and movement pieces, allowing them to form their own opinions and meanings.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p>

		The ritualistic movement, speech, and themes of passing on to the next life was emphasized with the aroma of the incense, eluding that this performance is sacred in a way.
To serve as a distancing device.		Because the incense was put out once the audience entered the theatre, the aroma did not get any stronger in the theatre; slightly it weakened as it drew into the clothes of the audience members. Thus, it heightened their experience, not overpowering them.



Figure 6.2.5: Barend Kriel & Lariska Knoeske (*Era* 2016)

6.2.4: Case study 2 explained: *Era*

Unlike *Oster* (2017) which stimulates all the senses, *Era* (2016) only stimulates three senses. Because it is a physical theatre piece, the auditory and visual stimulation is crucial for the genre, but Dobson added the olfactory sense to set the ambience of the performance and to introduce a ritualistic element. *Era* (2016) deals with universal themes and is portrayed through repetitive movements. The performance starts where nine people sit waiting for their luggage at a station. The visual sense is stimulated

through elaborated lighting designs and the use of Grotesque images. The first Grotesque image can be seen in Figure 6.2.4 which portrays two characters who are discoloured. This decolourisation is achieved by fusing together an inanimate colour (grey) with a living being. This unnatural colour together with their sadistic characteristics and speech portrays them as inhumane. These two characters are not the only ones who are discoloured as the dancers have the same grey mesh that they cover their faces with. This Grotesque image symbolises human beings in general, making the actors and dancers faceless, enabling the audience to project their own faces to the words and situations. Together with the decolourisation, these watcher characters are deformed as only their upper torso can be seen. The only reason that this sensitizes our visual sense is because of the contrast between the 'neutral' figures in the foreground and the floating deformed upper bodies at the back. This violation of ontological and biological boundaries elicits feelings of awe and wonder in the audience members as most of the visuals portrayed have a touch of 'miraculous' in them. Along with feelings of awe and wonder, comic amusement is also used. Because this performance emphasises sombre themes, two separate scenes are placed in strategic places to lift the mood and to emphasise the contrast between happy and sad.

The auditory sense is stimulated through monophonic and stereo sound systems. Monophonic sound originates from the actors and their voices while the stereo sound plays the music from the speakers. The sound switches between them are continually sensitizing the audience to the sound.

The olfactory senses are stimulated through incense that is burned in the theatre before the performance starts. This aroma sensitizes the audience when they enter the theatre, immediately setting the ambience for the performance. New incense is not burned throughout the performance, so the aroma does not get stronger but instead frames the performance as ritualistic as ideas of the afterlife and religion are portrayed.



Figure 6.2.6: Barend Kriel & Lariska Knoeske (Era 2016)

The use of the olfactory senses took the performance to another dimension as only the visual and auditory senses were initially stimulated. The exciting thing about stimulating the senses in a performance like this is the freedom to using the senses to convey more meaning than the aural or visual signs give. The interpretation of physical theatre performances differs in everyone; thus, the use of the senses can steer the individual to the meaning you possibly want to portray.



Figure 6.2.7: Marli van der Bijl (Era 2016)

6.3 Case study 3: *Nagwandelaars*

6.3.1 Sjaka S. Septembir & Gideon Lombard

Sjaka S. Septembir (1972-), born as Karl Gröger to an Austrian father and Afrikaans mother, was raised in a house where love for language was cultivated. Whilst at school in the Eastern Cape, Septembir started to write poetry. He admits that it wasn't well received at the time, but the process of writing poetry fascinated him. In 2009 he completed his MA in physical theatre and is now a highly acclaimed writer, poet, director, and most importantly a storyteller.

Gideon Lombard (1987-) is no stranger to stages of Cape Town, where he settled after growing up and being educated in Namibia and numerous global cities. After he graduated from the University of Cape Town's Drama Department, he became a household name in acting, directing, writing, composing and designing.

The partnership between Septembir and Lombard have seen many victories including *Nagwandelaars* (2016) and a new project named *Bal-oog en Brommel* (2017). Septembir and Lombard, two exceptional actors, have a unique way of writing and incorporating the senses. Unfortunately, interviews with the two writers were not possible but were luckily sent the text through email correspondence. The researcher can only speculate what their intended meanings and goals were with the incorporation of the senses.

