IF YOU WRONG US, SHALL WE NOT REVENGE?

DARING ENTERTAINMENT TO CHALLENGE IDEOLOGIES OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

by

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Abstract

Can entertainment challenge the ideologies that contribute to violent conflict, mass atrocities and genocide? This study explores audience responses to entertainment created for this purpose. Theoretical approaches including those of narrative persuasion, theatre for development, applied theatre, and genocide studies suggest that such a production – if sufficiently transportive – would encourage audiences to reconsider their views.

This study developed a theoretical approach to creating Ideologically Challenging Entertainment (ICE). (‘Entertainment’ defined as narratives that audiences consider engaging, interesting, and ‘transportive’ as described in narrative persuasion literature). It focused on mainstream theatrical approaches while presenting multiple perspectives, using an adaptation of The Merchant of Venice, (Two Merchants) aimed at confronting some of the ideological underpinnings of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, including antisemitism and Islamophobia. Each performance included two versions of the adaptation: a Jewish dominated society with an Arab Muslim minority, contrasted with an Arab Muslim dominated society and a Jewish minority. A mixed-methods study of audience responses explored whether this production inspired audiences to shift their ideological views to become more tolerant of differences, and more aware of the ideological persecution that contributes to violent conflict.

The results support the hypothesis that entertainment can challenge ideologies and inspire the moral imagination. Of audience members who did not initially agree with the premise of the production, 40% reconsidered their ideological views, indicating increased tolerance, greater awareness of their prejudices and recognition of the persecution faced by others. In addition, 86% of the audience expressed their intention to discuss the production with others, thereby encouraging critical engagement with, and broader dissemination of the material. Perceptions of the production as ‘high quality’ and ‘entertaining’ were the primary factor associated with changing ideological views.
Furthermore, qualitative responses offered insight into aspects of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Canada. The research also contributed to the refinement of audience response research methods in mixed-methods studies. These outcomes suggest that high quality entertainment – as defined by audience responses to it - can become a powerful tool in the struggle against the ideologies of hate and fear that contribute to prejudice, discrimination, violent conflict, atrocities and genocide.
Preface

This dissertation is an original work by the author, Dana Lori Chalmers.

The theory development outlined in Part 1 of this dissertation is entirely my own conception and work. Preliminary interviews conducted as part of this research were approved by the University of British Columbia’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) under the project title The Play’s the Thing: Part One. The BREB identification number is H11-00318.

The theatrical production described in Part Two of this dissertation is the result of extensive collaboration between myself and a team of students and faculty from the Department of Theatre and Film at UBC. I conceived of, adapted the script from Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice and directed the production under the faculty supervision of Professor Stephen Heatley. Dr Neil Freeman offered guidance on the script adaptation. The design, technical and performance elements of the production were carried out by students, faculty and staff in the Department of Theatre and Film under my direction. Additional faculty guidance was provided for the student cast, design team and crew.

The research and analysis conducted in Part 3 of this dissertation was conceived of and executed my myself with some guidance and assistance. I received guidance on statistical analysis procedures from Dr Tandy Thomas and Dr Stephen Thomas (at the time a PhD Candidate) at Queen’s University. Dr Beverley Chalmers conducted the audience observations during performances of Two Merchants, assisted with distributing and collecting questionnaires, and contributed to the coding of one variable used in the analysis. Jeffrey Montano provided technical assistance with audio and video recording Two Merchants. Trish Everett conducted one focus group discussion with her class in her role as the Teaching Assistant and Tutorial leader. Arthur Solomon also assisted with the coding of one variable in the analysis.
The audience response research described in Part 3 of this dissertation was approved by the University of British Columbia’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) under the project title Two Merchants. The BREB identification number is H11-02247.

All photographs in this dissertation have been included with the permission of the people in the images as well as the designers of Two Merchants.
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List of Abbreviations

AT: Applied Theatre

ELM: Elaboration Likelihood Model

ICE: Ideologically Challenging Entertainment

JDW: Jewish Dominated World

MDW: Muslim Dominated World

MOV: Merchant of Venice

TfD: Theatre for Development
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Chapter 1: Introduction

It is now clear that the coming decades will be defined by a war in the shadows [...] This enduring battlefield will have no definable frontiers, no apparent or visible enemies and these battles will be waged not only physically but also ideologically and across the virtual domain.¹

In the 20th century, ideological tensions and conflicts began to dominate social and political life. Both World Wars, the Cold War, Apartheid, the Arab-Israeli conflict and terrorism can all be clearly linked to ideological or religious motivations. Even less extreme examples such as ongoing ethno-religious tensions throughout the world and increasing hate crime are connected to ideologies of fear and hatred – the ideologies that this research is designed to confront. The purpose of this research is to develop and refine entertainment as one technique for challenging elements of ideologies of fear that support oppression, violent conflict, atrocities, terrorism, and genocide.

Definitions of ‘ideology’ vary depending on the source one consults. The Cambridge Dictionary Online offers the most simple definition of “a set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organisation is based.”² Merriam Webster’s Online Dictionary, on the other hand, offers a definition that is far more encompassing:

1) visionary theorizing
2a) a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture
2b) a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture
2c) the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a socio-political program³

Alternatively, the Collins English Dictionary provides yet another set of possible definitions for the term:

² Cambridge Dictionaries Online, s.v. “ideology”
1) A body of ideas that reflects the beliefs and interests of a nation, political system, etc. and underlies political action

2) The set of beliefs by which a group or society orders reality so as to render it intelligible

3) Speculation that is imaginary or visionary

4) The study of the nature and origin of ideas

Finally, the *Encarta Dictionary (North America)* defines ideology as:

1) System of social beliefs: a closely organised system of beliefs, values, and ideas forming the basis of a social, economic, or political philosophy or program

2) Meaningful belief system: a set of beliefs, values, and opinions that shapes the way a person or group such as a social class thinks, acts, and understands the world.

For this dissertation, I am combining these definitions to characterise ideology as a system of beliefs, philosophies, principles, values, concepts, ideas and theories that form the basis for a political, social, economic or cultural group or program. Ideology helps us define and understand our world, creating a lens through which we evaluate what is good, bad, right and wrong. Ideology is, in some ways, a combination of history, culture and religion. Despite these innocuous definitions, the concept of ‘ideology’ is often thought of as something the ‘other’ has, not something we possess ourselves. Perhaps this phenomenon is due to the usually innate understanding of one’s own ideology in comparison with the effort it requires to understand the ideological views of the other – much like people mistakenly believing that only ‘foreigners’ speak with an accent, ‘we’ do not. I argue that we all connect with one or many ideologies, and that such ideological allegiances change and evolve as we do.

Most ideologies, particularly in conflict situations, involve a celebration of or respect for the history of a given group; they venerate specific societal, political or economic practices - such as pride in

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4 Collins English Dictionary Online, s.v. “ideology”
5 Encarta Dictionary: English (North America), s.v. “ideology”
the military or in the legal system. They also honour heroes - examples of great men and women who exemplify the ideological image of ‘good’. Ideologies also define the ‘villains’ of a society - the threat to the group or the force against which heroes have to fight. The tension between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in an ideology helps to define its boundaries. 

Ideology shows itself in society in countless ways - through the political and legal systems and in education and health care. My own ideological views have been essential to the instigation and development of my research and will be discussed later in this chapter.

While the definition I have created above implies a relatively stable conceptualisation of ideology, such stability is not characteristic of the notion of ideology. How we understand the concept of ideology has been debated at length, with understandings of the concept ranging from those who view ideology as a means of oppression, to those who interpret it as a ‘filter’ partially obscuring our ability to perceive reality. Even the varying notions of ideology are expressed through ideological lenses.

Similarly, my ideology has, in turn, influenced the way in which I have defined the term for the purposes of this dissertation.

Ideology also plays a dominant role in our entertainment and cultural lives. Just as the nature of ideology inspires debate, so too does its relationship to art and culture. Those who view ideology as oppressive, often view art as a tool of that oppression. Others, like Brecht, perceive the possibility for art to be used to challenge ideologies. With such wide ranging debate surrounding the nature of ideology itself and its relationship with the arts, defining the relationship becomes essential. Rather than limit the definition to the arts as a tool of ideological domination or a means of emancipation, I have

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6 The term ‘conflict’ could refer to an exceptionally wide variety of possibilities. For the purposes of this dissertation, ‘conflict’ refers to the more extreme forms of violent conflict such as war, atrocities, terrorism and genocide. While some forms of conflict are necessary and even beneficial to growth and development, the ones addressed here are generally considered to be extremely destructive. There are, of course, philosophical arguments as to the necessity of even violent conflict for societal development; these are beyond the scope of this dissertation. For the purposes of this dissertation, my premise is that it is desirable to resolve violent, destructive conflicts and, if possible, to prevent further occurrences of them.

7 Further details on the characteristics of conflict-related ideologies can be found in Chapter Four.


11 Adorno and Horkheimer, 147.
chosen to focus on the relationship itself. The culture of the audience shapes performances, just as entertainment is the public arena in which we explore and define ideological meaning.

Performance [or performed entertainment in this context] can be most usefully described as an ideological transaction between a company of performers and the community of their audience. Ideology is the source of the collective ability of performers and audience to make more or less common sense of the signs used in performance, the means by which the aims and intentions of [entertainers] connect with the responses and interpretations of their audiences.

This interpretation has the advantage of describing a relationship—a form of communication—that could apply to a significant range of ideological beliefs. The importance of the relationship between ideology and entertainment for this research becomes apparent when you consider the role that ideology plays in conflict. While there is some debate about the extent to which ideology influences individual perpetrators of violence and atrocities, many theorists agree that ideology, in combination with broader sociological and psychological factors, plays a significant role in violent conflict, genocide and atrocities. If ideology plays a significant role in conflict, then that which defines, represents and explores ideologies should be examined in our efforts to halt and prevent violent conflict. Entertainment is only one of “many social and psychological mechanisms by which moral standards can be selectively engaged or [...] disengaged.”

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13 Ibid., 17.
14 Ibid., 16.
16 Waller, 185-186.
The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between entertainment and the elements of ideologies that contribute to violent conflict. More specifically, I hope to develop a mechanism by which entertainment could be used to model and inspire the ‘moral imagination’ as a means of questioning and opposing one-sided ideological perspectives of conflict in which the actions of one’s own community are glorified and those of the ‘enemy’ are vilified. These perspectives support the divisions between conflicting groups rather than encouraging the relationships that are necessary for reconciliation.

The term ‘moral imagination’ has been used for decades to describe a connection between the imagination and morality – in the sense that morality represents what we believe to be ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, acceptable and unacceptable. Edmund Burke even used the term in 1790 in his writing on the French Revolution. Some have described the moral imagination as a kind of imaginary courtroom that represents our conscience, playing out the drama of judging one’s actions or potential actions in the imagination. In the early 1990’s, Mark Johnson used the term ‘moral imagination’ to describe our capacity to see and to realize in some actual or contemplated experience possibilities for enhancing the quality of experience, both for ourselves and for the communities of which we are a part, both for the present and for future generations, both for our existing practices and institutions as well as for those we can imagine as potentially realizable.

Part of this capacity, according to Johnson, is the ability to ‘take up the place of another’; to “go out toward people to inhabit their worlds, not just by rational calculations, but also in imagination, feeling, and expression.” In his applications of the moral imagination to conflict resolution and peacebuilding theories, John Paul Lederach advances this concept. Lederach describes the moral imagination as a way...
wherein individuals can imagine a world in which they are in relationship with their perceived enemies, acknowledging the interdependency of all people – regardless of the side of a conflict with which they are affiliated. This is similar to the concept of egological intersubjectivity which “involves an empathic intentionality which experiences otherness by way of an imaginative transposition of self into the position of the other.” These interrelationships form a foundation for common ground, greater understanding, and reconciliation when the individuals and communities involved in conflicts recognise them. The moral imagination that can enable this recognition is a fundamental construct underlying this research: the ability to encounter multiple sides of a conflict through theatrical presentations of them in relationship with one another, and to confront our own prejudices, thereby resisting the pressure towards violence and oppression that such beliefs exert.

Throughout this dissertation, I use the Arab-Israeli conflict as an example of an ongoing violent conflict with strong ideological and international influences. Even within this context, my focus remains on the elements of the ideology which are common to a broader range of ideological conflicts, such as ‘us’ and ‘them’ imagery, the perception of the ‘other’ as a threat and the belief in the justness of one’s own perspective.

Part One of this dissertation introduces the theoretical model developed for the creation of Ideologically Challenging Entertainment (ICE). Part Two describes the application of this theoretical model to a theatrical production: Two Merchants. Finally, Part Three is devoted to understanding how audiences responded to the production. These three sections reflect the threefold goals of this research. The first of these is to combine existing perspectives, theories and research to form a coherent theory for the creation of ICE. The second is to apply these theories to the creation of an interesting, engaging

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24 Further exploration of these concepts can be found in Chapter Five
25 These concepts are explored in Chapters Two, Four and Five.
piece of entertainment that embodies significant elements of conflict ideologies, inter-ethnic relationships and challenges the conflict ideologies it represents in ways influenced by existing reconciliation and peacebuilding approaches. The third goal of this research is to explore and understand the audience responses to this production, specifically in relation to the show’s ability to promote greater understanding of conflict ideologies and its efficacy at challenging and countering the perspectives amongst the audience that support conflict ideologies. Understanding the audience responses to the production will be invaluable to future researchers and practitioners in refining the ability of ICE to become an effective mechanism to support peacebuilding and reconciliation processes on an ideological level.

**Hypotheses**

The theories described in Part One of this dissertation make it clear that entertainment has the potential to inspire, influence and challenge audiences when the conditions are right. These powers to influence have historically been used to both support and resist dominant ideologies and can have both beneficial and adverse consequences. Just as theatre has been used to resist oppressive regimes such as Apartheid, it has also been used to support oppression and atrocities, such as in the case of Nazi Germany. Regardless of the value of the ideology they espouse, such productions can only be

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26 Further details on the specific elements of conflict ideologies with which I engage in this study are explored in chapters four and five.
effective when they are able to engage an audience enough to transport them, imaginatively, into the world of the play – in other words, when the productions are entertaining. The quality of the production, the accuracy of the representations and the transportive quality of the narrative will all affect the show’s ability to support or challenge the ideological views of the audience or inspire relevant discussion on the subject matter. In this research, the intention is to challenge aspects of ideologies that support prejudice, discrimination and violent conflict. This play will be the first case study of a previously untried theoretical model. I hypothesise that the model can be implemented to create not only a production that reflects the necessary ideologically challenging issues, but, in addition, will be entertaining enough to an audience to effectively challenge their views.

A second likely influence on the ability of the production to challenge audiences will be the audience themselves. In this case, however, the influences are more difficult to measure as they will be as varied as the viewers. Every theatrical production is, in part, like a conversation between the audience and the performance. Each individual spectator will bring their own unique perspectives to their perception of that ‘conversation’. Phrased another way, each person in the audience helps to ‘create’ the production they see; consequently, that audience member’s experience of the production will vary based on the contribution he or she makes to it. Individual preconceived perspectives on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the quality of the production, the nature of the dissertation, the research, the actors or the play itself are all likely to influence audience members’ experience of the production.

Given these conditions, it is reasonable to hypothesise that the show will encourage many, but not all, audience members to reconsider their views. It is far more likely that the play will promote significant discussion among most audience members, if only due to its unusual nature and controversial

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32 For a more detailed discussion of this concept, please refer to Chapter Three.
subject matter. I posit, however, that a large portion of this discussion will relate to the ideological issues explored in the production. Through discussion, we are able to explore different perspectives and critically engage with ideological concepts. In many cases, such perspectives are so embedded in a society that we do not consciously challenge them. Engaging the ‘moral imagination’ and participating in discussion and debate about these concepts can help us to challenge the validity of these ideological perspectives in much the same way that individuals and nations in the past have challenged the views that ‘slavery is good’, ‘women are not capable of voting’ and ‘the sun revolves around the earth.’ Such discussion is an ideal outcome of this study; however it is necessary to note that relatively few productions stimulate this kind of engagement. Both the nature of the production and the discussion it encourages are essential to the process of challenging ideologies with entertainment.

My Perspectives

I have my own ideological views that influence my worldview. I have a strong belief in the need for fairness\(^3\) – despite having been informed that ‘life is not always fair!’ Having spent some of my childhood in South Africa during Apartheid, I witnessed, firsthand, some of the impacts of inequality in a society in which one group attempts to dominate another. Consequently, I firmly believe in the need to fight such regimes and to do so in a way that honours the principles for which one is fighting. For example, we cannot fight oppression when we are practicing it, just as we cannot discriminate in the process of resisting discrimination. This is, perhaps, my strongest bias: that oppression, discrimination, atrocities and genocide need to be resisted and that entertainment is one possible mechanism for resistance.

\(^3\) Defined as: “treating people in a way that does not favour some over others” Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, 11\(^{th}\) Edition, s.v. “fair”; “considering everything that has an effect on a situation, so that a fair judgment can be made” Cambridge Dictionaries Online, s.v. “fair”; “just and honest; impartial; unprejudiced; specif., free from discrimination based on race, religion, sex, etc.” Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 4\(^{th}\) Edition, s.v. “fair”
Over the course of this research, many people have asked about my biases as they relate to the Arab-Israeli conflict. I started this process with the hope of becoming as unbiased as possible. My knowledge at the time was predominantly limited to some of the Israeli perspectives and I wanted to broaden my understanding to understand as many different views of the conflict as I could. I made a conscious effort to understand not only a wider range of Israeli perspectives, but also Palestinian, Arab and international views of the conflict. I made sure to consult with people from both Israel and Palestine, as well as with both Jews and Muslims in the early stages of this study. I knew I was likely to offend some people, but I had no desire to do so out of ignorance or apathy. As a result, my views and biases have changed with time. Rather than becoming ‘unbiased’ - if such a thing is possible – I became biased in favour of different perspectives depending on the issue being discussed. I am no more or less ‘pro-Israeli’ than I am ‘pro-Palestinian’.

One relevant area in which I do have a bias is in my discussions of inter-marriage later in this dissertation. As an important issue in both Jewish and Muslim cultures, it is one that has become relevant to this study. As a child of a mixed-religion marriage, I am a strong advocate for its benefits, and am aware of some of its challenges. I hope I have presented the views of those who oppose such relationships fairly, despite my own beliefs about such opposition.

Regardless of where my biases lie, I always return to the need for ‘fairness.’ I recognise that this is a highly subjective term and, as with many concepts discussed in this dissertation, subject to the influence of my ideological perspectives. As it relates to my research on the Arab-Israeli conflict, one of

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34 At present, there is no fully recognised ‘State of Palestine’. The United Nations General Assembly has recognised such a state as a non-member observer state, but full statehood has not yet been recognised. Interpretations of the geographic limits of ‘Palestine’ vary and could include only those areas administered by the Palestinian Authority, or an undetermined area of land existing alongside Israel or, for some, the region covering the land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea (some view Israel as also including the same area of land with both groups ignoring the statehood –present or future – of the other). For the purposes of this dissertation, ‘Palestine’ will refer to the political entity commonly referred to as ‘Palestine’ as a home for the Palestinian people, hopefully one day coexisting peacefully with Israel. The borders of this entity/state have yet to be determined. This is not a geographic designation, but rather one of identity. For further information on the terminology associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict, please refer to: Use with Care: A Reporter’s Glossary of Loaded Language in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, (Zurich, Switzerland: International Press Institute).
the most tangible ways in which I practiced the principle of ‘fairness’ was to ensure that I understood and studied the perspectives of at least Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the variation among those groups. When I encountered a concept or action with which I disagreed, my response was to find someone who could explain its logic to me; to find a way to understand a worldview through which those beliefs or actions were valid. In addition, when I was aware of my biases, I made a conscious effort to understand and honestly represent differing and opposing views. That is not to say that my representations are without fault, but rather that they reflect the fullest and most genuine account of my understanding of the information that I can create. When others shed light on biases of which I was less aware, I acknowledged them and sought ways to expand my perspectives, understand those of others, and mitigate any influence those biases had on this research. I am fortunate to have the support of a supervisory committee with a wide range of beliefs and perspectives who have helped me in this effort. The desire to challenge the ideological perspectives of others starts with my willingness – if not eagerness – to challenge my own views. Even when my instinct is to resist, I have endeavoured to overcome such resistance and work towards greater understanding, empathy and fairness.

**Methodology**

My methodological approach focuses on the needs of the research question itself and finding the best mechanisms for exploring that question in its entirety. I value some of the principles found in multiple research paradigms and have tried to incorporate them into my methodological approach for this study. I appreciate the need to seek causal relationships, test hypotheses and refine theories that are common ideals in positivism.\(^{35}\) Likewise, I appreciate an approach that emphasises finding recurring patterns within the data.\(^ {36}\) I also subscribe to the aspects of constructivist philosophy that posit that

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“people understand the issues they face in ways that are influenced by biases, frames, theories, accounts, narratives and conceptual frameworks of various kinds, and that these construals of their situation and their experiences have important consequences for how they act and organise.”

Similarly, I recognise the logic in theories of intersubjectivity that advocate that “an intersubjective reality emerges when there is social consensus in the culture that a certain set of values and beliefs is widely shared.” Moreover, my research subject matter should be a clear indication that I subscribe to a worldview that is rooted in the need to improve our society as is sometimes articulated in participatory research paradigms. In this context, the ideal of collaborating with or being inclusive of people who may be affected by the research is one that has tremendous value. This eclectic combination of principles from multiple paradigms creates a methodological perspective that tries to balance multiple perspectives such as finding harmony between the subjective, the intersubjective and the ‘objective’ and the desire to collaborate with the practical limitations of such collaborations. If pushed to identify with a single worldview, I would choose to identify my methodological approach within the paradigm, or worldview, of pragmatism as defined by Cresswell and Plano Clark – if only because such a paradigm appears to offer the opportunity to include almost any perspective, philosophy or approach that serves the research question at hand. “The focus is on the consequences of research, on the primary importance of the question asked rather than the methods, and on the use of multiple methods of data collection to inform the problems under study.” In this case, the emphasis is on using ‘what works’ for the research question, rather than adherence to any particular philosophy.

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39 Creswell, 41.
40 Ibid.
Beyond these paradigms, I hope that my research will have practical applications and actively seek topics that can – even if only eventually – serve to improve society in ways that extend beyond the boundaries of pure intellectualism. My desire to apply my research and my unabashedly passionate approach to the subject matter has created challenges for this study, however, both my approach and the challenges have only served to improve it.

This philosophy extends beyond my approach to academic research and to the way I approach entertainment and theatre as an artist. My recognition of the power of art to influence society connects with my acknowledgement of the responsibility that artists have for the messages they communicate. The audience is as much a part of the creation of theatre as the actors, designers and directors and as such, their experience should be as important as any artistic expressions.

Much of my research is founded on the principle that ways in which individuals perceive the world around them shapes their realities or, as phrased by the Thomas Theorem “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.” Regardless of whether there is a truly objective reality, individual actions are defined by their perceptions and in conflict situations the perceptions of opposing parties are often vastly different from one another to the point of being mutually exclusive. Consequently, a practical approach to my research requires the recognition of multiple (perceptions of) realities.

An extension of this philosophy is the acceptance that it is exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, to conduct research of this nature and remain unbiased. That being said, some of the principles behind the ideal of objectivity are exceptionally valuable, including the necessity to remain open to unexpected and even unwanted research outcomes. Moreover, when researching conflict and atrocities, it is necessary to include perspectives that one may find objectionable or even abhorrent. At

the same time, there is tremendous value in the subjective impressions that come from recognising one’s own connection to the research. These impressions and intuitions have been instrumental in developing the research instrument – the production – as well as in both understanding the data and in finding outcomes that were not initially apparent. This kind of reflexivity is a core principle of qualitative research methods\textsuperscript{43} as well as Applied Theatre (AT) and Theatre for Development (TfD) practices\textsuperscript{44} and is something I have chosen to integrate into both my research approach and this dissertation.

I have endeavoured to create a research environment in which the participants in this research have as many opportunities as possible to contribute to the study and to voice their views. Just as audiences contribute to creating art, research participants collaborate in the creation of strong outcomes. In my analysis of these responses, I have devoted considerable time to ensuring that the voices of the research participants are included in this dissertation without filters or revisions. While the practicalities of this study precluded the possibility for extensive collaboration with the research participants, I strongly support a research ideal in which the participants are active partners in the creation of the research. Ensuring that the participants in this study were given ‘a voice’ without interference was the best way in which to honour this ideal in this situation. It may be that future studies will be well served by a more collaborative model, such as participatory action research, however such an approach was impractical in this instance.

Finally, my rhetorical style throughout this dissertation is somewhat less formal than may be conventional in some academic disciplines. This has been a conscious choice to communicate this material in a way that is accessible, not only to multiple disciplinary perspectives, but also to non-academics, including the audiences and participants that contributed to this research. In addition, this


\textsuperscript{44} Hazel Barnes, "Mapping Ethics in Applied Drama and Theatre," (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2011), 135.
dissertation is founded on the concept that one can effectively teach, learn and persuade through narratives and entertainment. Consequently, I have incorporated narratives - personal parables, if you will - throughout this dissertation. The purpose of these breaks from conventional academic writing is twofold. First, the inclusion of brief narratives is representative of the core principle of this research: that narrative can both entertain and effectively communicate complex concepts simultaneously. The second purpose serves my own need to have this work reflect not only the views of the participants and the theories represented, but also the personality and passion that has driven this study through to completion.

**Language**

When Juliet posits that ‘a rose by any other name would smell as sweet’, she fails to convince even herself that the language we use to describe something is benign. She is right, a rose by any other name is still a rose; but the language we use to describe it changes our perception of it. This dissertation involves a number of concepts that can be described in multiple ways. The ways in which I use words such as ‘entertainment’, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jews, Muslims and Arabs requires some introduction.

**Entertainment**

The concept of ‘entertainment’ in this dissertation is one that could have been expressed in a number of ways, including through discussions of theatre for social change or political theatre; narratives; or performance. Each of these concepts – theatre, narratives and performance – has been used in other related contexts, but is not entirely accurate with reference to this research because they each neglect an essential element of the requirements for the type of performance that is being explored in this study. Rather than outlining the array of reasons why each of these alternative terms are inappropriate to this study, I will explain why ‘entertainment’ was selected in preference to these, more commonly used terms.
The definition of the word ‘entertainment’ varies slightly from dictionary to dictionary. Online dictionary definitions of the term include the following variations:

- “Performances that people enjoy” (Macmillan Dictionary)
- “An event, performance, or activity designed to entertain others.” (Oxford Dictionaries)
- “Amusement or diversion provided especially by performers” or “something diverting or engaging” (Merriam Webster)
- “the various ways of amusing people, especially by performing for them” or “something that is produced or performed for an audience” (Encarta Dictionary)

While the definitions are unclear on the forms entertainment may take, the phrase ‘I know it when I see it’, famously referring to hard-core pornography,\(^{45}\) reaches to the heart of these diverse definitions: they are almost uniformly focused on audience response (entertainment should be amusing, absorbing, diverting, engaging or enjoyable). It is here that the concept of ‘entertainment’ differs from the alternatives above: ‘theatre’, ‘narratives’ and ‘performance’, all of which emphasise the nature of the performance itself. It was primarily for this reason that the term ‘entertainment’ was selected for this dissertation.

The emphasis on audience response does present some problems for research requiring the creation of entertainment. For example, there is no set of criteria, independent of an audience, which defines an ‘entertaining’ performance. Consequently, there is no guarantee that an audience will perceive a given production to be entertaining until it is performed. Moreover, what one audience member perceives as entertaining, others may consider unadulterated torture. This inability to clearly predict an audience’s response to a production makes it exceptionally difficult to guarantee in advance that what one creates will, in fact, be ‘entertainment’.

An additional challenge with the concept of entertainment is one that is shared with the terms ‘theatre’ and ‘performance’, namely, the vast range of possible activities that may be ‘entertaining’ (or ‘theatre’ or ‘performance’). While many of the definitions of ‘entertainment’ cited above seem to imply that entertainments are performed, some of them (Webster and Oxford) open the range of possibilities to almost any activity – performed or not. These might include playing games, surfing the internet or ‘Facebook stalking’ (an apparently popular form of entertainment during which one obsessively follows the actions of people on their Facebook friends list). This definition presents clear concerns about the potential scope of a dissertation involving ‘entertainment’ in that the extent of the research could include theatre, the internet, games, sex, sports and hobbies – to name only a few options.

Other definitions, such as Encarta’s “something that is produced or performed for an audience” while limiting the entertaining options to something more closely aligned with ‘theatre’ or ‘performance’, also extend the range of possibilities to events such as public hangings, religious ceremonies or invisible theatre.\(^{46}\) Moreover, terms such as ‘performance’ and ‘theatre’, open the range of possibilities to educational theatre and videos, or even political speeches or school plays. Likewise, ‘narratives’ include such a broad range of possibilities – including oral histories/traditions, print narratives and storytelling – that the possibilities become too vast to manage. In fact, any of the available terms have the problem of requiring additional limiting factors to make them feasible for use in a study of this nature. Consequently, for this dissertation, I have chosen to use the term ‘entertainment’, modified to limit its definitions to performed narratives that are absorbing, interesting, enjoyable or diverting and within this framework have elected to exclude forms such as video games, ballet, opera and symphonies, while still including discussions of theatre, film and television.

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\(^{46}\) A form of paratheatre in which performers stage activities/events in public places without informing their ‘audiences’ that there is a performance in progress. For example, two actors boarding a train at different stations then proceeding to find one another and exchange items of clothing for the entertainment of other passengers.
There is no question that terms such as theatre, performance or narratives could apply to this research and many would argue that perhaps, should have been used in this dissertation. I have chosen to use the term ‘entertainment’ for the reasons discussed above as well as to differentiate this kind of performance from the far broader range of socially and politically relevant forms of performance that are now or have been implemented. The types of performances discussed in this dissertation are a specific subset of the broad definitions of theatre, performance and narratives, and consequently, I have chosen to use different terminology in my discussions of them.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict

There is a range of language that refers to the ongoing conflict between Israel and its neighbouring states. Some of the most common terms are ‘the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’; ‘The Middle East Conflict’; and ‘the Arab-Israeli conflict’. While each of these terms describes approximately the same set of events, the terms themselves create different impressions of those events.

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The term ‘Israeli-Palestinian conflict’ is common and, over the course of this research, has been suggested as an alternative to my preference for the term ‘Arab-Israeli’ conflict. In some sense, the term ‘Israeli-Palestinian conflict’ is accurate in that the subject of the conflict is the lands of Israel and Palestine. The inaccuracy inherent in this term is the implication that the conflict is solely between Israel and Palestine. This is a naively problematic implication. Since the modern manifestation of the conflict began in the early 20th century, at least the following nations and groups have been directly involved in the conflict: Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Israel and Great Britain. In addition, the following groups and nations have been involved indirectly: France, the United States, the former USSR, Saudi-Arabia, Iran, Iraq, France and the United Nations – at least. To imply that this is a conflict between only two groups – Israelis and Palestinians – is to ignore the significant international involvement that
has frequently aggravated the conflict. Likewise, an attempt to separate the conflict between Israel and Palestine and the conflict between Israel and other Arab nations risks ignoring the significant international influence on both Israel and Palestine in their relations with one another and, conversely, the influence that issues specific to the relationship between Israel and Palestine have over broader Arab-Israeli relations.

On a more insidious level, the term ‘Israeli-Palestinian conflict’ reinforces a commonly held ideological view of the conflict which demonizes a ‘powerful’ Israel as the bully against a ‘weakened’ Palestine – ignoring the wealth and power of the neighbouring Arab states who are and have been deeply involved in the perpetuation of the conflict. When comparing Israel and Palestine as enemies in this conflict, there is no doubt that Israel is by far the stronger power. Israel is wealthier, has a stronger military, better education and medical care, is a recognised (mostly) state and has a strong alliance with the United States. While Israel is unquestionably stronger than Palestine, it is not necessarily stronger than the combined power of the neighbouring Arab states and the multitude of other nations and organisations involved in the conflict. Perpetuating the myth that Israel is bullying the ‘innocent victim’ of the weak Palestine is one way to build international opposition to Israel and create the image that Israel is not under any kind of real threat (a view that emerged in the views of some participants in this study).

**The Middle East Conflict**

Like the term ‘Israel-Palestine’ conflict, the ‘Middle East’ conflict has elements of both accuracy and inaccuracy. This term reflects the broader nature of the conflict, including more than only Israel and Palestine. That being said, the term ‘Middle East’ itself is problematic. Geographically, the definition of the Middle East is imprecise at best and could refer to a region as specific as Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, or a region stretching as far east as the western border of China, as far north as
Georgia and as far south as Somalia, with a range of possibilities between these options.\textsuperscript{47} In addition, the term itself has some unpleasant historical origins with strong connections to British imperialism and Orientalist discourses.\textsuperscript{48}

Beyond the concerns with the concept of the ‘Middle East’ itself, is the application of the term to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It implies that the conflict is amongst all the countries in the Middle East – regardless of how one defines it, rather than between a number of specific countries in the region and Israel. While this may seem like an inconsequential distinction, the reality of Israel being the only country in the region on ‘one side’ of the conflict is an important one to acknowledge.

\textit{The Arab-Israeli Conflict}

The ultimate decision to use the term ‘the Arab-Israeli Conflict’ was based on my view that it is the best of the available commonly used options in reflecting the nature of the conflict. As with any of these terms, it is not perfect, however, it reflects the fact that the conflict is mostly located in the ‘Arab world’ and Israel and the term reflects the conflict’s extension beyond simply Israel and Palestine. The weakness of this terminology – as with all the other options - lies in its implicit exclusion of the international community in this conflict. Thirty years ago Abu-Laban wrote that “The tension in the Middle East has been broadened to encompass the international arena, presenting a threat of nuclear confrontation among the superpowers.”\textsuperscript{49} Now, since Islamist terrorism has taken a more dominant role in international politics, it becomes difficult to separate the conflict between Israel and Palestine from the tension between Israel and Iran, Iran and the United States, and the conflict between Al-Qaeda and the United States.

\textsuperscript{47} Jaren Culcasi, "Geographical Record: Constructing and Naturalizing the Middle East," \textit{The Geographical Review} 100, no. 4 (2010): 589.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 583.
\textsuperscript{49} Baha Abu-Laban, \textit{An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada} (Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 41.
While the term ‘Arab-Israeli conflict’ does not include the wealth of other nations who have participated in or currently contribute to the conflict, there is no commonly used term that would fulfil such an expectation. I recognise that people have vastly differing views of the best terminology to apply to this particular conflict. I have chosen this term as the best of the options based on my own perspectives and critical analysis of the conflict and in an attempt to use terminology that was as ‘fair’ as possible in my research.

Within this framework, I often use specifically Palestinian symbolism in opposition to Israeli imagery, particularly in Two Merchants. Even within a broader international conceptualisation of the conflict, Palestine is often used as a symbolic opposition against Israel (and sometimes broader Western influences.) Other nations involved in the conflict often use Palestine as a focal point for discussions of opposition to Israel\textsuperscript{50} or invoke Palestine in opposition to other activity in the Middle East to which they may object, for example, international involvement such as the Iraq war.\textsuperscript{51} In addition, from a purely practical perspective, there are no recognisable ‘Arab’ symbols as they relate to the Arab-Israeli conflict, while the Palestinian symbols are often embraced beyond Palestine itself.

**Jews, Muslims and Arabs**

While the discussion of the various influences on identity associated with these groups is best left to later in this dissertation, it is worth introducing the ways in which these terms are used. Definition and identity often play a dominant role in discussions of these diaspora groups. Who is, or is not a Jew/Muslim? Are Jews a religious or ethnic group? Should the discussion focus on Muslims or Arabs? Does the degree of religious observance indicate identity? These and other questions are all common when attempting to define a diaspora or community. Ultimately, most use the debate to


emphasize the diversity within the communities, rather than defining their limits. The groups themselves are incredibly diverse and even overlap - there are Jewish Arabs/Arab Jews, just as there are Israeli Muslims or Christians. Generally speaking, however, in both diaspora groups in Canada, the majority of the population is Canadian born.

In this dissertation, for purposes of simplicity, it has been necessary to choose a term and accept that it may not accurately represent the diversity inherent in all of these communities. When the term Jew or Jewish is used, it refers to anybody who identifies themselves with those ‘cultures’ either ethnically or religiously. It is differentiated from ‘Israeli’ which is used to denote a nationality. When the term Israeli is used, it refers primarily to Jewish Israelis unless otherwise specified.

The term ‘Muslim’ in this dissertation is more problematic. There is no question that the Muslim world extends far beyond the community of Arab-Muslims that are the focus of this dissertation, however, once again for purposes of simplicity, the term ‘Muslim’ in this dissertation primarily refers to Arab-Muslims. This is never intended to imply that all Muslims are Arabs! The term ‘Arab’ refers to the ethnic identity of ‘Arab’ as individuals and communities self-identify with that term. While the majority of this population is Muslim, in this dissertation the term can also refer to non-Muslim Arabs on occasion.

My use of the terms ‘entertainment,’ the ‘Arab-Israeli conflict,’ ‘Jews,’ ‘Muslims’ and ‘Arabs’ is not intended to reduce these complex, diverse concepts to a single homogenous construct, but is rather an attempt to find a way to communicate these multifaceted ideas clearly. The emphasis that this dissertation places on diversity, complexity and multiple perspectives should serve to counterbalance any homogeneity perceived to be inherent to these terms.

Part 1: Ideologically Challenging Entertainment

Theories

The decision to use theatre as a specific intervention to address ideological issues related to conflict, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular, evolved from the literature of a broad range of disciplines including, but not limited to, History, Sociology, Political Science, International Relations, Psychology, Genocide Studies, Conflict Resolution, Theatre and Applied Theatre. Each of these disciplines or sub-disciplines contains theories, approaches or concepts that can be combined and applied to creating a cohesive theoretical approach to using entertainment (in this case, theatre) as a way to address ideology in conflict – creating Ideologically Challenging Entertainment (ICE).

Although these theories come from a wide range of disciplines spanning the Social Sciences and Humanities, there are a number of commonalities in how these disciplines engage the public on issues relating to ideology. For example, theories of persuasion emerging from psychology and sociology are conceptually similar to some of the theories of theatre for social change and AT. The concepts are framed in completely different ways, but the meaning and fundamental principles are very similar. Consequently, rather than present each discipline’s theoretical approach(es) independently, I have combined the diverse theories to create an innovative model for creating entertainment that inspires questions, discussion and even change relating to conflict ideologies. The diverse theoretical approaches are applied to the model in order to inform the development of each phase.
The theoretical model created here is composed of three phases, Imagine, Understand and Create. These phases reflect Lederach’s model for the invocation of the moral imagination. In order to cultivate this imagination, Lederach proposes a four level process. The moral imagination asks us to imagine ourselves within these interdependent relationships; understand and embrace the complexity of a situation; be creative and believe in the power of that creativity; and take risks, particularly those which involve stepping into the unknown arena of peace after entrenched conflict. Lederach’s approach also requires that we understand the nature and complexity of violent conflict and he similarly advocates an approach that uses art – in a variety of forms – to engage in this kind of social and political change.\textsuperscript{55}

The first phase requires us to imagine possibilities. First, is the overall \textit{conceptualisation}: attempting to understand the nature of the problem to address, the appropriate form of entertainment to use, the likely efficacy of the chosen method and the acceptance of complexity. The next perspective to consider is the \textit{ethical issues} involved. Some may argue that ethical considerations should be the first

\textsuperscript{55} Lederach, 5.
consideration after a broad concept is determined, however, until one understands the issues involved in all their complexity, any consideration of the ethical principles will be incomplete. Entertainment with ideological content can easily become propaganda, and artists who use entertainment to inspire change need to be aware of the power they have to influence others and the ethical responsibilities that entails. With that understood, however, both stages in this phase should be considered as a whole. They should encourage us to imagine the possibilities, not only of the potential benefits of these interventions, but also of their potential hazards and of alternative approaches.