Nagwandelaars (2016) is based on three of C.J. Langenhoven's (1873 – 1932) ghost stories. Legend has it that the same ruins where the play was staged, used to be where he wrote some of his ghost stories. The town of Oudtshoorn was home to Langenhoven. The use of Langenhoven's stories serves as a type of homage to the great writer.

1.3.2 *Nagwandelaars*

As *Nagwandelaars* (2016) is site-specific, the play could only take place at night. This piece of land contains ruins in the form of a barn-like structure, accompanied by a graveyard. During the play, the visual sense of the audience would be deprived, thus needing the darkness outside. Due to the space restraints, a limited number of audience members were allowed during a performance.

Nagwandelaars (2016) is loosely based on three of Langenhoven's ghost stories. These stories include *Die Verloofdes*, *Die Bouval op Wilgerdal*, and *Die Spook*.

As the audience arrives at sunset, the sound of crickets can be heard. At 19:30, as the play gets underway, the graveyard keeper (Sjaka S. Septembir) opens the gate and show the audience in. The gate is



Figure 6.3.1: *Nagwandelaars* (2016)



Figure 6.3.2: *Sjaka Septembir in Nagwandelaars* (2016)

locked behind them. The audience is then lead past specific graves, being told stories of the deceased with the vintage lantern in his hands, only illuminating his face as seen in figure 6.3.2. The audience is then lead to a tree, as seen in figure 6.3.1, whilst being told a story of one of the village people who committed suicide, showing to his grave in the distance. The keeper hands the audience a doll as seen in figure 6.3.3, stating that the doll will protect the audience, directly making them participants in the performance.

The audience is then lead into an abandoned ruin barn seen in the right-hand side of figure 6.3.1. Inside this barn are a makeshift stage and unconventional seating. By now a new character introduces himself as *Bertus* (Geon Nel), shows the audience to sit and a piece of raw garlic is handed to each audience member. When the researcher watched the show, she had the opportunity to sit in the front row, witnessing first hand

the keeper pouring salt around the entire block of audience members instructing them to repeat a few rituals to keep them safe.

BERTUS: Weer eens welkom. Kom ek trek eers 'n sirkel van veiligheid om ons almal. 'n Oomblik van stilte. Ek nooi jul uit om saam met my diep in te asem. Almal saam. En uit asem. In asem. Uit asem. Nou kap met die hak van jou linker voet twee keer in die grond. Dit hou die geeste weg. Ons sal sulke klein ritueeltjies bly doen, net om die sirkel van veiligheid om ons te behou en versterk.

(Nagwandelaars 2016: 5)

The character of *Bertus* is played by Geon Nel, who in real life, is a magician. This is also one of the characteristics of his character. Once the audience is seated, he entertains them with numerous tricks whilst orientating the audience and giving them the necessary information about the characters and the time the stories took place. This is evident from the extract that follows.

BERTUS: Hallo julle! Is hy weg? Kwaai Oom daai ne? Hoe gaan dit? Dis ok. Jy kan maar sê? Sssshhhh. Bly stil. bly stil. Ek dog ek hoor iets. Grappie. Booo! Het hy vir julle iets gegee? 'n Pop? Kan ek gou sien? Ek belowe ek gee dit nou vir jou terug.

Laat dit verdwyn - verbaas dat hy dit reggekry het

BERTUS: My naam is Bertus. Albertus Johannes Groenewald. Gebore 1980, Oudtshoorn. Mooi plek die. Mooi, maar klein. Almal ken almal se stories. Daar's 'n paar mooi stories uit hierdie geweste. Die mooiste seker Langenhoven se stories, nie waar nie. Ons gaan dit vanaand aan julle vertel.

Kyk na niks

BERTUS: Ek hou van toertjies! Hou julle van toertjies? Ek hou van toertjies! Magic! Kulkuns! Truuks! Hier kies 'n kaart.

Doen trick wat effe skeef loop as die kaart in sy neus beland.

BERTUS: Eina donder! Trek die ding uit!... Nie heeltemaal soos ek dit beplan het nie, maar nou ja. Die graf oom sê altyd dis hoe die lewe werk. Is

dit? Bietjie soos die lewe? Ek is nog nie so goed met kaarte nie, maar vuur.
Ek speel graag met vuur.