The second phase of the process – Understand - begins to focus on a specific context, requiring a deep understanding of the relevant issues. Again, this phase incorporates two stages that can be undertaken consecutively and/or concurrently. The first stage requires understanding the situation and identities; how this entertainment will connect with reality. Reality is not only what could be termed ‘objective’ reality, but also subjective and ideological realities. Similarly, identities can be both objectively real and subjective or imagined. Moreover, they can be both at the same time. The identities influence the next stage, which involves understanding the relationships. Relationships can refer to the relationships between the individuals and groups involved in the conflict – both with friends and with enemies. They can also relate to the entertainment itself, including relationships between the intervention and its audience. This connects to the third phase of this process – Create. It is the point at which the creation of the intervention can begin. How does one create a production – an intervention – that honours and incorporates the range of issues explored in the first two phases of this process?

While this kind of structured approach to ICE is novel, it is important to recognise that there have been a number of artists who have created incredibly powerful examples of entertainment that have effectively challenged the ideological views of their audiences. Some of my personal favourites are
the challenging theatre practitioners in South Africa during the Apartheid era such as Pieter Dirk-Uys,\textsuperscript{56} Athol Fugard,\textsuperscript{57} Mbongeni Ngema\textsuperscript{58} and organisations such as the Market Theatre\textsuperscript{59} who consciously used entertainment to fight the ideology of the Apartheid regime. The model developed in this research is highly indebted to these and other artists who have used their own forms of entertainment to inspire ideological and, by extension, social change.

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\textsuperscript{57} Donahue; Athol Fugard, "Some Problems of Being a Playwright from South Africa," \textit{Twentieth Century Literature} 39, no. 4 (1993): 388.
Chapter 2: Conceptualisation

The first stage in the process of creating ICE begins with a broad concept of the issues one wishes to address. In the case of this dissertation, much of this has already been defined by the focus on conflict ideologies and entertainment. Given this focus, the next step is to start with an understanding of conflict and particularly the relationship between conflict and ideology. One also needs to understand the mechanisms for intervening on an ideological level, particularly the processes by which these interventions can be effective. The relationship between these two expansive ideas creates the beginning of a broad conceptualisation of the scope of this process.

Choosing an Issue

There are any number of problems in the world in desperate need of intervention and change; the environment, war, terrorism, disease, poverty, infant mortality, literacy, gender equality, the list could go on almost endlessly. In the face of the sheer insurmountability of the possibilities, how does one choose a focus that might make a difference? Many factors play a role in this choice. As unscientific and perhaps ‘un-academic’ as it may sound, the need for passion in this process cannot be overemphasised, particularly when faced with a task that others may deem ‘impossible’. Passion alone, however, is not enough to define the focus of an intervention in academic research. One also needs to select an appropriate intervention and understand its potential for creating the desired kind of change.

Numerous studies and theories of genocide, war and conflict resolution reveal the importance of ideology in conflict. Theories from theatre and persuasion literature suggest that the combination of these forms may prove to be an effective intervention to influence ideology. Furthermore, it is appropriate to understand some of the ways in which theatre and entertainment can be used to inspire social, political and ideological change.
Conflict

In his discussion of genocide in Africa, Frank Chalk identifies two different categories of genocide: utilitarian and ideological. In utilitarian genocides, the emphasis is on the acquisition of resources and usually the perpetrators are able to utilise the established armed forces to facilitate this acquisition. In an ideological genocide, however, a significant motivation is “the search for a perfect future inspired by a utopian ideology” and, in order to reach this halcyon future, one needs to eliminate threats to the utopian ideal. In these instances, there is a need for “extensive, sustained propaganda to mobilize violence on a grand scale.” Similar broad categories may be applied to non-genocidal entrenched conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, Terrorism, South Africa’s Apartheid or the Canadian Residential Schools. Ervin Staub appears to share this perspective; in an analysis of a range of case studies including genocides such as the Holocaust, Rwanda and Cambodia, as well as violent conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, terrorism and the violence in the Congo, he makes it clear that mass killings and genocide share a number of causal influences. “When the conditions that lead to mass violence are present and an evolution is in progress, one cannot predict which of these kinds of violence might be the outcome [...] Therefore, prevention must focus on preventing increasing violence between groups, not specifically genocide.”

That ideology plays a significant role in some conflicts, terrorism, oppression and genocide is a generally accepted aspect of conflict, although the extent of the role of ideology is frequently – and heatedly – debated. Since September 11th, we are all familiar with the importance of ideological

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Staub: 823.
64 Ibid., 822.
65 Ibid., 823.
66 Aldis and Herd, eds; Browning, 216; Chalk, "The Seeds of Genocide: Hate Propaganda and the Banalization of Evil."; Goldhagen; Barbara Harff, "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder
reasoning to terrorist groups like Al Qaeda. Anybody who studies Hamas or the Muslim Brotherhood cannot help but be bombarded with ideological justifications. Israeli extremist groups exhibit similar ideological motivations, in many cases citing almost identical rhetoric as justifications for violence. Yet it is not only those we deem ‘other’ who value ideologies; ideologies are essential to our perceptions of ourselves as well. The significant number of conflicts in which ideologies have played a substantial role has spurred a wealth of literature about the factors contributing to conflict and the role that ideology plays in them.

**James Waller’s Evil Paradigm**

James Waller posits a combination of innate and conditioned contributors to the individual and collective psyche that contribute to the phenomenon of ‘extraordinary evil’. He proposes a paradigm that outlines several aspects of individual and social psychology that contribute to the ability of ordinary human beings to commit acts of extraordinary evil.

The paradigm starts with the forces that shape our responses to authority. He classifies these forces under three categories: the Actor, meaning the individuals involved; the Context of the Action, meaning the society in which evil occurs which Waller calls a Culture of Cruelty; and the Definition of the Target, meaning the ways in which victims are identified and eliminated from society. Waller’s discussion of the ‘Actors’ is divided into two components: the innate characteristics in human nature that make all human beings susceptible to acts of extraordinary evil, which he calls the Ancestral Shadow; and the influences and characteristics that awaken this potential, which he subsumes under a rubric, the Identities of the Perpetrators. Each of these broad categories is subdivided into individual influences and then divided further into highly specific components or actions reflecting those

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influences. The result is a paradigm that outlines 12 different influences to the human ability to commit atrocities. Of these 12 influences, 8 are either driven by or closely linked with ideology, including:

- Our Ancestral Shadow
  - Ethnocentrism
  - Xenophobia
  - Desire for social dominance
- Identities of the Perpetrators
  - Cultural belief systems
  - Moral disengagement
- Social Death of the Victims
  - Us-them thinking
  - Dehumanization of the victims
  - Blaming the victims

Of the four major categories of forces shaping our ability to commit atrocities, the only one in which ideology does not play an overt role is the influence of a ‘culture of cruelty’.

**Ervin Staub: Roots and Prevention of Mass Killing**

In his discussion of an approach to prevent mass killings, Ervin Staub uses a number of case studies from a range of different conflicts in order to identify an array of influences affecting a society’s progression towards mass killings or genocide, many of which show similarities to those identified by Waller. Like Waller, Staub focuses on the motivations of perpetrators of mass killing and genocide. His typology breaks down these motivations into the instigating conditions, cultural and societal characteristics and psychological factors of both perpetrators and bystanders. He then goes on to discuss ways in which prevention of violence or interventions in existing violent situations can take place as well as mechanisms for reconciliation after violence as a preventive measure.\(^\text{68}\)

Staub identifies two instigators, or starting points, of mass violence and their psychological and social effects including: difficult life conditions, particularly a sudden deterioration in life conditions and conflict between groups – especially identity groups. He goes on to discuss cultural characteristics that

\(^\text{67}\) Waller, 134.
\(^\text{68}\) Staub: 822.
make violent outcomes more likely including: ‘us and them’ thinking such as cultural devaluation and ideologies of antagonism. In addition, he recognises the impact of overly strong respect for authority in a society and unhealed wounds from a previous experience of being a victim. He also notes that monolithic (as opposed to pluralistic) cultures, autocratic political systems and a history of resolving conflict through aggressive means are all cultural and societal characteristics that facilitate the possibility of mass killing or genocide. Staub moves from discussions of societies to individuals through an analysis of the roles that witnesses and bystanders play in the conflict including. These include the participation or passivity of bystanders enabling or even encouraging the perpetrators; internal bystanders participating in the discriminatory system; external bystanders either actively supporting perpetrators or, through their inaction, appearing to condone their actions; and the influence of leaders and elites in shaping societies.69

As with Waller’s typology, Staub’s influences strongly implicate ideology as a key feature in enabling the development of particular kinds of conflict. Of the eleven characteristics Staub identifies, he explicitly connects ideology to five of these characteristics and the connection is implicit in an additional four. These include:

- Explicit:
  - Difficult life conditions
  - Conflict between groups
  - ‘Us and them’ thinking
  - Ideologies of Antagonism
  - The influence of leaders and elites
- Implicit:
  - Overly strong respect for authority
  - Monolithic cultures and autocratic political systems
  - Unhealed wounds from past victimization
  - The role of internal bystanders70

69 Ibid., 824-831.
70 Ibid.
Staub also advocates a significant range of ideological interventions as part of his discussion of early prevention of violence and conflict. Broadly speaking, these involve developing more positive attitudes towards the other through increased contact between groups, dialogue, any mechanisms of ‘humanising’ the other, and healing wounds from past victimisation. He discusses the need for constructive ideologies that are inclusive and embracing of all groups, promoting pluralism and training in understanding the roots, impact, prevention and origins of violence, conflict genocide and group violence.\(^{71}\)

**Barbara Harff’s 2009 Risk Analysis Model**

Barbara Harff identifies six significant societal conditions that can increase the likelihood of a conflict escalating into a genocide or politicide. Her *Risk Analysis Model*, unlike Waller and Staub’s theories, is aimed at recognising the signs of an impending genocide or politicide in order to predict and intervene, rather than identifying influences on perpetrators in order to learn how best to intervene.\(^{72}\) Harff’s model uses numerous social and economic indicators to create a statistical model that can, in theory, begin to predict future genocides. While the indicators she uses are too numerous for discussion here, these conditions can be grouped into six broad categories of indicators including the risk of future instability, state-led discrimination, having been part of a genocide or politicide taking place after 1950, ethnically polarised elite, specific regime types, and trade openness.\(^{73}\)

- **Risk of Future Instability:** Genocides and politicides are more likely to occur either during or shortly after regime instability or internal war. In addition, they are more likely to take place in regions where the neighbouring states have undergone similar political upheaval.
- **State-led Discrimination:** Genocides and politicides take place in places with policies and practices that deliberately restrict the economic and/or political rights of minority

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\(^{71}\) Ibid., 834-838.  
\(^{73}\) Ibid., 520-521.
group(s). While Barbara Harff focuses on the restriction of minority groups, Ervin Staub discusses the restriction of the economic and political rights of a majority group by an elite minority.

- **Genocides or Politicides since 1950:** Genocides or politicides are more likely to occur in places in which there is a recent history of genocide or politicide, with this analysis focusing on the time since 1950. In other words, countries or regions that have been part of genocide since 1950 are more likely to repeat that level of violence than those without such a history.

- **Ethnically Polarised Elite:** Genocides and politicides are more likely in places in which either the minority or majority group dominates the ‘elite’ of society and where that domination is intensely contested. This conflict between the elite and those they dominate often contributes to the ideological underpinnings of the violence.

- **Current Regime Type:** Different regime types are more susceptible to committing genocide and politicide with autocracies being the most likely and democracies being the least likely.

- **Trade Openness:** Higher levels of international trade openness decrease the likelihood of genocide or politicide. This is calculated based on imports and exports as a percentage of the Gross National Product (GNP).

These six broad categories of risk factors encompass a significantly larger number of quantitative societal measures that Barbara Harff incorporates into her model. All of these focus on evaluating the society as a whole, and usually imply a state structure. This makes sense, given that the purpose of this model is to predict potential genocides or politicides in order to encourage international intervention. Even with this broad, society level focus, however, Harff’s model still includes ideology as a significant factor in the development of extreme forms of conflict, particularly with regards to the factors of an ethnically polarised elite and the regime type – both of which are likely to have strong ideological underpinnings.

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74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
Gregory Stanton’s Eight Stages of Genocide

The second model for predicting genocide (after Harff’s Risk Analysis) used by Genocide Watch is Gregory Stanton’s *Eight Stages of Genocide*. As with Harff’s approach, these stages focus primarily on the societal level, rather than the individual level, but include additional measures of a society’s inclination towards extreme conflict that may not be as easily quantifiable as Harff’s measures. The eight stages identified by Stanton are Classification; Symbolization; Dehumanisation; Organisation; Polarisation; Preparation; Extermination and Denial. While the stages occur sequentially, the beginning of the second phase, for example, does not indicate a cessation of the first. Rather, each subsequent stage adds to the existing previous ones.

1. **Classification**: “All languages and cultures require classification – division of the natural and social world into categories.”\(^{76}\) This is also sometimes called ‘segregation’.

2. **Symbolization**: Introducing symbols or images that represent or signify the classifications. Some are based on physical characteristics, others are imposed by a culture on itself and still others are imposed by an oppressive government on a targeted group.

3. **Dehumanisation**: “Classification and symbolization are fundamental operations in all cultures. They become steps of genocide only when combined with dehumanization.”\(^{77}\) Denying the humanity of others.

4. **Organization**: Genocide takes place in organised groups. These can be small, or large, governmental or extra-governmental. They need not be elaborate or in possession of advanced weaponry.

5. **Polarization**: Eliminating moderates to ensure that people are ‘either with us or against us’; pushing the population to the extremes to ensure conflict.

6. **Preparation**: Includes a series of processes including identification – identifying the victim – and expropriation of the property of victims. It may also include concentration of the victims and/or transportation of the victims to killing centres.

7. **Extermination**: The murder of the victims. Considered ‘extermination’ by the perpetrators because of the dehumanised status of the victims.

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\(^{76}\) Stanton: 2.
\(^{77}\) Ibid., 3.
8. **Denial**: A range of mechanisms exist to deny or hide a mass murders, including hiding mass graves, destroying records, dismissing reports as propaganda or unconfirmed, minimizing the number of dead and arguing about the semantics of applying the term ‘genocide’ to a particular conflict.\(^7^8\)

According to Genocide Watch, the Arab-Israeli conflict is currently in stage five: polarisation with the (potential) victims being either the Palestinians or the Israelis.\(^7^9\)

Stanton makes it clear that simply being in one of these stages does not imply that a genocide is imminent. He notes that almost all contemporary societies exhibit characteristics of stages one and two and, in fact, these are part of how communities define themselves. As always, it is the context of how these exist in a society that influences how we address them. Stanton proposes that interventions should not wait until stage seven – which is when most people imagine interventions to be necessary – but rather advocates attacking every single stage of this process as a means to prevent the escalation to genocide. Steps one, two, three, five and eight all emphasise ideology as a significant component of what makes them effective. Consequently, one can assume that an intervention that addresses ideological issues could be valuable in addressing all of these stages.

**Ideology and War**

While the literature surrounding ideology and genocide is vast, ideology rarely plays a role in the international relations literature. Since the advent of the ‘realist’ school of thought, issues of ideology appear to be rarely considered relevant to international relations. The realist school of thought “maintains that state behaviour is primarily driven by the balance of power among rivals in the international system.”\(^8^0\) Such an approach assumes that states behave rationally and that all states

\(^7^8\) Ibid.
share a common objective of ‘survival and security’\textsuperscript{81} based on the same definitions of those terms. It further assumes that ideological rhetoric is little more than a mask used to conceal the genuine interests of the states involved.\textsuperscript{82} Issues relating to power inequalities are, according to some realists, far more relevant to international relations.

There are those, however, who argue (or, in my view, recognise) that ‘realist’ concerns of structural conditions do not account for the vehemence and intensity, or even the actions involved in many international conflicts.\textsuperscript{83} From this perspective, ideological concerns may be more dominant than those relating to power dynamics or structural issues. In all likelihood, the influences leading to war will encompass a combination of ideological and material concerns. One recent study on \textit{Ideology, Ideologues, and War} by Alex Weisiger, conducted a quantitative analysis examining some of the possible relationships between domestic political ideologies and wars in Europe. Weisiger finds that there is a strong association between ideological differences and the probability of conflict. Moreover, while his findings do not indicate any ideological connection to the nature of the war itself, it does find a correlation between ideological difference and the length of time it takes to reach a negotiated settlement.\textsuperscript{84} The implications of this study lead directly into the next discussion of ideology as it relates to conflict resolution, particularly with regards to the assertion that considering the ideological perspectives of those involved in the conflict is an essential part of effective conflict resolution.

\textbf{Ideology in Conflict Resolution}

While genocide research is an excellent means of understanding the role of ideology in conflict, it is not the only source of this kind of information. Conflict resolution and management approaches also emphasise the importance of ideology in conflict and the dangers of ignoring ideology when attempting

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 540.
\textsuperscript{84} Alex Weisiger, “Ideology, Ideologues, and War,” in Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference (University of Pennsylvania: 2011), 33.
to resolve conflicts. In one of the most famous books about negotiation, Roger Fisher and William Ury outline a highly practical, non-sentimental approach to negotiation. When advocating the importance of separating the people from the problem, Fisher and Ury do not suggest that the people are unimportant, but advocate a mechanism for having people work together to solve a problem, rather than in opposition to one another. In this process, they emphasise the importance of perception in a negotiation, recognising that “as useful as looking for objective reality can be, it is ultimately the reality as each side sees it that constitutes the problem in a negotiation and opens the way to a solution.”

Similarly, Fisher and Ury focus their negotiation process on interests, rather than positions. In other words, the reason why someone wants a particular piece of land or access to a particular historical site is more important in a negotiation than the object/fact itself. In some cases, the interests will be more tangible, but in other cases, these interests can be strongly connected to ideology – such as the battle over the Temple Mount/Haram-al-Sharif. While Fisher and Ury may not connect their approach with ideology, their emphasis on understanding the perceptions, emotions, and interests of all parties also necessitate an understanding of the ideologies that may be influencing or even fuelling them.

In a somewhat different approach to conflict resolution, Michelle LeBaron and Venashri Pillay, in their book on intercultural conflict, identifies three ‘levels’ of conflict: material, symbolic and relational. They note that the material level – the concrete, tangible aspects of our existence – is where conflict most visibly manifests. It is in the destruction of property, in the economic impact and in the deaths of human beings that we are able to see the effects of conflict. It is not, however, the only level at which conflict exists. The symbolic level represents the way we perceive the world, the values

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86 Ibid., 40-43.
87 Michelle LeBaron and Venashri Pillay, eds., Conflict across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences (Boston, MA: Intercultural Press, 2006), 20.
88 Ibid., 21.
we hold, our identities and the meaning we ascribe to the world around us.\textsuperscript{89} Finally, the relational level – closely related to the symbolic level – is the point at which individuals and groups recognise their interdependence and the need to find common ground, rather than further divisions.\textsuperscript{90}

I posit that the ideologies that contribute to violent conflict straddle both the symbolic and relational levels. They strongly influence individual and group perceptions of events, meanings and the world, while at the same time are firmly rooted in relationships with one another and with perceived enemies. LeBaron and Pillay advocate the necessity of addressing the symbolic and relational levels of any conflict, but particularly of entrenched conflicts, in order to make changes at the material level both possible in the short term and potentially lasting.\textsuperscript{91} This approach is reinforced by one of the world’s experts on peacebuilding and reconciliation, John Paul Lederach. Lederach calls for the mobilization of the ‘moral imagination, arguing that “Transcending violence is forged by the capacity to generate, mobilize, and build the moral imagination.”\textsuperscript{92} He suggests that the moral imagination requires

\begin{quote}
the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence.\textsuperscript{93}
\end{quote}

In short, Lederach suggests that at the core of peacebuilding lie four disciplines including relationships, paradoxical curiosity, creativity and risk, and that all four of these components require imagination.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{92} Lederach, 5.  
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 34.
Tools and Weapons and Interventions (Oh my!)

Regardless of which theoretical approach one accepts, ideology is a consistently common theme. Perhaps because the results of change in economics and politics are more tangible than ideologies, the choice to transform ideologies of conflict is less common. Unsurprisingly, as Lederach proposes, when transforming ideologies is the goal, the selected tool (or weapon, some may argue) is creativity and the arts.

Lederach’s proposal to use the arts and creativity to inspire the moral imagination is a relatively new approach in some academic disciplines. As one of the audience members at Two Merchants pointed out, however, the concept of using theatre and entertainment as a means of affecting social, political or cultural change is not particularly novel. This has been a common practice in theatre, some may argue, for centuries or even since theatre began.

Some theorists on this issue focus their attention on the question of how to bring ‘culture’ – or in this case, theatre – to an audience. Two primary theories address this challenge - Cultural Democracy and the Democratisation of Culture – and create a continuum of possible combinations between the two extremes. While commonly used in reference to ‘community theatre’, these theories can be adapted to suit any theatrical form with aspirations of social influence. Cultural Democracy, at one end of the spectrum, usually defended by Owen Kelley and supported by the majority of community-engaged theatre theorists and practitioners, is the process by which every member of society has access to the means of production (almost a Marxist style ideal), or in this case, the ability to create theatre and art. It is often described as the ‘bottom up’ approach, essentially proposing theatre by the people and for

the people. The other end of the spectrum, supported by Roy Shaw, is the Democratization of Culture.\textsuperscript{96} This approach advocates bringing the ‘high arts’ to those who have traditionally not had access to them; thereby making the already existing culture accessible to everybody. Roy Shaw also proposes that both of these approaches could be implemented simultaneously.\textsuperscript{97}

Other theorists approach the issue from a different perspective, emphasising the potential influence of the art, rather than the mechanism for creating it. There have been numerous theatrical genres created with exactly this intention, often discussed under a broad umbrella term of ‘applied theatre,’ incorporating concepts of having an effect on an audience as well as an ‘affect’, focusing on the emotional impact of a message or production. Historically, both the ‘affective’ and ‘effective’ approaches to influencing an audience inspired theatrical models such as, ‘theatre for social change’, ‘theatre for development’, ‘theatre for education’ and ‘audience response theory’, including such genres as political theatre, community theatre, Thingspiel,\textsuperscript{98} theatre of the oppressed, dialectic theatre and even, to a degree, symbolism, expressionism and absurdism, to name only a few. In addition, popular theatre and popular entertainment frequently include social commentary and attempts for social or political change.

There are any number of theoretical and practice-based approaches involved in the wide range of AT practiced today. While no single, comprehensive model has been identified, some academics have compiled a set of ‘common features’ of such programs. These include:

- focus on multiple perspectives
- disregard for sequence as fundamental to effective structure
- endings that remain open for questioning

\textsuperscript{96} Kershaw, 184.
\textsuperscript{97} Kershaw, 184.
\textsuperscript{98} Thingspiel was a theatrical genre created by the Nazis shortly before they came into power and subsequently banned by them in the mid 1930’s. Part of the goal of Thingspiel was to proclaim and propagandise Nazi ideology, while also celebrating the Nazi imagined heroic history of Germany’s past. A more detailed description of Thingspiel can be found in: Gadberry, \textit{Theatre in the Third Reich, the Prewar Years: Essays on Theatre in Nazi Germany}. 
• less reliance on words; more exploration of movement and image as theatre language
• greater reliance on polished improvisation
• theatre as a close, direct reflection of actual life with an overt political intent to raise awareness and to generate change
• a collective approach to creating theatre pieces in which the makers themselves become aware and capable of change
• issues of local importance that may or may not be transferable to other communities
• audience as an important and active participant in the creation of understanding and, often, of the action

Generally speaking, however, AT actively excludes ‘conventional’ or ‘traditional’ theatrical forms so, while Shakespeare plays, for example, may include social and political commentary, they are not usually considered part of the genre of ‘applied theatre’. In fact, Monica Prendergast goes so far as to state that all AT is “carried out in non-theatrical or extra-theatrical settings.” This is one of the key differences between the research program described in this dissertation and many of the existing programs addressing issues related to conflict using theatre, such as Vancouver’s Peace it Together Program.

*Peace it Together* is a Vancouver-based program that outlines its ‘mission’ to empower “youth to build peace through dialogue, filmmaking and multimedia.” *Peace it Together* brings youth together from both sides of the conflict in order to create films that present an idea/concept from both Israeli and Palestinian perspectives. Its intention is to promote peace through both the participation of the individuals involved (working together rather than in opposition) and to inspire others through the finished products – the films themselves.

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The participatory element of peace promotion (bringing conflicting groups together to work towards a common goal) is a common aspect of many AT forms including Cirque du Soleil’s outreach program, Cirque du Monde and an entire array of ‘community engaged’ theatre. While many people agree that the impact of this kind of participatory model on the participants is significant, there are some studies that indicate that simply increasing contact between conflicting groups does not break down stereotypes; people involved in such events may be likely to view their fellow participants as ‘exceptions’ rather than to revise their existing stereotypical views. In addition, with the emphasis on the participants and the difficulty involved in assessing audience response, the impact on an audience is not as clearly understood.

While the popular entertainment model included in this study does not necessarily fit into the existing AT model, and is not a participation based program, some of the theories and influences that help to define AT can be applied to a popular entertainment model. Regardless of the approach one takes, theatre or film can “say the unsayable” and confront people with the challenge of changing the unchangeable. In order to do this, the show has to connect with the audience’s ideologies but can also be effective in acting in opposition to them as a form of ‘counter culture.’ If a popular perception of changing ideologies in entrenched conflicts is that it is impossible then selecting a tool that can ‘change the unchangeable’ seems apropos.

105 Tim Prentki and Jan Selman, Popular Theatre in Political Culture: Britain and Canada in Focus (Bristol, UK; Portland, OR: Intellect, 2000), 101.
106 ibid., 145.
107 Kershaw, 21.
108 ibid.
Influencing an Audience

In psychology, sociology and marketing, one approach to the art and science of conveying a message to an audience with the intention of affecting the audience is ‘persuasion theory’. In their broadest context, persuasive messages are designed to initiate or instigate ‘attitude change.’ Since attitudes influence behaviour and can be used, to a degree, to predict behaviour, theoretically, instigating attitude change can also change behaviour. Over the past sixty years, the degree to which attitude change can predict behaviour change has been debated, with some theorists in the 1960’s and 1970’s positing that changing attitudes has no impact on behaviour. Recent studies reveal that when the persuasive message can create stable, persistent attitude change, these changes can and do influence behaviour. Much of the research of the last thirty years has focused on both affecting attitude change and determining how to make that change stable and persistent.

According to accepted cognitive theories on influencing attitude change, there are two main routes to attitude change: central and peripheral. The central route uses accurate information, or information that claims to be accurate, and logical arguments, to convince someone of the value of their idea. Due to the deep cognitive focus of this method and the extent of cognitive engagement with the persuasive message, “attitude changes induced via the central route are postulated to be relatively enduring and predictive of behaviour.” The peripheral route, on the other hand, uses various positive and negative ‘cues’ to influence attitude and behaviour change. These cues include tactics such as using association with an attractive person to ‘sell’ a product or idea, or indications of the reliability of the

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111 Ibid; Pierro and others.

112 Ibid; Pierro and others.
source of the information in order to make the persuasive message appear more viable. The peripheral route was, at first “postulated to be relatively temporary and unpredictable of behaviour.”\textsuperscript{113} Recent studies, however, suggest that peripheral cues that require extensive processing may have a similar effect as those processed by the central route.\textsuperscript{114}

Another route to persuasion and branch of persuasion theory is narrative persuasion: conveying persuasive messages within narrative forms. Narrative persuasion operates as a third ‘route’ to persuasion, in addition to the cognitive and peripheral routes that will be discussed throughout this section. The cognitive route to persuasion creates highly stable and persistent attitude change. So too, it appears, does narrative persuasion.\textsuperscript{115} In fact, Appel and Richter’s study of the persistence of the persuasion effects in narratives indicate that the persuasive effects of the narrative may actually increase over time (admittedly the study only covered a period of approximately a month, but the results were encouraging).\textsuperscript{116} While cognitive routes to persuasion rely on cognitive elaboration and processing (thinking about the message), in the case of narrative persuasion, the mechanism for effective narrative persuasion is ‘transportation’, a process that allows for the “melding of cognition and affect.”\textsuperscript{117}

Transportation is what theatre artists call the ‘suspension of disbelief’; the willingness of an audience member to not only accept a fictional world but, in many cases, to be imaginatively transported into it. For the time in which we are involved with that imaginary universe, the real world fades and even disappears\textsuperscript{118}, including the elements of the ‘real world’ that may challenge the message.

\textsuperscript{113} Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann: 136.
\textsuperscript{114} Pierro and others: 110.
\textsuperscript{117} Green and Brock: 719.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 702.
in the narrative.\textsuperscript{119} The ‘world’ of a transportive story can feel exceptionally real and can evoke both
cognitive and emotional responses with high emotional content often increasing the likelihood of the
story being persuasive.\textsuperscript{120} Similarly, it is clear that empathy plays an important role in eliciting attitude
change.\textsuperscript{121} The illusion of a ‘real’ world created by a transportive story, combining its cognitive and
emotional impulses can result in an almost experiential component to the process of narrative
persuasion.\textsuperscript{122} Experiential learning is one of the most efficient and enduring forms of attitude change
and in imitating it, transportation capitalises on this type of influence.\textsuperscript{123}

The experiential component of narrative persuasion is only one element that explains its
efficacy. Audience members who are transported into a fictional world are far less likely to generate
counterarguments against any persuasive messages they encounter within that narrative as they have
already accepted the truth of that world.\textsuperscript{124} Studies testing the efficiency of transportation in changing
attitudes, indicate that transportation is associated with story-consistent beliefs. In other words, after
being transported by a narrative, people are likely to change their beliefs to match those advocated
within the story. This has been demonstrated to be effective using a range of different media (print,
television and film are the most common) and incorporating a variety of persuasive messages, including
films with highly controversial messages.\textsuperscript{125} In fact, there is some indication that narratives may be
particularly useful when the inclination to counterargue is strong, such as with messages involving
controversial or ideological themes.\textsuperscript{126} One study, which explored the effects of a \textit{Law and Order} episode
on beliefs relating to capital punishment, found that in some cases, the transportation effect of

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Markus Appel and Tobias Richter, "Transportation and Need for Affect in Narrative Persuasion: A Mediated Moderation
\textsuperscript{121} Philip J. Mazzocco and others, "This Story Is Not for Everyone: Transportability and Narrative Persuasion," \textit{Social
\textsuperscript{122} Melanie C. Green and Brock: 719.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 702.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} Igartua and Barrios: 518.
\textsuperscript{126} One study, which explored the effects of a \textit{Law and Order} episode on beliefs relating to capital punishment, found that in some cases, the transportation effect of
narrative persuasion was able to effectively suppress the existing ideological beliefs of the audience, inspiring beliefs and views consistent with the storyline of the episode, rather than those previously inherent in the audience.\textsuperscript{127} Studies such as these reinforce the previously held belief that as long as the story remains absorbing, the political content should have no negative impact on the persuasiveness of the narrative.\textsuperscript{128} In fact, these recent studies demonstrate that narrative persuasion is likely to be an exceptionally effective method of countering those attitudes that people are most unwilling to change (such as firmly held ideological or political beliefs).\textsuperscript{129}

The importance of ‘transportation’ in a narrative and the experience of being an audience member who is completely absorbed into the imaginary world of the production, is a key element in the choice to focus this research on entertainment, rather than any number of other possible AT forms. The need for a transportive narrative, while not excluding AT, does lend itself to the adaptation of mainstream entertainment forms like popular theatre and film.

**Embrace Complexity**

Complexity is an advantage to those studying conflicts. It provides numerous routes to understanding - which is the first and most powerful step towards conflict resolution.\textsuperscript{130} Lederach posits that “a peacebuilder must embrace complexity, not ignore or run from it. ‘Complexify before you simplify’”\textsuperscript{131} while Fisher and Ury emphasise the importance of preparation and understanding multiple perspectives on the conflict.\textsuperscript{132} Lederach’s concept of paradoxical curiosity, as one discipline of peacebuilding, is a particularly salient example of the ideal of embracing complexity. Paradoxical

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 178-179.
\textsuperscript{131} Lederach, 33.
\textsuperscript{132} Fisher and Ury, 22-26.
curiosity is an approach to social realities that refuses to accept the dichotomies of ‘us vs. them’ thinking in conflict, opting instead to hold together even contradictory perspectives in search of a greater whole.

Far from being paralyzed by complexity, paradoxical curiosity as a quality of the moral imagination relies on complexity as a friend not an enemy, for from complexity emerges untold new angles, opportunities, and unexpected potentialities that surpass, replace, and break the shackles of historic and current relational patterns of repeated violence.\(^{133}\)

Conflicts like the Arab-Israeli conflict have multiple levels and a multitude of perspectives and influences, demanding an approach that embraces complexity and practices paradoxical curiosity. This study emphasises the role of ideology, but does not discount the importance of the numerous other influences on these issues, including those of economics, politics, international relations, individual choices, religion, demographics and history – to name only a few. Even within the important but limited scope of ideology, the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict exists on multiple levels.

In discussions of Jewish and Arab identities, relationships and diaspora groups, many accounts begin with the question of ‘who is a Jew?’\(^{134}\) or ‘who is an Arab?’\(^{135}\) The groups themselves are incredibly diverse and even overlap - there are Jewish Arabs/Arab Jews, just as there are Israeli Muslims or Christians.\(^{136}\) Even if one can clarify identity issues, not all Jews view Israel, Zionism, Palestine or Judaism the same way, much like there is no ‘Muslim’ or ‘Arab’ worldview that can be simplified to a single ideological perspective. Even the stereotypes are complex to the point of being contradictory. Within some worldviews, both Jews and Muslims are perceived as being a threat to each other (and frequently to other groups, or even the world), and yet at the same time, the same worldviews often consider them to be weak or inferior. Similarly, there is a stereotype of being ugly, and yet at the same time seducers. In a conflict like this, one cannot even clearly delineate between victim and perpetrator

\(^{133}\) Lederach, 37.  
\(^{134}\) Weinfeld, 1-5, 14-41.  
\(^{135}\) Abu-Laban, 41; Eid, x, 57.  
\(^{136}\) Clifford: 323.
with perpetrators identifying as victims – often with justification – and some victims becoming perpetrators. Ignoring the complexity of these issues runs the risk of trivialising the issues, insulting the countless individuals, groups and nations who have worked towards a resolution of the conflict over the decades, and often results in outcomes that fuel the conflict.

Embracing the complexity of the issues does not imply that there is no truth. Simply because there are multiple perspectives on an issue does not mean that they are all true, nor does it mean that only one of them is true. It simply recognises an acceptance of more than the most superficial understanding of what the truth may be.

The problem is not that there is no single truth or that every writer or interpreter takes a position or entertains one or another version of one of these perspectives. Rather, the problem is that researchers have rarely made the effort to cross over - that is, to be sensitive to or mindful of other perspectives. It is as though every writer or researcher has chosen a side and having done so, simply staked a claim to it.138

There is an obligation, or perhaps an ideal to strive for, “more than ever amidst inter-ethnic conflict and talk of ‘civilizational clashes’, a commitment to go beyond simplifications about the region, whether generated from within or without, and [to believe] in the ability of rational categories at once to explain and to enrich the discussion.”139

The recognition of multiple perspectives, of complexity and alternative visions of the world is not an approach unique to the Arab-Israeli conflict, conflict in general, or even conflict resolution. Aside from it being an essential component in sound academic research, it is a frequent inclusion in AT

practices. Prendergast and Sexton identify a number of common practices and approaches to AT including the need to emphasise multiple perspectives.\textsuperscript{140} Moreover, in theatre the approach is not limited to the content of the production, but also to its form, with AT commonly breaking chronological sequencing in order to highlight a particular concept, character or theme.\textsuperscript{141} Similarly, these approaches to socially and politically engaged theatre often include alternative approaches to communication such as movement or images\textsuperscript{142} while also straying from the traditionally accepted ‘scripted’ theatre and including ‘polished improvisation’.\textsuperscript{143} All of these practices generate a theatrical experience with the potential to convey a significant range of complex layers of meaning in a medium that can do so through both form and content.

There is often a concern, however, that including such complexity in either content or form can become an obstacle to understanding. This is a valid concern. When one performs Shakespeare, there is a constant awareness that the density and unfamiliarity of the language is an obstacle to an audience’s understanding of it. One approach to managing this is to ensure that performers (and directors) appreciate the depth of the script to such a degree that they cannot help but effectively communicate its meaning. Obviously this approach is limiting; communication requires both transmission and reception of information and one can only control how clearly one transmits. That being said, some of the persuasion literature suggests that complicated messages are not necessarily the barrier to understanding that some assume them to be.

In the early discussions of the relative benefits of central or peripheral routes to persuasion, a theory developed by Petty and Cacioppo \textit{et al.}, suggested that neither the central nor peripheral routes alone can account for all the components of attitude change but rather, in order to study attitude

\textsuperscript{140} Prendergast and others, \textit{Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice}, 11.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
change in its entirety, one must incorporate both. As part of this technique, they developed the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM suggests that the different methods or routes to persuasion will be more or less effective depending on the probability of stimulating message or issue related thoughts such as arguments in favour of or against the message. In other words, the more likely a person is to positively elaborate upon the ‘message’ independently, the greater the impact of the message will be.

That being said, not all elaboration has an equal persuasive effect. The ELM argues that attitude changes resulting from generating positive arguments that are relevant to the issue (central route) will result in a more stable, persistent change in attitude that is consequently more likely to predict behaviour changes. Moreover, these new attitudes will be less susceptible to counter-persuasion than those created through peripheral routes.\(^{144}\) In essence, persuasive messages that generate issue-related arguments in favour of the message are likely to create persistent attitude change.

To add an additional level of valued complexity, recent persuasion research suggests that persistent attitude change is dependent, not only on the likelihood of the elaboration, but also on the extent of information processing. Extensive processing of information using either central or peripheral approaches to persuasion result in identical effects on the stability of the attitudes and their relation to behaviour.\(^{145}\) This indicates that one key to effective persuasion is to use longer or more complex messages in order to stimulate more extensive processing (or greater elaboration) on the part of the recipients, resulting in stronger and more stable attitude change.

Many of the enhancing and mitigating factors of cognitive and peripheral persuasion also apply to narrative persuasion. For example, narrative persuasive messages can be reinforced by the positive

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\(^{144}\) Pierro and others: 103.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., 110.
elaboration described in the ELM.\textsuperscript{146} ELM can also be influenced by narratives in that if a cognitive persuasive message triggers a positive, story based elaboration, the transportation effect can influence the persuasiveness of the cognitive message.

Moreover, the efficacy of persuasive messages is often dependent on the existing views of one’s audience – much like conflict resolution techniques need to be tailored to the worldviews of the various participants in a negotiation. Many of the persuasion techniques focus on encouraging audiences to create arguments in favour of or against the persuasive message. The more positive the arguments an individual generates, the more likely they are to be persuaded by the message.\textsuperscript{147} Negative arguments (going against the intended content of the message), or resistance, usually reduce or even negate the efficacy of the persuasive message.

When audiences are likely to resist the content of a persuasive message, there are some techniques that can inhibit an audience’s ability to generate counterarguments. One such technique is to introduce distractions into the message; distracted recipients are less capable of generating counterarguments. This should be used with caution, however, since distraction can undermine the persuasive impact of a message when conveyed to an audience that is likely to support the it – in those cases, audience members perceive the message as being further from their own views when distracted.\textsuperscript{148}

This approach is reinforced by some theories surrounding cognitive dissonance, which posit that people have a strong aversion to cognitive dissonance and, as such, are motivated to seek out information that reinforces, rather than contradicts, their own views.\textsuperscript{149} The stronger a person’s

\textsuperscript{147} Cialdini, Petty, and Cacioppo: 360-361.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 362.
connection with a particular belief or idea, the more likely they are to seek out information that supports their own views. In other words, audiences who disagree with the content of a persuasive message may, if given the opportunity, avoid hearing it at all. This is particularly true in situations in which participants feel that they have to defend their values, in contrast with people who are seeking accuracy who tend to be more even-handed in their selection of information.

Similarly, people often view information that supports their views as being of higher quality than information that contradicts those views. Consequently, they may instinctively discredit the source of any message that counters their own beliefs. Once again, introducing distractions into the message may help to mitigate these factors. The tendency to select information that supports one’s own views is “blocked when processing capacity is low [suggesting] that a preference for attitude-consistent information does not occur automatically and depends on ample processing resources.” In other words, when people have to devote mental resources to processing a ‘distraction’ or to understanding more complex issues, they are more likely to select a range of possible material from which to learn, rather than only the material they think will support their views. This further suggests that when people are given information with a great deal of complexity or containing multiple views, they may be more willing to consider views beyond their own than when participants are only given a single concept and have enough intellectual processing capacity to select attitude-consistent information.

In some cases, however, the messages one hopes to convey will be designed to support the existing views of an audience and, in particular, to help them resist opposing messages. When the intended audience already supports your position, creating a message that highlights the opposing

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151 Hart and others. As cited in Bohner and Dickel: 407-408.


153 Bohner and Dickel: 408.
views can act like an inoculation, teaching people how to resist opposition and strengthen their existing views. A similar approach is also effective when the issue involved is so deeply believed by the audience as to become a ‘cultural truism’, such as the common belief in the United States that democracy is the best form of government. In these cases, people may accept these views without a great degree of cognitive involvement and, consequently, are not always readily able to defend their beliefs. In this context, the most effective inoculation technique is to provide the recipients with potential counterarguments to their views coupled with logical explanations as to why these are not valid.

Both of these examples presuppose an audience that is not necessarily familiar with the arguments in opposition to their existing beliefs – the ones the persuasive message is designed to reinforce. Other audiences may be more familiar with both the pro and con positions in the debate. In these cases, all that is necessary to help audiences resist attempts to change their views is to inform the audience that they will be receiving a message with that intention. Forewarning of persuasive intent is enough to generate counterarguments.

Complexity is part of the fabric of reality and in conflict, it is an essential aspect to both understanding and resolving it. In theatre, it adds potential for engaging the creativity and risk taking that Lederach includes as essential for invoking the moral imagination. Of equal importance is the recognition that such complexity not only can avoid being an obstacle to understanding, but can be an asset to the persuasiveness of its message.

**Popular Entertainment and Ideology: When you have a hammer…**

When I started studying genocide and ideology, I realised that I began to see the ideology of genocide – if not genocide itself – everywhere. A few years into my studies, I wrote a paper – one of my favourites – about images of genocide in *Harry Potter*. I started to see images of genocide in popular

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155 Ibid., 361.
culture from *Harry Potter* to *Star Trek* and found the revelations fascinating. When my nephew reached nine months old, however, I had a conversation with his parents about violence in children’s television in which they decided that *He-Man* and *She-Ra* – shows I loved during my childhood - were too violent for their son. The same day, their son watched several episodes of the *Smurfs*. I shared the story with my parents and joked that I had found a serious fallacy in the argument of my sister and her husband. *He-Man* and *She-Ra* contain contextualised violence – resistance against an oppressor and defence of those one loves. The *Smurfs*, on the other hand, is far less contextualised and even contains genocide – Gargamel wants to kill all the Smurfs. At this point, my father burst out laughing and shared a piece of insight that has stayed with me throughout my continued research into ideology and entertainment:

“When you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail.”

When researching stereotypes in film and television it is easy to suffer from the malady of ‘having a hammer’. What we perceive is not necessarily inaccurate – any more than my observation that Gargamel wants to commit genocide against the Smurfs is inaccurate – but that does not make it right. In fact, one could argue that the Smurfs have an equally genocidal attitude towards Gargamel. A better example is from Jack Shaheen’s book *Reel Bad Arabs* in which he vilifies Disney’s *Aladdin* as portraying all the negative Hollywood stereotypes of the Arab – the evil villain, the dangerous street vendor ready to cut off the hand of a woman giving fruit to a starving child, the belly dancers and the desert. He cites the opening song, which states “Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place, where the caravan camels roam. Where it’s flat and immense and the heat is intense, it’s barbaric, but hey it’s home.”¹⁵⁶ (It is a testament to a misspent youth that I can recite these lines without having to re-watch the movie or check the script.) In actuality, he cites both these lyrics and an earlier version of the song that never aired. Technically, there is nothing inaccurate about his descriptions of the characters. He does not mention, however, that the heroes are also Arabs. *Aladdin* – the principled thief who gives his

bread to his monkey even when he is hungry; the honourable, if naïve sultan; the beautiful but unquestionably strong princess – these are all equally Arab characters portrayed as heroes and in many ways countering the stereotypes present in other parts of the film. Disney, Hollywood and entertainment in general do not get it right all the time. Aladdin is no more representative of the Arab world than Pocahontas is of the Anishinaabe, Cindarella of the lives of mice, James Bond movies of MI6 – or than the Smurfs are of genocide.

The ideologies that contribute to genocide are, as Waller notes, connected to an ‘ancestral shadow’ in which theoretically instinctive ethnocentrism and xenophobia can be polarised into the ‘us vs. them’ thinking of genocide ideology. Consequently, the recognition that ‘when you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail’ becomes essential. Being aware of the ideology makes it seem omnipresent. It is only when the specific features of the ideology become clearer that one is able to distinguish the real ‘nails’. The connection to the Arab-Israeli conflict is an obvious one – it is an entrenched conflict in which religion and ideology cannot help but be a significant feature. Using entertainment as a means of addressing that ideology is simply one of many possible options. Entertainment has the potential to succeed, based on the demonstrated persuasive power of narrative, but also based on what theatre artists have known forever – that entertainment, and possibly, particularly, live entertainment – has the potential to create social change.
Chapter 3: Ethics

Questions of ethics and responsibility are common topics when dealing with applied theatre, theatre for development, academic research, conflict resolution and international development programs. This chapter will discuss some of the ethical and moral\textsuperscript{157} issues that manifest in these varying disciplines as they relate to ICE. While a comprehensive survey of the ethics of theatre, academics and development programs is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the selection of moral and ethical concerns that relate to the creation of ideologically challenging entertainment included here is essential to the process of imagining a form of ICE that can challenge ideologies without becoming propagandistic.

This chapter begins with some concerns relating to entertainment, particularly as it relates to entertainment designed to challenge or influence ideologies. Ethics in entertainment is still a relatively sparsely explored area of study\textsuperscript{158} and the ethics of entertainment with the intent to challenge ideologies is an even more rarely studied. Much of the discussion of entertainment is based on my own experiences of creating ICE within the framework I have created for this research and is informed by the literature of related disciplines. Much of this discussion is informed by my own principles and, consequently, is explored as ‘moral’ issues rather than those of ethics. These principles, however, contribute to the growing field of ethics in entertainment in a way that could help to define ethical guidelines for its practice in the future.

In the second part of this chapter, I offer an overview of some of the ethical considerations of conducting academic research, particularly as it relates to research in a theatrical context. The third and

\textsuperscript{157} I differentiate the terms ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’ in this context based on the following criteria. Moral issues refer to individual principles of what is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Ethics, on the other hand, refer to externally imposed rules or guidelines for practice, such as the ethical practice of academic research.

final part of this chapter outlines some ethical principles that are shared among academics, theatre practitioners and development programs. While the literature surrounding ethics of ICE and the ethics of academic research have developed from different origins and draw upon very different literature, there are some common principles that have emerged in both practices. In this section, I focus on these ethical principles, including community engagement, the ethics of interventions and issues of responsibility. I have integrated my discussion of the ways in which those principles connect with theatre, academics and development programs to illustrate the similar ways in which those principles are enacted, despite their divergent origins.

**Entertainment**

**Persuasive Entertainment**

A central moral question surrounding ideologically persuasive material asks: how is it different from propaganda? The use of propaganda is ubiquitous and its content is often ideologically based; it is, in essence, a process by which one individual or group attempts to persuade another individual or group of a particular (often ideological) point of view. The most famous propaganda campaign in recent history is Nazi propaganda. Although some of the leaders of the Nazi regime were not particularly ideologically motivated, many believed that the truth of the ideological narrative could not be denied. While today we accept that Nazi ideology, advocating genocide, discrimination, and – if one will pardon the excessively dramatic tone of the phrase – world domination was wrong in the most complete sense of the word, one has to wonder if some of the ideological beliefs we hold true today may not be perceived with similar horror in a century. Some argue for the existence of moral absolutes (emerging from a number of different and sometimes contradictory world views). Even if one accepts only the slightest chance that ‘moral absolutes’ may not be eternal and universal, what right does one group of
people, regardless of how strong their ideological beliefs or how ‘right’ they believe their ideology to be, have to persuasively press their ideological views on another?

These questions nearly stalled the current research before it truly began. Do theatre practitioners – or any artists – have the right to use what we know to be an exceptionally powerful persuasive medium to communicate our values to an audience that, in most cases, is not aware of the persuasive intent and unprepared to resist? Alternatively, does the persuasive power of entertainment negate the individual’s responsibility for their own actions? Both of these questions, representing what appear to be opposing sides of an argument, are essential to the way in which one approaches ICE. In answer to the first question, if one wants to challenge – even counter – the propaganda and ideologies of repressive regimes, the response to such ideologies is not to present an ‘opposing’ ideology, but rather to introduce a series of alternatives and encourage individuals to make an active choice. Repressive regimes are named as such because they repress opposition and deny the right to question; ICE stimulates questions! In many ways, this approach is akin to the belief that one of the key components to a free society is a belief in, and the defense of freedom of expression. Presenting multiple perspectives on a conflict, rather than a single view, encourages audiences to question, to debate and to decide for themselves which beliefs they wish to support.

**Persuasion and Personal Responsibility**

The power and persuasiveness of entertainment does not negate personal responsibility for one’s actions. We are bombarded with persuasive messages every day, from other individuals, from the media, entertainment, literature and education. These influences help to inform our ideological beliefs, often in ways of which we are not always aware. With all the power that these influences can exert on our beliefs and perceptions, however, they do not control our actions, nor do they control our minds. Individuals are always free to question the information they receive, to ignore it, to refute it, and most
importantly, we are free to act or not act on it. Unfortunately, this freedom is not always respected, valued, or encouraged. In fact, a review of the school rules of my own primary school (now posted online) reveals a rule stating that students will “refrain from any sort of challenge of a teacher’s authority whatsoever.”\footnote{Montrose, "Montrose Primary School: Rules and Policies", Montrose Primary http://www.montrose.org.za/school-rules (accessed 7 May 2013).} While the rules do allow students to talk to a teacher privately if they have a problem, they make no allowances for students to respectfully present alternative perspectives in class when they can be heard by, and potentially help to educate, other students. While as adults in some contexts we are encouraged to think critically about the information we receive, this is not uniformly valued nor is it common before reaching adulthood. ICE that offers multiple perspectives implicitly requires audience members to question the material and perhaps even to engage critically with the issues.

**Polemical Persuasive Entertainment**

This raises an additional moral question: are existing polemical entertainment examples inherently immoral? For many, one imagines that the answer would depend on the content of the message. A polemical message designed to inspire support for neo-Nazis is likely to be viewed by many as morally questionable (one hopes). Evaluating such approaches based on their content, however, is problematic. Every individual or group propagandising a set of ideals we now view with abhorrence believed, unequivocally, that their views were morally and ethically honourable.\footnote{Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans., James Murphy, 2nd ed., vol. Two Volumes in One (London, UK; New York, NY; Melbourne, Australia: Hurst and Blackett Ltd., 1942; reprint, 2004).} The issue discussed here is one of form and structure, not content. There are unquestionably many powerful and persuasive examples of entertainment that may not present multiple perspectives, but are still respectful of opposing views and are morally sound. It is not, however, the purview of any single group to decide what is and is not morally acceptable content. ICE offers a possible structure that encourages one
approach to persuasive entertainment designed to avoid some of the pitfalls common to well-meaning individuals trying to persuade others of the ‘rightness’ of their own ideological views. Such an approach will be context-specific; other situations may demand a completely different approach.

Encouraging questions among audiences is not unique to ICE; it is part of the common practice of some forms of AT.\textsuperscript{161} ICE furthers this goal by combining it with the insistence on presenting multiple and often contradictory perspectives as a means of encouraging debate.

**Ethical Research**

The *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*\textsuperscript{162} outlines guidelines designed to establish the ethical principles of conducting research involving human subjects. Such research applies to all research approaches ranging from conducting interviews about any specific issue to genetic or medical research involving human trials. The overarching principle of this policy is respect for human dignity, a concept that is broken down into three broad categories: respect for individual people, for welfare, and for justice, each of which will be addressed in this section. These principles can also be extended beyond the scope of scholarly research to inform a principled approach to the creation of ideologically challenging entertainment (ICE). Specific concerns regarding the ethics of this particular study are discussed in Chapter 8.

**Individuals**

The principle of respecting people “recognizes the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due.”\textsuperscript{163} As part of this broad ethical guideline, academic research ethics (and one would hope, simple morality) requires that we respect the autonomy of

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\textsuperscript{161} Prendergast and others, *Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice*, 11.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 8.
individuals, specifically with reference to their “ability to deliberate about a decision and to act based on that deliberation.” Specifically, this guideline requires that research defer to the individual judgement of participants and ensure that they are free to make their own decisions and choices without interference or pressure. In conjunction with this, it requires that participants be able to provide ‘free and informed consent’ to any participation in the research. In combination with respecting the autonomy of individuals, ethical behaviour also requires that one ensure the welfare of individuals, in part by recognising that individuals should retain their right to privacy and control of their personal information.

Informed consent is also a key principle of practice in many AT settings, particularly when the AT practitioner may want to cite the responses of the participants. Some practitioners, including David Kerr of the University of Botswana, have discovered that Western principles of ‘informed consent’ may not always be appropriate or appreciated in different cultural environments. He gives an example of participatory AT work being conducted in which the community was willing to give its consent as a group, but individuals did not wish to sign their names to an individual consent form. The same people wanted to participate, as long as they did not have to identify themselves through a consent form – despite assurances of confidentiality. There is a desire to implement these ethical practices combined with a need to be able to adapt them to the cultural needs of the communities with which TfD and AT practitioners work.

Privacy is also an ongoing concern for participatory AT and TfD and one that shares some common ground with questions of privacy in focus group discussions. The issue of privacy when

\[164\] Ibid.
\[165\] Ibid.
\[166\] Ibid., 9.
sensitive information is revealed in a focus group\textsuperscript{168} also emerges in AT; people may reveal things in the intensity of the moment that they would otherwise not want to share. Moreover, other participants may then share that information with people beyond the confines of the focus group or the AT activities. Such revelations can be potentially dangerous, particularly in situations in which the revealed information can lead to stigmatisation or more severe forms of discrimination.\textsuperscript{169}

**Welfare**

The second of the core principles of the *Tri-Council Policy for Ethical Research* is the concern for welfare of a person, including their “experience of life in all its aspects.”\textsuperscript{170} Some of these include aspects of life such as mental and spiritual health as well as issues of community membership and social participation. Moreover, the concept of ‘welfare’ is not limited to the welfare of an individual, but also of groups. One of the main ways in which ethical research practices try to respect the welfare of individuals and groups is to balance the risks of the research with the benefits.

Regardless of how one approaches either academic research or creating ICE, one consistent goal should always be to maximise the benefit of the process to the individuals and groups involved while minimising the risks.\textsuperscript{171} This includes not only the immediate participants such as the performers and design team, but also the audience. The ideal of minimising harm while maximising benefits concerns both individuals and groups. This has particular relevance to the need to minimise the harmful effects of situations in which there is an imbalance of power relevant to the research, such as the power

\textsuperscript{168} Deborah J. Warr, “‘It Was Fun... But We Don’t Usually Talk About These Things’: Analyzing Sociable Interaction in Focus Groups,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (2005): 222.
\textsuperscript{169} Kerr: 179.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., i.5.
imbalance which can sometimes exist between the researcher and the participants, or through the influence of relationships such as that between an employer and employee.

**Justice**

It is necessary to treat groups fairly and equitably while acknowledging that “treating people fairly and equitably does not always mean treating people in the same way.” This connects with the final principle of respect for human dignity identified by the Tri-Council policy – that of justice and the need to treat all participants in the research justly. Principles of respect, welfare and justice are hardly unique to academic research and can be found in the discussions of ethical practice in a significant number of other contexts.

**Where Research and Entertainment Ethics Meet**

**Engaging Communities in Theatre and Research**

One principle of practice that is common to the practices of both theatre and research is that of engaging communities. Both research and AT and TfD productions are often created with the involvement or collective participation of the community with which the research or productions hope to engage. They are created within the context of the community itself and are tailored to each individual community. These models focus on issues of local importance and connect with the relevant community or communities as part of the creation process; they engage “those whose lives...”

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173 Ibid., 36.
174 Ibid., 10.
176 Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman, eds., 1; Leonard and Kilkelly, 9; van Erven, 244.
are affected by the research issue directly into the research process, with members of the local community typically shaping the research questions to address locally defined concerns.”

In theatrical terms, this creates productions in which the form and content of each performance should be individualized and tailored to the community, rather than using a ‘stock’ production or formula. One technique which is often used to support this practice is the use of an historical event or a local/personal story - usually one that is idiosyncratic to the community and possibly obscure - as the basis for the content of the play. The historical episode or story is often based on a history of oppression and the play itself will mount a criticism of that oppression in the present. The use of a local story is what Elizabeth Burns calls an ‘authenticating convention’; an aspect of the production to which audience members can relate. These conventions help to bridge the gap between the play as fiction and the play as socially relevant.

Engaging with communities is a principle that extends beyond the limits of Applied and Community Engaged Theatre models and has become a ‘buzzword’ in academic discourse as well. In particular, questions of ethically connecting academic research and broader communities has been a topic of frequent discussion in relation to qualitative research practices and is now becoming topical in all forms of academic research. In fact, community engagement is one of the three main goals advocated by the UBC strategic plan, Place and Promise.

Impact of Performances

While AT practitioners emphasise the importance of connecting with a community during the creation of productions, there is less focus given to continuing the engagement after the performances.

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178 Boser: 1063-1064.
179 van Erven, 2.
180 Kershaw, 245-249.
181 Boser: 1063.
Very few artists follow up with an audience as to their experience of the production beyond attempts to understand how appealing the production may have been (usually in a desire to improve audience recruitment). After conducting my own research, one theatre practitioner and researcher (for whom I have tremendous respect) suggested that his main interest in the outcome of my research was whether it would help sell more tickets. While that is an absolutely fair and – in this economic climate – reasonable interest, it is also somewhat cynical and does not necessarily support any need to connect with the community that theatre serves. This may be appropriate in a model that aims to provide entertainment; it is more problematic when one is attempting to use such entertainment to connect with the ideological beliefs of the audience. Is there an ethical responsibility for the creators of AT, TfD or ICE to understand the impact they have on an audience? I posit that such a responsibility does exist and doing so in a way that supports the ethical considerations of other forms of research is essential.

Ownership and Dissemination of Information

Moreover, when conducting community focused research – whether through TfD, AT, ICE or any other format - the current push for community-based research in academic contexts does not always take into account whether communities participating in the research will have access to the data. In its section on clinical trials, the Tri-Council Policy requires that data be published, for example in a peer review journal or in a publically available clinical trial database. Many communities and individuals, however, do not have access to such sources of information. Most public libraries will not subscribe to all of the journals and the cost of buying access for an individual is frequently prohibitive. Even if an individual could access the information, journal articles are frequently written in such a way as to make them incomprehensible to people without a specialisation in the field. In an article on the TfD practices in Kenya, Christopher Odhiambo Joseph conveys the common perception that the only true beneficiaries of TfD work are the academics in universities who can use the results of their data to
support their own career development. At the same time, researchers from most academic disciplines who attempt to disseminate their research in publically accessible ways (such as through blogs, YouTube videos or social media) are seldom given academic recognition for such publications.

Ownership of information is also becoming an ethical concern in AT and TfD settings. The principle of using stories that are relevant to a community or even adapted from traditional stories, dances and entertainment forms can be problematic as such appropriation could be construed as a breach of copyright. To whom do these stories belong? Do the AT and TfD practitioners have the right to ‘borrow’ local culture for their own performances, regardless of how well intentioned? Moreover, “if a group makes a play through a technique of collective devising there may be problems if the play is published.”

A general guideline that is starting to emerge in the TfD literature is that all participants should be credited with the creation of devised productions. Regardless of whether communities have access to academic credit or information, the benefits of TfD for the community should be a priority. In other academic discourses, similar discussions focus on questions of the ownership of and access to data, particularly in instances in which researchers are collaborating with local populations. These questions provided some of the inspiration for the ‘open access movement’ in academic publishing.

Furthermore, academics who spend months and years building relationships with a community in order to collect data often find it exceptionally difficult to maintain those ties while analysing and publishing their data, meaning that the community participants engage in the research only to be forgotten once the analysis is underway. Hazel Barnes outlines some of the ethical principles discussed

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184 Kerr: 178.
185 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
at a series of workshops held at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa with delegates to the Drama for Life Initial Africa Research Conference on Applied Drama and Theatre. Two of the key principles arrived at during these discussions advocate that results of any research should be returned to the community and the benefits of the research should be shared with the community.¹⁸⁹ The academic ‘publish or perish’ mentality puts immense pressure on researchers to publish in ‘academically acceptable’ ways and with great haste, meaning that community engagement often flags once the data has been collected.

**Ethical Interventions**

Intervening in any conflict can be an ethically challenging activity, often raising questions of whether it is just or appropriate to intervene in a conflict or emergency outside of one’s own community, country or nation. There are some guidelines in international law, such as the Responsibility to Protect doctrine,¹⁹⁰ however, the ethical questions surrounding less extreme forms of intervention are less clearly defined. One common concern in more politically oriented interventions is sovereignty. Often focused on the limitations of sovereignty, the decision about whether or not to intervene in a given humanitarian emergency is one that constantly faces the international community. Using somewhat extreme examples to illustrate the point, on the one hand is an example such as the Rwandan Genocide in which the international community failed to intervene effectively, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands. Even humanitarian emergencies caused by natural disasters rather than conflict situations face sovereignty as an obstacle to intervention, such as the Burmese government’s refusal to allow international aid after the devastating cyclone in May 2008.¹⁹¹ In the face of aspects of international law such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹⁹² and Responsibility

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¹⁸⁹ Barnes, 142.
¹⁹² *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, (United Nations General Assembly, 1948), Declaration, Resolution 217 A (III)
to Protect\textsuperscript{193} which specifically state that Human Rights are not subject to limitations of sovereignty,\textsuperscript{194} countries such as China have used sovereignty as a justification for their efforts to block interventions in conflict situations such as the genocide in Sudan.\textsuperscript{195}

Such concerns are not limited to the extremes of interventions, but apply to even the smallest scale approaches. Questions of representation emerge in TfD research practices when practitioners face ethical questions such as “How can I legitimately write about, represent or speak on behalf of these students – culturally Other and potentially ‘at risk’?”\textsuperscript{196} One approach to this dilemma is to return to the ethical principles outlined earlier – specifically to collaborate with affected groups – to be inclusive. In 2004, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) suggested “humanitarian protection work is also about working directly with protected persons to identify and develop ways that they can protect themselves and realise their rights to assistance, repair, recovery, safety and redress.”\textsuperscript{197} This method is already being espoused in literature regarding interventions in natural disasters, suggesting moving away from external deployment of expertise to using local knowledge, skills and organisations.\textsuperscript{198} Such an approach represents a way in which one can implement development programs through an equal partnership with local populations; utilising local expertise and in accordance with local cultural, social and religious strictures. It demonstrates a kind of humanitarianism and intervention that, in this idealised form, is respectful and effective while promoting independence and avoiding interference. Unfortunately, this is an ideal that only applies in situations in which the local authorities support the intervention and the communities have the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textsuperscript{193} Evans and others.
  \item \textsuperscript{194} \textit{Universal Declaration of Human Rights}.
  \item \textsuperscript{196} Diane Conrad, "Entangled (in the) Sticks: Ethical Conundrums of Popular Theater as Pedagogy and Research," \textit{Qualitative Inquiry} 12, no. 3 (2006): 438.
  \item \textsuperscript{197} Andrew Bonwick, "Who Really Protects Civilians?," \textit{Development in Practice} 16, no. 3 (2006): 271.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
resources to devote to such an endeavour. Individual situations will determine the extent to which this ideal is feasible in practice.

Similar approaches to inclusivity are fundamental to the practice of many qualitative research approaches, in part to address the unequal power dynamics in other research approaches. “one key element of most participatory inquiry approaches is that they profoundly reduce the “researcher” and “researched” distinction common among the traditional research stance.”

The process of ‘making data’ is perceived as being different from quantitative approaches to ‘collecting data’ in the sense that ‘making data’ in a qualitative context is a collaborative process between the researcher and the participants. Likewise, TfD is founded upon the principle that “both the teacher and the learner are equal partners in the investigation of problems and the consequent search for possible solutions. [...] the underlying principles behind TfD are the conscientisation and empowerment of the target communities.”

Similar philosophies exist in practices of Applied Theatre and non-traditional forms of entertainment based theatre in which the power differential between the audience and performer are intentionally altered by altering their physical relationship. Such approaches aim to reduce or, in their ideal form, eliminate the barrier between the audience and performers in the hopes of engaging the audience in a more participatory entertainment experience. These practices are often advocated as a way to increase the efficacy or persuasiveness of a given performance, but they are also part of the ethical imperative to engage the audience as an active participant in creating the performance, just as research participants are active in the creation of data.

199 Boser: 1064.
201 Joseph: 194.
202 For further discussion of this topic, please refer to Chapter 7.
Responsibility

Finally, one must consider issues of responsibility. In some contexts, academic researchers are faced with research practices that limit their ability to take responsibility for the impact of their research. One example of this is raised in an editorial on the ethics of international perinatal research in which the author highlights a fundamental problem in the way such research is funded. In particular, if a research intervention is demonstrated to be beneficial, there are no requirements or provisions for researchers to provide the beneficial intervention to the control arm of the study. For example, the PROBIT study, “arguably the largest and most significant to determine the impact on infant health of the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative,” demonstrated the significant positive effects of the initiative. Before beginning the research, however, one of the primary researchers insisted on the need to follow up with the participants after the results of the intervention had been established. Since the study determined that the intervention was beneficial, it was unusually for most research - offered to the control arm of the study. If it were shown to have harmful effects, the researchers would have debriefed the participants in the experimental group. In this instance, the academic granting agencies did not support the application of research findings to the study population. Consequently, the researchers, recognising the ethical need to take responsibility for the impact of their research, found additional, separate funding for this implementation from the World Health Organisation.

Similar experiences and ideals are reported in TfD situations that advocate that the community should benefit from the outcomes of any TfD research. The tension between the expectations of financial donors or NGOs and the TfD practitioners creates ethical challenges that have yet to be resolved. TfD practitioners report feeling trapped between conflicting demands of the donors and the

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204 Ibid., 193.
205 Ibid.
206 Barnes, 142.
community members.\(^\text{207}\) In one example reported in Kenya, the donors engaged a TfD team to work with a community to identify areas of particular need and mechanisms for addressing them. When the TfD team reported to the donors, the suggestions of the community were ignored and the donors in question implemented their own activities. “It is apparent that the donors in this case had predetermined notions about what constituted problems for them in this community and moreover had very little confidence in the intellectual capability of the community to identify its own oppressive conditions as well as offer possible solutions.”\(^\text{208}\) While this is a particularly egregious example, the current ‘fashion’ for TfD in some development programs may be undermining the potential benefits of the interventions.

When creating ICE, the concept of responsibility for the effects of what one creates can be somewhat murky and is a common question when discussing the influence of the media. For example, if one believes that violence on television inspires violence in reality, are the creators of violent television implicit in the violent crimes they allegedly incite?\(^\text{209}\) The legal precedents are somewhat unclear in this regard. Hate speech is illegal in many parts of the world, as is incitement to commit genocide illegal under international law\(^\text{210}\) and while some precedent for the legal responsibility of the media in the process of incitement does exist,\(^\text{211}\) would a similar interpretation apply to entertainment as a less direct form of communication?

In addition, socially aware and engaging performances are becoming increasingly common in oppressed communities. Within this context, the potential for theatre, or any intervention or research, to cause harm that outweighs any potential benefits is immense, and a veritable minefield for practitioners.

\(^{207}\) Ibid., 141.
\(^{208}\) Joseph: 197.
\(^{211}\) Joint Trial of Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze, (Rwanda Genocide Tribunal 2004).
theatre can only achieve its radical aims if its practice is recognizable as culturally relevant and politically achievable to the audience. Ethical decision-making depends upon facilitators pushing cultural norms beyond the acceptance of reactionary attitudes or oppressive practices, but to do so in ways, which carry the community with them, and without putting community members into unnecessary danger.\textsuperscript{212}

Pushing boundaries with applied theatre can have negative as well as positive results, including putting the participants and community members one is hoping to help at greater risk in oppressive authoritarian societies. Once the researchers or practitioners leave, the community members may be punished for their resistance or opposition. Their participation in activities that subvert or oppose those in power can result in severe, or even deadly consequences. Researchers and artists alike share a responsibility for ensuring that the work they do does not inadvertently put their community-based colleagues at risk.

The literature on AT and TfD acknowledges that “there is a danger in assuming that our work is ethical just because we are interested in solving problems fairly or in helping people to assume responsibility for their lives.”\textsuperscript{213} One of the key ideological principles behind this work borrows from the physician’s oath to ‘do no harm’.\textsuperscript{214} Unfortunately, this is also one of the most challenging aspects of these forms of AT and TfD; while the ideal is to help, or at least to do no harm, there is often the potential hazard of making a bad situation worse with a theatrical intervention. Audiences are unpredictable, and what works well for one or 100 audiences may be a disaster for the 101\textsuperscript{st}.\textsuperscript{215} The challenge of how to prevent and manage such situations, particularly when practitioners are not always trained for such eventualities, is an ongoing ethical dilemma for AT practitioners.

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{212} Kerr: 180.
\item\textsuperscript{213} Barnes, 131.
\item\textsuperscript{214} ibid., 136.
\item\textsuperscript{215} Kerr: 180.
\end{footnotes}
Ethical principles extend beyond legal ones or those provided in official policies and it is my assertion that regardless of the legal implications, those who create entertainment exert tremendous power and influence over their audiences. Such influence does not obviate the personal responsibility of individual audiences. Nor, however, should it be used without regard for its power and the effects it can have. ICE, like any other intervention, should incorporate ethical practices, including those of the respect for individuals, ensuring the welfare of individuals and groups, honouring the requirements of justice and taking responsibility for the results of one’s practice. “With academic freedom comes responsibility.”\textsuperscript{216} Likewise, the freedom to create entertainment that supports or challenges an ideology should also come with responsibility.

\textsuperscript{216} Canadian Institutes of Health Research, \textit{Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans}, 7.
Chapter 4: Situations and Identities

Any intervention that intends to inspire change in the real world needs to be clearly applicable to the real world. There is a wide variety of ways to do this. Some examples, like Mbongeni Ngema’s *Sarafina*,217 tell a story of a real event. It may be a fictional narrative, but the events it represents are based clearly in reality and the setting is recognisable and ‘real’. Other examples, such as the work of Pieter Dirk-Uys and his famous character Evita Bezuidenhout, satirise reality – taking it to an extreme that is still based in truth. He posits that in order to do this successfully, he needs to maintain a balance of 49% anger and 51% entertainment.218 Yet another approach is the one taken by *Star Trek* – arguably one of the most successful television series of all time and created with the express intent of challenging a dominant ideology. *Star Trek* creates an entirely fictional universe out of a foundation of reality. Regardless of the creative approach one uses, creating a connection with real situations is a fairly obvious requirement in ideologically challenging entertainment. Likewise, reflecting reality with intent to inspire change or raise awareness, particularly around political issues,219 is a common feature of AT.220

The previous discussion of the Elaboration Likelihood Model emphasised the need for persuasive messages to be relevant to the audience in order to inspire positive and relevant elaboration and extensive processing. While these theories of persuasion are relatively new (the earliest were generated in the mid 20th century), some theatre theorists and artists have subscribed to these theories for at least 80 or 90 years already. Influential German playwright Berthold Brecht attempted to force theatre audiences to respond to theatre cognitively, to elaborate on the messages they perceived in order to make their own judgements about their validity. Brecht’s alienation221 technique was based on

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217 Ngema.
220 Ibid.
221 For a more detailed discussion of alienating in Brecht’s theatre, see the chapter on Relationships.
the insightful belief that his arguments would have a deeper, longer lasting impact if they were central and cognitively based rather than peripheral and emotionally suggestive – as he perceived most theatre to be.

Brecht spent most of his career developing his techniques and testing them in his productions, particularly focussing on ‘dialectical theatre’. These didactic plays maintain a narrative framework while presenting the arguments of a moral dilemma. “Brecht’s stage was to be stripped of its theatrical magic, and the audience refused the state of emotional, empathetic trance, a ‘degrading condition’ [Brecht] associated with what he called the ‘Aristotelian Theatre.’”223 Brecht believed drama should be “a critique of life”224 and an audience lulled into an emotional response would no longer think about the issues portrayed on the stage.

What Brecht discovered in his experimentation with alienation is that Theatre audiences expect to be entertained, just as audiences encountering an advertisement expect to be exposed to a persuasive message. Brecht’s attempts to modify the experience were frustrated when audiences insisted on responding to his productions by empathising with the characters and being transported into the stories. He demonstrated what Plato described centuries ago in his ‘allegory of the cave’225 – that people will revert back to the familiar – to their horizons of expectation – regardless of the oppositional forces at work. In theatre, the expectation is to be entertained, to be transported into another world. Theatre audiences not only allow this transportation, they insist on it.

Brecht’s belief that audiences needed to engage with the social and political issues he was addressing cognitively not only fits perfectly with the ELM paradigm and the belief that extensive

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223 Ibid., 142.
224 Ibid., 141.
cognitive engagement with a message will make it more persuasive, but also pre-dates these theories. Some people perceive much of Brecht’s work to be a failure in that he was attempting to create cognitive engagement with issues and his brilliant playwriting created exceptionally emotionally engaging characters. In fact, what Brecht perhaps stumbled upon was that which gives ICE such great potential – the combination of all three routes to persuasion including cognitive, peripheral and narrative to engage audiences with topics that resonate with ‘real life’ situations.

Anybody who has seen the effects of extremist propaganda knows that persuasive messages do not have to represent the truth of the situation in order to be effective. Connecting with reality enough to make the argument seem plausible appears to be enough when coupled with effective peripheral persuasive content. This is not an approach I advocate. While I cannot deny its power, I have serious problems with the ethics of this approach. From a more pragmatic point of view, however, misrepresenting the truth of the situation enables others to both discredit you – as the source of the message – and to counter the content of the persuasive message. A far more powerful option is to represent the truth of the situation as much as possible, acknowledging that truth is often a multi-faceted and complex concept, the understanding of which can evolve and change with time.

...Not Just Any Reality

As mentioned in the section on Ethics, community and AT practices strongly advocate selecting topics of local importance as the central focus for any production. This ideal, however, can be misleading in some circumstances. The concept of a play created ‘within the context of a community’ or around an issue of ‘local’ importance, implies that one ignore issues of national or international importance (unless one is living in Israel, for example, where issues of international importance are issues of local importance). In other words, this approach implies that in order to address issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, sex trafficking in Europe or rape in the Congo, one must be creating the
intervention in Israel, Palestine, Europe or the Congo, respectively. By that estimation, if one is creating a production in Vancouver, British Columbia, the issues addressed should be Vancouver-centric. This implied limitation tends to conflate what is ‘local’ for the person or group creating the intervention and what is ‘local’ for the audience.

This issue raises several questions about the range of possibilities for ICE. There appears to be a great deal of agreement that one can address issues that are of importance to one’s immediate socio-cultural surroundings. In other words, ICE can – without qualm – challenge the local ideological issues of its creators. When it comes to intervening in non-local issues, there is a spectrum of possibilities between two extremes. On the one end of the continuum is a policy of isolationism – if the problems are not directly connected to one’s own immediate surroundings, they should not be addressed. Perhaps an apt historical equivalent would be America’s policy of isolationism in the first part of the 20th century. The other extreme is one that advocates something akin to a policy of intervention in which one assumes not only the right, but the responsibility to intervene in the perceived problems of other cultures – the historical equivalent being colonialism. History appears to teach us that neither of these extremes is a particularly successful (or even ethical) model. There is, however, a world of possibility between the extremes.

Beginning with the perception that any intervention in one’s local community is – to use the common colloquialism – ‘fair game’, I would argue that geography is perhaps not the best measure of what is, or is not, an appropriate justification for an intervention. For example, I live within a few kilometers of Vancouver’s Downtown East Side – often termed the poorest postal code in the country. I do not, however, pretend to understand the complexity of the issues faced by the residents of this area or the wealth of social and political stimuli that influence the ongoing problems in this area. I would consider my intervention in this local issue to be as inappropriate as others may consider a Vancouver-based intervention addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict. Somebody else, however, perhaps even further
away from the geographic heart of the problem, may have far greater knowledge or understanding of
the issues involved and be a more appropriate choice to intervene. Moreover, someone more
geographically distant may be more connected to the issues and simultaneously be able to provide an
objective perspective on them. For example, someone growing up in Harlem may have significant
insights into the experiences of those in Vancouver’s Downtown East Side, while being able to see the
issues with a degree of objectivity based on their relative ‘distance’ from the specific influences unique
to this situation.