*(Doen 3 vuur tricks wat opbou tot die verskyn van **Pieter en Susan** – in die stuk begin Susan haar kinder troos lied nerie, Pieter val teen die einde ook in.)*

BERTUS staar na die niks

(Nagwandelaars 2016: 2)

Betrus starts to tell the story of two kids that fell in love and later got married and had a daughter named *Mariska*. He is interrupted by two new characters, *Susan* and *Pieter*, continually scolding *Bertus* saying that he promised they could see her tonight. When he continues to tell the story of how happy and safe they were in Oudtshoorn, *Susan* and *Pieter* give in to abide by his rules. Here, the audience is confused as a story is started which has reference to who these people are or what happened to them. The play continues, and *Bertus*, fulfilling the role of storyteller, begins the first story of *Die Verloofdes*. With both Septembir and Lombard masters of physical theatre, *Susan* and *Pieter* start miming the story. Here they seem to be controlled by *Bertus* as he forces them to play along and act out these characters, playing along as if he has something that they need.

PIETER: Liewe mense julle is hier vanaand dis moet ek aan julle die waarheid beken. Ek is nie versot op die mensdom nie. Dit is tog bekend as die mens-dom. Maar teen my wil...

BERTUS: Luister hier Pieter, wil jy haar weer sien of nie? Jy weet wat laas gebeur het. Nou maar bly by die storie.

SUSAN: Ja, Bertus ons sal. *(trek vir Pieter terug, sy draai na die gehoor)*. Ons is baie jammer Dames en Here.

(Nagwandelaars 2016: 5)

Bertus continues to tell the story of the engaged couple and how they were fighting when they arrived on her parents' farm the evening. Going to bed in different rooms that night, they hear a constant knocking on the wall. Both of them wake-up the next morning thinking that the other one knocked on the wall through the night as a token of their affection. When her father asks how they rekindled their flame, it turns out that

neither of them knocked on the wall and that the wall is five feet deep. As you become desensitized to the surroundings and start to get immersed into this sensory performance sudden shocks of loud banging on the corrugated iron roof sends thousands of tiny dust particles cascading down onto the audience, sensitizing the audience. This banging on the roof occurs sporadically throughout the performance, never in sequence or a recognisable pattern.

Hy word onderbreek deur 'n klop. Hy kyk na die ander. Almal haal hul skouers op.

BERTUS: Hou op speletjies speel daar agter.

PIETER: Daar's niemand daar nie. Dis net ons.

Dit klop weer, meer dringend. Die tafel in die hoek beweeg effe.

(Nagwandelaars 2016: 9)

As the second story, *Die bouval op Wilgerdal*, the same forced participation is seen from *Susan* and *Pieter*. Bertus tells the story of a husband and wife who, on horseback, looked for a farm to overnight whilst travelling. Whilst en route they see ruins of what once was a farmhouse. Arriving at a farmhouse to spend the night, the owners tell the story of a young woman who was engaged to a man named *Petrus*, but another man, named *Frans* wanted to marry *Emmie*. One night, *Frans* broke into *Petrus's* house, intending to kill him. With a lousy turn of events, *Frans* tripped over the door ledge and shot himself in the head. *Bertus* continues to tell that *Emmie* and *Petrus's* wedding went on as planned, but due to the outbreak of influenza, *Petrus* passed away. As if *Emmie* hadn't been through enough, at his funeral she saw that he was still alive. Bending down to kiss him, she realised that it was *Frans* she kissed and not *Petrus*. Back in the house where the story is being told to the couple, they go to bed trying to get the story of *Emmie* and *Petrus* out of their minds. They decide to go to the ruins and see if there are any ghosts. Once they enter the house, the candle that they are holding suddenly grows more prominent, and they decide to leave but is pulled back by some or other spirit and is forced to sit down. Here the play builds up to its climax. Throughout the play, the two main characters refer to a little girl, but this girl is only seen right at the end once the play reaches its' climax. Lombard, uses darkness in this

climax to create a more significant contrast with light once a candle is lit and the little girl stands in front of the audience, dressed in white. Once the little girl appears, she lights her candle and briefly blows it out.

Ons hoor 'n kind lag.

KIND: Mama, Papa.

SUSAN: Mariska. Jy is hier.

Ligte gaan dood. Hoor 'n gestoei en geskuiwel. Die kers wat komself aansit gaan aan.