Studies of diaspora groups indicate that there is a strong connection between diaspora groups
and their homelands. In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, there is a powerful link to Israel and
Palestine and to the events related to the Arab-Israeli conflict for both Jews and Muslims, particularly
Arab Muslims. Moreover, events in the home communities, particularly those with potentially
international significance, have a significant impact on the diaspora communities themselves and on
the ways that those communities are perceived by others. For example, after September 11th, the
perception of Arabs and Muslims in North America (and other parts of the world) changed dramatically,
with an increase of hate crime against these groups being one symptom of this radical shift in
perspectives. In fact, since September 11th and the subsequent ‘War on Terror’, levels of both
Islamophobia and antisemitism have been increasing, particularly in Europe but also in North
America.

Stewart Ltd., 2010), xxi; William Safran, "The Jewish Diaspora in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective," Israel Studies 10,
(Toronto, ON; Buffalo, NY; London, UK: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 295; Ahmad F. Yousif, Muslims in Canada: A
Question of Identity, 2nd ed. (Brooklyn, NY; Ottawa, Ontario; Toronto, Ontario: LEGAS, 2008), 131.
227 Safran: 53; Faydra L. Shapiro, "Learning to Be a Diaspora Jew through the Israel Experience," Studies in Religion 30, no. 1
(2001): 23; Troy, 40; Weinfeld, 208.
228 Abu-Laban, 41; Eid, 49; Zabel, 7.
229 Eid, 49; Safran: 55; Troy, 40; Weinfeld, 210; ibid., 208; Zabel, 212-227.
230 Abu-Laban, 91; Zabel, 87.
negative stereotype was prominent prior to this attack), the attacks on the United States focused attention on this particular image and this particular group. When looking at earlier research on the perception of Arabs, one encounters different negative stereotypes as dominating the literature, including that of the romanticised Arab and the wealthy ‘Oil Sheikh’. Likewise, when the Arab-Israeli conflict flares into more dramatic violent moments (outright war, such as the recent Gaza wars, or other forms of violence such as the first and second intifadas and the recent outbreaks of violence in the West Bank), perceptions of Jews, Muslims and Palestinians in other parts of the world shift, with far greater attention being drawn to these groups than is usually the case. Given the link between diaspora communities and their respective homelands – both in terms of their own identities and how they are perceived by others – I posit that international or foreign concerns of this nature are issues of ‘local’ importance. This conclusion is further reinforced when one considers the religious significance of Jerusalem to Christians around the world, as well as Jews and Muslims. By this reasoning, these issues would also hold enough relevance to an audience comprised of members of diaspora groups, and/or those with whom they come into contact, to inspire the involvement advocated by ethical procedures, the Elaboration Likelihood Model and AT approaches.

Moreover, there are some problems and concerns that most of the world has acknowledged as transcending the boundaries of sovereignty. They are of concern to humanity as a whole and, consequently, are (or perhaps should be) of ‘local’ importance to any community, regardless of their geographic origin. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political,

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232 Eid, 155.
234 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 
jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty. 235

Perhaps then, we can accept that the rights and freedoms that we accept as universal, can be considered issues of ‘local’ importance no matter where – geographically – they are situated. Perhaps it is naïve to believe that the universal human rights to life, liberty and security of person, 236 or to be free from servitude 237 or not subjected to torture, inhuman or degrading treatment 238 could be of personal interest to all human beings, but if so, then I happily embrace my own naiveté. These are issues of local – of human – importance, whether the infractions exist next door, in the neighbouring province or on the other side of the planet. Not every person can be passionate about every problem in the world – we would likely go mad if that were the case – but to limit what problems receive a voice based on a relatively arbitrary definition of what is of concern to a given population is, perhaps, to fail in our responsibilities to one another.

**Complex Ideological Realities and the Case of the Arab-Israeli Conflict**

Understanding the situation itself and connecting it to a given community, while a promising start to the creation of ICE, is not entirely sufficient, particularly when one is addressing questions relating to ideology. It is not enough to understand what has happened, or even how it happened, one must also understand ‘why’. Moreover, in controversial, entrenched conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, even understanding the truth of ‘what’ has happened can be problematic. “In periods of war and conflict, societies and nations tend to develop their own narratives, which from their perspective become the only true and morally superior narrative.” 239

235 ibid.
236 ibid., Article 1.
237 ibid., Article 3.
238 ibid., Article 5.
With regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an analysis of Israeli and Palestinian textbook approaches to discussions of the refugees after the 1948 war reveals that “both sides appeared to have failed to talk about the complexity of the refugees’ problem.” Both sides blamed each other for the plight of the refugees with the two narratives being unable to even agree on the apparent ‘facts’ of the history, such as the number of refugees, with Israeli accounts noting between 600,000 and 700,000 refugees while Palestinian accounts recognise over one million refugees. In many cases, the competing narratives of the history are in direct opposition to one another, with triumphs of one perspective being the tragedies of the other. To use the example of the 1948 war again, the Israeli narrative calls this war the War of Independence, while to the Palestinians it is *al Nakba* (The Catastrophe). “The heroes of one side were the monsters of the other” and neither side recognises the victimization of the other.

Such variances in the narratives of the various groups involved in intractable conflicts are not limited to the distant or even recent past; the lived experiences of different groups and individuals involved in intractable conflicts differ dramatically and consequently create different ideological realities with which to connect. Using the Arab-Israeli conflict as an example again, the reality of the conflict for Palestinians “has an unrelenting effect on day-to-day life with experiences of occupation and living under the thumb of the Israeli army [...]. This translates into restricted freedom of movement, curfews, border checkpoints, and great fear of shootings, killings, and house demolitions.” This is not a universal Palestinian perspective, however it is a dominant Palestinian narrative. Likewise, one dominant Israeli perspective of the lived history reveals an ongoing, ever-present fear of suicide attacks, manifesting itself in the fear of partaking in what outsiders would consider ordinary activities such as

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240 Ibid., 515.
241 Ibid.
242 Ibid.
243 Ibid.
244 Ibid.
245 Ibid., 517.
taking a bus, being in a crowded part of the city or even going downtown.\footnote{Ibid.} A common fear among both narratives is of sending children to school.\footnote{Ibid.}

It is extraordinarily common to find accounts of intractable conflicts, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict, that present only a single perspective, a solitary narrative reflecting the experience of only one part of the population. This tendency exists among the academic literature as much as it does the media, and also manifests in the artistic representations of this conflict. One example of this is Caryl Churchill’s 2009 play \textit{Seven Jewish Children}. In the 10 minute play Churchill creates a malignantly poetic narrative supposedly representing what Jewish parents do or should tell their children, presumably about Palestinians. It concludes with a vicious monologue including the lines

\begin{verbatim}
Tell her they want their children killed to make people sorry for them, tell her I’m not sorry for them, tell her not to be sorry for them, tell her we’re the ones to be sorry for, tell her they can’t talk suffering to us. Tell her we’re the iron fist now, tell her it’s the fog of war, tell her we won’t stop killing them till we’re safe, tell her I laughed when I saw the dead policemen, tell her they’re animals living in rubble now, tell her I wouldn’t care if we wiped them out, the world would hate us is the only thing, tell her I don’t care if the world hates us, tell her we’re better haters, tell her we’re chosen people, tell her I look at one of their children covered in blood and what do I feel? tell her all I feel is happy it’s not her. \footnote{Churchill Caryl, “Seven Jewish Children — a Play for Gaza,” \textit{Radical Teacher} 89, no. 1 (2010): 71.}
\end{verbatim}

In this short play, Churchill makes no attempt to connect with the complex realities present in the play, but rather uses examples that one recognises from the news media and distorts them into a narrative of vitriolic propaganda that, in my view, will accomplish nothing more than to further inflame the existing inferno of fear, hate and distrust. Despite (or perhaps due to) its propagandistic attributes, \textit{Seven Jewish Children} ‘went viral’,\footnote{Felton-Dansky Miriam, “Clamorous Voices: Seven Jewish Children and Its Proliferating Publics,” \textit{TDR: The Drama Review} 55, no. 3 (2011): 161.} aided by Churchill’s insistence that anybody can produce the play without having to pay for the rights, as well as the freely available script and minimal production
requirements.\textsuperscript{250} Such polemical approaches to conflict have already demonstrated their efficacy in prolonging or even inciting further violence. It is sad to note that the response to Churchill’s play is, in many ways, one of admiration,\textsuperscript{251} regardless of the play’s sensational, rather than substantive content.

A polemical approach is undoubtedly easier for artists, but, as has been mentioned, complexity can enhance the audience’s experience. Some persuasion theorists also suggest that not only can pluralistic narratives be beneficial, but even conflicting and contradictory viewpoints can enhance persuasive efficacy.\textsuperscript{252} A recent study on the relationship between counter-factual thinking and narrative persuasion suggests that inspiring counter-factual thinking within narratives enhances the persuasive effects of narrative persuasion.\textsuperscript{252} Connecting ICE to the situation is not simply a case of connecting a single narrative in a production to a single perception of a situation – it requires attempting to connect to multiple perspectives, many of which may appear to be ‘counter-factual’ to some audiences and factual to others. This is the discipline of paradoxical curiosity; of recognising a truth that includes contradictions and goes beyond the imposed duality of conflict.\textsuperscript{253} This process is part of what challenges an ideology, rather than supporting it.

**Identities**

All of us have multiple identities as both individuals and in our association with groups. How we choose to identify at any given moment is often context specific. The same woman might identify as a wife, a mother, an academic, an artist or activist, often within the same day, but the context defines which identity is raised to prominence in how she sees herself, how others perceive her, and in how that identity will influence her behaviour. Group identities are just as mercurial. Every individual connects to

\textsuperscript{250} Caryl: 71.
\textsuperscript{251} Miriam.
\textsuperscript{252} Nurit Tal-Or and others, “Counterfactual Thinking as a Mechanism in Narrative Persuasion,” *Human Communication Research* 30, no. 3 (2004).
\textsuperscript{253} Lederach, 37.
multiple group identities. A group identity such as ‘Jewish’ or ‘Muslim’ does not necessarily have a coherent meaning. What one individual Jew (or even Jewish community) may perceive as being quintessentially ‘Jewish’, another may not consider part of their group identity at all – and yet both would call their group identity ‘Jewish’. Furthermore, how others perceive individuals and groups also plays a role in how one defines that ‘identity’, just as the imagined characteristics of a group are as important as more tangible features may be.

The influence of context on identity is one way in which the ‘situation’ as discussed earlier, connects to issues of ‘identity’ as discussed here. As important as connecting with the reality of the situation is in the process of creating ideologically challenging entertainment, in a narrative based entertainment form like theatre, film or television, the characters are a significant (arguably the most significant) driving force of the narrative. Likewise in conflict, as influential and powerful as situational stimuli may be, ultimately it is people – whether individually or within groups – that create and perpetuate violent conflicts. In the process of creating ICE, it is essential to delve into a deep exploration of the identities themselves, the role they play within communities and their connection to the conflict situation one is addressing.

Identity, however, is not a concept that lends itself to abstract postulating; it is a fundamentally applied concept. Perhaps the most important aspect of identity, however, is understanding that it is highly idiosyncratic. As the example above indicates, every individual, every context is different and even the most apparently homogeneous group identities will have ‘outliers’ or even contradictory and oppositional elements. Consequently, discussing identity as an abstract concept becomes almost impossible.

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Moreover, one needs to examine not only the relatively objective views of identities as touched upon in the introduction to this dissertation, but also the imagined identities present in the conflict. Furthermore, there may not necessarily be a clear definition between ‘real’ and ‘imagined’ identities; in many cases, the ‘real’ elements of the identity are also the imagined ones. Imagined identities can include stereotypes, archetypes and myths that are often more ‘real’ to people involved in the conflict than any objective truth may ever be. For example, shortly after the opening of Two Merchants, I was asked to talk about the play with a class of first year theatre students. After the class, one student came to talk to me about an inaccuracy she perceived in the costuming of the Muslim women. She thought the design team had made a mistake when they chose not to include a hijab in the costume for every Muslim woman on stage. For her, the stereotype of all Middle Eastern Muslim women wearing the hijab was so real that when presented with an alternative, she was convinced her stereotype was accurate and the alternative view was an indication of unskilled work on the part of the design team.

Given the challenges inherent in discussing an abstract concept of ‘identities’, this section will focus on the specific identity related issues connected with this study. I will begin with a discussion of more tangible identities, particularly as groups perceive themselves, and follow with the less tangible ‘imagined’ identities which emphasize both how groups perceive themselves and how they perceive the ‘other’.

**Tangible Identities**

How one defines one’s own identity is often deeply connected with the ways in which communities define themselves. Anthony Cohen discusses a concept of ‘community’ in which a community suggests “a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, [and] which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups.”

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as many of these questions imply, communities are defined, at least in part, by the definitions of the boundaries of those communities; by both what they include and what they exclude. Frequently, the definitions of the boundaries of individual communities “may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side.” Much of the discussion of both Jewish and Muslim diaspora identities emphasize the diversity within the communities, rather than defining their limits.

Community identity is closely connected with individual identity. People see themselves within their community; they see their experiences reflected in the community narrative. Given the pluralistic nature of identities, however, it is often difficult to predict which facets of the identity of a group or individual will have the most influence over attitudes and behaviour. In some situations, people choose which social identity gains prominence in their own individual identity based on the elements of the social identity that dominate public discussion or debate. For example, when religious conflict is dominant, people associate more strongly with a religious identity; when national rights are debated, people define themselves along national lines. Similarly, dominant aspects of societies will also influence dominant characteristics of individual identity. For example, in societies in which religion plays a dominant role, religious identity becomes more important and holds greater influence over the individual. Likewise, in societies under a perceived or real threat, identities tend to become more nationalistic.

When political, religious, ethnic and class identities in a society interact with one another and become politicised, the identities can become polarised, creating an either-or, or ‘us vs. them’ cleavage within the social identity. When these divisions overlap they can be highly motivating to the population.

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256 Ibid.
257 Abu-Laban, 41; Eid, x, 57. Weinfeld, 1-5, 14-41.
258 Moore and Aweiss, 32.
259 Ibid., 30.
260 Ibid.
“In Israel overlapping cleavages include political ideologies, religion, ethnic origin, and socio-economic status. These components operate in tandem when socio-political issues are at stake, making the demographic lines of demarcation very clear.”

This is also the case in the Arab-Israeli conflict where the various identity cleavages have created significant fissures among the various communities. In addition, the development of the Jewish and Palestinian ‘nations’ over the past decades has often proceeded in direct opposition to, if not at the expense of, one another. “The intractable conflict between the two societies over the last hundred years buttressed the construction of their separate collective identities, at the price of poisoning the relationship between the people of the two societies.”

These insights into the Israeli and Palestinian identities also extend to the related diaspora communities. The relationship between the diaspora group and the ‘homeland’ (or broader community beyond the immediate boundaries of the diaspora group) is an important part of what defines diaspora communities. In both Jewish and Arab communities, a connection to the ‘homeland’ forms one of the bases for community definition. This connection can be based on a geographical entity (such as Israel for the Jews) as much as it can connect to a broader international community (such as the ummah for the Muslims). For many Jews, their identity as Jews is strongly connected with Israel – regardless of where in the world they are living. “More than in the case of other diasporas, the Jewish identity seems to be defined increasingly in terms of its relationship with Israel.” For many, this connection is based on dual social identities connected with both nationalism and religion. That being said, this relationship is far from the only defining or unifying characteristic of the diaspora communities.

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261 Ibid., 33.
262 Bar-Tal: 360.
264 Safran: 45.
265 Troper, 295.
266 Yousif, 131.
267 Fatah, xxii.
268 Safran: 53.
269 Troy, 40.
Solidarity among diaspora communities is common even without specific references to Israel. Beyond the influence of Israel on social identity is also the constant underlying influence of the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{270} These two elements in combination support a view of diaspora identity that, for some, is “based on a practical, political concern for the security of world Jewry.”\textsuperscript{271}

For the Arab diaspora, the influence of their connection to the homeland manifests slightly differently. While there are undoubtedly connections to individual national and religious social identities, the diaspora identity is particularly influenced by the political climate of various Arab nations and their relationships with international politics. Younger Arabs or newer immigrants seem to be particularly likely to be influenced by events such as the first Gulf War (1990), September 11\textsuperscript{th} (2001), the Iraq war (2003) and subsequent Islamist terrorist attacks.\textsuperscript{272} Presumably, the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war and the 2008-9 Gaza war would have had similar effects. Political situations such as the one emerging post-9/11 and in the aftermath of the \textit{Patriot Act} have a strong impact on the Arab American experience and one’s sense of what it means to be part of the Arab diaspora.\textsuperscript{273} During events such as these, negative and distorted portrayals of Arabs and Muslims become prominent in the media, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. This is particularly true of media portrayals that attempt to explain Islamist terrorism by citing cultural factors as the primary cause of violence.\textsuperscript{274} International events relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict have been particularly instrumental in the way that negative images of Arabs in the media are structured.\textsuperscript{275} International events that aggravate stereotypes “contributed significantly to the emergence of a reactive ethno-religious identity among the Arab diaspora.”\textsuperscript{276}

\textsuperscript{270} Weinfeld, 208.  
\textsuperscript{271} Shapiro: 24.  
\textsuperscript{272} Eid, 50.  
\textsuperscript{273} Zabel, 7.  
\textsuperscript{274} Eid, 50.  
\textsuperscript{275} Abu-Laban, 91.  
\textsuperscript{276} Eid, 49.
This connection with a homeland or international community is often a source of tremendous pride for communities as a whole and for individuals.\textsuperscript{277} As much as many discussions of nationalism or identification with a religious or ethnic identity often impose a sense that such associations are, in some way negative, there is also an ongoing presence of love - perhaps even in a romantic sense - for the Jewish/Arab/Muslim/Israeli community. So much so, that diaspora communities go to remarkable lengths to preserve, protect and honour their cultures. We often discuss the conflict, the wars, terrorism, politics, assassinations, and protests, but what is frequently left unsaid is that part of the reason these wars exist is not solely about territory or spite, it is born out of a powerful, emotive connection with the history of some of the oldest cultures on Earth. These are rich, beautiful, fascinating cultures with deep and abiding senses of community, history and ‘home’. For many, that is the reason they fight – and why the connection with the Arab-Israeli conflict itself is often one of the defining characteristics of community identity\textsuperscript{278} and why international events have such a strong impact on diaspora identity.\textsuperscript{279}

\textit{The Arab-Israeli Conflict and Identity}

The experience of living within an intractable conflict significantly alters – if not partly defines – the social and national identity. The conflict becomes part of daily life, ingrained in social beliefs and practices so firmly that, at times, it becomes difficult to imagine life without it. Daniel Bar-Tal discusses this influence using a range of terms, including the concept of a ‘conflictive ethos’. “Intractable conflicts deeply involve society members and result in the construction of a \textit{conflictive ethos}, which provides the dominant orientation to the society”\textsuperscript{280} Moreover, there are many aspects of society whose life and livelihood are invested in the continuation of the conflict. Were the conflict to be resolved, they could

\textsuperscript{277} Habib, 255-256.  
\textsuperscript{278} Troper, 286.  
\textsuperscript{279} Zabel, 212-227.  
\textsuperscript{280} Bar-Tal: 352.
lose their employment, prestige or a lifetime passion – even when that passion has been the resolution of the conflict.

What Bar-Tal refers to as a ‘conflicтив ethos’ is strongly associated with ideology – both of which have an intense influence on identity. Bar-Tal’s analysis of the psychological processes engaged during an intractable conflict begin with the idea that society members try to make sense of the conflict situation, trying to understand the childhood question of ‘who started it’ and why their opponent is fighting them. In his discussion of the psychological responses to intractable conflicts, he states that

They are demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting, and costly both in human and material terms. These characteristics require that society members develop conditions that enable them to cope successfully with the conflict situation. One such condition is a psychological infrastructure, which consists of such elements as devotion to the society and country, high motivation to contribute, persistence, readiness for personal sacrifice, unity, solidarity, determination, courage, and maintenance of the society’s objectives.

The psychological conditions present in an intractable conflict situation include forming what Bar-Tal calls ‘societal beliefs’ which both influence the way in which community members perceive the conflict and inspire their actions and responses. Just as soldiers depersonalise (and sometimes dehumanise) the enemy to lessen the psychological burden of having to kill, so do people living in situations in which conflict is an ever-present part of daily life. Bar-Tal identifies eight societal beliefs that contribute to the ‘conflicтив ethos’ of a society, most of which significantly contribute to the social identity of such communities. These include beliefs about one’s own community such as the justness of one’s own goals, a positive self-image, patriotism, the belief in unity, and the belief in one’s

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281 Ibid., 360.
282 Ibid., 352.
283 Ibid., 353.
284 Ibid.
285 Ibid., 354.
286 Ibid.
287 Ibid.
288 Ibid.
own victimization; \(^{289}\) beliefs about the ‘other’ such as issues relating to security \(^{290}\) and delegitimizing the opponent; \(^{291}\) as well as a belief in peace as the “ultimate desire of the society.” \(^{292}\)

These societal beliefs feature prominently in the ways in which Jews, Israelis, Muslims and Arabs connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict create their identities. In their perceptions of their own communities, all parties view their goals as ‘just’. Palestinians and other Arab groups consider their response to the conflict to be, for some, resistance against an oppressing or occupying force \(^{293}\) and, for others, a holy struggle against an evil – in the biblical sense – threat. \(^{294}\) Israelis and Jews consider Israel to be the Jewish homeland, justified by more than 4000 years of history \(^{295}\) and legal creation of the State of Israel. \(^{296}\) For others, the quest to reclaim all of historic Israel is a sacred duty. \(^{297}\)

Both groups perceive themselves as being honourable, heroic, and perhaps even martyrs to a cause far greater than themselves. Individuals may view their role in the conflict as a sacrifice to a far greater good. \(^{298}\) They see their people as strong, as survivors and warriors in a struggle for freedom. \(^{299}\) Many groups see their communities as ‘chosen’ by God and themselves as truly, genuinely spiritual individuals. Almost all of the communities consider themselves deeply connected to the land itself – to that particular geographic location. \(^{300}\) This connection is a combination of the physical location, the historical context and the spiritual importance of it, woven together into a perceived collective ‘imprint’

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\(^{289}\) Ibid.
\(^{290}\) Ibid.
\(^{291}\) Ibid.
\(^{292}\) Ibid.
\(^{295}\) Troy, 110.
\(^{297}\) Rabbi Zalman Baruch Melamed, "Eretz Yisrael and the Torah Are One and the Same," Yeshiva.org.il (1993); Troy, 94.
\(^{299}\) Bar-Tal: 354; Maqdsi: Article 9, pg 125; Prior, 56, 171; Troy, 90-94.
with which many in the community (and in this case, the community refers not only to those living there, but to diaspora groups as well) powerfully connect. This connection to the land partially informs the patriotic identities of Israelis and Palestinians although in both cases the national identity is an evolving one that has yet to be solidified, in many cases with Israel evolving in opposition to its hostile neighbours and Palestinian identity developing in opposition to Israel.\(^{301}\)

In addition to the ways in which communities view themselves, the societal beliefs identified by Bar-Tal also emphasise the ways in which communities view their perceived enemies. Almost all of the communities connected to the Arab-Israeli conflict consider their security to be threatened by the ‘enemy’. Israelis view the frequent shelling from Gaza, suicide bombings, a history of attacks from Arab neighbours and repeated rhetoric threatening the very existence of Israel to be a clear, tangible and immediate threat to their existence.\(^{302}\) Palestinians consider the Israeli military presence and checkpoints in the West Bank, settler communities, blockades of borders to Gaza, military retaliations against what Israel considers to be terrorists, and Israel’s undeniable military superiority to be a threat to their existence.\(^{303}\) In addition, more fundamentalist Islamist groups such as Hamas consider Jews (as well as any secular or ‘Western’ society) to be a threat to Islam itself.\(^{304}\)

The events of the Arab-Israeli conflict also have a powerful effect on Jewish, Muslim and Arab diaspora identities.\(^{305}\) Aside from being a major concern in defining diaspora identity, the conflict also has a relationship with the solidarity of the various communities.\(^{306}\) For example, during crisis situations in the Middle East, diaspora Jews bind together in stronger pro-Israeli solidarity than at other times when they are more willing to criticise Israel.\(^{307}\) During the Six Day War, for example, “there were those

\(^{301}\) Adwan and others, *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*, ix.


\(^{303}\) Prior, 59-61.

\(^{304}\) Maqdsi: Articles 9 - 22, pg 125-129.

\(^{305}\) Troy, 40; Weinfeld, 208; Zabel, 212-227.

\(^{306}\) Eid, 49; Safran: 55; Weinfeld, 210.

who emerged, perhaps uncomfortably, out of the Jewish closet [...] and, for the first time, acknowledged a Jewish connection. Likewise, international events have an impact on how non-Arabs, Muslims or Jews perceive these respective groups, particularly when the often prolific media coverage creates inaccurate and sometimes offensive stereotypes. Similarly, media images of the first intifada made the Israeli military look like military thugs attacking unarmed teenagers. These connections to ongoing international conflicts not only contribute to the identities of the respective communities, but also contribute to ongoing tension between the Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities – in itself a common defining characteristic of the respective identities.

Despite all the powerful societal beliefs contributing to the perpetuation of the conflict, the ultimate desire for most of the communities involved – if not all of them – is peace. How that peace will be attained is never made clear. Most discussions focus on either a Two State Solution or, more rarely, a One State Solution. When it comes to the ongoing tension between Israel and Iran (sometimes viewed as an extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict), more extreme groups have stated that they will not compromise and that peace will only be achieved when one group or another has been destroyed. No matter which route to peace a given community advocates, the desire for peace – for the end of the conflict – is a significant component of the social identity of these groups.

Imagined Identities

A different approach to understanding identities emerges from archetypal psychology: the branch of psychology dealing with images or archetypes. Archetypal psychology, as envisaged by its leading expert, James Hillman, is, simply put, the study of images, archetypes and myths as they relate to the soul or psyche. In this form of psychological analysis, one uses images to begin to understand the

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308 Troper, 285.
309 Abu-Laban, 91; Zabel, 87.
psyche. As understanding of the psyche increases, one is better able to understand and interpret images. The greater ability to understand images, in turn, helps the psyche to evolve. Descended from Jungian studies of archetypes as patterns emerging from the collective unconscious, Hillman’s archetypes are collections of images and myths evoking powerful emotional responses. Unlike Jung, Hillman suggests that any image can be archetypal and that such images are the fundamental bases of psychic life. They are creative and spontaneous and, moreover, their power lies in what Hillman calls their ‘emotional possessive effect’ which endows them with the power to ‘bedazzle’ consciousness even to the point of blinding it to its own perspective or reason. Such images can offer insight into both the ways that people ‘imagine’ conflict and themselves within it, as well as how they imagine their perceived enemies.

Images manifest in the social consciousness through a variety of means; through the media, arts, culture, political life, education and everyday social interactions. Much of this process is part of what is sometimes called ‘propaganda’ - although the term is laden with negative imagery that is only partially accurate. Bar-Tal phrases it in another way, stating that “Cultural, educational, social, and political mechanisms are mobilized to impart these beliefs [related to the conflictive ethos] to society members and maintain them during the conflict.” Regardless of how one phrases it, propaganda or other persuasive mechanisms are the art of both expressing the images, myths and attitudes of the public and influencing them. Successful propaganda cannot and will not create anything new, but rather will manipulate existing images, symbols and beliefs into serving its own ends. In other words,

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313 Bar-Tal: 354.
315 Ibid., 33.
the best propaganda exists within a far broader context which includes the political, economic, religious, social, psychological and cultural factors of the time and in the history of the intended audience.\textsuperscript{316}

While most theorists on the effective use of propaganda or persuasive messages assert that the content of the message needs to be individually tailored to the targeted population - emerging out of extant beliefs and attitudes\textsuperscript{317} – there are some common archetypal images in conflict situations that can further our understanding of the nature of the imagined identities influencing the conflict. In developing one’s own identity, the most common images that emerge are those discussed previously – the community as strong, honourable and fighting for a just cause - and the belief in the victimisation of one’s own community. The image of the ‘other’ or the enemy is perhaps a more obvious and familiar concept; the common images being the other as the ‘aggressor’ (perpetrator, attacker, etc.), as a manipulator, the dehumanised ‘other’, and the other as somehow associated with that which we consider absolutely ‘evil’. In addition, there are some interesting similarities in how the physicality of the other is imagined.

Images and archetypes in Hillman’s archetypal psychology more closely resemble myths than the static pictures one might envision. They have layers of meaning and depth, characteristics and histories that are not necessarily as concrete as the conventional image of the word ‘image’. They exist primarily in the world of the imagination rather than objective reality. From the perspective of archetypal psychology, myths such as the imagery of oneself and one’s enemy are a fundamental component of creating and understanding the ‘soul’, with the ideal perspective being one that “sees every fragment of life as myth and poetry.”\textsuperscript{318} Moreover, this perspective recognises that individual and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{317} Ellul, 34; Jowett and O’Donnel.
\end{itemize}
communal myths are deeply and profoundly connected, allowing psychological insight into identity at both the individual and collective levels. 319

**The Image of the Victim**

In the complex, convoluted conflicts of today’s world, it is often the case that “a clear-cut division between soldier and civilian [can] not easily be drawn.”320 This issue is embodied in the situations in which child soldiers are forced to join militias, to kill and commit atrocities from extremely young ages. These children have no choice and no opportunity to escape.321 However, when they grow up, many of these victims begin to recruit child soldiers themselves; committing the same atrocities against others of which they were once the victims.322 Where, then, does one draw the line? At what point does a victim become a perpetrator and vice versa?

The same ambiguity permeates complex humanitarian emergencies and entrenched conflicts; the perpetrators from the Rwandan genocide survived as ‘victims’ in refugee camps in Zaire;323 child soldiers become adult war criminals;324 and women forced into prostitution to survive join militias in order to gain protection.325 Similarly, the survivor of a violent attack in an intractable conflict can go on to commit similar violence in retaliation or out of the belief that such violence will defend against future attacks. Actions that in most situations would be considered draconian, in some contexts inspire sympathy.

319 Hillman, xx.
322 Nolen and Baines.
324 Nolen and Baines.
325 Utas.
The need to incorporate victimhood into one’s social identity becomes crucial in conflict situations in which being the victim is the only clearly ‘innocent’ role. Bar-Tal argues that during intractable conflicts, the “collective memory of each party views the past selectively in a one-sided manner, focusing mostly on the misdeeds of the other group and its responsibility for the conflict, and on the glorification and victimhood of the ingroup.” This choice is entirely logical in an ideology that requires that one believe in the justness of an ongoing violent conflict.

The need for each group to identify as a victim is undoubtedly part of the Arab-Israeli conflict as well. Both the Israelis and Palestinians perceive themselves – at least partially – as victims and survivors of tragedy. Both groups have genuine examples of victimisation in their histories – occasionally even at the hands of one another. There are two main events in recent history that are often cited as the absolute evidence of the victimisation of the Jews/Israelis and the Palestinians: The Holocaust and The Nakba.

Most people are familiar with the general history of the Holocaust during which Europe’s Jews were systematically disenfranchised, forced from their homes, imprisoned, tortured and murdered under the reign of the Third Reich. The intention was to eradicate – exterminate – all the Jews of Europe and, eventually, the world. Jews were not the only target of Nazi atrocities, but they were the largest group of victims and were the primary target of the Nazi extermination policies.

The Nakba is less familiar to North American audiences. Conflict between Jews and Arabs existed both before and after the declaration of the State of Israel in May, 1948. After the UN vote on the partition of Palestine in late 1947, however, neighbouring Arab countries also entered into war with Israel in what became known in Israel as the War of Independence, also known as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

327 Weinfeld, 3.
328 Bialystok, 249; ibid., 246-250; Cocks: 27; ibid., 26; Davis: 202; Fatah, xvii; Rashid Khalidi, "Toward a Clear Palestinian Strategy," Journal of Palestine Studies 31, no. 4 (2002): 8; Nesbitt-Larking: 1; Said, 108; Troy, 100; ibid; Weinfeld, 209; ibid., 3.
War. During these clashes, many Palestinians fled from, or were forced to leave their homes. The exact details of the Palestinian exodus are debated; some sources say they were forced to leave by Israeli armies,\textsuperscript{329} others say they fled,\textsuperscript{330} and still others suggest they were encouraged (or even forced) to leave by Arab leaders.\textsuperscript{331} Most likely, it was a combination of all three. There are reports of murders and attacks on civilians.\textsuperscript{332} This period of (forced) displacement is what the Palestinians call al Nakba. While many points around the details of the Nakba are debated, there is no doubt that a significant number of Palestinians either fled or were forced to flee their homes and became refugees, primarily in neighbouring Arab states. The number of refugees varies depending on the sources one consults. Martin Gilbert cites an Israeli estimate of 520,000, a United Nations estimate of 726,000 and a British estimate of 810,000.\textsuperscript{333} Other sources include estimates of 470,000,\textsuperscript{334} 600,000,\textsuperscript{335} 700,000,\textsuperscript{336} and 800,000,\textsuperscript{337} Palestinian refugees. What is not often reported (and is unquestionably not included as part of the discussion of the Nakba) is that there were approximately 800,000 – 900,000 Jewish refugees fleeing from the Arab states engaged in the conflict, many of whom went to Israel where they were eventually integrated into Israeli society.\textsuperscript{338} The exact number of Jewish refugees from Arab nations is unclear, however it is apparent that they continued to leave Arab nations for decades after the first Arab-Israeli
War in 1948. Part of the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees is that, unlike the Jewish refugees, the Arab countries to which they relocated often refused to allow them to integrate into society, with many reports indicating that the Arab states wanted the refugee camps to remain as such in order to cultivate international sympathy and anger with Israel.339

The Holocaust and the Nakba were completely different kinds of tragedies and the suffering of one cannot be compared or equated with the other. In fact, to attempt to equate them or to represent one in the language or discourse of the other runs the risk of diminishing either or both as tragedies in their own rights.340 The discussion of the two events here connects them only through the impact they have on the modern national and community identities of the affected groups.

During the Holocaust, the Nazis exterminated approximately six million Jews, one third of the world’s Jewish population. During the Nakba, organisations fighting for the newly formed State of Israel committed atrocities against the Palestinian population. There was never a policy of systematic extermination implemented during the Nakba. This discussion is neither comparing nor suggesting an equivalency between the two historical tragedies. These events are, however, extremely important to their respective cultures and are essential to the understanding of the Israeli and Palestinian political and ideological narratives.

Both modern Israel and Palestine were, from a certain point of view, founded in trauma: today’s Israel arose with the memory of the Holocaust only a few years old and Palestine sees its modern emergence in the Nakba.341 Today, the narratives of both cultures are filtered through the lenses of their

339 Beker: 6; Gilbert, 256; Karsh, 250; Leslie: 3.
respective traumas – their respective experiences of victimization.\(^{342}\) “Palestinian national identity crystallized around the loss of homeland, the longing to return, and the desire for self-determination.”\(^{343}\) Similarly, the Holocaust became a fundamental feature in defining what it means to be a Jew.\(^{344}\) In addition, Israel itself is often perceived through the lens of the loss of homeland, the longing to return and the desire for self-determination. Through this lens, the Holocaust could be – and sometimes is – perceived as a catastrophe reinforcing the importance of the need for Jewish self-determination and a safe homeland – much like the Nakba is perceived in Palestinian ideology.

While the roles that the Holocaust and the Nakba play in the respective histories of Israelis and Palestinians have some parallels, there is a key difference that should be acknowledged and a main misconception that should be addressed. The key difference is that the Holocaust took place in Europe – far from Israel/Palestine (at the time, the British Mandate of Palestine). Regardless of the antisemitic nature of much of the Second World War propaganda in the Arab world, and even acknowledging the collaboration of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem with Hitler and the Nazi agenda,\(^{345}\) the Arab world cannot be said to have been perpetrators of the Holocaust.\(^{346}\) The Nakba, on the other hand, is directly part of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and as such can only be viewed within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite this, the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict creates additional examples of victimization for both communities at the hands of the other. For Israel, it is the constant fear of terrorist attacks, while for Palestinians it is the fear of becoming a casualty of Israel’s retaliations against terrorists.

\(^{342}\) Achcar, 18; Schechet, 14.
\(^{344}\) Bialystok, 220; Troy, 31.
\(^{345}\) Jeffrey Herf, _Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World_ (New Haven, CT; London, UK: Yale University Press, 2009), 8.
Some Jewish scholars refer to the Jewish tendency to identify as victims as the ‘eternal victim mentality,’ and suggesting that a partial explanation for this mentality is that “Israel was most popular when it was most vulnerable, just as Jews were most popular after the ashes of Auschwitz exposed their great vulnerability.” In other words, being perceived as the victim garners support for Jews and Israel. Many Jews (whether in Israel or in the diaspora), however, genuinely and justifiably see themselves as the victims of external (Arab) aggression or terrorism as well as victims of thousands of years of antisemitism and persecution culminating in the Holocaust as the ultimate expression of the world’s hatred. Likewise, in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab groups share a similar perspective of their experiences, choosing to identify themselves as victims of colonialism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, or even genocide - depending on the extremity of the viewpoint. The result of this ‘victim’ identity is an ongoing feeling within both Arab and Jewish communities of being threatened or persecuted.

As much as the memory of the Nakba and the Holocaust play critical roles in Palestinian and Israeli life, so too does the ‘forgetting’ of these events. Gilbert Achcar has recently documented the presence of Holocaust denial in the Arab world. The historian Derek Penslar has also pointed out that in years immediately after the war, a number of Israelis wrote about the tragic fate of the Palestinians, but more recently there seems to be a ‘Nakba denial’ in certain quarters. The denial of the historical traumas of either of these groups is yet another form of victimization and reinforces the feeling of being faced with an ongoing threat.

347 Weinfeld, 40.
348 Troy, 100.
349 Bialystok, 246-250.
351 Davis: 202.
352 Ibid.
353 Bialystok, 249; Cocks: 27; Nesbitt-Larking: 1; Said, 108; Troy, 100; Weinfeld, 209.
354 Penslar: 27.
This process of denying the victimhood of the ‘other’ in a conflict is a significant obstacle to reconciliation and long-term peace. “All the approaches [to conflict resolution or reconciliation] recognize that reconciliation requires a psychological change – a transition to beliefs and attitudes that support peaceful relations between former enemies.”\textsuperscript{355} Part of this psychological shift requires that the beliefs about one’s own community should become more objective, “especially with regard to acts related to the conflict, and hence should be more complex and even critical. The new beliefs should recognize the contribution of the ingroup in the course of the conflict, including responsibility for atrocities (if any).”\textsuperscript{356} In other words, all of the involved communities need to recognise their own history as ‘perpetrators’ when such a history exists. Likewise, all communities need to recognise that both their own and the ‘other’s’ identity as victims in the conflict are valid.\textsuperscript{357} Though he phrased it differently, Alexander Solzhenitsyn recognised a similar truth when he said “You took my freedom away a long time ago, and you cannot give it back because you have no freedom yourself.”\textsuperscript{358}

\textit{The Image of the ‘Other’}

Throughout history the enemy has been a ubiquitous figure, though his manifestations have changed from time to time. It is usually easy to identify him, even in peacetime. He lies beyond civilization, perhaps outside of humankind itself. He usually lacks the qualities we embrace. His most ordinary acts are fraught with sinister intentions. Thus, he is a focus of fear and loathing, and we project onto him our unacceptable feelings and anxieties...But, paradoxically, though we fear the enemy, we embrace him as well, because he is a clear focus for the unspeakable hatreds that dwell within us.\textsuperscript{359}

While there is likely significant utilitarian value to identifying as a victim, the Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities are often targets of prejudice and stereotypes that provide justifiable fuel for the victim mentality. The images and stereotypes about Jews, Muslims and Arabs abound in the media and

\textsuperscript{355} Bar-Tal: 356.
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid., 358.
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{358} Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn, \textit{The First Circle} (New York Harper & Row, 1968), Chapter 18.
entertainment industry. In many cases, issues of antisemitism and Islamophobia are connected to international conflicts, which can allow socially unacceptable prejudices (anti-Jewish or Muslim sentiments) to be masked by politically acceptable (and frequently not prejudiced) rhetoric (opposition to Israel or terrorism).

The images, stereotypes and rhetoric applied to the ‘other’, the ‘enemy’ or the perpetrators in a conflict share some broad archetypal characteristics when viewed as an abstract concept connected to multiple conflicts. These broad characteristics include imagining the other as an aggressor, instigator or perpetrator; manipulator; a dehumanised other; and associated with that which is considered universally or even archetypally evil. When viewed within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the similarities among the broad archetypes can be paralleled on an even more specific level. In other words, the image of the Jew as the other is remarkably similar to the enemy of the Arab as the other when studied from the opposing perspectives.

The Enemy as the Aggressor

In war, all sides propagandise their enemies as a threat; that is how they justify the war to their people and how individuals are able to manage the stress of the conflict while being “motivated to act on behalf of the society and to harm the enemy.” It is within this justification that the category of the archetypal enemy as the ‘aggres sor’ plays a significant role. In this context, the ‘aggres sor’ can mean several things. Superficially, it suggests that the enemy attacked first. Beyond this however, it identifies the enemy as a threat who will destroy (or is already destroying) ‘our’ way of life, enslave ‘our’ people and perhaps even take over the world. Moreover, the war is not only the fault of this domineering

360 Abu-Laban, An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada, 82-95; Eid, 53; Zabel, 86.
363 Ibid., 354.
enemy, but he is profiting from the resulting suffering. Characterising the enemy in this way inspires fears that allow governments to justify the suffering created by war and the inhumanity of mass atrocity crimes as ‘self-defence’.

Such characterisations are common amidst the rhetoric of the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example, the pro-Palestinian academics unequivocally blame Israel (and the United States) for the current conflict, in part due to their position as more powerful than the Palestinians.\(^\text{364}\) (Israelis do not see themselves in conflict with Palestinians, but with the entire Arab world, thus inverting the power imbalance perceived by Palestinians.\(^\text{365}\)) Pro-Israeli articles declare that two-state solutions have failed because the Palestinians have refused to accept historic compromises.\(^\text{366}\) In this context, the Palestinians are sometimes perceived as “suicide bombers and fanatics, devoid of a just cause and fundamentally opposed to peace.”\(^\text{367}\) The Palestinian side calls Israel a colonial power\(^\text{368}\) with apartheid-like policies\(^\text{369}\) while the Israeli side accuses the Palestinians of either supporting terrorists or being a failed state (based on the belief that with the creation of the Palestinian Authority, Palestine became a *de facto* state) due to their inability to establish a monopoly of force in their own territory.\(^\text{370}\) Both sides claim that the other has not nor will recognise its own right to exist as a state.\(^\text{371}\) Even the conspiracy theories presented against either Israel or Palestine are remarkably similar to one another with articles supporting Israelis positing that the Palestinians intentionally provoke military reactions in order to generate a crisis thereby forcing some Arab countries to take military action.\(^\text{372}\) Similarly, those in support of Palestinians claim that Israel uses its assassinations of Palestinian militants/terrorists in order


\(^{365}\) Adwan and others, *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*, xv.


\(^{369}\) Davis: 200.

\(^{370}\) Inbar: 838.

\(^{371}\) Cocks: 25.

\(^{372}\) Inbar: 829.
to provoke violence against Israeli civilians thereby obtaining public support for an evidently complex plot to destroy the basis for a viable Palestinian state.\textsuperscript{373}

Additional examples are revealed in rhetoric surrounding the recent conflicts with Gaza. Israelis view the renewal of hostilities as a response to the Gazan breaches of the ceasefire. The Israeli perspective is that Gaza fired more than 8,000 rockets into Israel between 2006 and 2011, in violation of various ceasefire agreements and, as such, Israel has the right to defend itself against these attacks and retaliate.\textsuperscript{374} The same rocket fire is viewed by some pro-Palestinian (or perhaps, in this case, anti-Israeli) groups as legitimate resistance or even retaliation against an ‘occupying’ force.\textsuperscript{375} In both cases, the ‘other’ is perceived as the aggressor in the conflict. In this case, I feel compelled to point out a flaw in the common argument that Israel is the aggressor in this particular instance. One common argument is that the 8,000 rockets fired into Israeli territory between 2006 and 2011 have resulted in relatively few Israeli casualties and as such are not a serious threat.\textsuperscript{376} This argument is flawed on any number of levels, but the simplest one is to recognise that simply because the rockets are poorly aimed, does not make them any less of a threat. Regardless of these logical inconsistencies in the arguments (and there are logical flaws in many arguments in opposition to both Israel and Palestine), the perception of the other as a threat is both a driving and justifying force.

More broadly speaking there are some common stereotypes regarding Arabs and Jews that help to define the image of the ‘other’ as an aggressor or threat. Since September 11\textsuperscript{th}, the image of the Arab as a terrorist has become a dominant characteristic of not only Israeli, but western perceptions of the

\textsuperscript{373} Khalidi, “Toward a Clear Palestinian Strategy,” 11.
other. This inception of this image, however, goes back further into history: the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars either created the stereotype of Arabs as ‘terrorists’ or, at least, made a significant contribution to that image. This image did not manifest in a vacuum, however. It was built on an existing foundational image of the Arab – particularly the Arab male – as being war loving, volatile, aggressive, cruel, cunning, and barbaric.

The Jews are similarly viewed as being psychotic mass murderers who are intent on destroying Islam. As with the image of the Arab as the other, the image of the Jew today is dominated by the perception of Israel as an aggressive, dominating and oppressive colonial power, but is built on an older series of familiar images. Perhaps the most well-known of these is the International Jewish Conspiracy as outlined in the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion. “This antipathy has been updated to a demonization of the Jewish homeland: the theme of the grand conspiracy contained in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion has been translated into the charge that Israel presents the greatest threat to world peace.” Even without the view of Israel as a threat to world peace, the Protocols (and the descended conspiracy theories) outline an imagined secret plan for the Jews to take over the world.

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378 Zabel, 87.
380 Ibid.
381 Ibid.
382 Ibid.
383 Ibid.
384 Ibid.
385 Fatah, xiv.
386 Ibid.
387 Ibid., 30.
388 Safran: 43.
through the manipulation of world economies and the international media.\(^{389}\) The Hamas Charter – as one extreme example – articulates this perception with remarkable clarity:

> With wealth they controlled the international mass media – news services, newspapers, printing presses, broadcast stations, and more. With money they ignited revolutions in all parts of the world to realize their benefits and reap the fruits of them. They are behind the French Revolution, the Communist Revolution, and most of the revolutions here and there which we have heard of and are hearing of. With wealth they formed secret organizations throughout the world to destroy societies and promote the Zionist cause...\(^{390}\)

In this context, Jews and Zionists are considered synonymous and are depicted using terms such as ‘vicious attack,’\(^{391}\) ‘invasion,’\(^{392}\) ‘occupation,’\(^{393}\) and ‘perverted transgressors.’\(^{394}\) Moreover, in this worldview, the threat is not only against Islam or Palestine, but against the world: “Today it’s Palestine and tomorrow it will be another country, and then another; the Zionist plan has no bounds, and after Palestine they wish to expand from the Nile River to the Euphrates. When they totally occupy it they will look towards another, and such is their plan in the ‘Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.’”\(^{395}\)

With both the image of the Jew and Arab as the ‘other’ representing one another as a threat, it is not surprising that there are similarities in the details of how both groups are portrayed. “Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terrorist, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization.”\(^{396}\) Interestingly, with the exception of the ‘camel-riding’ aspects, Jews are stereotyped in much the same way. Both have been represented as being intent on ‘world domination’\(^{397}\) and both communities are currently facing an international increase in anti-Jewish and


\(^{390}\) Maqdsi: Article 22.

\(^{391}\) Ibid., Article 28.

\(^{392}\) Ibid.

\(^{393}\) Ibid., Article 30.

\(^{394}\) Ibid.

\(^{395}\) Ibid., Article 32.

\(^{396}\) Said, 108.

Islamophobic sentiment. In addition, with both communities being perceived as a threat to one another, they are also imagined as reaping the benefits of the ongoing conflict and of the various conflicts for which they are ‘responsible’. The Arab image of the ‘Oil Tycoon’ attempting to economically dominate America became prominent after the 1973 Arab Oil embargo and continued to evolve into the image of the oil sheikh billionaire, wearing sunglasses and a goatee, who is going to buy up America. Similarly, the image of the Jew as manipulating the world in order to start wars from which they can profit is one that has endured for decades. It was a common feature in Nazi propaganda and continues into the ideology of Hamas in which it is claimed that the Jews started both the First and Second World Wars in order to profit from the trade of war materials, get the Balfour Declaration and create the League of Nations, United Nations and Security council in order to “rule the world” through these organisations.

The Manipulative Other

The other as the manipulative mastermind is a common feature of the rhetoric against the ‘enemy’ in ideological conflicts. In this case, the other is imagined as a puppet master behind all plots to ultimately destroy one’s own community and makes it possible to blame all problems on this enemy, especially if the image includes them as being particularly cunning. This is also remarkably valuable when trying to convince one’s own community to believe or trust the persuasive messages inherent in supporting one’s own ideology in the face of opposing views presented by the opposition.

This form of manipulation is common in propaganda-based discrimination. For example, in antisemitic propaganda, the common image of the ‘international Jewish conspiracy’ or of the Jew as a

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399 Zabel, 87.
400 Ayish, 87.
402 Maqdsi: Article 22.
403 Ibid.
manipulative swindler (such as the Shylock image) has the effect of undermining any argument from either a Jewish source or a source perceived to be controlled by the Jews (as part of the ‘international Jewish conspiracy’). The imaginary Jewish conspiracy is an effective mechanism of undermining any argument in favour of Jews based on the idea that anybody espousing such an argument must have fallen prey to the manipulative effects of this conspiracy.

Similarly, the stereotype of Muslims as either terrorists or delusional fanatics can be used to undermine any argument made by a Muslim or in support of Muslims. Particularly given the covert nature of some recent terrorist attacks, prejudiced viewers of Muslims argue that they cannot be trusted based on how effectively the September 11th hijackers managed to hide their plans. Likewise, any support given to Muslims by an outside source is discredited as either part of the ‘plot’ or as supporting terrorism and therefore unreliable.

Both of these specific examples have been applied to both Jews and Muslims. While the image of the international Jewish conspiracy is a familiar one, a similar image exists against Muslims, including the image of OPEC as “greedy price-gougers bent on controlling world economics or at least on ruining the United States and Western Europe”\(^\text{404}\) and of Arabs as seeking to dominate western civilization and destroy what cannot be subjugated.\(^\text{405}\) Similarly, even with the mostly unquestioned knowledge of the groups responsible for the September 11th attacks on the United States, there is also a conspiracy theory that posits that the Zionists were ultimately responsible.\(^\text{406}\) While an outsider may view conspiracies about Jews, Muslims, Arabs and Israelis being bent on world domination as ridiculous, there are those

\(^{404}\) Davies, 266.

\(^{405}\) Ayish, 87.

for whom these beliefs are absolute truths. For them, any perspective in disagreement with their own can be discredited by the concept that the imagined manipulative ‘other’ is controlling the message.

The Dehumanised Other

Dehumanisation is one of the most common explanations given to the question ‘how is it possible for ordinary people to commit violent atrocities and genocide?’ The concept is simple; in order to accept killing another human being, whether an individual or a group, one has to either justify that they have earned such a ‘punishment’ - by making them criminals - or remove their humanity. In both cases, it usually helps if the dehumanisation is combined with the depiction of the ‘non-human’ enemy as a threat. This phenomenon is what James Waller calls ‘defining the target’ and causing the ‘social death of the victims’. Dehumanising the enemy makes him easier to kill - like stepping on an ant or hiring an exterminator to get rid of termites in your house. Identifying the enemy as a biological threat makes his death his fault.

Dehumanising the enemy is also a frequent feature of ideological conflicts throughout the 20th century. During the Cambodian genocide, a combination of the imagery of dehumanisation and the biological threat was used by the Communist Party of Kampuchea: “the CPK leadership employed biological metaphors that suggested the threat of contamination. It referred to enemies as ‘diseased elements,’ ‘microbes,’ ‘pests buried within,’ and traitors ‘boring in.’” Similarly in Rwanda, the Tutsis were referred to as ‘cockroaches’ to be exterminated. In Rwanda, the propaganda also included the image of the enemy as demonic, the devil and the ‘incarnation of evil.’

If the image of the aggressor focuses on military, political and economic aggression, the image of the dehumanised other utilises rhetoric to create an almost biological threat - as a virus, undermining

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407 Ayish, 87; Davies, 266; Fatah, xv.
408 Waller, 134.
409 Kiernan, 549.
the health of the community. The dehumanised ‘other’ becomes dirty, impure, or genetically inferior. There are only two possible responses to a virus or contagion - quarantine (isolation) or extermination. While imagining the ‘other’ as less than human provides a psychological rationale to make killing a targeted group possible, the image of a biological threat makes such murders not merely justifiable, but essential as biological and survival imperatives.

The rhetoric of the polemical voices articulating some of the extreme arguments of the Arab-Israeli conflict is rife with dehumanising language. Israelis, Jews, Zionists, Palestinians and Islam itself are all portrayed as a ‘cancer’. In a recent example, a California based activist identifying as an Israeli Jew created a highly Islamophobic (and by all accounts terrible quality) movie which inspired violent retribution throughout the Arab and Islamic world. This movie, in addition to some highly offensive content about Mohammed, also included the assertion that Islam is a cancer. This is not unusual language; there is even a Facebook page titled ‘Islam is a cancer cut it out now,’ with over 300 ‘likes’. It is also common in descriptions of Israel, including in a speech given by Iran’s Ayatollah Ali Khamenei which stated that “The Zionist regime is a true cancer tumor in this region that should be cut off.” Similarly, the Hamas Prime Minister likened the State of Israel to “a cancer that is threatening to spread to other parts of the body.” Yet another example can be found in a statement posted on the website of the Muslim Brotherhood, the first lines of which state “Day after day, Israel is proving to all and sundry that it is more of a malignant tumor whose ultimate goal is to kill, replace, destroy and liquidate then [sic] of a normal human entity wanting to live and let live.” More examples are easy to locate – a quick web search for ‘cancer’ and any of the group names will reveal multiple sources. Similar citations

are easy to locate equating the various groups involved in the conflict with disease, dirt and infestations.\textsuperscript{416}

Much as the rhetoric of dehumanisation shares some common characteristics, there is a single significant difference that has to be acknowledged. The examples of dehumanisation of Jews, Israel and Zionists cited above – as well as numerous others – come from the respective leaders of Iran, Gaza and Egypt. They are part of the dominant, even state-sanctioned rhetoric of those respective countries. The examples of anti-Islam dehumanisation are predominantly from small, extreme right-wing groups that the Israeli government condemns. The official rhetoric of the dominant Israeli culture does not, in general, utilise the language of dehumanisation. Moreover, in searching for examples of such dehumanisation, it is far easier to locate sources of anti-Israel or anti-Zionist dehumanisation (and even calls for genocide) than it is to locate Israeli sources citing equivalent rhetoric against Arabs, Palestinians, Muslims or Islam. There are several possible explanations for this apparent difference including the fact that Israel has a significantly smaller population than the combined populations of the countries of the Arab world and Iran. Another possibility is that the appearance of a significant difference in the frequency of dehumanising language is simply a factor of what is readily available in the English speaking media. Alternatively, the impression of significantly greater comments of dehumanising literature aimed at Israel than at Arabs, Palestinians or Muslims may be an indication that there actually are more dehumanising comments aimed at Israel and Zionists. Determining which of these – if any – is accurate is not within the boundaries of this dissertation, but should be considered when discussing this kind of ideologically laden rhetoric.

\textsuperscript{416} Fatah, xiv.
The Other and Absolute Evil

There are remarkably few concepts that are generally viewed as absolute ‘evils’ – at least by a significant majority. In some religious traditions, there are concepts of devils and demons that inspire a perception of absolute evil. In more secular terms, a society’s history and ideology can supply alternative examples. For example, for most people, National Socialism has become the secular ‘devil’ of this era; equating something with Nazism is an effective way of inspiring abhorrence. Similarly, comparisons with a greater evil can be used not only to demonise the actions of one’s enemy, but to exonerate the less than pristine record of one’s own community. These are what Waller refers to as ‘exonerating comparisons’ in which a perpetrator of violence or an atrocity will rationalise it based on the fact that it is less egregious than the actions of the enemy. “Regardless of their accuracy, [...] exonerating comparisons still serve their function of neutralizing self-censure and preserving self-esteem in perpetrators of extraordinary evil – functions clearly in the perpetrators’ rational self-interest.”

Both the techniques of associating the other with ‘evil’ and creating exonerating comparisons based on the ‘more evil’ actions of the other are prominent on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Jews and Zionists are equated with a range of ‘evils’ including the KKK and the Nazis and there are some instances in which Israel is perceived as “the root of all evil in the Middle East.” Similarly, Arab Nations and Iran are portrayed as wanting to create a second Holocaust against the Jews and the state of Israel. With this perception, common rhetoric against Arabs invokes Nazism whenever possible, including equating the Arab propaganda with that of the Nazi regime. Exonerating comparisons are

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417 Waller, 190.
418 Fatah, 20; Troy, 4.
419 Berenger, 235.
also a common feature of the Arab-Israeli conflict with most groups claiming that the aggression of their own group is far outmatched by that of the other.

**Accusation in the Mirror**

In Rwanda, there is a concept of ‘Accusation in the mirror’ by which “the party which is using terror will accuse the enemy of using terror.” In other words, characterising the enemy as a threat and projecting the threat one’s own group presents onto the potential victims. In Rwanda, the ‘accusation in the mirror’ refers to the projection of one’s own aggressive intentions onto the ‘other’; the same concept however, could refer to the projections of one’s own fears onto the intentions of the other. The concept of projection has existed for more than a century as a common psychological defense mechanism. Societies embroiled in intractable conflicts create identities for themselves in which the honour, innocence and strength of the society are glorified. At the same time, societies use both real and imagined victimization to support their beliefs that any violence or atrocities they may commit are acts of self-defense and even heroism. To support this, an additional social identity is imagined – that of the ‘other’ or the enemy. In an ‘us vs. them’ worldview, ‘we’ accuse the enemy of being that which terrifies us: an aggressive, manipulative, inferior and demonic abomination intent on domination and manipulating the world into supporting their evil aggression against ‘us’. Such identities are both informed by and influence ideological worldviews and understanding them is essential to the effective creation of ideologically challenging entertainment.

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Chapter 5: Relationships

While the concept of ‘relationships’ has been an undercurrent in much of the discussion thus far, there are some specific areas in which relationships are at the forefront of the theoretical considerations behind ICE. These include the centrality of relationships to the conflict management and reconciliation processes, to the moral imagination and its connection to creativity and performance, and to the efficacy of ICE within the model of persuasion theory.

Relationships, Conflict Management and Reconciliation

The discussion of conflict resolution thus far in this dissertation emphasises different methods of building relationships, particularly revealing some of the common ground upon which relationships can be built. Michelle LeBaron identifies relationships as being at the heart of conflict and an essential element to consider in effective conflict resolution. She suggests that “conflict resolution across cultures is most successful when we watch for connections with others [...] When we are threatened, it is difficult to think of the ‘other’ as a human relation [...] yet it is never more important.” This view is not unique. Even Roger Fisher and William Ury, who advocate separating the people from the problem, affirm that relationships are entwined with conflict however, they approach relationships in negotiation as something entangled with the conflict, rather than inherent to the conflict. Regardless of how one approaches relationships in negotiation and dispute resolution, there is no question that they are an inevitable and inextricable part of conflict.

While approaches to relationships vary in dispute resolution practice, there are some similarities amongst the various approaches; specifically, the need to cooperate. Through cooperation on a variety

423 Michelle LeBaron, Bridging Troubled Waters: Conflict Resolution from the Heart (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2002), xv.
424 LeBaron and Pillay, eds., Conflict across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences, 144.
425 Fisher and Ury, 22.
426 Ibid., 20.
of levels, advocates of this method create, to some degree, an ‘ensemble’ approach to dispute resolution. In many cases, this results in placing the relationship at the centre of both the conflict and the resolution process. Understanding this relationship can take place on a range of levels and occasionally with quite different premises.

On a macro level, an ensemble approach to dispute resolution as proposed by LeBaron and Pillay, begins by recognising the interdependence of people involved in conflict. Much like Stanislavski’s acting method which advocates an ensemble of actors without ‘stars’ all working together, with designers, directors and producers, to support a central ‘vision’ of the play, recognising interdependence within conflict requires a similar dedication to the concept that every participant contributes to the final outcome – whether that outcome is a play, a conflict, or peace. It also requires that all parties recognise that they need one another; highlighting the necessity for the relationship, rather than solely its existence.

Alternatively, Fisher and Ury posit a more cognitively centered theory through their interest based, ‘win-win’ style negotiation that reframes a negotiation from a traditionally adversarial approach to one which brings all parties together in order to ‘attack’ a problem rather than one another. While Fisher and Ury frame this as disentangling the ‘people problem’ (the relationships) from the substantive problem, another way to view their approach is that they simply reframe the relationships in order to make them more conducive to a mutually beneficial negotiated outcome.

Fisher and Ury’s focus on the cognitive elements of an ensemble approach to negotiation is similar to one element of Bertolt Brecht’s approach to theatre. While Brecht also advocated strong ensemble work, he also required that the work be founded on an intellectual understanding of the issues involved. Rather than cultivating a relationship with his audience based on the suspension of

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427 LeBaron and Pillay, eds., Conflict across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences, 144.
429 Fisher and Ury, 11.
disbelief (as realist theatre practitioners had in the past), Brecht focused his energies on ensuring that the relationship with the audience facilitated an intellectual connection between actors and audience which allowed them both, like Fisher’s negotiation adversaries, to work together to understand the social or political issue confronted in the play. Like Fisher and Ury, Brecht’s ideal theatre avoided emotional entanglements in his productions, actively seeking to break the empathetic bonds that occurred between audience and characters through a process sometimes known as distancing or ‘alienation.’

"Alienation" in the epic theatre for the most part results from the intervention, at all levels of the theatrical production, of a series of discontinuities and recoil effects. For example, on the textual level, these discontinuities occur between the actions and the words of a character at different moments of his evolution, between his general behaviour and the situation in which he finds himself, and between the spoken text and the sung text. 430

Brecht objected to the ideological content of theatre on principle, attempting to re-define the dramatic form itself in order to avoid what he perceived as theatre’s “ideological declarations and the exploitation of pathos.” 431

David Bohm and Deborah Tannen address more specific elements of dispute resolution theory: dialogue and communication. While Bohm and Tannen’s foci are narrower than the more sweeping theories identified thus far, the principle of the ensemble – the relationship – is dominant in their discussions. Bohm’s theories of dialogue posit an ideal of dialogue building to a point of almost collective consciousness; harmony between the individual and collective in which individual opinions still exist and are expressed, but do not cause conflict. 432 In such an environment, “If you see other people’s thought, it becomes your own thought, and you treat it as your own thought. And when an emotional charge comes up, you share all the emotional charges, too, if they affect you; you hold them together

431 Ibid., 26.
with all the thoughts.” In Bohmian dialogue, the emphasis, as with Fisher and Ury’s negotiations, is on the process itself rather than the individual people or groups participating in the process.

Tannen identifies a similar phenomenon in her explorations of communication when she talks about involvement and the concept of rhythmic synchrony. Rhythmic synchrony, as Tannen describes the phenomenon, is “the astonishing rhythmic and iconic coordination that can be observed when people interact face to face.” Tannen is referring to a phenomenon whereby people involved in communication, when they come from a shared cultural background, begin to unconsciously (or subconsciously) coordinate behaviours with one another such as vocal emphasis, gestures including unconscious processes such as blinking or even breathing. She equates this synchrony with an orchestral ensemble in which a group of musicians work together in order to create a single piece of music. Tannen posits that “the sharedness, or lack of sharedness, of rhythm, is crucial for conversational outcome.”

Bohm and Tannen’s emphasis on relationship building through harmony and synchronicity parallel those of other conflict resolution theorists. Jean-Paul Lederach includes both the necessity for building relationships and the possibility for creative engagement in his approach to the moral imagination. Lederach asks us to imagine ourselves “in a web of relationships even with [our] enemies.” He suggests that when we can overcome violence, we can recognise the interdependent relationships that already exist but are obscured by the oppositions of the conflict. He likens this to the artistic process, which he posits has a dialectic nature: “it arises from human experience and then shapes, gives expression and meaning to, that experience. Peacebuilding has this same artistic quality.

433 Ibid., 45.
434 Ibid., 21.
436 Ibid., 18.
437 Ibid.
438 Lederach, 34.
It must experience, envision, and give birth to the web of relationships.” In this model, relationships are central to the creation of the moral imagination due to their recognition of the interdependency of our own lives on those of others, including our enemies. Building relationships first requires understanding them. The web of relationships identified by Lederach already exists, the challenge of conflict resolution is to help others to see and accept it. Likewise, Bar-Tal calls this the process of ‘reconciliation’ during which one begins to change the ‘conflictive ethos’ into an alternative ‘peace ethos.’ It is this process of reconciliation “through which the parties in conflict form new relations of peaceful coexistence based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of each other’s needs.”

Relationships, however valuable they are to the process of reconciliation, can also complicate the peacebuilding process. In some historical examples, the strengthening of the relationships between groups was used and manipulated by propagandists to aggravate existing societal and ideological tensions. The most salient example being the years prior to the Holocaust. Prior to 1933, Jews in Germany were more integrated into German society than in almost any other country in Europe. There were high rates of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews in Germany and most of the systemic legal discrimination against Jews that was common throughout Europe had, in Germany, been abolished. This integration, rather counter-intuitively, became a key feature in Hitler’s propaganda campaign against Jews as a threat to German society and way of life. In addition to portraying the Jews as different, alien and separate from Aryan society, Nazi propaganda used their integration into German

439 Ibid.
440 Ibid., 110-112.
441 Bar-Tal: 352.
442 Ibid., 355.
society to illustrate the supposedly insidious nature of the Jewish threat; the idea that Jews successfully integrate into society only as a means of attacking from within through subterfuge and manipulation.  

The situation in Israel and Palestine is completely different from the Nazi example and yet, is another example of how strengthening a few aspects of a relationship can have a complicating effect on the peace process. One illustration of this phenomenon is the complications around possible solutions to the conflict, particularly discussions of whether two-state or one-state solutions are viable. In the general international population, there is a growing consensus that the long-term solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict will be what has become known as the two-state solution; maintaining a strong, independent Israel and formalising the existence of an Independent Palestine. From Oslo in 1993 through to Taba in 2001 and beyond, negotiations for a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict have tried and, to a greater or lesser degree, failed.  

Moreover, with Hamas’s election into power in 2006, its recent re-alliance with the Palestinian Authority and Israel’s refusal to recognise or negotiate with a group it perceives as terrorists, it appears the dreams for a two-state solution that appeared so close to actualisation in 2001 now seem impossible. This history and the challenging (and ever fluid) international environment is part of the justification for Palestine’s recent unilateral petition to the United Nations for recognition as an independent state.

Even with the prevailing belief that a two-state solution is the only feasible long-term outcome for the conflict, many academics and politicians are coming to the conclusion that a single-state

446 ibid.
alternative is not only possible, but possibly inevitable.\(^{448}\) Some argue that the economic interdependence that exists in Israel and Palestine would make separating the economies almost impossible and likely disastrous for the Palestinian economy, in particular.\(^{449}\) An alternative view as advocated by Rafael Reuveny, suggests that with appropriate economic aid, the Palestinian economy could weather the shock of separation from Israel, however the current level of economic interdependence is actually facilitating the continuation of the conflict and is encouraging the decline of the Palestinian economy.\(^{450}\)

Alternatively, some like Edward Said have proposed a single-state solution, in part because the economic and geographic interdependence and entanglement of the two populations make fairly dividing the territory extremely difficult.\(^{451}\) Those opposing this alternative claim that it is an idealistic model which may sound ‘intelligent’ but has no practical understanding of how such a state could be established or could function.\(^{452}\) The possibility of a single state, however, is unlikely to receive any support until separation has been discredited as a possible option.\(^{453}\)

In this instance, the existing economic and geographical relationship between Israel and Palestine is, in fact, so closely intertwined that it is complicating the possibility for peace. The perceived ideal peace proposal – the two-state solution – is one that could be threatened by the economic interdependence that some theorists advocate as a mechanism for peacebuilding. Even if one ignores the conflict, the close economic relationship that exists is likely going to be more harmful to the Palestinian economy than beneficial if it continues in its current asymmetrical approach.\(^{454}\)

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\(^{449}\) Ibid., 331.


\(^{451}\) Cocks: 36.


\(^{454}\) Reuveny: 659.
One interpretation of this discussion is to assume, incorrectly, that building relationships is harmful to peace; rather unsurprisingly, I – and many of conflict resolution experts already cited as advocating the value of relationships to peacebuilding – would argue rather vehemently against this interpretation. It is essential to build relationships in order to facilitate peacebuilding. Using the idea of a bi-national state as an example, such a concept appears to be so counterintuitive and frequently objectionable because it would require relinquishing power – actual, imagined or potential – to a disliked, distrusted and possibly even hated ‘other’. One cannot build a single facet of a relationship – such as the economy – and expect that all others will automatically follow. This was never the intention with the Arab-Israeli conflict; building the economic relationship was intended as part of a more systemic approach, but it seems to be one of the few elements of the relationship that has developed. Unfortunately, in doing so, it has, in some ways, exacerbated the ongoing power differential between the groups that continues to aggravate the conflict. Relationship building as advocated in models such as Lederach’s moral imagination requires developing relationships holistically. Economic relationships need to be fostered alongside social, individual, religious, political and community relationships. As is likely apparent, such an approach will be impossible without also addressing the ideological fears and psychological images of the ‘self’ social identity and that of the ‘other.’ It is these issues, particularly those of ideology, that continue to be significant obstacles to any form of resolution as they influence all other choices. No solution to political, geographical, political or even religious conflicts is likely to last without significant ideological changes on all sides of the conflict.

Performance and Relationships

A comprehensive approach to relationship building – perhaps as envisioned by the holistic nature of Lederach’s ‘web’ of relationships – is a fundamental component of some approaches to

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455 Hermann: 393.
conflict transformation using performance. In a two-volume work titled *Acting Together*, editors Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutiérrez Varea and Polly Walker, in combination with some extraordinary artists around the world, compile an approach to performance based conflict transformation that embodies Lederach’s moral imagination. These artists, “while composing works of beauty, meaning, and imagination, [...] have simultaneously worked to end violence and abuses of power, and to increase justice, understanding, and inclusion.” In this work, the editors propose their own ‘theory of change’ for peacebuilding in which they imagine a “permeable membrane between art and society animated by the moral imagination.” The artistic, performance based approach to peacebuilding has the ability to act on the relational level of a conflict in a way that few, if any, other mechanisms for peacebuilding can. Art can voice that which is unexpressed, can bring to light forgotten events and offer an imagined world of possibility in which the suppressed, oppressed and ignored aspects of conflict can be embraced, celebrated, mourned, and recognised. Moreover, unlike other methods such as dialogue or negotiation, performances can connect with both the conscious and non-conscious mind, and can engage the psyche – what Hillman calls the soul – in a breathtaking array of ways.

Cohen et al. recognise that the marriage between performance and the moral imagination is not one that requires any great adaptation of either discipline. “In fact, these disciplines of the moral imagination – cultivating spaces for creative acts, taking risks in the direction of vulnerability and relationship, acknowledging interdependence, and embracing paradox and complexity - are all defining elements of well-crafted performances.” That is not to say that all performances are necessarily peacebuilding performances in the model of the moral imagination, but rather that the skills and talents required to create a strong performance naturally lend themselves to the inspiration of the moral imagination.

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457 Ibid., 163.
458 Ibid., 165.
459 Ibid., 171.
imagination. There is no doubt that performance has, in the past, been used to create hate, fear, terror and to support oppression, but the same power that allowed it to support ideologies of fear empowers performance to resist and challenge it.

From a relational point of view, the performances outlined in *Acting Together* and the theories posed by its editors demonstrate the immense ability of performances to help participants and/or audiences to re-discover, or even renew relationships that have been destroyed by a society in conflict. Such performances provide a venue for the creation of shared narratives or the recognition of mutual interdependence. If nothing else, they provide the opportunity for opposing communities to join in a shared experience of creating or witnessing the performance. Examples of the possibility for performance to accomplish exactly this can be found even beyond the exemplary work described in *Acting Together*. Such examples include the performances of Pieter-Dirk Uys in South Africa, who broke the Apartheid laws repeatedly by opposing segregation, not only in his performances, but also in his theatre and his company. In a world where ‘blacks’ and ‘whites’ could not share the same schools, communities, or facilities, Uys’ theatre was non-segregated. His approach aimed at resisting Apartheid, not only through the experience of participating in a non-segregated experience, but also through his performances. He successfully and powerfully satirised the Apartheid ideology. He challenged audiences to recognise the ludicrous nature of the government and regardless of whether he successfully changed the minds of any audience members - as I suspect he did - he was unquestionably an effective and remarkably powerful irritant and embarrassment to the regime.

The role that relationships play in performance, however, extend beyond the social experience of watching a play or even the message of the performance itself. Theatre is a relational art form that

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460 Chalmers, “The Influence of Theatre and Paratheatre on the Holocaust”.
462 Fagiolo.
463 Lieberfeld and Uys: 8.
combines a significant number of the fine arts. Painting, sculpture, woodworking and metalworking all play a role in set design; dance, music and acting are essential elements of performance; and poetry, prose and creative writing make up the script. Sound design is music in its broadest sense of the word, and lighting design is both a means of enhancing the visual art forms on the stage as well as an art in itself. All of these artists and artistic processes appear on a stage with a complexity that is both daunting to create and, when done well, seamless to watch. That is the art of synchrony in theatre; the rhythmic coordination between countless individual artists and art forms in order to create a single, (and hopefully), harmonious creation.

Theatrical relationships exist between actor and character; amongst actors; with the director, designers, writers, technicians and producers; and with audiences. There is a doctrine practiced in the art of staged combat (stunts for the stage) which states that there are always at least three people in a fight – each of the combatants and the audience member. The theatrical experience itself is often framed in similar terms, with theatre seen as a complex array of relationships between the actors on the stage and the audience with the actors – at its most basic level. The relationship between the stage and the audience, however, has some tangible characteristics that can help in the creation of effective ideologically challenging entertainment.

There have been a number of studies of theatre audiences that explore different relationships between the performers and the audience. Some examples include, Neil Blackadder’s historical study of audiences who rioted in response to productions, Claudio Benzecry’s ethnographic study of opera audiences and Martin Barker’s study of the difference between audience responses to theatre and film. Studies of this nature raise some questions about theatre audiences that, while not all explored here as they are beyond the scope of this dissertation, may be relevant for future examinations of related issues.

Blackadder posits that the nature of theatre audiences has changed since the early to mid 20th century. He suggests that in the late 19th century, productions became more inclined to challenge social norms, resulting in riotous responses from audiences that eventually stopped when audiences became accustomed to challenging theatre. In direct opposition to Blackadder’s riots, Benzecry focuses his discussion on the experience of ‘love’ in audience responses; the passion that audiences feel for a particular style of performance and the lengths to which they will go in order to experience that connection.

Martin Barker explored the differences between audience responses to theatre and those to film. He noted that audience members assumed that theatre should have meaning and purpose, that attending the theatre should entail a degree of work to find that meaning. At the same time, he recognised that while some audience members were certain that theatre should have meaning, they did not necessarily apply that standard to the production they viewed.

Susan Bennett, a leading performance studies theorist, posits that the site of the performance itself, the size of the house (audience), and the physical relationship between the audience and the players, all have a powerful impact on audience reception. This theory recognises the importance of the spatial relationships between the performers and the audience, since this physical relationship helps determine the psychological relationship between the performers and the audience. For example, a production on a proscenium stage (a ‘typical’ theatre in which the stage is clearly separated from an audience by the imaginary ‘fourth wall’ through which the audience can watch the action) creates a different relationship to one performed in a thrust or ‘theatre in the round’ performance space. These

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469 Ibid., 131-132.
relationships, which vary the proximity between the audience and the stage are, according to Bennett, critically influential on audience reception and as such, are a final, essential element in community-engaged theatre practices.

The influence of the spatial relationships between audience and performer offers a partial explanation for the now common practice of using unconventional divisions between the audience and performer in a range of AT models. These approaches typically break down the traditional boundaries that exist in proscenium style theatres. This is accomplished through the use of audience participation or altering the customary use of space (such as placing audience members on the stage or actors in the audience). Other conventions include keeping all the performers on the stage at all times; juxtaposing real games or work with acted scenes (thereby incorporating the ‘real’ world into the world of the play); and casting the audience as the ‘crowd’. One can also break down the traditional barriers between audience and performer through the use of different audience-performer relationships, such as those existing in thrust stages (the audience is on three sides of the stage, such as Shakespeare’s Globe in London); ‘alley’ staging (the audience on two opposite sides of the stage), theatre in the round (the audience surrounding the stage), or environmental staging (the action taking place within the ‘real world’ in which the audience and actors can effectively intermingle). Other ways in which audience members are invited into the performance is through the collective approach to creating performances in which the community is integrated in the creation – and often performance – process. Breaking down the traditional barriers between audience and performer involves the audience in the performed narrative to a far greater degree, enhancing the transportive effects of a well-crafted production.