(Nagwandelaars 2016: 14)

Here, the pace of the performance starts to pick up as the last story is being told, *Die Spook*. *Pieter* starts to narrate the story, pretending to be Langenhoven about a woman who could speak to ghosts. A few seconds later, a voice is heard from above, and the banging starts again. At this moment, the hold that *Bertus* has over *Susan* and *Pieter* starts to fade, and *Bertus* suddenly levitates against the wall as if someone is pushing him up against it. *Bertus* continues with his original story about *Mariska* and tells the audience how she was murdered with a machete in her bed and how her parents were shot, the killer trying to make it look like a farm murder. *Bertus*, being the one who killed *Mariska*, *Pieter* and *Susan* were uncovered by the police. Knowing this, he commits suicide outside.

BERTUS: Volmaan. Die huis is stil. Die familie slaap. 'n Deur gaan oop. Voetstappe in die donkerte. Onheil. Die baba kamer. Die vloere kraak. Mariska begin skree. Dis te laat. 'n Panga lem vang die maanskyn. Kap en kap en kap. Mariska stil. Stilte. Hy kom suutjies die hoofslaapkamer binne. Hy staan oor haar. Haal 'n wit roos uit en plaas dit op haar hart. "Ek is so lief vir jou," sê hy en trek uit 'n pistool. Vyf skote. Twee lyke. Weer die panga lem. Woede. 'n Kan petrol. 1985, die land was vol angs. Hy probeer dit soos 'n plaasmoord laat lyk. Die polisie is te uitgeslape. Hulle kom vir hom. Hy hang homself in 'n boom.

(Nagwandelaars 2016: 15)

Without realising, the theatrical space is filled with a garlic smell as the audience started to peel the piece of garlic, desperately trying to conceal their fear. Once the climax is reached, and *Bertus* runs outside, faint sounds are heard from him. The play ends with the caretaker switching on the lights and reciting the *Susan*, *Pieter* and *Mariska*'s birth and death dates and asks the audience to leave as soon as possible. Once outside, the audience sees that Bertus has committed suicide.

GRAFGRAWER: Is julle veilig. (*hy kyk na die verhoogie*) Pieter Oberholzer.

1952 - 1985.

Susan Oberholzer. 1954 - 1985.

Mariska Oberholzer. 1983 - 1985

Kom ons maak spore. Ek het hier ligte aangesit buite en die polisie ontbied.

Ek het al vreemde goed hier gewaar maar nie soos vanaand nie. Kom, kom, ons moet hier uit.

Buite hang BERTUS van die boom.

(*Nagwandelaars* 2016:17)



Figure 6.3.3: The cast of *Nagwandelaars* (2016)

6.3.3 Combined framework evaluation

VISUAL SENSE		
Element	Presence	Analysis
No visual stimulation	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> Sporadic darkness is used throughout the performance. This is prevalent at the end of the second story, <i>Die Bouval op Wilgerdal</i>. Here, the presence of a candle emphasises the action on stage. This emphasis is usually seen in reverse, where a blackout would emphasise the light.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> By using darkness sporadically, the audience is sensitized to the sudden deprivation of their visual sense. Because the audience is already sensitized and de-habitualised in the space, this darkness emphasises heightens their discomfort as their other senses are highly stimulated. The darkness is emphasised by the loud bangs on the roof, the falling from the ceiling and the use of polyphonic sounds coming from the roof.</p>
Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybridization 		No examples of fusion figures are seen in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016). Even though the play has three supernatural characters, the audience only realises that they are ghosts at the end of the play.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decolourisation 	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> Only one example of decolourisation is seen in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016). <i>Mariska</i>, the daughter of <i>Susan</i> and <i>Pieter</i>, only appears near the end of the production. Here, the darkness that surrounds the single lit candle deprives her face of colour. The minimal lighting emphasises the paleness of her face. Because this image is only seen for a few seconds, the use of makeup could not be seen.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The only illumination to her white face is a candle, this contrast of colour in the darkness, makes her look inanimate.</p>

		This is ultimately the goal as she is a ghost.
• Disproportion		No examples of disproportion are seen in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016). Even though the play uses Grotesque images like decolourisation, no images of disproportion are seen.
• Deformation		No examples of deformation are seen in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016).
• Enlargement		No examples of enlargement are seen in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016). Even though the play has supernatural elements, the bodies of the actors are kept realistic.
Emotional states • Horror and disgust	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Even though slight feelings of shock and fear are experienced by the audience, no elements of disgust are seen or experienced in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016). Horror is defined as intense feelings of fear, shock or disgust. <u>Interpretation</u> These slight feelings of fear are made bearable with the use of other sensory stimulation. These include olfactory and tactile stimulation. These stimuli serve as a distraction for the audience when the immersion is overwhelming.
• Comic amusement		<i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016) have no examples of comic amusement. The only emotions that are associated with the play are horror and disgust as well as awe and wonder.
• Awe and wonder	X	<u>Manifestation</u> The emotions of awe and wonder are elicited using decolourisation and the use of magic tricks. The decolourisation of <i>Mariska</i> is emphasised by the contrast between the darkness and the lit candle. <i>Bertus'</i> tricks and the moment where he levitates against the back wall confirms the 'magical' aspect that is needed when feelings of awe and wonder are produced. <u>Interpretation</u> The tricks that the magician is nothing but miraculous. These magic tricks are done before the audience's eyes without

		any explanation of how it is done. These tricks, together with the inanimate colour, the contrast with the darkness and shock of the little girl, evokes feelings of awe and wonder.
AUDITORY SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of auditory stimulation		The auditory sense is stimulated throughout <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016).
Standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monophonic • Stereo 	X	<u>Manifestation</u> The auditory sense is stimulated though monophonic, polyphonic sound. The voices of the actors serve as the source of this monophonic sound. <u>Interpretation</u> At the start of the play, the caretaker who stands at the front of the crowd is the only source of the monophonic sound. Once inside, the actors on stage produce the sound. At the end of the play when the caretaker comes in through the backdoors, the sound turns from monophonic to polyphonic, as the sound is coming from multiple sources.
Polyphonic	X	<u>Manifestation</u> Three examples of polyphonic sound can be heard in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016). Firstly, the loud bangs on the roof let the audience experience sound from above. Secondly, the caretakes voice as he enters the barn from behind. Whilst he enters and speaks, we hear <i>Bertus</i> outside while he commits suicide. These three examples of sound come from three different sources. <u>Interpretation</u> The use of polyphonic sound is to sensitise, de-habitualise and de-automatise the audience. All three of these sources of polyphonic sound is unexpected and either pull the audience from their immersive states or immerses them more.
Rearrangement of the relationship between elements.		There are no examples of a rearranged relationship between elements in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016).

(language, song, music, and sounds)		
TACTILE SENSE		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
No tactile stimulation		There are many examples of tactile stimulation in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016).
Discriminative/ contiguous/ immersive touch system (location, strength, movement) (cold, smooth, lukewarm, irritating, warm surfaces)	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>There are two examples of tactile stimulation in the play. Firstly, the garlic clove that is handed to the audience. The smooth garlic clove is covered in thin, fragile peel. This peel easily comes off the raw clove as you peel it. This action of peeling doesn't happen until much later when the audience starts to get anxious, frightened and uncomfortable. The second example of tactile stimulation is the dust that falls from the ceiling after every loud bang on the ceiling. These irritating dust particles are felt on any open piece of skin and especially on your hands and face.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>The ability to peel the skin off the clove distracted some audience members when they started to feel uncomfortable or frightened. This distraction allowed the audience to pull themselves from their immersive states and focus on the peeling the clove until they've collected themselves. Secondly, the dust particles did not serve as a calming technique, in contrast, the dust invades personal space and draws the audience into the action on stage, making them accomplices by physically leaving something on them. To me, the dust served as a distancing device, making me want to escape the situation.</p>
Emotional/ affective/ recovering touch system (sexual to dangerous) (excitement, sensuality, pain, pleasure)	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>Peeling the garlic clove helps comfort the audience, making them feel safe in a moment when they are frightened. This action of peeling distracts them and pulls them from their immersive states. The dust, on the other hand, violates the audience and elicits a range of emotions from fear to anger.</p>