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\(^{470}\) Billingham, 14; Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman, eds., 3.
\(^{471}\) Kershaw, 191.
\(^{472}\) Prendergast and others, Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice, 11.
**Persuasion and Involvement**

The importance of relationships to creating ideologically challenging entertainment not only reflects its value in conflict resolution and the depth of its integration into performance practices, but is also supported by its potential impact on the audience as envisioned by persuasion theory. In their discussion of the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Petty and Cacioppo posit that ‘involvement’ will be one factor that will influence an audience’s elaboration likelihood. In their 1983 study, they tested the impact of audience ‘involvement’ on the relative values of the central and peripheral routes to persuasion. They measured viewer involvement by the degree to which the audience could relate the issue to their own lives. For example, when dealing with a product, if the audience member knows that they will be unable to purchase the product, their ‘involvement’ will be significantly less than if the product were available to them. The result of their experiment indicated that in situations with high involvement, central arguments proved more valuable than peripheral clues and the quality of the argument was more important.\(^473\)

Petty and Cacioppo’s concept of ‘involvement’ is, in its essential form, describing a relationship with the audience. In situations in which the audience involvement was high, “the quality of the arguments in a message accounts for more variance in attitudes than when involvement is low.”\(^474\) Given this, Petty and Cacioppo conclude that high levels of involvement result in increased ‘message processing’ – or a higher level of elaboration likelihood. When translated into a narrative persuasion model, the concept of ‘involvement’ is closely connected with the concept of ‘transportation’ or with the extent to which audiences identify with characters.

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\(^{473}\) Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann: 144.

Some theorists separate ‘transportation’ from ‘identification with characters’, as different mechanisms involved in the efficacy of narrative persuasion, in part as it connects with ‘involvement’ or the relationship the audience has to the narrative.\textsuperscript{475} In these cases, theorists postulate that identifying with characters in a narratives allows the audience to take on a new point of view, overcoming the natural tendency to resist alternative or even opposing viewpoints.\textsuperscript{476}

According to drama theory, the emotional process of viewers’ identification with characters could serve as a motivational force to re-conceptualize the problem depicted in the drama and resolve it in a similar manner in their own lives. However, the process of identifying may depend on the extent to which viewers like the characters, or view them as relevant to themselves.\textsuperscript{477} In other words, the extent to which an audience can recognise the relationship between themselves and the characters, situations, and issues represented on the stage.

I argue that identifying with characters is, if not part of the transportation process, at least so closely linked to it as to be difficult to evaluate separately. This view is consistent with some of the early studies of transportation that indicated that during these studies highly transported participants showed beliefs more consonant with story conclusions as well as positive evaluations of the story protagonists.\textsuperscript{478} Whether viewed separately or together, involvement, transportation and identification with characters facilitate the way in which narratives inhibit the natural tendency to counterargue against persuasive messages and, perhaps more importantly, encourage issue-relevant elaboration when presented with a strong argument.

\textsuperscript{475} Igartua and Barrios: 516.
\textsuperscript{476} Ibid., 518.
\textsuperscript{478} Green and Brock, "The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives," 707.
The Web of Relationships

Building sustainable peace requires a daunting array of capacities. As noted earlier, those involved are called upon to communicate effectively, to reflect on and reassess their own past actions, to empathize with others’ suffering, to rebuild relationships of trust, to make difficult ethical choices in the face of competing values, and to sustain vitality and dynamism in the midst of despair.479

Creating ideologically challenging entertainment is, by definition, a relational activity. Every aspect of the process necessitates building relationships with communities, concepts, situations, between individuals, performers, audiences and the conflict itself. The centrality of relationships to conflict resolution, performance and persuasion theories only builds on the foundation of relational elements in every other aspect of the theoretical foundation for effective ideologically challenging entertainment.

479 Cohen, Gutierrez Varea, and Walker, Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict, 173.
Chapter 6: The Intervention

Cohen et al. asks “How can performances be crafted to bolster and celebrate the unique identities of distinct groups while also acknowledging the interdependence among adversaries?”

Unfortunately, there is no performance or production that is capable of representing the full range of complexity and perspectives inherent in an entrenched international conflict. Any relevant production, however, can be informed by the intricacies and idiosyncrasies, and represent them in the way that the arts have often represented life – as a microcosm of possibilities. Moreover, every conflict, every situation will require a different kind of representation, tailored to its specific needs. While it would be pleasant to be able to create a ‘one size fits all’ approach to creating ICE, the result would be an ill-fitting, awkward and likely unappealingly bland or didactic production that represented only the most superficial of issues.

Even without a simple universal model for creating interventions, there are a number of approaches, beyond those that have already been discussed, that relate specifically to the structure and content of the intervention itself. Some of these include:

- Are the aims of the production to:
  - Inspire change in the participants (cast, crew, designers, etc.) or the audience?\(^{481}\)
  - Imagine a possibility for forgiveness and reconciliation?\(^{482}\)
  - “Celebrate the identity of a particular cultural group?”\(^{483}\)

- How will the production represent:
  - The situation?
  - The identities?
    - Particularly the ‘self’ and the ‘other’
  - The relationships?
  - Power dynamics?\(^{484}\)

\(^{480}\) Ibid., 181.
\(^{481}\) Ibid., 171.
\(^{482}\) Ibid.
\(^{483}\) Ibid.
\(^{484}\) Ibid.
Disenfranchised and privileged groups?\textsuperscript{485}  
Common ground, humanity and interdependence?\textsuperscript{486}

- How will the production:
  - Offer new knowledge and increase understanding?\textsuperscript{487}
  - Honour the requirements of truth and accountability?\textsuperscript{488}
  - Balance the complex and often conflicting and contradictory requirements of ethically engaging with a conflict of this nature?\textsuperscript{489}
  - Inspire the moral imagination?

In addition, transformative performances can counter some of the most psychologically challenging influences of entrenched conflicts.

In zones of violence and oppression, suppressed truths about abuses of power, unexpressed stories of suffering, unremembered erasures, unmourned losses, unresolved conflicts and dilemmas, unpunished crimes, unfulfilled yearnings, unacknowledged complicities, unspoken feelings of remorse, and unreconciled relationships are all screaming — in silence and in deafening roars — for focused, creative attention that might lead to healing and justice, and, perhaps, to peace.\textsuperscript{490}

ICE can also counteract some of the negative effects of the media, which is often a main source of information about the ‘other’ in a conflict,\textsuperscript{491} abounding with negative, prejudicial and stereotypical representations.\textsuperscript{492} Performances should invite audiences to engage with visions of the conflict, and those participating in the conflict, that diverge from their own.

**Parallel Narratives and ICE**

There are a myriad of possible ways to create ideologically challenging entertainment that embody the principles outlined above. Selecting the best approach will depend on the needs of the specific issues one is attempting to address. The Arab-Israeli conflict presents a number of unique

\textsuperscript{485} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{486} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{487} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{488} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{489} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{490} Ibid., 163.  
\textsuperscript{491} Abramovich: 304.  
\textsuperscript{492} Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*, 82-95; Eid, 53.
challenges that help to refine the possible approaches to ICE. The ideological climate surrounding perspectives on the Arab-Israeli conflict has become so polarised that finding common ground between the various narratives is, at present, almost impossible.\textsuperscript{493}

Given this difficulty, Sami Adwan and Dan Bar-On posit that it may not be necessary – as a first step – to present a common historical narrative or find common ground between the conflicting sides, but rather that the initial process of reconciliation should encourage the acceptance of different perspectives on the same facts.\textsuperscript{494} They utilised this model to create – in collaboration with a number of Israeli and Palestinian educators – a revolutionary textbook in which “each side, Palestinian as well as Israeli, presents its own narratives.”\textsuperscript{495} The textbook, titled \textit{Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine} literally presents two, often conflicting, narratives of the Arab-Israeli conflict side by side, with the Israeli narratives printed on the left hand pages and the Palestinian on the right. This textbook countered what the authors perceived as the existing trend in educating about the conflict in which the narrative of the ‘other’, if presented at all, is “presented as being morally inferior. The enemy is depicted as faceless and immoral, with irrational or manipulative views.”\textsuperscript{496} \textit{Side by Side} offered an opportunity to children to know, not only the narrative of their own people, but also those of their ‘enemies’. When the textbook was offered to schoolchildren, the result was surprise that spurred great interest and curiosity.\textsuperscript{497} In other words, presenting parallel narratives inspired students to seek greater knowledge and unlocked the possibility for them to recognise the relationships between their own identities and those they perceived as their enemies.

This approach is one that embraces many of the desires expressed by communities and individuals trying to engage with this issue. Discussions of faith based education advocate an “emphasis

\textsuperscript{493} Adwan and Bar-On, "Shared History Project: A Prime Example of Peace-Building under Fire," 514.
\textsuperscript{494} Schechet, 20.
\textsuperscript{495} Adwan and Bar-On, "Shared History Project: A Prime Example of Peace-Building under Fire," 515.
\textsuperscript{496} ibid.
\textsuperscript{497} ibid., 519.
on inter-faith dialogue”\textsuperscript{498} and the need to include narratives that embrace the complexity of the conflict rather than presenting a one sided view of it.\textsuperscript{499} While such dialogues are not necessarily ones of ‘parallel narratives’, they embrace a similar philosophy of understanding and accepting multiple points of view on religious issues. Moreover, presenting parallel narratives offers an opportunity to articulate “the struggle not against encroaching systems of oppression, but rather for the access of all people to a life of dignity within their own communal institutions, histories, and cosmogonies (as well as within society as a whole).”\textsuperscript{500} Such an approach can help to celebrate identities of all groups - even when one cannot agree on a unified vision of those identities – while simultaneously “rehumanizing people to themselves and each other.”\textsuperscript{501} Witnessing parallel narratives also invites the audience to witness and be part of the interdependence that Lederach challenges us to recognize.\textsuperscript{502}

Presenting parallel narratives also has potential benefits from the perspective of persuasion theories, particularly those addressing issues of repetition. Repetition of a persuasive message can be either a negative or a positive influence on its efficacy. Excessive repetition of a message, particularly one with a low involvement factor can become tedious for viewers, resulting in negative elaboration on the content, thus reducing or eliminating the persuasiveness of the argument. Alternatively, moderate repetition should enhance positive elaboration under several possible conditions. Some of these include the recipients having some prior knowledge about or interest in the topic; the topic and execution being sufficiently relevant and interesting that recipients are motivated to devote the cognitive resources to thinking about the issue; and when the associations and implications are sufficiently rich that their pool

\textsuperscript{499} Schechet, 18.
\textsuperscript{500} Cohen, Gutierrez Varea, and Walker, \textit{Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict}, 176.
\textsuperscript{501} Ibid., 182.
\textsuperscript{502} Ibid.
is not easily exhausted. Obviously this is a difficult balance to strike and the degree to which repetition can be effective will be strongly influenced by the experiences and disposition of each individual recipient.

**Cautions and Challenges**

If choosing to create an entertainment-based intervention featuring a parallel narrative approach, there are some challenges one should approach with caution. The most obvious of these is the need to present parallel perspectives without privileging one or another. If one adapts the approach used by Adwan and Bar-On, is it possible to perform two or more narratives simultaneously? If not, how does one choose which narrative is presented first? Similarly, if one is presenting multiple narratives, is it possible to ensure that the artistic quality and entertainment value of both are equivalent? Even something as subjective as the attractiveness of the performers can influence how a performance will be received. Similarly, how can one be certain that one’s own biases are not being imposed onto the production when one may not even recognise that they are biases?

Another potential area of caution is what Gil Troy calls the ‘epidemic of even-handedness.’ Troy’s ‘epidemic’ is based on his perception that in an attempt to appear ‘fair’ or ‘unbiased’, authors, academics, politicians and other interested participants ignore or minimise acts that are, unquestionably, morally reprehensible. It is possible, however, to recognise multiple perspectives and the validity of opposing narratives without undermining one’s own ethical standards. Recognising that multiple parties involved with the Arab-Israeli conflict have committed acts of terrorism (defined, in this case, as violent acts intentionally committed against civilians with the intent to inspire terror among the population) does not minimise the opposition one may feel towards terrorism. Moreover, it is not

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504 Troy, 122.
505 Ibid., 122-123.
biased to recognise that such acts may be more officially and publically condoned by one side or another when one has credible evidence to support those assertions.

Opposing atrocities is no more an indication of bias than recognising victims may be. This becomes an indication of bias only when the atrocities of one’s own ‘side’ are ignored and the victimhood of the ‘other’ is negated. Anybody approaching a discussion from a particularly polemical viewpoint, however, is likely to accuse any attempt at recognising the legitimacy of the ‘other’ as contributing to the epidemic of even-handedness.

A final challenge in presenting parallel narratives is that, in situations such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, neither the narratives themselves nor the presentation of them in tandem is likely to result in a message of ‘hope’ for the future being incorporated into the narratives themselves. In many of the interviews conducted prior to the opening of Two Merchants, the desire for a presentation that offered hope for the future was a common theme. This concept also emerges in the work of Cohen et al. in which one of the challenges they present for performance aimed at conflict transformation is that it might imagine a possibility for reconciliation and forgiveness.\textsuperscript{506} While there may be potential for a parallel narratives approach to imagine the possibility for reconciliation, in the midst of an intractable conflict such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, a more likely nature of parallel narratives is that they, like any set of parallel lines, do not intersect. While such an approach may not imagine, for itself, these possibilities, it does offer the opportunity for the audience to use the narratives as a foundation for such an image. In this model, the audience may have to take the final step of connecting the parallel perspectives, rather than the performers.

\textsuperscript{506} Cohen, Gutierrez Varea, and Walker, \textit{Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict}, 171.
The Theory and Practice of ICE: Summary

The process of creating ideologically challenging entertainment outlined thus far offers an introduction to the initial stages of ICE. Creating ICE requires that we imagine the possibilities of what can and should be created. The conceptualisation process outlined here focuses on issues relating to violent ideological conflict, mass atrocities and genocide and connects those with persuasion and arts-based theories for effective social, attitudinal and ideological interventions. While the latter theories regarding persuasion and arts-based interventions would likely apply to most forms of ICE, the former issues of atrocities and violent conflict are specific to this project. ICE designed to intervene on different issues would obviously require an entirely different realm of theoretical research, going beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Part of the benefit of the imagination process is the ability to delve into the complexity of an issue without concern for the practical limitations often imposed by the ‘real world’. Embracing this complexity is what enables us to recognise multiple perspectives, to explore alternative and sometimes unpleasant viewpoints. Such variation encourages audiences to engage more extensively with the material and consequently increases its persuasive effect.

While the imagination process itself may be free from limits, it also enables – one might even say encourages – us to impose limits, starting with those demanded by ethical practices. Ethical guidelines and questions from AT, TfD, academic research, approaches to persuasion, theatre practice and international interventions can all inform the creation of ethical and responsible ICE.

Having decided to create ICE, particularly in relation to violent or intractable conflicts, the next step is to understand the situation and the identities. For many of us, the inclination is to find ‘the facts’ and understand what ‘really’ happened. As has been discussed above, however, there are some circumstances in which understanding the situation is often a process of learning multiple ‘facts’ and
accepting that what ‘really’ happened is perceived differently. In addition, not every issue will be relevant to every audience and the process of understanding the situation enables us to find an issue of relevance to the audience, locate viewers appropriate for the issue, or find ways to connect a seemingly unrelated issue to spectators.

Similarly, in complex situations, identities become tangible and intangible, ‘real’ and imagined, accepted and imposed. Identities are full of contradictions, including identifying one’s own group as both heroic and victimized, or identifying the other as both inferior and a powerful threat. Whether the objective reality supports the way identities are imagined or not becomes immaterial in the face of the belief in an identity. In this case, what one believes is what will influence one’s behaviour and how individuals perceive themselves and the ‘other’ in a conflict is more relevant to understanding their actions than any demonstrable ‘realities’.

The more one understands the identities and the situations involved in a conflict, the more important relationships become. The identity of the ‘self’ (in-group) is often viewed in relation to the perception of the ‘other’ (out-group), while the conflict situation is, by definition, one of relationships. The relationships go beyond those of ‘us and them’, however. They return us to the need to imagine, not only the conflict based relationships, but also those that connect opposing groups. In addition, relationships in performances - between characters, between actor, character and audience and between the numerous artists collaborating to create a performance - are an integral part the efficacy of an ideological intervention.

Creating an intervention that honours the depth of understanding and imagination explored thus far becomes the next challenge. Approaches such as parallel narratives offer possibilities for engaging with multiple perspectives while the challenges of fairness, representation and inspiring hope can create a navigational hazard akin to walking a high-wire maze in gale-force winds.
Part 2: Creating and Understanding *Two Merchants*

Early in the process of creating *Two Merchants*, one of the cast members asked me which was going to be more important to me – the ‘research’ (by which he presumably meant the audience response component of the study) or the play? A number of different people repeated the question throughout the production process and in post-show interviews. The answer has always been the same: the two are mutually dependent. The research would only reveal the outcomes for which I hoped if the play was ‘good’. A bad play – meaning one in which poor production values become the focus of the audience’s attention – would have resulted in an audience that was unmoved, disinterested and entirely focused on the lacking theatrical qualities in the production. The data would have revealed nothing about the issues in which I was truly interested. The play had to be good enough to stand on its own as an entertaining piece of theatre. At the same time, I had to design and implement a data collection strategy that would encourage audiences to share their experiences both of the play and their responses to its ideological content. Unlike many research designs, there would be no going back and little opportunity for follow-up.

The next two chapters will detail one example of the implementation of the theory introduced thus far and the techniques used to understand audience responses to the production – in this case, *Two Merchants*. In order to facilitate a clear understanding of the processes involved in implementing both the production and the audience response research, these chapters are organised in approximately chronological order, with discussions of the play itself and the audience response research design intermingled as they informed one another. I begin by introducing the initial conceptualisation of the study, including both the initial perceptions of the research, the adaptation of a script and establishing a location for its performance. I then offer a glimpse into the process of bringing *Two Merchants* to life. Finally, I discuss the research methods used for the audience response research.
Two Merchants is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice, abridged to the length of a one-act play (approximately one hour) and performed twice every night. The two versions of the play are interpreted differently based on a single variation in the socio-political structure of the play: in one version (known from this point on the Muslim Dominated World (MDW)), Shylock, Tuball and Jessica are Jews in a predominantly Arab or Muslim society (changed from the original in which the dominant culture is Christian). In the other version (the Jewish Dominated World (JDW)), the social structure is inverted, with Shylock and Jessica becoming Muslim Arabs in a predominantly Jewish society.

Two Merchants fulfills a dual purpose in this dissertation; it is both the outcome of the research that defined the theoretical model introduced in the previous section, as well as the intervention for the audience response research that will form the foundation for most of the remainder of the dissertation. It was performed for ten nights in November of 2011 as part of Theatre at UBC’s 2011-2012 season.
Chapter 7: Creating Two Merchants

For many, it is challenging to consider that theatre can be an effective tool in the process of conflict management, prevention or intervention. Designing a theatrical intervention that could be effective and a way to measure that efficacy is, however, problematic. Two Merchants developed in response to this need.

In its initial form, the research was modelled on a within-subjects experimental model which could also be considered a field experiment, encompassing significant discussion about controlling variables within the intervention itself (order effects, differences in the quality of the acting, differences between the Jewish and Muslim versions, etc.). This initial process inspired much of the foundation for the final production of Two Merchants, including the need to alternate which act was viewed first, the decision to use the same cast playing the same characters in each act and the choice to make as few changes as possible between the scripts of the two acts. In other words, what happened in one version had to happen in the other one in very similar forms.

Some proposals from the early stage of the development process were not included in the final product, including the initial idea to include not one, but three questionnaires; one before the play, one at intermission and one at the end of the performance. In addition, the initial model included a quantitative survey utilising primarily Likert scale questions with a few open-ended questions comprising the qualitative elements of the questionnaire research.

It rapidly became apparent that, while such a proposal may have made for a more rigorous research design, it was almost completely impractical in the context of a theatrical production. Asking audience members to complete three questionnaires in one night would likely result in significant participant fatigue and a great deal of participant attrition. Moreover, some of the questions that need to be asked when discussing violent, intractable, ideologically motivated conflicts appear potentially
offensive – no matter how carefully worded. A further problem was the sheer range of possible ideological perspectives that could manifest in response to *Two Merchants* – attempting to ask specific questions that addressed all of these possibilities and come up with an appropriate scale for each of the answers resulted in an unmanageably long survey, or, more accurately, three unmanageably long surveys. Moreover, it was very likely that the questionnaires would exclude questions that could be potentially valuable.

Focusing the data collection on more open-ended questions and incorporating multiple data collection methods allowed the research to collect a wide array of information without limiting the questions asked to only those topics we imagined might emerge. Consequently, all of the data collection techniques used were primarily qualitative, with only a few categorical questions included on the questionnaires. Moreover, in the interest of practicality, we only collected data after the performance of both acts, opting to ask participants about any changes they perceived in their own views rather than attempting to ‘measure’ such changes through pre- and post-show questionnaires. The advantage of these adjustments was to allow for the maximum possible variation in responses while retaining the possibility of quantifying the qualitative data during the analysis process. Including only one questionnaire and multiple other data collection methods made the process far more feasible in the context of a theatrical production.

**Developing the Intervention – Two Merchants**

*The Merchant of Venice*

William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, at its simplest level, tells the story of a Christian merchant (Anthonio) who, on behalf of his friend (Bassanio), borrows money from a Jewish moneylender (Shylock). Bassanio needs the money in order to court a wealthy heiress (Portia). Since both Shylock (Jewish) and Anthonio (Christian) are outspokenly prejudiced against each other and each
other’s religions, the bargain they reach is that Anthonio will borrow the money without interest on the condition that, if he cannot repay the loan on time, Shylock will take a pound of Anthonio’s flesh instead. Shylock does not have the full amount of the loan and himself borrows money from another Jew named Tuball. Anthonio is unable to repay the loan and Shylock takes him to court to demand his pound of flesh. Through some interesting legal loopholes, Shylock is denied his pound of flesh, is not repaid for his loan, is forced to give up all of his wealth to a man he despises (a Christian who married his daughter), and convert to Christianity.

Portia has an additional storyline in the play, based on a test created by her father to determine the worthiness of her potential suitors. Her suitors from all over the world have to choose between a gold, silver and bronze chest. Choosing the right chest will give them the right to marry Portia. The connection between this storyline and the Shylock thread is through Bassanio. It is his need for wealth to pursue his courtship that initiates the bond between Shylock and Anthonio and it is because of this connection that Portia intervenes in the trial to defend Anthonio.

A third, smaller story thread is that of Jessica and Lorenzo. Jessica is Shylock’s daughter and is in love with a Christian – Lorenzo (who is also a friend of Anthonio’s). Jessica chooses to defy her father and run away to marry Lorenzo. This has a devastating effect on Shylock and is part of what drives him to seek his pound of flesh.

**Why This Play?**

The theoretical model outlined previously makes it clear that choosing the right play for an intervention of this nature is an essential part of the process. Moreover, there are a wide variety of issues to consider in this process. Firstly, the play needs to be entertaining enough to be ‘transportive’ for the audience. Without this quality, it is less likely that the play would have any of the desired impact. In addition, the play needs to represent the relevant ideological issues, including the ‘us vs. them’
mentality, the complexity of relationships within and between groups, the range of ideological perspectives contributing to the conflict and the complexity of the issues and identities. Moreover, as much as possible, the play needed to be unbiased in the sense that it should not convey a clearly pro-Jewish or pro-Muslim bias: in this context, a proxy for a pro-Israeli versus pro-Palestinian bias.

In order to create a play that would have the necessary transportive effect on the audience, I judged it necessary to use an existing script rather than attempt to write one. It was imperative to use a play that had already demonstrated its ability to engage, entertain and excite an audience, ensuring that any obstacles to transportation or aesthetic quality of the production were the result of the performance - or my direction - rather than the script.

Furthermore, in order to avoid the perception of bias (or the imposition of an imaginary bias), I wanted to use a script that had been written prior to the Balfour Declaration of 1917. This is not to say that any play written after that date is automatically biased on the Arab-Israeli conflict (on the contrary, I would posit – without any evidence – that most plays written in the last century have been written without any consideration of the Arab-Israeli conflict). My concern was that a common accusation levelled at people who attempt to intervene in intractable conflicts – no matter how unbiased their intentions – is that they are biased towards one side or another. While some may choose to level that bias at me individually, I had hoped to avoid the possibility of such an imposition on the script itself by choosing one that could not have possibly had any relationship to the current conflict.

*The Merchant of Venice* seemed an obvious choice. Written long prior to the Balfour Declaration, Shakespeare could not have been biased on the current conflict. The play provides

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507 The Balfour Declaration was a British document stating “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object...” Gilbert, 34. This official promise to create a ‘national home’ for the Jews in Palestine is sometimes viewed as the origin of the modern Arab-Israeli conflict. Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2012). While the origins of the conflict undoubtedly extend far further into history than 1917, the Balfour Declaration was the official beginning of the process of creating the modern State of Israel and consequently a defining moment in the creation of the conflict as it exists today.
frequent references to both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian prejudices and the behaviour of the characters creates a story in which one of many legitimate interpretations is that there is no real hero – almost all the characters are unpleasant, prejudiced, manipulative and merciless. Similarly, almost all the lead characters have moments when they can be portrayed as genuinely sympathetic, kind, generous and caring. It also has an undeserved reputation for being antisemitic - undeserved because it is no more antisemitic than it is anti-Christian and because it mitigates both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian tendencies with powerful reminders that both Jews and Christians are simply human and actually not that different in many respects.

As a means of displaying complex relationships and ideological perspectives, *The Merchant of Venice* is ideal - it displays extremely complicated relationships between religions, demonstrates both the hatreds that can emerge and the reasons why those hatreds should be discarded, and it does not portray one side as better than the other. It also reveals the profound love for one’s own beliefs, culture and community as well as powerful relationships between friends, family and lovers. While the play originally focuses on Jewish-Christian relationships, the Christianity revealed in the original seemed like it could be relatively easily converted into Islam (if one can excuse the imagery), with minimal loss to the meaning, the power of the play, or Shakespeare’s poetry. The play also lends itself (admittedly not without some problems, as will be discussed) to inverting the two religions, with the Jewish minority becoming a Muslim minority.

Moreover, while the play (and Shakespeare by extension) has been accused of antisemitism, whether such a prejudice exists has been debated almost since the play was first produced. This debate became apparent to me during my Masters research on the Nazi use of theatre during the Holocaust. Despite its antisemitic reputation, the Nazis did not consider *The Merchant of Venice* to be a particularly useful play for their propaganda. It was, in fact, highly problematic for them. They had a great deal of difficulty reconciling Shakespeare’s eloquent attempts to humanise Shylock. When the play was
produced by the Nazis, there were heavy cuts and changes made to the text and story to avoid these ‘problems’.  

Further research revealed that The Merchant of Venice, and specifically the character of Shylock, has been the subject of intense debate for many centuries. Discussions of Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice, and specifically the character of Shylock, vary significantly in interpretation and response. Shylock is alternately professed to be a hero, villain, and victim. He is perceived as a perfect representation of a Jew and as a gross stereotype with no basis in reality. There are assertions that this is the only one of Shakespeare’s plays that was ‘of his age’ rather than transcending time, contradicted by claims that Shylock is the ultimate proof that Shakespeare lived ‘beyond his age’. Politically, The Merchant of Venice has been ‘claimed’ by both Israelis and Palestinians as a narrative supporting their respective ‘causes’. Moreover, many authors, in conducting their analysis, imply, suggest or state outright that their interpretation is the only ‘true’ interpretation of the play/Shylock based on Shakespeare’s original text (the actual text of which is, ironically, generally not debated). In many ways, it appears that the play in general and the character of Shylock in particular have become a kind of projective test in which the interpretation of its meaning appears to reveal more about the analyst than about the play itself.

Symington, 248.


Ibid., 7.


**Shylock**

The character of Shylock is, quite simply, a wonderful character to study. He has been portrayed and interpreted as a hero, a villain and a victim – as well as a complex, ‘human’ character embodying elements of all three. “Shylock has sometimes been presented as the devil incarnate, sometimes as a comic villain gabbling absurdly about ducats and daughters. He has also been sentimentalized as a wronged and suffering father nobler by far than the people who triumph over him.”\(^{516}\) There are commentaries on the character that go back at least as far as the 18\(^{th}\) century, with as much variation in interpretation 300 years ago as there is today. Moreover, it seems that the discussion of whether *The Merchant of Venice* is an antisemitic play often revolves around how one interprets only a single character: Shylock.

There are some who believe that after The Holocaust, “Shylock became a much more problematic character,”\(^{517}\) due to the unfavourable perception of antisemitic attitudes. Those advocating such a position use it to explain post-war productions in which Shylock was portrayed as either a hero or a victim. They also posit that from the 1960’s-1990’s there was a resistance to the play – “a play which cannot possibly mean what it appears to say.”\(^{518}\) The pressure to present Shylock as noble or heroic eased at this point as long as the Christians were presented as being worse than Shylock.\(^{519}\) The implication of this view of the history of *The Merchant of Venice* is that, had the Holocaust not happened, the portrayal of Shylock as a villain, in all his apparently antisemitic glory, would be unproblematic. “To stage the play of Anthonio, Portia, and Shylock now is to attempt what is virtually impossible, since only an audience at ease with its own anti-Semitism could tolerate a responsible and


\(^{517}\) Gross, *Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend*, 299.

\(^{518}\) Ibid., 316.

\(^{519}\) Ibid.
authentic presentation of what Shakespeare actually wrote.” Such advocates even go so far as to state that “to recover the comic splendour of The Merchant of Venice now, you need to be either a scholar or an anti-Semite, or best of all, an anti-Semitic scholar.”

I may be a scholar (although not an antisemite), but I disagree with the implication that Shylock simply has to be a villain incorporating antisemitic stereotypes. The historic evidence also undermines the assertion that the reason modern productions reinterpret Shylock out of being a villainous character is the current disfavour of antisemitism in the post-Holocaust world. There is a range of commentary from centuries before the Second World War that indicate that even before Hitler, Shylock was not always an easily defined villain. Given this debate, it may be valuable to outline some of the arguments of those who perceive Shylock as a villain, those who see him as a victim, and those who consider him a hero.

The Villainous Shylock

Those who do see Shylock as a villain interpret him as being intended to be a villain, a hate figure and a character that has helped to keep Jewish stereotypes alive. A book of theatrical reviews of productions in London, England in 1772 expresses this depiction rather poetically:

“With what art and perfect knowledge of human Nature in her most degenerated State has the Poet drawn the Character of Shylock! How nobly has he availed himself of the general character of the Jews, the very Quintessence of which he has displayed in a delightful manner in order to enrich this Character. And though he has evidently deviated from a Matter of fact (according to Tradition), [based on a belief that the story is a representation of actual events in which the Christians were the villains] in representing the Jew the Hero of Villainy and Barbarity instead of the Christian, popular Prejudice will sufficiently vindicate him. [...]the Picture here drawn, is

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520 Bloom, ed., 7.
521 Ibid., 3.
522 Gross, Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend, 322.
so disgraceful to human Nature, that we doubt whether it ever had an Original."\textsuperscript{523}

This eloquent description reveals a perception of Shylock that is unquestionably villainous while also revealing the writer’s views of Jews in general. Such descriptions are not limited to 18\textsuperscript{th} century accounts of Shylock’s character, although admittedly the more modern ones are less romantically phrased. By 1965 the description of Shylock is more succinctly described as the “simple embodiment of the powers of evil.”\textsuperscript{524}

Other commentators not only perceive Shylock as a villain, but connect and contrast his villainy with the behaviour of other characters in the play. In 1709, Nicholas Rowe described Shylock with poetic style: “There appears in it [Shylock] such a deadly Spirit of Revenge, such a savage Fierceness and Fellness and such a bloody designation of Cruelty and Mischief, as cannot agree either with the Stile [sic] or Characters of Comedy.”\textsuperscript{525} While Rowe focuses his discussion on the play itself and the character of Shylock, he also recognises the ‘other side’ of the relationships in the play. Rather than focusing on the villain, he also discusses the strong positive relationships of what he perceives as the heroes: “There is something in the Friendship of Anthonio to Bassanio very Great, Generous and Tender.”\textsuperscript{526} For Rowe, the contrast between Shylock, Anthonio and Bassanio is one of stark opposites. An 1809 analysis by Nicholas Drake, however, perceives similar characteristics between Shylock and Christians, but makes it clear that such characteristics are, in his view, clearly separated. “Avarice and revenge, the prominent vices of Shylock, are painted with a pencil so discriminating, as to appear very distinct from the same passions in the bosom of a Christian.”\textsuperscript{527}

\textsuperscript{525} Rowe.
\textsuperscript{526} Ibid.
A modern analysis, once again, creates a less descriptive but no less clear interpretation that “Shylock is not there to be sympathized with, whereas Anthonio is to be admired, if we are to read the play that Shakespeare wrote.” The final qualification implies that any other interpretation of the characters or their relationships is somehow a bastardisation of Shakespeare’s original play. This is hardly a unique assertion and is, in fact, a common conceit among many commentators on Shakespeare’s plays.

**Shylock the Victim**

Despite assertions that the play that Shakespeare ‘actually wrote’ insists on Shylock’s villainy, there is a similar array of literature positing that Shylock’s character is clearly one of a victim, forced into his behaviour by circumstances, history and other characters. Many of these interpretations focus on Shylock’s humanity, recognising that given the same situational pressures, any human being might respond as he does. Nathan Drake, cited previously as distinguishing the characteristics of avarice and revenge in Shylock from similar ‘passions’ in Christians, also suggests that the circumstances in which Jews have been placed for so many centuries obviously colour all their actions and emotions. Such a perception creates a strange combination of perceiving villainous behaviour in Jews while simultaneously excusing or explaining it as the natural result of the discrimination imposed on them. One particularly eloquent description of the connection between Shylock’s behaviour and his history as the victim of discrimination comes from William Hazlitt’s 19th century discussion of the characters of Shakespeare’s plays:

> The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong; and we can hardly help sympathizing with the proud spirit, hid beneath his ‘Jewish gabeldine’, stung to madness by repeated undeserved provocations, and labouring to throw off the load of obloquy and oppression heaped upon him and all his tribe by one desperate act of 'lawful' revenge, till the ferociousness

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528 Bloom, ed., 3.
529 William Poel, *Shakespeare in the Theatre* (Project Gutenberg Online, Catalog, 1913), 47.
of the means by which he is to execute his purpose, and the pertinacity with which he adheres to it, turn us against him; but even at last, when disappointed of the sanguinary revenge with which he had glutted his hopes, and exposed to beggary and contempt by the letter of the law on which he had insisted with so little remorse, we pity him, and think him hardly dealt with by his judges. 531

Hazlitt suggests that the characterisation of Shylock is such that audiences cannot help but feel sympathy, or pity for him in recognition of the intense hardships he has suffered and the unfairness of the legal loophole that condemns him. This is a common theme in both the recognition of Shylock’s victimhood and understanding the behaviour that is at odds with Jewish culture and law:

Here is a man who is forced to lend money because other professions are closed to Jews. Here is a man who is an alien in Venice; despised and mocked by his Christian contemporaries. He is a man dedicated to his community and family, but is betrayed by his daughter. His very human rage leads him to challenge an unforgiving power and to violate Jewish law and tradition. 532

Ultimately however, it is Shylock himself who connects his own villainy with his victimhood in one of his more famous speeches, which concludes with the line “The villainie you teach me I will execute, and it shall goe hard but I will better the instruction.” 533

It is not only Shylock’s historical victimization that supports the interpretation of this character as a victim. As suggested by Hazlitt above, another reason why some perceive Shylock as the victim in the story is his mistreatment by the law. Shylock takes Anthonio to trial for reneging on a legal contract into which Anthonio willingly entered, with full knowledge of the repercussions should he fail to comply with its demands. Shylock is determined that the law will support the integrity of the contract. When Portia finds a loophole through which to not only release Anthonio from his debt, but also with which to condemn Shylock, it is often perceived as a supreme travesty of justice. “Who, with the most ordinary

notions of right and wrong, derives any gratification from the merchant Anthonio’s being brought off by
a quirk of law, and that law an unjust one.”

The Heroic Shylock

As seems to be a common theme throughout this dissertation, the interpretations of Shylock are
not simply the binary opposition between villain and victim. Shylock is also occasionally interpreted as a
hero, not only within the story itself, but as a character, or even a person, playing a role in the history of
the Jewish people. Victor Hugo saw Shylock as being representative of a ‘type’; not a genuine human
character but a broad representation of the entirety of Judaism and Jewish people, both the good and
the bad as society has created them. He also perceives the character as playing an almost heroic role in
the history of the Jewish people:

“Shylock has gained what is better than his cause – he has gained the cause of
an entire people. He has caused the unknown rights of his race to be
recognised, and enabled them to prevail by the exemplary condemnation of
that exterminatory code which hitherto had kept them in abeyance.”

This view seems strange to those who are more familiar with the view that Shylock has
contributed to antisemitism and the persecution of Jews, rather than a character that revealed the
plight of the persecuted Jew to the world. In fact, several months after Two Merchants closed, I received
a vitriolic email (also sent to head of the department of Theatre and Film and the office of the President
of UBC) from someone who had not seen the show but was horrified that the University of British
Columbia would deign to support the production of any play related to The Merchant of Venice, which,
in the view of this individual, was responsible for spreading antisemitism for centuries. This
perception is not, however, universally shared by those who are familiar with the play: “But who shall

534 Charles Cowden Clarke, “Merchant of Venice” Shakespeare - Characters; Chiefly Those Subordinate (London: Smith, Elder,
535 Victor Hugo, William Shakespeare, trans., Melville B. Anderson (Chicago, IL: A.C. McClury, 1887), 224-225. As cited in Bloom,
536 Dana Chalmers, Jerry Wasserman, and UBC Presidents Office, email, by Zak Lamont, 11 January 2012, Two
Merchants....Obscene. Vancouver. Personal Communication
say that this very play has not been instrumental in breaking down the barriers and mounds of intolerance and persecution for faith’s sake? For those like Victor Hugo and Charles Clarke, Shylock as a character has become a kind of hero to the oppressed Jewish people – one who revealed their oppression and dared to fight back.

Shylock, The Heroic, Victimized Villain

Perhaps we do not need to compromise in our views of this character. Perhaps Shylock was a human being – at times, a villain, at times a victim and at times he is even heroic. As John Gross notes, “Shylock would not have held the stage for four hundred years if he were a mere stereotype. His greatness is to be himself, to transcend the roles of representative Jew and conventional usurer. He is Shylock, with his own private history, his own vivid individuality.” Moreover, Shylock is not the only character in this play to exhibit such a range of possibility. Portia is often interpreted as being one of the few noble, honourable characters in the play – and yet she is occasionally vicious and, despite her own exhortations to Shylock in court – shows Shylock no mercy. Likewise, Anthonio is a great friend to Bassanio, selfless and generous – and yet he readily admits to physically abusing Shylock and blatantly states that he will do so again.

One of the most remarkable aspects of The Merchant of Venice is the complexity of the characters and the relationships. It is possible to present the play in a bland, even comedic fashion – but to do so does not explore even a small portion of the depth of possibility in this script. Moreover, the complexity of the characters, situations and relationships is such that it offers exceptional opportunities for connections to the complexity of situation, identity and relationships of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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538 John Gross, Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy (New York, NY; London, UK; Toronto, Canada; Sydney, Australia; Tokyo, Japan; Singapore: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 63.
Merchant of Venice – Two Merchants

The process of converting Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice into Two Merchants, as noted previously, had to conform to the dual requirements of the theatrically possible (and ideally, interesting) and academically sound. As a result, the needs of the research methods and data collection techniques contributed significantly to the way in which the script for Two Merchants took shape. The following discussion outlines a summary of the kinds of changes made to the script in order to create Two Merchants.

Throughout the adaptation process, I chose to work with the Folio version of the text rather than a modern edition. The edition I selected was from the Applause First Folio in Modern Type, edited by Neil Freeman. My preference for this text is primarily due to the wealth of information one can glean from Shakespeare’s spelling and grammar choices, which many modern editors ‘correct’. 539

The initial vision for this production was not one in which both versions of the play were repeated in the same night, but rather that the full play would be performed each night, with the interpretations alternating between performances. In this example, half the audience for the run would see one version of the play while the other half would see the alternative version. The idea to show both interpretations in the same night first emerged during an initial consultation with Neil Freeman on the viability of this idea. Once the possibility of presenting both versions to the same audience existed, it rapidly became apparent that this would be the preferred choice, in part from an ethical perspective. Presenting one version to one group and a second version to a different audience created the potential for audiences to become influenced against one or another group. Just as the debate around whether the play is antisemitic has raged for centuries, so these interpretations could fall into a similar ‘trap’.

Given my intention to connect the play with ideological beliefs relating to an intractable conflict, this

539 For more information on the benefits of using Folio texts, please see Neil Freeman, ed. The Applause First Folio of Shakespeare in Modern Type (New York, NY; London, UK: Applause, 2001).
would have been problematic. Presenting both versions in the same night helped to mitigate this concern.

Similarly, it was necessary to consider whether the order in which the two acts were presented would influence the audience’s perceptions. Short of presenting both versions simultaneously (a thought which only occurred to me years after the production closed), one act would, by necessity, have to be performed first. In order to control for this effect in the audience responses, the order in which the versions were presented alternated for each night of the run. Once this became the definitive choice for the structure of the play, the adaptation process became focused on making the play short enough to be performed twice in one night.

Most of the adaptation process was one of cutting the original script rather than adding anything new. On principle, I hoped to keep Shakespeare’s language and poetry as intact as possible, while shortening the play sufficiently to allow for multiple interpretations. The first of the cuts were made to any portion of the script not directly linked to the Shylock-Anthoio plot. These included most of the scenes relating to Portia’s courtship, the three caskets and her various suitors. On occasion, Portia has some remarkably Islamophobic lines about one of her suitors. These were rescued from the cuts and reinserted in a much abbreviated scene between Nerissa and Portia.

With the removal of much of Portia’s plotline, the play was still longer than would be ideal. At this point, it became necessary to cut individual lines and speeches that were not essential to forwarding the plot or particularly revealing of ideological elements of identity or relationships. Given the desire to connect the play with the Arab-Israeli conflict, only the aspects of the story most relevant to those issues were retained.

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540 In this instance, 50 minutes would have been ‘ideal’.
An additional concern was the number of characters in the script, many of whom only had a small number of lines. Even with the removal of most of Portia’s storyline, there were still at least 14 characters in the play: more than the available student body of actors. Theatre at UBC proposed using the Intermediate year BFA acting class with 11 actors requiring that all the actors had significant enough roles to fulfill the various pedagogical requirements involved. In consequence, the characters of Launcelet and Salerio were combined into the single character of Launcelet, while Tuball and The Judge as well as Nerissa and Salerino allowed for a single actor to play both parts.

With the initial cuts made, it was then necessary to make the adjustments that would create the Jewish Dominated World (JDW) and the Muslim Dominated World (MDW). Converting the Christians to Muslims was a relatively simple process with the substitution of the word ‘Arab’ or ‘Muslim’ for Christian, depending on the context. Single word substitutions of this nature were relatively straightforward, particularly given that the number of syllables and emphasis of both words are similar enough to fit into Shakespearean poetry with minimal disruption.

The JDW required a more complex adaptation process. In this version, not only did the original Christians have to become Jewish – a process that, like the conversion of the characters to Muslims, worked with minimal interruption to the poetic flow – but the originally Jewish characters had to become Muslim. This was a more problematic adaptation. Many of the references to Shylock in the original text refer to him as ‘Jew’, the most famous of these lines being Portia’s “Tarry Jew,/ the Law hath yet another hold on you.”\(^{541}\) In the context of many of these lines, ‘Jew’ is used almost as an epithet, accusation or insult. In the lines in which the syllable count is relevant to the poetry of the script, it is desirable to find a word for Arab or Muslim that is also a single syllable term that can be used with similar somewhat malicious intent. Such a term did not appear to be immediately apparent.

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\(^{541}\) Shakespeare, Act 4: Line 358-359.
Consequently, the initial draft of the script ignored the poetic requirements (or adapted them in other parts of the line) and used the word ‘Arab’ as a substitute for ‘Jew’.

With the exception of the sweeping cuts, the two biggest changes to the text were made at the beginning of the play and the end. With a significant portion of the first scene of The Merchant of Venice having been cut, I chose to add an introduction to the play – a prologue of sorts – and an epilogue. I borrowed the lines for the both from a selection of Shakespeare’s other plays including Loves Labour’s Lost, the Second Part of Henry IV, The Life of Henry the Fift,[sic] The Second Part of Henry the Sixt [sic] and The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth, piecing them together into something that suited Two Merchants.

**Challenges of the Adaptation**

While much of the adaptation from The Merchant of Venice to Two Merchants was a relatively straightforward process of substituting the occasional word and making a number of cuts, there were some challenges presented, particularly when one considers that Two Merchants was designed to create parallels between its story and aspects of Arab-Israeli conflict related ideology and set in a modern context. Three of the main challenges will be discussed here. The first was whether to include the ‘pound of flesh’ aspect of the bond between Shylock and Anthonio, given that such an agreement would be exceptionally unusual, if not illegal in a contemporary context. The second significant challenge was reconciling the idea of a Muslim moneylender with Islamic prohibitions against charging interest. The third significant challenge was how to adapt the ending of this act given that, if played as written, it would involve a Muslim Shylock being forced to convert to Judaism. The latter two challenges only presented themselves in the JDW version of the play in which Shylock was a Muslim in a Jewish dominated world.
The Pound of Flesh

There are a number of concerns with the inclusion of the ‘pound of flesh’ in the bond between Shylock and Anthonio in *The Merchant of Venice* including its inherent improbability, as well as the possibility that it may automatically bias audiences against the Shylock character.

There are a range of explanations for the ‘pound of flesh’ references in *The Merchant of Venice*, both from within the text itself (to explain the internal reasoning behind the demand) and using historical sources. Within Shakespeare’s text, there are a number of ways to interpret Shylock’s demand for the pound of flesh. One is to read it as Shylock being bloodthirsty and particularly vicious – demanding a particularly gruesome penalty. An alternative interpretation (and a common one) is to suggest that the demand is absurd – that there was no real desire on Shylock’s part to actually extract a pound of flesh. Shylock’s lines when outlining the terms of the bond lend themselves to the latter interpretation:

> Goe with me to a Notarie, seale me there
> Your single bond, and in a merrie sport
> If you repaie me not on such a day,
> In such a place, such sum or sums as are
> Exprest in the condition, let the forfeite
> Be nominated for an equall pound
> Of your faire flesh, to be cut off and taken
> In what part of your bodie it pleaseth me.

*(Two Merchants, MDW.iv.464-471)*

Shylock’s suggestion that the pound of flesh penalty is a ‘merrie sport’ implies that he either intends it to be an outlandish penalty, or that he wants Anthonio to believe that his suggestion is a joke.
According to Brian Weinstein, “under Venetian law there has to be some penalty for non-payment written into such agreements, and Shylock thinks of the most absurd penalty of all: namely, a pound of human flesh.”\(^{542}\) The rhythm of the poetry does indicate some intense emotion on Shylock’s part, with him exceeding the 10 syllables usually used in lines of iambic pentameter and losing the usual iambic rhythm on the first, fifth, seventh and eighth lines of the above quote. Whether this is interpreted as simple tension due to his history with Anthonio, mirth at his own witty idea, or revelations of a more nefarious purpose, is something that the performers and directors are free to interpret.

Given the ambiguity of Shylock’s intentions, it should come as no great surprise that there are a number of different historical examples and discussions of this aspect of *The Merchant of Venice*, many of which try to place the pound of flesh in an historical context. One popular theory is that the bond involving a pound of flesh was part of a common folk tale, widespread in Europe by the middle ages.\(^{543}\) One detailed description of this theory suggests:

> The origins of the pound of flesh story go back to antiquity, possibly to ancient India or Persia. In Western Europe, the tale began to assume its modern form in the twelfth century, but in the earliest surviving versions there is no mention of Jews. It was only towards the end of the thirteenth century that a Jewish link was introduced, in a section of the anonymous Middle English poem *Cursor Mundi* (“The Course of the World”). This was also the first known appearance of the pound of flesh theme in English.\(^{544}\)

Another theory suggests that in the 13\(^{\text{th}}\) century it was not uncommon to use a body part as collateral or the removal of a body part as punishment for failing to keep an obligation.\(^{545}\) Advocates of this theory believe that “there was nothing unique about Shylock’s bond”\(^{546}\) in that historical context.

Other theories, rather than trying to find an historical root of the fable, connect it to more symbolic or even ideological origins. Within the context of Elizabethan England, from which Jews had

\(^{542}\) Weinstein: 190.
\(^{546}\) Ibid., 103.
been banned for centuries, but which was also predominantly Christian, “nobody needed to be told about Jews. Their image had been fixed by centuries of Christian teaching, and the broad presuppositions that went into the making of Shylock were far more important than any literary sources.”\(^\text{547}\) The image of Jews at the time was that “they were in league with the devil; indeed, they were the devil, in one of his guises.”\(^\text{548}\) In Elizabethan England, the Jew of medieval myth – upon which Shylock may have been based – was “a poisoner, as we have seen, and a sorcerer; he was accused of committing ritual murder, crucifying children and desecrating the Host.”\(^\text{549}\) Similar blood libels have been issued against Jews for millennia, with such tales spreading through antisemitic myths even in contemporary society. This theory of the pound of flesh fable suggests that behind this element of Shylock’s deal with Anthonio, lies a subtle (or perhaps not that subtle) hint at the myth of Jews committing ritual murder – of, in fact, a gentle psychological nudge towards an element of the ever famous blood libel. “Behind the usurer enforcing his bond there looks that ultimate bogeyman, the Jew intent on shedding Christian blood for its own sake. And that means there is also, hovering in the background, an analogy with the sufferings of Christ Himself”\(^\text{550}\)

This interpretation is one that, if accepted, could provide a link between this aspect of The Merchant of Venice and some of the ideologies behind the Arab-Israeli conflict, which also include, if not the traditional blood libel myth, similarly bloody images of Jews. When it comes to equivalent connections to a Muslim Shylock, obviously there is not much in the way of historical study connected to such an idea (although it is, by no means, unique to this adaptation). One probably dubious connection that could be made would be to the old stereotype of the Arab world in which the punishment for theft is to have one’s hand cut off (while not completely untrue – as the blood libel is – it is still an exaggerated perception of a rare occurrence).

\(^{547}\) Gross, Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy, 25.
\(^{548}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^{549}\) Ibid., 27.
\(^{550}\) Ibid., 29.
From a theatrical perspective, the pound of flesh is likely to be accepted by audiences as part of the myth of this imaginary world. Audiences attend the theatre with the intention to suspend their disbelief. They will accept that the murdered Julius Caesar will happily return to life for the curtain call because it is theatre, just as they accept the truth of Yorrick’s skull in Hamlet, despite knowing with a fair degree of certainty that it is not a real skull. Similarly, audiences are likely to accept the ‘pound of flesh’ deal as part of the imagined world of the play.

The second concern surrounding the inclusion of this aspect of the story in *Two Merchants* is the concern that such a gruesome suggestion might inevitably demonize Shylock. If one chooses to interpret the bond as Shylock being excessively and intentionally cruel or bloodthirsty, then such an action could contribute to the demonization of the character. If, however, one subscribes to the interpretation that the original deal involving the ‘pound of flesh’ was simply an absurd offer designed to relieve Anthonio of the obligation to pay interest in opposition to his beliefs, then it could become a way to humanise Shylock, rather than demonise him. It would create the impression of a man excluded from the society around him who, when offered the chance, finds a way around his own normal practices in order to attempt to ‘fit in’. This could even be supported by the fact that Shylock does join Anthonio and Bassanio for dinner – even after initially refusing the invitation in rather vehement terms.

The historical debates around Shylock’s villainy has rarely focused on the ‘pound of flesh’ element as a justification for viewing the character as evil. Rather, the emphasis is usually placed on Shylock’s insistence, in court, that the original bond be upheld. “His Jewish villainies, moreover, are strictly traditional. He is a usurer; he is cunning and cruel; he pursues a vendetta against Christians – or against their noblest available representative”\(^{551}\) (emphasis added). In addition, the intense debate regarding Shylock’s character is another indication that the pound of flesh has not resulted in his inevitable demonization.

Ultimately, individual audience members will perceive the character differently, based on the aspects of the production they choose to emphasise, the characters with which they identify and their own preconceived notions about Jews, Arabs, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Shylock, *The Merchant of Venice* or even the performer himself. Removing everything from the script that may be offensive to someone would have resulted in a non-existent play. Moreover, it is an absolutely essential part of Shakespeare’s script. Regardless of which interpretation one chooses, it is not problematic enough to warrant its removal from the script of *Two Merchants*.

**A Muslim Moneylender**

There is a common perception that Islam forbids charging interest in financial dealings. This prohibition provided an initial challenge to the adaptation of the JDW version of the script in which Shylock purportedly habitually charges interest on loans.

The perception that Islam forbids charging interest is relatively common knowledge. What is less commonly known is that Judaism and Islam and Christianity all have a religious opposition to usury (usury is distinguished from interest in that ‘usury’ is considered to be excessive amounts of interest) emerging out of Deuteronomy 15, in the Old Testament – a religious text common to all three religions. The first several verses of this chapter of the bible outline the guidelines for lending money. It offers several guidelines, many of which are based on the overarching principle that if one encounters a ‘brother’ in need, one should lend him what he needs freely. A brother, in this case, refers to a fellow Jew. Part of this loan is the stipulation that after seven years, if the debtor has not yet paid his debt, it should be forgiven without penalty. Verse three however, states that “Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: [renew the debt after seven years] but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release forever.”

This verse is often used to suggest that biblical guidelines for moneymaking do not

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552 *King James Bible*, (Project Gutenberg, 1990), Deuteronomy, Chapter 15, verse 3.
necessarily require the same generosity when lending money to a ‘foreigner’ (in this case, anybody who is not Jewish). More specifically, it suggests that the prohibition against charging interest does not apply to those outside the religion in question.\textsuperscript{553} That being said, however, while Jewish and Christian dominated cultures have come to terms (pardon the pun) with a financial model in which ‘interest’ plays a common role, many cultures in which Islam is a dominant religion are attempting to develop a financial system which – at least in its language or ideology – is not ‘interest based’.

With these issues in mind, the idea of Shylock charging interest on loans in Two Merchants becomes a challenging one to incorporate into both a Jewish and Muslim context. There are, however, several ways to address this particular issue. The first is to distinguish between usury and interest, as do some interpretations of the religious opposition to usury. (In fact, this is how charging interest, but not usury, became accepted by Christianity.) Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, has a prohibition against usury (Riba), but not necessarily against interest.\textsuperscript{554} With this distinction, it becomes clear that in the text of Two Merchants, Shylock is accused of usury but only refers to himself as charging ‘interest’ – and even then within the context of stating that it is Anthonio who calls it ‘interest’. While the traditional reading of Shylock accepts that he would ordinarily charge interest, it is possible to stretch the meaning of the text to imply the opposite (almost unquestionably in opposition to what Shakespeare probably intended).

Even if we accept that Shylock does charge ‘interest’ on a regular basis, it is also possible to justify a transaction involving what we would call ‘interest’ even within the most stringent Islamic Finance laws. “The \textit{de facto} Islamic banking transaction is – in most cases – virtually identical to a

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capitalist banking transaction." What an Islamic Financial institution would call a ‘profit and loss sharing (PLS)’ model is virtually identical to a capitalist model, also known as ‘interest.’ In such a model, the bank can legitimately charge a fee based on the risk they are taking in contributing to the shared investment. It could be argued, that were Shylock to charge ‘interest’ on a loan, that cost could be considered a fee for the higher proportion of risk he is taking for whatever the endeavour the loan would be used (in this case, Anthonio’s shipping business, from which Anthonio will lend money to Bassanio, interest free). In Islamic banking, “transactional structures are meant to reinforce the idea that the provider and recipient of funds share in the risk and return as much as possible.”

While the PLS paradigm is not terribly different from conventional banking, it is also not used with great frequency, even in societies in which Islam is the dominant religion. On the asset side of Islamic banking (banks investing in assets), it accounts for only a negligible portion of financing. While PLS is more frequently used in the liability side (banks lending money to people or people holding bank accounts), in practice, “Islamic deposits are not interest-free.”

Furthermore, the Muslim population is hardly homogeneous. There are individuals who choose to adhere to strict Islamic Banking Practices (approximately 1% of the population according to an associate partner at an international Professional Services firm focusing on Financial Advising), but many Muslim people are prepared to pay interest when borrowing (approximately one third of Muslims in the UK, according to one study). The same study indicated that 70% of the participants held bank


Ahmed, 172.

Chong and Liu: 143.

Dar and Presley: 7.
accounts (savings accounts, for example) - very few of which were in Islamic financial institutions even when those were available.\textsuperscript{560}

In short, while Islam does prohibit usury, the practice of usury, as defined by charging excessive interest, is often distinguished from interest that is more reasonable. In addition, even strict Islamic banking structures are virtually identical to conventional interest based approaches – aside from the rhetoric surrounding them. It should be noted that such rhetoric is not necessarily something to dismiss lightly as it does reflect an ethos that is important to those who practice it. Regardless of the requirements of strict Islamic banking practices, even with alternatives available, many Muslims are still willing to conduct their financial transactions through activities that involve interest. Similarly, while strict adherence to Jewish law does not allow usury either, many (if not most) Jews conduct their financial transactions through interest-based financial systems. Given these views, allowing a Muslim Shylock to charge interest on his loans seems feasible, either as part of the distinction between usury and interest, or as having him simply be one of many Muslims who does not adhere to that aspect of Islamic finance practices.

\textbf{Forced Conversion}

The third and probably most significant obstacle to the adaptation of the JDW based act was the final penalty imposed upon Shylock. This was the only obstacle that required significant alteration of Shakespeare’s original in order to allow \textit{Two Merchants} to fit into the desired contemporary context.

In Shakespeare’s \textit{The Merchant of Venice}, after Portia reveals the legal loophole that exonerates Anthonio, she takes her revenge one step further by suggesting that, since Shylock intended to kill Anthonio – a Christian – he could be charged for that crime – the penalty for which is death. In a show of

\textsuperscript{560} ibid.
‘leniency’, the sentence is mitigated to Shylock having to give up his wealth and property and convert to Christianity.

The forced conversion required by the script created a significant problem for this adaptation. While it is possible to find historic examples of forced conversion to Islam, there are no historic examples in the post-ancient world, of which I am aware, of a forced conversion to Judaism. As a non-proselytising religion, the idea of forcing anybody to convert to Judaism is one that is anathema to the fundamental beliefs of the religion. Consequently, a new ending was required for the JDW and, in order to avoid creating unnecessary variables, would need to be applied to the MDW as well.

In order to resolve this, I removed any mention of conversion from the trial, thereby changing the ending of the trial scene to one in which the state-imposed penalty be limited to simply loss of his property and wealth. Such a penalty, however, lacked the extraordinary emotional and dramatic power of the original forced conversion and created a play that was, at best, anticlimactic. Given the violent nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the frequent instances of individuals or small paramilitary groups committing violence without official state sanction, one clear option was to end the play with such an act of violent vengeance being committed against Shylock - in short, he was murdered. While arguably not as powerful as the forced conversion may have been, murder was one of the few possible endings that could come close to the power of Shakespeare’s original. The fact that his murder was not state-sanctioned, serves as a reminder that in some instances, the violent and horrific aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict are sometimes the acts of individuals and small groups, and not always those of the states themselves.

Pre-Testing

As is the case with many new scripts, before starting rehearsals it was necessary to pre-test the script. Eight actors participated in a workshop that included both a reading of the script and a mock
The casting workshop revealed that all the actors in the workshop could create different interpretations of their characters and that a casting process requiring performers to do exactly this would help to define which performers were most comfortable and skilled with such an approach.

The script reading revealed a number of possible changes that would enhance its theatrical feasibility. It was clear that some additional cuts would be necessary in order to reduce its overall length. In addition, the script required the addition of stage directions. The extensive cuts had resulted in what appeared to be discontinuities between individual scenes. Without stage directions to explain some of the visual transitions, the script appeared disjointed. Moreover, the participants found Shakespeare’s Venetian names to be disconcerting in a play set in the Middle East. Moreover, they suggested that changing all the names in both scripts might help to distinguish the characters between the JDW and MDW acts. Finally, all the participants agreed that in the JDW, the use of ‘Arab’ as a substitute for the epithet ‘Jew’ did not hold the same visceral power. The suggestion was that ‘Jew’ be replaced with another single-syllable word that could be performed with similar explosive emphasis.

Additional cuts and stage directions were a relatively straightforward process of removing short sections from long speeches or a small number of individual lines from characters. Changing the names of the characters and locations, however, was a more involved process. Rather than create individual names for all of the characters in both versions of the play, choosing a name for a character became part of the rehearsal process, with each actor choosing the names for their own characters. I chose the names for characters that are mentioned in the play but do not appear, as well as names for the various locations in the play (primarily Venice). The name for Venice in a Jewish dominated world became Ha-ir, the Hebrew word for ‘the city’ while the equivalent in the Muslim or Arab dominated world became Balda, the Arabic word for town. Belmont, the location usually given for Portia’s home, became the
name of a bar or coffee shop within *Ha-ir* and *Balda*, rather than a separate town. As such, its name remained consistent with the original. While many of the names selected had meaning for the actors who selected them, the one character’s name most likely to be questioned was Shylock. The actor playing Shylock made several suggestions for his name, including those of Abram and Isaac, but ultimately decided on *Kaleb* (JDW) and *Kalev* (MDW), both meaning ‘dog’ (a common insult levelled at Shylock by other characters in the play). Table 1 outlines the final names chosen for *Two Merchants*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Character Names in Two Merchants</th>
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<tr>
<td>MOV561</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominant Culture: Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthonio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bassanio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorenzo</td>
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<td>The Duke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominant Culture: Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nerissa</td>
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<td>Salerino</td>
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<td>Gratiano</td>
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<td>Launcelet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solanio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority Culture: Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shylock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority Culture: Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
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The final concern raised while pre-testing the script - the use of ‘Arab’ as a substitute for ‘Jew’ when used as an insult – was, perhaps, the most challenging change to implement. As noted before, most derogatory terms for Muslims and Arabs tend to require multiple syllables. Many of them are more offensively descriptive, such as ‘carpet jockey.’ The only insult that I could find that would suit all

561 MOV: *Merchant of Venice*
the requirements of the play was that of ‘Goy’, a word that is used by Jews to refer to a non-Jew. While not always used in a derogatory sense, the word ‘Goy’ can be and has been used in that context. This ambiguity was, in fact, a useful characteristic since its equivalent in the MDW – Jew – is also not an inherently derogatory term, but rather one that can be used as such. Admittedly, this was an imperfect adaptation. The word ‘Arab’ would probably have been a more fitting choice from the perspective of both authenticity and ideology, however in the context of the script it did not convey the same explosive power, regardless of how it was performed. This imbalance between the visceral impact of the two words created a problem for a script requiring balance. Consequently the word ‘Goy’ was used on the occasions in the script when the original ‘Jew’ was intended as an insult. The remainder of the examples of the word ‘Jew’ retained their original adaptation of ‘Arab’.

**Locations**

The decision to present *Two Merchants* in Vancouver, rather than elsewhere in world, was one based on a combination of factors including both ethical and practical. A production designed to inspire discussion, debate and critical engagement with conflict related ideologies could, theoretically, aggravate existing tensions. If one assumes that theatre has the power to affect an audience on an ideological level, without previous studies to offer guidance, one has to also assume that the impact of a production could be to encourage a stronger peace ethos, as intended, or could have the unintended consequence of aggravating existing conflict based views. Without any significant body of audience response research on ideologically challenging entertainment, it was impossible to be certain that the production – however well-intentioned or planned – would not inflame an already tense situation if performed in a location with volatile links to the conflict. Consequently, performing *Two Merchants* in a location not directly linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed prudent.

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From a practical perspective, performing *Two Merchants* in Vancouver offered the combined benefit of being close to UBC where the research team is based and offering a plethora of potential theatrical spaces that could be used for a production of this nature. In addition, conducting audience based research on an entertainment focused theatrical production is served by setting that production in a research-intensive university with a strong theatre program that also includes an annual season of professional quality productions.

Theatre at UBC uses three main theatres for their season, one of which is the Telus Studio Theatre located in the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. Even in the earliest conceptualisation stages of this research, the Telus Theatre seemed like an ideal choice for this research. The physical relationship between the audience and the performers can have an effect on audience response. The Telus is a flexible space, meaning that the relationship between the audience and the stage can be changed depending on the needs of the production. The house comprised of 12, three story towers. Each level of each tower consists of a single ‘box’ (in the sense of box seats at a theatre), seating four people. Five of the towers are fixed, creating a horseshoe shape at one end of the stage. The remaining seven towers can be moved anywhere else in the space as long as they can be anchored to a fixed point either on the grid or the walls of the theatre. It is usually cost effective to keep all the towers directly connected to one another to avoid having to build walkways for audience members to get from one tower to the next. Despite the height of the towers, it is a remarkably intimate space, with most audience members in very close proximity to the stage. Often additional seating is included in rows in front of the towers, placing these audience members almost on the stage.

The Telus does have some challenges as a theatrical space. The height of three levels of audience seating creates some challenges for performers that need to connect with audiences seated on ground level as well as those seated three stories above them. In addition, the height of the towers and the frequent thrust, alley or arena configurations can be problematic for both the creation of a set and
for audience sight lines. Moreover, the towers themselves are made of metal, which reflects sound rather than absorbing it. Despite these potential difficulties, the Telus, with its relatively small house size of 180 audience members, flexible configurations and intimate audience to performer relationships became the best choice for this production.

**From Idea to Creation**

Creating *Two Merchants* necessitated balancing a number of often conflicting requirements. It required a three-way balancing act between the theatrical, research and ideological components of the production. Moreover, with two versions of the same script, there was an additional requirement to balance each of the versions, not only with the three-way requirements described here, but also with each other.

With the need to balance the show providing a foundational principle upon which *Two Merchants* was created, there were additional ideals that influenced all the creative aspects of the show. The first was the desire for authenticity, as much as is possible in a theatrical context, in every aspect of the show. Given the Elizabethan language and the obviously fictional storyline, ‘authenticity’ in this context refers to the need for the representations to reflect broad truths, to counter stereotypes and to create, as much as is possible, an honest representation of how some members of these ethno-religious groups might respond in these imagined circumstances.

A second essential component of *Two Merchants* was to represent a range of ethno-religious, cultural, ideological and political identities, based on those most closely affiliated with the Arab-Israeli conflict. The remainder of this chapter will briefly overview the ways in which these issues influenced the creation of *Two Merchants*, starting with a discussion of the characters in the play, followed by the design and technical elements, and concluding with the rehearsal process and staging of *Two Merchants*. 
Characters

The characters of *Two Merchants*, rather unsurprisingly, are very similar to their counterparts in *The Merchant of Venice*, with a few small changes. The first is that *Two Merchants* has fewer characters than Shakespeare’s original excluding, for example, all of Portia’s suitors except Bassanio. In addition, each of the characters had two names – one for use in the MDW and one for use in the JDW. In all discussions of these characters in this dissertation, they will be referred to by their original Shakespearean names, as they are more familiar to those without intimate knowledge of *Two Merchants*. Finally, several of the originally male characters became females in *Two Merchants*.

In order to represent some of the range of possible ideological orientations affiliated with the Arab-Israeli conflict, the characters in *Two Merchants* would, ideally connect with these different perspectives. Fortunately, Shakespeare helpfully created characters that fulfilled this ideal without any significant changes being necessary. If one imagines the progression of personal ideologies towards the most vehement views encouraging the perpetuation of ideological conflict or even genocide as a spectrum, with mild prejudice on one end and extreme fear and hate advocating extermination on the other, it is possible to place the characters of *Two Merchants* at various points along this spectrum.

Both an overall impression of an individual character and specific lines provide significant insight into the character’s location on this spectrum. In addition, the Bogardus Social Distance Scale can provide some insight into the way in which an individual character relates to characters of other ethnic groups.\(^{563}\) The Social Distance Scale asks participants to indicate if they would be willing to admit a member of a given ethnic group to specific relationship including:

- To close kinship by marriage
- To their club as personal friends
- To their street as neighbours

• To employment in their occupation
• To citizenship in their country
• As visitors only to their country
• Would exclude from their country\textsuperscript{564}

The Social Distance Scale was first developed in the mid 1920’s and is still used and adapted today. When discussing ideological conflict, mass atrocities and genocide, there are additional levels to this, the most relevant being an additional level of ‘dehumanisation’. In this degree of social distance, the minority group is not perceived as human – let alone eligible for citizenship, friendship or marriage. At the level of demonization members of the minority group are less than human and also inherently evil or threatening. Dehumanisation and demonization overlap in some instances, particularly when the dehumanisation takes the form of a threatening ‘animal’ such as a parasite or vermin. Characters in \textit{Two Merchants} talk about themselves and their ‘enemy’ in terms that reveal their ideological views or social distance. Shylock and Solanio are particularly salient examples, although almost all the characters in the play can be connected with this spectrum.

One of Shylock’s earliest lines in the play is offered in response to an invitation to join Anthonio and Bassanio for dinner. He states “I will buy with you, sell with you, talke with you, walke with you, and so following: but I will not eate with you, drinke with you, nor pray with you (\textit{Two Merchants (2M)}, MDW.iv.360-363). In this line, Shylock clearly identifies his social distance from the dominant culture surrounding him; he will accept them as business associates and is forced to recognise them as neighbours, but he will not accept them into the two closest degrees of social distance – friendship and kinship. This is a contrast to Anthonio, who is driven to conduct business with Shylock by extraordinary circumstances but, under normal circumstances, would not recognise Shylock as a business associate. In fact, given the outcome of the trial, one could argue that Anthonio does not even acknowledge Shylock as a citizen of his country, but rather as an ‘Alien’ with some rights, as indicated by Portia’s lines:

\textsuperscript{564} ibid., 244.
It is enacted in the Lawes of Balda
If it be proved against an Alien.
That by direct, or indirect attempts
He seeke the life or any Citizen,
The party against the which he doth contrive,
Shall seaze one halfe his goods, the other halfe
Comes to the privie coffer of the State,
And the offenders life lies in the mercy
Of the Judge onely, gainst all other voice.

(2M, MDW.xvi.381-391)

This comparison, however, does not presuppose that Shylock is somehow less prejudiced than
Anthonio, but rather that his circumstances force him to accept closer ‘Social Distance’ while Anthonio
has the luxury of maintaining greater distance. In fact, Shylock states quite bluntly that his hatred for
Anthonio is due, in part, to his different faith “I hate him for he is a Muslim” (2M, MDW.iv.366).

Shylock’s dialogue also gives us an insight into the ‘reverse’ social distance – Shylock’s
perception of the social distance imposed upon him by the majority group.565 In his first encounter with
Anthonio, Shylock describes Anthonio’s prior treatment of him:

Signior [Anthonio], many a time and oft
In the Marketplace you have rated me
About my monies and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug
(For suffrance is the badge of all our Tribe.)

You call me misbeliever, cut-throate dog,
And spet upon my [Jewish] gabardine,
And all for the use of that which is mine owne.
Well then, it now appears you neede my helpe:
Goe to then, you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have moneyes, you say so:
You that did voide your rume upon my beard,
And foote me as you spurne a stranger curre
Over your threshold, moneyes is your suite.
(2M, MDW.iv.437-462)

In this passage, Shylock makes it clear that Anthonio certainly has little interest in doing business with him (something that is confirmed by Anthonio when he describes his willingness to deal with Shylock as breaking his custom), but more than that, treats Shylock with such disdain that one could make the argument that Anthonio does not even recognise Shylock as human. In fact, by calling Shylock a ‘cut-throate dog’, spitting on him and kicking him ‘as you spurne a stranger curre’, Anthonio is clearly dehumanising Shylock. One could make the argument that while Anthonio is forced to recognise Shylock as a second-class citizen of his country, he does not recognise him as even human — suggesting a far greater social distance than Shylock is willing to acknowledge. From Shylock’s perspective, the majority culture perceives him as less than human, consequently not even registering him on the social distance scale. This is a common feature of ideological conflict and genocide and, when supported by the state or a significantly powerful non-state body, provides psychological justification for mass atrocities.

Solanio is, perhaps, the character in Two Merchants exhibiting the most aggressive and egregious attitudes towards the minority culture. In one scene, Solanio describes Shylock as “The villaine Jew” (2M, MDW.x.536), “the dogge Jew” (2M, MDW.x.544-546) and as the devil when she says “Let me
say Amen betimes, least the divell crosse my praier, for here he comes in the likenes of a Jew” (2M, MDW.x.18-19). She even repeats her devil reference when Tuball enters, supporting the theory that her views extend to all Jews, rather than to Shylock specifically: “Here comes another of the Tribe, a third cannot be matcht, unlesse the divell himself turne Jew” (2M, MDW.x.73-74). Later in the play, when Shylock proves intractable in his demands to take a pound of Anthonio’s flesh, Solanio states:

It is the most impenetrable curre
That ever kept with men.

(2M, MDW.xiv.498-499)

In this quote, Solanio does not even accord Shylock the courtesy of the appropriate personal pronoun, referring to him instead as ‘it’. Solanio displays the most virulent hatred of the minority group of any character in the play. While other characters such as Gratiano and Launcelet also express significant dehumanising language, Gratiano focuses on the animal imagery (rather than the demonising ones common to Solanio) and Launcelet reserves her invective for Shylock specifically, not extending her hatred to Shylock’s daughter – also a member of the minority culture. It was for this reason that Solanio became the appropriate choice to murder Shylock (with Gratiano’s assistance) in Two Merchants.

Likewise, the text supports Solanio’s violent action with her vitriolic rhetoric. Jessica, on the other hand, is a character that falls on the other extreme of the Social Distance scale, as she is a character willing to marry a member of the ‘opposite’ culture. Lorenzo – Jessica’s future husband – while willing to marry a member of the minority culture, expects her to convert to his religion and give up her own cultural background in the process, suggesting that he is less accepting than his marital aims might indicate. His attitude towards Shylock suggests that he is no more accepting of the minority than Anthonio, with Jessica being the exception.
Throughout *Two Merchants*, the characters’ ideological orientations were determined, primarily, by the clues provided in the text – in other words, using Shakespeare’s clues. In order to differentiate between the characters in the JDW and those in the MDW, as with all aspects of the production, balancing the choices was paramount. In addition, actors were asked not to make choices that privileged one version of their character over the other. For example, they were asked not to have one version of their character being ‘strong’ and another ‘weak’, or one ‘good’ and another ‘evil’. While these limitations may have reduced the possible variation between the characters, it was necessary to support a balanced representation of both cultures. The result were some more subtle variations on the characters. For example, the Jewish Jessica could be described as excitable with a more relaxed posture, while the Muslim Jessica was intense and controlled. The Jewish Lorenzo, on the other hand, was a womaniser while the Muslim Lorenzo was mercenary. The interpretation of Nerissa offered more variation, with the Muslim Nerissa being a practical, efficient business oriented character while the Jewish Nerissa was more of a daydreamer, generous and wanting Portia to be ‘in love’. Nerissa was also balanced with Portia who, in her Muslim incarnation was generous and welcoming while her Jewish character was more business oriented, despite her trendy attire.

In many cases, the character choices were designed to counter the popular stereotypes of Jews and Muslims. One popular stereotype of Jewish men is that they are physically weak, easily intimidated, bookish and ‘geeky’, while Muslim men are often portrayed as domineering and almost aggressively confident. Bassanio’s character inverted these stereotypes, with his Jewish character being confident and flirtatious while his Muslim version being more ‘geeky’ and awkward around women. Similarly, the character interpretations attempted to counter some of the gender stereotypes, particularly those depicting Muslim/Arab women as weak and submissive. All of the female Muslim/Arab characters were interpreted as strong women. Some owned their own businesses (Portia, Solanio, Gratiano) while
others defied male characters (Jessica and Launcelet). Moreover, while Arab men are usually portrayed as violent, women committed most of the violent acts in *Two Merchants*.

Regardless of the overall generalisation of each of the characters in *Two Merchants*, as with any well-written characters, they behaved differently depending on the characters with whom they interacted. While Shylock may have been resentful, cold or aggressive when talking with Anthonio, he was a loving, protective and even affectionate father when talking with Jessica. Likewise, Launcelet was defiant and mocking when talking to Shylock, respectful and friendly (even flirtatious) with Bassanio, and nurturing and affectionate with Jessica. This variation, as with other choices in the production, was both a product of Shakespeare’s wonderful writing and an intentional choice to depict characters with depth and range – in other words, as human.

The specific character depictions combined to create a distinct overall impression of each act in *Two Merchants*. Broadly speaking, the JDW was energetic and casual while the MDW was intense and formal. The general ‘feel’ of these acts do not inherently contain value distinctions (although individuals may prefer one or another). While they may or may not be representative of the truth of the respective cultures, they do reflect, to a limited degree, some of the differences between a somewhat secular Israeli culture (depending on where in Israel one may be) and the Islamist controlled Gaza.
Two Merchants Design and Technical Elements

The Set

The set for Two Merchants used the architecture of the Telus Theatre to create the impression of a town square located in a fictional area of Israel/Palestine. 11 seating towers are arranged in a horseshoe configuration around the stage with a single tower located in the centre of the open end of the horseshoe. The audience is seated in the horseshoe towers and in seating around the perimeter of the stage. This seating is designed to integrate with the set, as if it were part of the town square.

Image 1 shows the set design renderings for Two Merchants showing the blurred boundaries between audience and stage, as well as the isolation of Shylock’s tower from the rest of the set.

Image 1: Set Design Renderings for Two Merchants. Designer: Diana Sepúlveda Navarrete
The single tower in the opening of the horseshoe, rather than being part of the audience seating, is Shylock's house. Set apart from the other towers and the rest of the set, this tower is both completely separate from its surroundings while being identical to all the remaining towers. This duality supports the similar opposition between the separation of opposing sides in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the common ground they share. Despite this segregation, a town square is one location in which it is plausible that both the dominant and minority cultures
could realistically interact.