		<p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>The clove serves as an emotional crutch for the audience, allowing them to distance themselves when they are overwhelmed. It also serves as a distraction tool, helping the audience deal with what they see onstage, and subconsciously making them feel safe. The more the audiences started to peel the garlic, the more frequent the loud bangs became, sending more dust particles down. Ultimately, these two tactile stimulants fight against each other, one helping you escape your emotions and the other forcing you to be part of the action.</p>
OLFACTORY SENSES		
<u>Element</u>	<u>Presence</u>	<u>Analysis</u>
The absence of olfactory stimulation		There are a few examples of olfactory stimulation in <i>Nagwandelaars</i> (2016).
To illustrate words, characters, places, and actions.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The specific place is illustrated through the aroma of the field. Once the play starts, and the caretaker tells the stories of the people of Oudtshoorn and the specific piece of land that they are standing on, the aroma of grass and dirt illustrates the words and place.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>The Karoo has a distinct smell, especially when you outside in a field. Once the play starts and the caretaker lead the audience through the graves, the smell of earth situates you to the location.</p>
To evoke a mood or ambience.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>The ambience is set using two olfactory stimulants. Firstly, the garlic clove and secondly the smell of dust. The garlic aroma is only noticeable when the pace is picked up, and the play nears the climax. The aroma of dust is noticeable from the moment it reaches the audience. Because the particles are big, they hang in the air prolonging the aroma.</p>

		<p><u>Interpretation</u> The aroma of the garlic clove near the end of the play is quite comforting. This creates an ambience that you are safe in the crowd and that everyone experiences these feelings of fear. The dust emphasises the confines of the room and creates an ambience of anxiousness and paranoia.</p>
To compliment or contrast with aural/visual signs.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> The aural and visual signs are complemented by the aroma of grass and dirt outside in the graveyard. Once the play starts and the caretaker tells the stories of the people of Oudtshoorn and how they died, as well as the specific piece of land that the audience is standing on.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u> The Karoo has a distinct smell, especially when you outside in a field. Once the play starts and the caretaker lead you through the graves, the smell of earth compliments what you see as well as what you are hearing. This helps the audience habituate themselves, matching aromas with visual and aural signs.</p>
To summon specific memories.		<p>Because the olfactory stimulation is so complex and dense with meaning, the director does not give you time to think about specific memories as you are either immersed in the play or trying to distract yourself.</p>
To frame the performance as ritual.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u> When <i>Bertus</i> takes the audience into the bar, he pours a circle of salt around them. Depending on where a member of the audience is sitting, faint, dry smell of salt will be present for a few seconds. Another example of this concept is the aroma of garlic in the air and on your hands. The amalgamation of these two scents in the same play foreshadows the presence of supernatural elements. The scents are helping to ward off these elements.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p>

		The aroma of garlic that lingers in the air, frame this performance as ritual, like the mythical notion of garlic is that it wards off spirits and vampires. Together with this, the vague aroma of the salt around the audience emphasises this idea, whilst ensuring the safety of the audience.
To serve as a distancing device.	X	<p><u>Manifestation</u></p> <p>Two examples of this concept are used, both distancing the audience in a different way. The first element, the garlic aroma, helps the individual distance themselves when their emotions are overwhelming. This olfactory stimulant together with the tactile stimulant of bruising the garlic distracts them from the action onstage. On the other hand, the dust particles cascading down from the ceiling distances the audience from the whole play. This type of distancing device makes intermittently forces the audience out of their immersive states. The difference between the two types being, one is forceful, and the other is done by choice.</p> <p><u>Interpretation</u></p> <p>The garlic serves as a distancing device as it helps the individual pull away from the immersive state for a few moments, distancing themselves until they are ready to be immersed again.</p> <p>The dust distances the audience as it sporadically draws the audience out of their immersion, making them experience the particles invading their personal space.</p>

6.3.4 Case study 3 explained: *Nagwandelaars*

Nagwandelaars (2016) is a multi-sensory play as it stimulates or deprives the five senses of the audience. Ironically, the visual sense is stimulated the least and is most often deprived of any stimulation. This deprivation of the visual sense de-habituates the audience as they are not used to the space around them. This allows the aural sense to be placed in the foreground, allowing the audience members to concentrate on the aural stimuli. The only Grotesque strategy that is used in the play is

decolourisation. As stated in the taxonomy above, the little girl is made extremely pale, almost grey like. Contrasted with the darkness around her, the candlelight makes her look like a ghost or a spirit. This together with the magician's tricks and levitation, evokes feelings of awe and wonder in the audience, as an element of the 'miraculous' is present. It is evident that the audience experiences fear, shock and anxiousness in the play. Horror and disgust are not sufficiently experienced in the play as horror is defined as immense feelings of fear and disgust. In contrast, no disgust is felt.

The aural sense is stimulated continuously as *Nagwandelaars* (2016) makes use of monophonic and polyphonic sound. This monophonic sound occurs throughout the play, whereas the polyphonic sound occurs sporadically. The monophonic sound desensitises/ habitualises/ automates the audience, immersing them in the narrative. This immersion is severed once the polyphonic sound begins: loud bangs against the ceiling, the caretaker entering from the back of the barn and sounds of Bertus committing suicide originating from outside.

The tactile and olfactory senses are stimulated continuously. As stated above, the audience members are handed garlic cloves in the building. This helps with the nervousness that the audience members feel throughout the play. When the performance was finished, I had peeled the entire clove of garlic, leaving my hands covered in the skin. This was my escape throughout the performance as I wanted to distance myself and mind from the impending fear. The garlic cloves serve as an emotional crutch for the audience, giving them something else to concentrate on when the performance is too overwhelming. With the lingering aroma of garlic in the air, the loud bangs on the corrugated iron ceiling sent dust clouds towards the audience. I could feel how these dust particles settled onto my skin, invading my personal space.

The olfactory sense is stimulated in several ways; the smell of nature whilst walking outside, the garlic clove, the dust, and the faint aroma of salt. Seeing as this is a site-specific theatre piece, the smell of the Karoo at night is an olfactory stimulus. The aromas of grass and dirt filled the air whilst walking past the graves, illustrating the place and the words of the caretaker. The aroma of garlic only filled the space once the audience members started to peel the skin of the clove. The garlic clove and the

salt aromas set the ambience and mood of the play, foreshadowing possible supernatural appearances. These two stimulants also frame the performance as ritual, as it is not how the salt or garlic smells that matters, but what they represent: the protection against spirits. The cascading dust particles and the aroma of garlic served as two distancing devices. Two devices that provided two types of emotions. The latter helping the audience distance themselves from the play where they get too frightened or nervous, where the latter invades your space and intrudes on your immersion, pulling you out of this state. The former, aiding the individual to distract themselves from their immersive state and the latter forcing the individual out of their immersive state.

All three case studies have different genres and styles, but *Nagwandelaars* (2016) is the only case study that stimulates or deprives all the senses. If this play was not multi-sensory, the researcher presumes that it wouldn't have had the same immersive impact that it had on the audience. The breaking of the fourth wall and de-habitation of the audience created a safe space for the artists to explore the realm of sensory theatre.

In conclusion, these three case studies prove that the taxonomy developed in Chapter 5 can be applied to different theatre genres. This proves that once the sensory stimulus is incorporated into a production, underlying themes can be projected through the stimulation of different senses. This can be seen in *Era* (2016) and *Nagwandelaars* (2016). Sensory stimulation has a different meaning when applied to children's theatre, as it provides the actors with an opportunity to interact with the children and inspire their imaginations.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Different theories on theatrical styles, acting and directing techniques and the reception of a performance by an audience are continually developing. For precisely this reason, this study undertook research into the development of and the nature of multi-sensory deprivation/stimulation theatre. It was essential to see that many scholars and artists have been studying a specific sense, but little study all the senses together. It was interesting to see artists use these sensory techniques without knowing that these stimulants, when used correctly, can deepen the performance and the audience's experience of it.

All the literary reviews followed the same structure; the theory would be analysed, an analysis of the sense, how it is used in theatre, and its relation to the twin terms. Van den Oever (2010: 62) explains these terms by saying that through time we have grown accustomed to the things that surround us, that our perception of these things has been automatised, thus leaving most of these things invisible. This is where multi-sensory theatre challenges our perceptions. It disrupts our automatised notions of *theatre*, sensitising us to how our senses react. During the literature reviews, other contemporary theatre practitioners are seen using these twin terms to elicit a specific reaction out of them, whether it is the Grotesque image that we have become desensitized to or theatre of cruelty which repeatedly sensitizes the audience.

With regards to the visual, it is imperative to know that the Grotesque image can only be applied to visual images. Thus, the only way that the Grotesque is applicable to this type of theatre is when the characters on stage or in the theatre space are already disrupted in a way. It is important to remember that the Grotesque theories can only be applied to living visual elements. A type of disruption is already achieved with theatre in the dark, as the audience is placed in a different space. Sudden jolts of lights in a dark space could illuminate characters who are already enlarged, deformed, discoloured, etc. Because the audience members are already de-habitualised and

sensitized to this new theatre medium, seeing these disrupted characters will only deepen their sensory response and their immersion. There is still a lot to learn from this theatre medium and the possibilities what a closer relationship to the Grotesque can bring.

The auditory and tactile chapter identifies a large gap the stimulation of these senses in the theatre. The effect of this type of stimulation goes far beyond our current knowledge. Limited research on tactile stimulation in theatre is currently available and is mostly limited to immersive touch and recovering touch. Sensitisation and desensitisation of the tactile sense will have to be explored in further research and performances. The tactile sense mainly revolves around concepts, age groups or tactile disorders as discussed in the nine facts stated by Linden. If researchers were to identify target groups suffering from a disorder or a specific age group, the field could grow exponentially. On the other hand, the sound-based theatre has started to make significant strides, leading theatre discussions with a sound only approach. This theatre style immerses the audience in a new space where their imaginations create their own visual narratives.

The olfactory senses have a unique way of creating lots of problems for scholars and artists but is ultimately extremely rewarding when the aroma design works in every aspect. The most important part of this chapter is the individual's experience in the performance, and as this is qualitative research and not quantitative, concrete resolutions are difficult to obtain. A full state of immersion is not easily obtained primarily when you are experiencing a performance in a phenomenological way: experiencing the experience of you experiencing. The olfactory senses in theatre and the individual's experience of these performances is untapped and waiting to be further explored by scholars and artists alike.

The objective of this study was to create a preliminary taxonomy of how the senses can be used together in performance; this objective was achieved. This taxonomy can be used by theatre practitioners as a guide to how the senses work together in performance and what the effect can be on their audiences.

This taxonomy was tested on three different productions from three different genres of theatre: children's theatre, physical theatre, and site-specific theatre. All three made use of multi-sensory stimulation or deprivation in their performances. The first case study, *Oster* (2017) stimulated all the senses of their target audience. In terms of multi-sensory stimulation, the possibilities are endless with children's theatre. Here, the creators of the play used theatre in the round to utilise the space better, but also to place the audience in the centre of the action. As the characters would move around in the space, the audience had to move with them. This enabled the actors to interact with the children and the children to interact with the set and props.

The second case study, *Era* (2016), only stimulated three senses: visual, aural and olfactory. Because more than two senses were stimulated, it is still classified under multi-sensory theatre. Physical theatre, unlike children's theatre, is more challenging to interact with the audience as set themes are portrayed through the performance. Depending on the themes portrayed, the senses can be used to highlight those themes and convey their meanings. With *Era* (2016), Dobson added the olfactory stimulation to frame the performance as ritual. The incense burned before the performance started to set the ambience for the themes to be portrayed. Here, the audience were sensitised to the aroma when they entered the space, but soon became desensitised once the aroma faded. To conclude, the aroma complimented the aural and visual signs that were portrayed on stage.

Lastly, the third case study, *Nagwandelaars* (2016), is the main reason this thesis was chosen, as this was the first experience I had with multi-sensory theatre. *Nagwandelaars* (2016) as stated in the taxonomy, uses sensory stimulation and deprivation to place the performance in another dimension. Because the play deals with supernatural characters and events, using stimulants like garlic and salt added to the audience's experience. The fact that the production was staged in a graveyard moving into a ruin-like barn adds to the de-habituation of the audience. Here, the audience is sensitised to every sensory stimulant as this is a strange setting. This adds to their experience as they are sporadically deprived of their visual sense inside the building.

These three case studies prove that the taxonomy developed in Chapter 5 can be applied to different theatre genres. This proves that once the sensory stimulus is incorporated into a production, underlying themes can be projected through the stimulation of different senses. This can be seen in *Era* (2016) and *Nagwandelaars* (2016). With regards to *Oster* (2017), sensory stimulation has a different meaning. When applied to children's theatre, it provides the actors with an opportunity to interact with the children and inspire their imaginations.

The value of this research lies in the taxonomy. This taxonomy can be used for the documentation of knowledge of the use of the senses in theatre. Further research with Performance Based Research can contribute significantly to the multi-sensory theatre, using this preliminary taxonomy as a theoretical base. It is important to note that this preliminary taxonomy consists of all the senses, namely; visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory. Each of these senses already has their own taxonomies and theories. Theatre practitioners have been using the senses in performance without necessarily realising the importance of each separate theory and how vital it is to provide a complete taxonomy incorporation all the senses. This preliminary taxonomy provides theatre practitioners and researchers with a complete framework for all the senses, how they might be used in theatre and what effect this might have on attendants.

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