At the apex of the horseshoe, directly opposite Shylock's house is either a bar or a coffee shop, depending on which version of the show is being presented. In the JDW, this is a bar and in the MDW, it is a coffeehouse. The bar located in the lower level of this central tower is not only the bar/counter in the set, but is also the bar used by the audience during intermission and after the performance. Other smaller stalls are located intermittently around the perimeter of the theatre, amidst the floor level seating. Four of the five stalls surrounding the square have signs above them written in either Hebrew and English or Arabic and English depending on the version of the play being depicted. These signs were changed at intermission.

In the centre of the town square is a memorial statue. In the JDW, this statue is a Holocaust memorial, depicting an open hand with a tattoo on the forearm and the words ‘Never Again’ written on the perimeter of the base. In the MDW, the statue is a memorial to al Nakba, depicting a fist holding a key and the words ‘We Will Return’ written on the perimeter of the base. The image of the tattoo on the forearm and the fist with the key are common symbols used to memorialise these significant traumas in Israeli and Palestinian history. Shylock’s house also contains miniature memorials, identical to those in the town square with the exception that in the JDW, in which Shylock is Muslim, his memorial is that of al Nakba, and in the MDW, when Shylock is Jewish, it is the memorial to the Holocaust.
The choice to set the play in the Middle East was a logical extension of the thematic connections to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, in Canada, there is a strong connection to Israel and Palestine and to the events related to the Arab-Israeli conflict for both Jews\textsuperscript{566} and Muslims.\textsuperscript{567} Consequently, members of both diaspora groups were likely to feel a strong connection to a production with that setting. Furthermore, when thinking about issues relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, most people – whether part of the Jewish/Muslim/Arab diaspora groups or not – are accustomed to thinking about such issues in the context of the Middle-Eastern setting, rather than as part of Canadian ideology. While related ideologies are part of Canadian culture (both in relationship to this conflict and those more closely connected (geographically speaking) with Canadian history such as the history of Canada’s relationships with First Nations groups), they are not commonly considered in such a context. Such disassociation is undoubtedly something that needs to be addressed as part of the ideological makeup of Canadian society, but in this context, it would have obstructed the intention of the play, rather than supported it.

\textsuperscript{566} Safran: 53; Shapiro: 23; Troy, 40; Weinfeld, 208.
\textsuperscript{567} Abu-Laban, \textit{An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada}, 41; Eid, 49; Zabel, 7.
Costumes

The costumes for Two Merchants aimed at representing characters that were recognisable as members of the Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities in Israel/Palestine. The costumes – like the characters – were designed based on the premise that none of the characters belonged to any of the extreme minority groups of these communities – whether that be ultra-religious groups or political fanatics. Just as the characters represent a wide range of religious and ideological viewpoints, so the costumes represented a range of possibilities within the majority of the Jewish and Arab communities. In all cases, the costumes reflected the desire to create balance between the two versions of the play, while also undermining common misconceptions and stereotypes.

In some cases, this presented a challenge to the ideal of representing the balance between the various cultures. For example, many women in Muslim dominated societies, including those of Palestine, wear the hijab or other forms of head and face covering. In many cases, this is a matter of choice, and for a number of women, has become a fashion accessory as personal and stylish as any other. In some cases, women are pressured into wearing the hijab, either by their family or society. Consequently, approximately half the female characters in Two Merchants had costumes that included the hijab. All except one of those (Jessica, when she was Muslim) was wearing the hijab by choice. As is the case in any large community, there is

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significant variation in who wears the hijab, why they choose to wear it, and how it is draped. Similarly, the characters in Two Merchants costumed with the hijab displayed similar variety. The hijab does not necessarily imply any particular religious, cultural or behavioural characteristics in the wearer. The characters wearing the hijab in Two Merchants were Portia, Launcelet and Jessica.

There are also, however, some Jewish traditions that include the need for women to cover their hair (as well as dress with ‘modesty’ – meaning covering most of their bodies). Such traditions are rarely practiced in daily life outside of religious and primarily orthodox and ultra-orthodox communities.\(^570\) These communities, while growing in Israel, are still a minority\(^571\) and the practice of women covering their hair with scarves and/or wigs is not part of the majority of either Jewish or Israeli culture. Consequently, while maintaining balance between the depiction of the two cultures may, superficially, require that equal numbers of characters cover their heads, given the similar religious traditions, in practice, this would create a false impression of Jewish and Israeli culture as far more religiously conservative than it actually is.\(^572\) The costuming for the Jewish

\(^{570}\) Valeria Seigelshifer and Tova Hartman, “From Tichels to Hair Bands: Modern Orthodox Women and the Practice of Head Covering,” Women’s Studies International Forum 34, no. 5 (2011): 350-351.

\(^{571}\) Approximately 22% of the Israeli Jewish society defines itself as religious or Orthodox. Assuming that half of these are women, and that not all of them choose to cover their hair, that amounts to less than 11% of the total Jewish population of Israel. Ibid., 350.

\(^{572}\) Finding exact statistics on the frequency of Jewish Israeli women covering their heads or of the Palestinian women’s practice of wearing the hijab is exceptionally difficult. What information that is available suggests that this is only a practice among some religious Jewish women, while the hijab has become a popular fashion item among Palestinian women. Furthermore, in Gaza over the last 20 years there has been a growing movement to require women to wear the hijab in public. Finally, Jewish women who do cover their hair do so after getting married. Ibid.
women followed the fashions for a majority of Jewish Israeli women – that is a combination of both ‘modest’ and ‘revealing’ clothes, depending on the character and fashion choices. Just as in North American culture, modest attire does not necessarily equate with modest behaviour, just as revealing attire does not necessarily imply licentious behaviour. This attempt to reflect reality breaks a common theatrical convention of costuming characters in a manner that reflects their behaviour or attitudes.

In many cases, the choice of costume aimed to defy the stereotypical depictions of the characters. For example, Shylock, a character that is almost synonymous with the stereotype of the wealthy Jewish moneylender, was costumed to appear far less wealthy than Anthonio. Similarly, Solanio, the most virulently (and violently) prejudiced character in the play, was costumed in relatively casual and even somewhat revealing clothes in both versions of the play. Portia was fashionable and sexy in both versions of the play, as befitted her role as Bassanio’s love interest.

Another example of the costumes undermining common misconceptions and stereotypes is the female character of Salerino who was dressed as a military officer in the JDW and a police officer in the MDW. While there is nothing in the script to indicate that Salerino is in the military, she is one of the few characters in the play whose dialogue conveys almost no prejudice against the minority culture, despite her association with more prejudiced characters. Choosing to depict possibly the nicest character in the play as a military or police officer undermined the stereotype of the military as brutal contributors to the conflict. Moreover, the inclusion of a female police officer in an Arab (specifically Palestinian) context is another way of undermining a common stereotype of the disempowered Arab woman, particularly as women have recently been allowed to join the Palestinian police force.

Two of the women in the play get married. One marries a Muslim (Jessica), after which she wears the hijab for all except a few moments. The other woman is Portia, who, immediately after getting married, impersonates a man, thereby drastically changing her costuming, regardless of whether she would choose to cover her hair in normal circumstances.
Differentiating between the versions

Out of concern for both practicality and the need to depict a sense of commonality between the two cultures, the changes in the set between the two versions were focused on changing specific details rather than attempting to create two entirely different settings. The store signs, the central memorials and the content of some of the various stalls were changed. Similarly, the layout of these features shifted slightly to alter the spatial configuration of the stage.

The use of colour, particularly on the signs depicting the stall, was another technique used to differentiate between the two versions. Predominantly pale blue signs were used for ‘Jewish’ stores, while beige and pale green colours were used for ‘Arab’ stores, reflecting colours of cultural importance to both peoples. This served the added purpose of visually segregating Shylock from the surrounding characters. When other signs were green, Shylock’s was blue, and vice versa (see Image 4).

The costumes for Two Merchants created some of

Image 8: Anthonio and Shylock in the MDW. Costume Designer: Megan Gilron

Image 9: Anthonio and Shylock in the JDW. Costume Designer: Megan Gilron

the most obvious differences between the
two versions of the show. The costumes represented, as much as possible within budgetary restrictions, the current fashions in Israel and its neighbouring Arab countries, particularly Palestine. Some of the male characters, when they were Jewish, wore yamulkes, while some of the Arab characters wore a keffiyeh or a Kufi skull cap. Some of the Arab female characters wore the hijab, although not all of them. The character of Solanio, while she did not wear a hijab, tied a keffiyeh around her neck as a symbol of her political ideology. More generally speaking, the costumes in the JDW represented a greater degree of wealth than those of the MDW. Given the differing economic realities between Israel and Palestine, this seemed appropriate. That being said, the wealthy characters in the play (particularly Portia and Anthonio) displayed similar levels of wealth through their attire in both versions of the play. While there is unquestionably economic disparity between Israel and Palestine, there is significant wealth in both Palestine and other Arab nations involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such subtleties cannot be conveyed in their entirety through costuming, but the inclusion of costumes displaying exceptional wealth in those characters who should be wealthy reflected some of this variation.

The lighting and sound elements of the show also helped to create the illusion of two different worlds. The lighting for each version of the show had each act taking place at different times of day, creating very different atmospheres for each pair of scenes. Similarly, sound effects such as the call to prayer in the MDW and Jessica’s choice of music helped to differentiate between the two versions of the script. Moreover, all the music used during the JDW was Israeli music while the music used during
the MDW was Palestinian. The only exception to this was the classical music underscoring Shylock’s murder in both versions of the play.

In some cases, the inability to create a balance between the two versions of the show resulted in certain production elements being cut from the final performance. One such element was the original intention to include video recordings or projections of real media reports of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in part as representative of the powerful role that the media plays in influencing the ideology of conflict. After significant exploration of this possibility, it became apparent that it would be exceptionally difficult (and impossible in the time allowed) to create a balanced representation of the conflict through available media sources. As powerful as they would have been, including these media clips proved to be more likely to increase bias and prejudice than reveal common ground.

**Authenticity**

The set for *Two Merchants* was clearly a fictional location in an unspecified part of Israel/Palestine. Elements of authenticity, however, help to connect this fictional town square with more ‘real world’ environments. The use of light stone as a basis for the floor and walls of the square are reminiscent of many areas of Jerusalem. The central memorials to past tragedies are common features in any number of cities, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the world.

Other set and props details supported the desire to authentically represent some of the cultural differences between Jewish and Arab cultures. For example, the Muslim prohibition against alcohol played a small role in the set and props for *Two Merchants*. The inclusion of the bar in the JDW is a common feature in a society that has no prohibition against alcohol. In the MDW, however, this is changed to a café – a common feature in Palestinian communities.\(^{573}\) Naturally, the bar served both coffee and beer (in this case, the bottles were designed to mimic an apparently popular Israeli beer

called Goldstar), while the café served only coffee. Likewise, at the wedding celebration of Portia and Bassanio, in the JDW, the couple toast their wedding with champagne, while in the MDW, they drink sharbat.

Similarly the different approaches to moneylending and banking were hinted at through the set of Two Merchants. When Shylock was Jewish, his ‘business’ was called Kalev Financing, while in the version in which he was Muslim, it became Kaleb Investing.

The costuming choices also served to create both a sense of authenticity in the characters and to counter some of the common stereotypes associated with both Jews and Muslims. These are most apparent in the costuming of the Arab/Muslim characters. For example, a common stereotypical representation of Muslim Arabs, particularly Palestinians, would have every male wearing a keffiyeh and every female wearing the hijab. The costumes in Two Merchants actively resisted these stereotypes. While we did include the keffiyeh in some costumes, it was never worn over the head, as is common in many representations. Moreover, unlike many representations, in Two Merchants one of the female characters included a keffiyeh as part of her costume (see Image 10). Also, only three of the six female Arab characters wore the hijab. Even then, particularly with regards to the character of Portia, the hijab was designed to become a beautiful aspect of her fashionable attire – as it is in many cases – rather than supporting the Western stereotype of the hijab as a means of oppression. Moreover, all three of the female characters wearing the hijab were those who specifically and actively oppose men in their lives (Portia, Jessica and Launcelet), in opposition to the stereotype of the submissive woman wearing the hijab.

Similarly, the costuming for the Jewish characters resisted many of the stereotypes one associates with ‘Jewish’ dress. For example, Shylock is frequently shown as an ultra-religious Jewish man, often with the traditional Hasidic black clothing, peyot and a black hat. In Two Merchants, he was
dressed as a business man. He wears a kippah (yarmulke) as his only outward indication of his religious beliefs. As with the Arab costumes, not all Jewish men in Two Merchants wear a kippah. Many of these details were likely to go unnoticed by audiences, but they served to create the illusion of a world that could be honestly connected with the reality it represents.

**Religious, Cultural and Political Identity**

While much of the representation of religious, cultural and political identities of characters emerged through the actors’ characterisation and the costuming, the set and props also supported some of the social identities mentioned in the earlier discussion of the theoretical model behind ICE. Shylock’s tower, for example, when he was Jewish, had a mezuzah placed to the right of the entrance, with particular attention paid to both its location and orientation. When Shylock was Muslim, on the other hand, one of the first images of the character is of him finishing his morning prayers, using a prayer rug. We also ensured that the orientation of both the rug and, obviously, the actor ‘praying,’ faced Mecca (a number of smartphone apps were invaluable in this attempt to ensure authenticity). These are small details which hint at a religious identity. By their very nature, however, they could not convey any significant degree of complexity.

The central monuments were, perhaps, the most dominant representations of cultural and political identities present on the set. The traumas of the Holocaust and al Nakba exert a powerful influence over Jewish/Israeli and Palestinian social identities. Consequently, the inclusion of these memorials as the central focus of the set and as the main way of differentiating the two versions of the play...
the show, supports the importance that these events play in Israeli and Palestinian historical narratives and social identities (see Image 5).

As much as these memorials connect to a significant aspect of the Israeli and Palestinian social identities, they also play a role in the political rhetoric of the Arab-Israeli conflict (some may even say they are subverted to serve this purpose). This connection was one of the first images of Two Merchants. Almost the first thing that happens on the stage is the appearance of Tuball – the only member of the minority culture in the play other than Shylock and Jessica. Tuball walks onto an empty stage and covers the memorial statue (to the dominant culture) with the national flag of the minority culture. For example, in the JDW, an Arab Tuball covers the Holocaust memorial with the Palestinian flag. In the MDW, a Jewish Tuball covers the memorial to al Nakba with the Israeli flag. The imagery is continued by the music, as Tuball goes to his stall on the square and turns on his national anthem. When Gratiano enters the set, she recognises the music and responds by playing her own national anthem, boosting the volume to drown out the sounds of Tuball’s radio. In this case, the auditory battle between the Israeli and Palestinian national anthems becomes the soundscape for the visual conflict represented by the flag over the statue and is then continued into violence through the actions of the characters. A few moments after the battle of the anthems, Shylock is blamed for the flag over the statue when the character of Solanio (in the JDW) or Anthonio (in the MDW) enters, sees the flag, removes it, spits at Shylock and throws the flag at his feet.574 When Shylock goes to clean the spit off the floor, Solanio or Anthonio kicks him. In these first moments of the play, the cultural and political identities, as well as the conflict between them and the violence inherent in that conflict are all established.

574 Out of respect for both the Israeli and Palestinian flags, the actors were exceptionally careful to avoid spitting on the flag. The flag was also immediately picked up and taken off stage.
Representing Relationships

The set, lighting and costumes all contributed to the representation of relationships in Two Merchants. Some of the set elements contributing to the depiction of relationships have already been mentioned, such as the isolation of Shylock’s house, the opposition between Shylock and Portia as represented by the literal opposition between Shylock’s house and Portia’s bar/café, and the isolation of Shylock from other characters through the differences in the colour of the sign above his home and the small statue/memorial he displays in his home as the ‘opposite’ of the one in the center of the town square. The set, however, also played a significant role in establishing the relationship between the audience and the performers. While the audience seated in the towers were clearly separated from the performance area, the set dressing included foliage and signage on the higher levels of the towers, creating the impression that the towers themselves were part of the set (balconies overlooking the town square, in the language of the illusion). Moreover, the seating on the stage itself was part of the playing area, with the bar extending behind some of the audience members and the inclusion of two entrances through the audience. Moreover, on several occasions, actors not only entered or exited through the audience, but sat among them and even left props and other items on the tables included as part of both the audience seating and the bar/café. In fact, the audience seated in front of the bar were, in essence, invited into the performance as characters sitting in Portia’s bar/café (called Belmont’s).

The lighting also supported this illusion. In most conventional theatres, the audience sits in darkness while only the stage is lit. In fact, most lighting designers go to great lengths to avoid ‘spilling’ light onto audience members, particularly in the Telus Theatre where the audience is so close to the stage. In Two Merchants, rather than leave the audience in darkness, the house575 was always lit. While in many scenes the lighting amidst the audience was somewhat dimmer than that of the stage, it was always present and, to a limited degree, changed with the lighting on the stage. Lighting the audience

575 The part of the theatre in which an audience is seated.
reinforced the illusion that the audience was part of the world being depicted on the stage, further supporting the connection between the audience and the characters.

The costumes for *Two Merchants* further helped to represent relationships, particularly those between characters. The complex and changing family relationship between Shylock and Jessica is one example. When these two characters were Muslim in a Jewish dominated society, Jessica’s hijab begins to symbolise some elements of her relationship with her father. When we first see Jessica, she is on her balcony overlooking the square. She is not wearing her hijab. When her father calls her, however, she hastily puts it over her head. Shylock then affectionately adjusts it while he gives her what he perceives to be loving advice and words of caution. Jessica, on the other hand, views Shylock’s words as oppressive, displaying somewhat typical teenage frustration with the advice and corrections of a parent.

Later, when she elopes with Lorenzo, he removes her hijab, dropping it carelessly in the square in front of the house. For Jessica, this is partially an indication of freedom from her father, while simultaneously symbolising Lorenzo’s insistence that she convert to his religion – something that causes tension between the characters later in the play. When Shylock finds the hijab and discovers that his daughter is missing, his grief is incredibly powerful. He carries the hijab for the remainder of the play, dropping it only when Jessica silently confronts him after the conclusion of the trial. Through this, we see not only his love for Jessica, but also his grief and torment at her loss. When he drops the hijab, essentially disowning his daughter, it is representative of a common reaction by parents in Muslim (and Jewish) cultures when their daughters marry outside the religion. The same actions are included in the version of the play in which Shylock and Jessica are Jewish, only using a scarf that Jessica wears around her neck, rather than a hijab.

Familial relationships are incredibly important in both Jewish and Muslim/Arab cultures, and these small moments in *Two Merchants* are designed to reflect that aspect of the social and individual
identities. Intermarriage is discouraged in Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities, sometimes resulting in parents disowning children, significant interpersonal tension, and occasionally even more extreme responses. Shylock’s and Jessica’s relationship reflects these aspects of the cultures, and a single costume piece in each version of the play helped to convey some of the love and occasional anguish that presents itself in such a relationship.

**Academics, Rehearsals and Staging**

The premise of *Two Merchants* was such that it was necessary to integrate, to a degree, academics with artistic creation processes. This required integrating some of the ideological perspectives outlined in the section on the theories behind ICE. This integration also required some adjustments to the structure of the play itself and the rehearsal process for *Two Merchants*. In addition, the ever-present desire for both balance and authenticity manifested in the rehearsal process and staging for *Two Merchants*.

Firstly, the rehearsal process for *Two Merchants* was twice as long as that of a normal Theatre at UBC production. The extra length was due, in part, to the need to rehearse two versions of each scene as well as the desire to ensure that the cast and the design team were aware of some of the basic history and ideological concerns influencing the production. This resulted in several rehearsals being devoted to introductions to ideological conflict, the essentials of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and discussions of both the Holocaust and the Nakba as significant influences on Israeli and Palestinian worldviews. In addition, in order to reinforce that the issues being addressed in *Two Merchants* were applicable to conflicts beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict, a guest speaker who was working for the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission examining the Indian Residential School legacy was invited into a rehearsal. He offered an overview of both the TRC and the Residential School system, some of the ideological foundations of the Residential Schools and his work involving research into the
missing children who had attended Residential Schools. We also invited guest speakers who had lived in Arab countries and Israel to talk about the respective cultures and to assist with language coaching for the few Hebrew and Arabic names or words used in the production. This offered cast members the opportunity to ask specific questions related to their characters’ actions and experiences within the play in an attempt to create an honest representation of how those imaginary experiences might be influenced by the respective cultures. These coaches were then invited to later rehearsals to help correct any pronunciation errors and to provide feedback on the details included in the production in an effort to ensure as much authenticity as possible.

As with most aspects of this production, issues of balance played a role in both the rehearsal process and the staging of the production. The concept of the same cast performing identical scripts with different interpretations twice in the same night, with each night performed in opposite order to the previous performance, is not a common experience in theatrical practice. As such, in order to help the cast, crew and director become accustomed to alternating versions of the show, every scene was rehearsed twice, with each version being rehearsed back to back. In the early stages, the choice of which version of the scene to rehearse first was arbitrary. The first ‘stumble through’, however, determined not only the order in which subsequent rehearsals would take place, but also the order of the performances. Before the stumble through, the stage manager and I flipped a coin, the result of which determined which act was performed first. The order was then alternated for every subsequent rehearsal of the entire show and into the run.

Balancing the staging was, primarily, a case of ensuring the movements, entrances, exits, and number of characters on the stage for every scene remained similar enough to avoid creating a significant bias. Given the choice to murder Shylock, however, it became necessary to introduce

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576 A stumble through is the first time the actors attempt to perform the show from beginning to end – usually revealing potential problems with the blocking, difficult transitions, unclear blocking notes or simple confusion (in the case of Two Merchants, confusion being the most frequent occurrence given the dual interpretations).
elements of violence into the performance that were not necessarily required (although by no means prohibited) by Shakespeare’s text. The most violent scene in the show – Shylock’s murder – was choreographed with intentional simplicity. Two women – Gratiano and Solanio – trap Shylock on the empty stage. Gratiano grabs his arms to hold him steady and Solanio stabs him once with a dagger. Gratiano then either exits very quickly or attempts to exit and is halted by Solanio’s words. This was the sequence of events in both versions of the play. The fight director devised two methods of stabbing that would result in a very quick death for Shylock and appeared equivalent in their degree of both violence and the intimacy required to commit the murder. The methods were then randomly assigned to a particular act.

Other elements of violence in the play were introduced, for example, in the opening scene of the play and during Shylock’s famous ‘Hath not a Jew eyes?’ speech. During the opening of the play – prior to any dialogue – either Solanio or Anthonio spit at Shylock and then kick him as he cleans it off the floor. During Shylock’s monologue, Solanio, Gratiano and Launcelet confront Shylock with violence. In both versions of this scene Shylock is shoved to the ground once, he is held down by a woman placing her foot on his chest while on the ground once and after standing again he is shoved twice more. In the JDW, Shylock experiences an extra shove during this scene however this is balanced in the MDW by the fact that Shylock is not permitted to stand for a significant amount of time after being shoved to the floor. When creating the fight choreography, this scene had yet to be blocked (directed) and, consequently, the fight director taught the entire cast how to perform a throw to the ground, a shove and a kick. These three simple fight moves were then inserted at appropriate moments later in the rehearsal process. The nature of the violence, the number of violent moves and the aggression with which they were implemented were carefully balanced in these scenes and indeed, throughout the show.
Every aspect of the production, from the characters to the design and the directing choices all involved constantly balancing and juggling the needs of the script, the cast and designers, the necessity to differentiate between the two versions of the show, a desire for authenticity and the challenge of respectfully and honestly representing cultural, religious and political identities and relationships. In most cases, this balance is impossible to quantify and often changes depending on the perspective from which one views it. What may appear to be a balanced and fair representation to one audience member will seem biased to another. Regardless of how it is perceived, the process of creating *Two Merchants* was one predicated on a desire to create a fair representation of a set of complex issues while challenging the preconceptions of the audience in such a way that they may think about and discuss these issues in constructive ways.
Chapter 8: Understanding and Exploring the Audience Responses

Audience response and reception studies have become increasingly important to the study of theatre and performance in general, and particularly performances aiming to inspire social or political change or action. In many cases, the artists involved in such productions accept that their performances will have a powerful impact on their audiences; for many theatre practitioners and academics, this is considered common knowledge. The realities of a culture in which such impact needs to be measured and ‘scientifically’ demonstrated, however, require that audience responses to such performances be more carefully understood. “In short, the audience has become an important object of study, not necessarily or even frequently motivated by the discourses of theatre studies, nor by our theatre history making, but by the economic realities of the cultural industries.”

Despite this somewhat cynical view of the concept of audience response research, it does offer a great deal to theatre artists beyond a few lines on a grant application. While we may intuitively accept the efficacy of theatre and performance, audience response research offers the possibility to further refine our practices to enhance these effects, to improve the audience experience of our performances, and in short, to create better – and potentially, more socially relevant – theatre.

Similar Studies

Many studies of audience responses use methodological approaches that, while valuable in themselves, have limited applicability to studies of this nature. For example, Blackadder’s work on audience riots uses a predominantly historical approach; Benzecry’s study of Opera audiences is an ethnographic study focused on the audience as a whole, rather than their response to a particular

578 Blackadder.
production, and Wesley Shrum’s study of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival focuses on critics’ responses and their relationship to audience responses to high and low art.

While the type of audience response research utilised in this research is still relatively new, there are some studies that have started to evaluate a number of these data collection methods as they relate to their use in a performance-based context. In a document produced by Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for the Arts called *Audience Research Made Easy*, a range of possible audience response research methods are proposed including both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Basic quantitative approaches focus primarily on point of sale information such as the number of tickets sold at a given price point, as well as quantitative surveys conducted in person, over the phone, or through written self-administered surveys. For basic qualitative research, they identify two main types of data collection strategies: focus groups and interviews. The document goes on to suggest observation as an additional technique for more advanced researchers. They also suggest advanced techniques for creating questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, in an analysis of Theatre as a potential tool for public engagement in health-policy development, several additional possible data collection methods have been suggested. These include break-out room discussions, similar to focus groups; theatre auditorium discussion with a facilitator and field note taker; and incorporating touch pad or ‘clicker’ technology during theatre auditorium discussion in order to allow the facilitator to create survey questions based on the discussion to which the entire audience can respond.

Many of these techniques have been used in a variety of contexts. In a study on the relationship between the intention of artists and the reception of audiences, quantitative surveys and focus group

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579 Benzecry.
582 Ibid., Module A: 18.
583 Ibid., Module B.
discussions were used to assess audience responses to a performance. In this case, the surveys were comprised of a series of statements to which students could respond using four-point Likert scales while a random selection of students were invited to participate in focus group discussions.\textsuperscript{585}

Focus group discussions have also been used in a study exploring the impact on Israeli high school students of a series of plays relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this study, six different plays were chosen to represent different aspects of the conflict and the responses of students from 12 schools in Israel were explored through 22 different focus groups with 110 teenagers participating. The focus groups were structured with specific questions about the plays and issues of tolerance towards Palestinians.\textsuperscript{586}

In both of these cases, with audiences made up of primarily of high school students participating in the studies, it was possible to assign students to focus groups as needed. The use of such techniques in a conventional theatrical setting is less common and would necessitate audience members to volunteer to participate in focus group discussions.

Both the break out room discussions and the large audience discussions were incorporated into a project which used a play called \textit{Orchids} to engage audiences in discussion on preimplantation genetic diagnosis - a procedure which enables genetic assessment of embryos created through in vitro fertilisation. Generally speaking, small ‘focus group’ discussions resulted in a higher degree of participation and interaction than the large audience discussions,\textsuperscript{587} however, large audience discussions raised more issues than in the focus group discussions, while not exploring those issues in as much detail. Beyond that, in the large audience discussion, issues were raised as discrete perspectives, rather


than as part of a dialogue or discussion.\textsuperscript{588} One point that emerged out of the Orchids project was that selecting the right venue is crucial to enabling audience participation if one intends to use large audience discussions.\textsuperscript{589}

In a discussion of methods for evaluating public participation methods, particularly as they relate to policy development, Rowe and Frewer discuss the value of focus groups as a means of engaging public participation with the express intention of influencing policy. They argue that while focus groups and public opinion surveys have limited ability to have a direct impact on creating public policy, they do have great value in “clarifying bases of agreement and disagreement and identifying values that underlie opinions [...] they might best be regarded as exploratory methods.”\textsuperscript{590}

Unlike many models, the Orchids project mentioned above utilised a wide range of data collection strategies. In addition to the small and large discussion groups, the Orchids project also used audience observation and elicited texts in the form of a demographic questionnaire with the option for audiences to add further thoughts or comments.\textsuperscript{591}

Audience observation during Orchids provided information on direct experiences of “ambiance, indications of audience engagement and observation of significant moments in performance.”\textsuperscript{592} This can be a tremendous asset in trying to assess the influence of a performance on an audience using ‘non-invasive’ methods. The problem with audience observation identified during the Orchids research was the difficulty of observing an entire audience from a single vantage point. Related to this concern is the potential for any experienced ambience to be a localised rather than ‘audience wide’ phenomenon.\textsuperscript{593}

\textsuperscript{588} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{589} Ibid., 1477.
\textsuperscript{591} Cox, Kazubowski-Houston, and Nisker: 1475.
\textsuperscript{592} Ibid., 1478.
\textsuperscript{593} Ibid.
The written comments emerging from the Orchids assessments identified a similar balance between assets and liabilities. The relatively anonymous nature of written comments allowed for the possibility of audience contributions that were more favourable or critical than might otherwise be expressed. Similarly, they allowed audience members to express thoughts or ideas that may not have been perceived as ‘popular’ in discussion groups. Unfortunately, given the anonymity in both the discussions and written comments, it was impossible to determine if the comments were reinforcing issues raised in discussion or if they represented new contributions. Consequently, after Orchids, the written contributions had to be analysed as a discrete data set.594

One acknowledged limitation of the Orchids study was the fact that the audience composition was not representative of the population as a whole.595 Additionally, researchers noted that the discussion elements of the data collection process were not ‘natural’ in that they did not reflect the common tendency of audience members to discuss a performance in a social setting after the show. One suggestion proposed that “if one of the desired outcomes of public engagement is to encourage lively debate as part of cultivating citizenship, it would be helpful to study alternative formats and other more naturalistic settings for dialogue (e.g. following groups to the bar or a coffee shop) over sustained periods of time.”596 A similar challenge was identified by Matthew Reason in his study of ‘liveness’ in theatre. He recognised that the ideal means of understanding audience responses would be through discourse analysis of the discussion of a production that naturally occurs after a performance.597

Reason’s approach was to invite audiences to conduct ‘focus group’ discussions with only minimal

594 Ibid.
595 Ibid.
596 Ibid., 1479.
structure or intervention from a facilitator. All these considerations contributed to the selection of the data collection techniques for the adaption of ICE to a research-based context.

**Collecting Audience Response Data**

Five different data collection methods were used to explore audience responses to *Two Merchants* including observation; a questionnaire; informal post-show discussions; interviews and focus groups. The data collection process took place during and shortly after (within weeks of) each performance, depending on the method utilised. At each performance the audience was observed, including video recording one section of the house; they were asked to complete a questionnaire and invited to participate in some informal, un-moderated discussions after the show, which were recorded using digital audio recorders. Audiences were also invited to volunteer to participate in either an interview or focus group discussion.

The choice to use multiple data collection techniques in a mixed-methods design was designed to enhance the strength of the data collected during this process. In a mixed-methods study, the “limitations of one method can be offset by the strengths of the other method, and the combination of quantitative and qualitative data provide a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself.” The intention of this study was to both explore the complexities of the situation and understand the multitude of perspectives on the issue, to investigate the extent to which those perspectives are present within the audience as a group, as well as to “understand the relationship between variables.” For example, I hoped to understand the ways in which people reconsidered their views after seeing the show, or the reasons why they did not. In addition, I hoped to understand how many audience members reconsidered their views, the number of those who did so in

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598 Ibid., 6-7.
599 Creswell, 8.
600 Ibid., 6.
similar ways or for related reasons, as well as how those changes related to either demographic characteristics or other experiences of the production. These aims require the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods as well as multiple data collection strategies.

Combining multiple methods of data collection, such as combining questionnaires and interviews, can be significantly beneficial to a given study and is, in fact, one of the principles behind well-known and persuasive research methods like grounded theory research and ethnography\(^{601}\) - both of which combine multiple data collection methods as may be appropriate for a given research situation. Combining multiple methods, for example focus groups with depth interviews, can utilise the strengths and compensate for the flaws of each method.\(^{602}\) For this reason, studies frequently combine two or three of these methods in order to collect the broadest and richest combination of data possible.\(^{603}\)

The use of multiple data collection techniques and approaches in response to *Two Merchants* had additional practical and financial considerations. The cost of creating *Two Merchants*, both financially and in terms of human contributions, was such that it was necessary to maximise the research opportunity the show provided. With an extremely limited number of performances, there was little time to make changes to the data collection strategies in response to any responses received. It was impossible to predict which data collection techniques would reveal the kind of data necessary for this dissertation. I initially predicted that interviews and focus group discussions would provide the greatest depth of information relevant to this study. My predictions were incorrect; the questionnaires provided not only equal depth of information to the interviews, but far greater breadth as well. Consequently, the data collection strategy was designed to maximise the opportunities for audience members to contribute to the study in any ways they wished to, with the desire to collect as much


\(^{603}\) Ibid., 133.
relevant data as possible, given the inability to predict the success of each data collection strategy and
the severely limited time frame during which I could collect data.

The specific methods chosen for Two Merchants were selected based on the individual benefits
of that particular data collection strategy, the advantages each strategy presents in combination with
other methods utilised, as well as their feasibility for integration into a theatrical experience. The data
collection processes collected during or immediately after the performances – observation,
questionnaires and informal discussions – were selected to collect significant depth and breadth of data
immediately while offering the opportunity for information from more ‘natural’ discussions and actions
to be collected. The interviews and focus group discussion were intended to provide insight with greater
depth than I anticipated receiving from the observations, questionnaires and informal discussions. A
brief description of the procedures used for each of these methods and the advantages and
disadvantages of each follows.

Observation

For the first few performances, two observers were placed in the audience for each
performance. Shortly into the run, however, we reduced the number of observers to one. Observers
took unobtrusive (as much as possible) field notes throughout the performances. In addition, video
cameras were used to record one section of the audience. The camera focused on the audience was
only able to ‘see’ a limited view of the audience. The same section included additional audio recording
equipment to enhance those of the camera, which was positioned some distance away. The primary
benefit of including observation in this study is the potential to observe audience behaviour that may
not be reflected in questionnaire or interview responses or may even contradict those responses.
Questionnaires

Questionnaires were placed on every seat in the house prior to each performance and audiences were invited to complete them. The questionnaire included a brief section of demographic questions followed by six categorical questions, each including the possibility for open-ended responses. The open-ended questions were intended to allow audience members with unpopular or socially undesirable views to express them anonymously as there was no identifying information included on the questionnaires, other than the date of the performance.

There are a number of benefits to including questionnaires in this research. Questionnaires using extremely open-ended questions can be a particularly efficient way to obtain data from a large sample size in a relatively small amount of time. Questionnaires “can foster frank disclosures that a person might not wish to make to an interviewer. Revealing secrets that risk shame, disgrace, or failure are among these disclosures.” The anonymity of the method combined with the complete absence of the physical presence of another person can help participants to feel that they can express in writing that which they may not tell an interviewer. Such texts tend to be more effective as a data collection method when participants feel that the addressed topics will have some impact on them; when they feel they have some knowledge or experience to offer; and when they perceive the questions and the research as significant. An added benefit of these texts is that, when asking open-ended questions, there is some indication that the data they produce resembles interview data; when combined with the ability to involve multiple participants simultaneously, these could be a particularly rich source of data.

As with most methods of data collection, there are some drawbacks associated with questionnaires. The anonymity that potentially facilitates the collection of such rich data makes it easier for respondents to misrepresent themselves. Respondents may wish to make themselves appear more

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604 Charmaz, 36.
605 Ibid., 37.
intelligent or politically correct and might shape their responses accordingly - thereby submitting responses that adhere to an imagined image of themselves rather than reflecting the reality. When such texts are submitted anonymously, the researcher has no way to verify the data by other forms of observation or interviewing. 606 There is no possibility of following up on a statement or encouraging a deeper or more expansive response. Nor is there a possibility of adding additional questions based on the data collected. 607 Moreover, researchers cannot modify or reword a question once it has been asked. 608 As an added complication, written responses depend on the participant’s prior writing skills, comfort with the language and confidence with written responses to submit effective responses. 609 All of these concerns could limit the depth of the data collected or even create inaccurate and unreliable data, thereby supporting the need for the use of multiple data collection methods.

**Depth Interviews and Focus Groups**

Audience members were invited to volunteer to participate in an in-depth, semi-structured interview within a few weeks of their seeing the performance. Every person who volunteered was contacted, although not all chose to participate. The interviews focused on the participant’s experience of and response to the play, inviting a broad range of discussion topics. Focus groups, on the other hand, were primarily used when an existing group, particularly class groups, attended the performance together. In that case, professors and students were invited to participate in a focus group discussion. They were similar in format to the depth interviews with the additional possibility for participants to question one another. Both focus groups and interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants.

606 Ibid., 36.
607 Ibid., 37.
608 Ibid.
609 Ibid., 36.
As with questionnaires, there are both advantages and disadvantages to using interviews as a primary source of data collection. At their best, interviews allow researchers to investigate, in detail, “the relationship of a specific behaviour to its context, to work out the logic of the relationship between the individual and the situation.”\(^6\) Particularly when combined with observation, interviews provide insight, not only into the relationship, but into the meaning that situations or events hold for people.\(^6\)

They yield data in large quantities very quickly\(^6\) and give the researcher more direct control over the construction of data than most other methods such as ethnography or textual analysis.\(^6\) Moreover, the open-ended, semi-structured approach to many interviews gives the participant more freedom than other forms of data collection, often revealing unanticipated insights into the phenomena being studied.\(^6\)

As much as interviews offer researchers a depth of information that would be extremely difficult to obtain from other data collection methods, they can also be problematic on a number of levels. Broadly speaking, interview studies are often criticised on the basis that the findings are not generalisable to a larger population due to the small sample sizes.\(^6\)

While some qualitative researchers may assert that “Statistical averages are excuses for researchers who do not work hard enough to find the specific reinforcement schedules controlling the behavior investigated”\(^6\), ultimately, qualitative studies have to be accepted in an academic community which is more familiar with quantitative concepts of ‘statistical significance’, generalisability, representative samples, and randomised trials.

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Charmaz, 28.
\(^6\) Ibid., 26.
\(^6\) Kvale, 102.
\(^6\) Ibid., 102-103.
A more immediate concern is that trust, power dynamics, professional status, gender, race and age may have an impact on the direction, content and ‘success’ (in terms of collecting accurate and useful data) of interviews. Interview subjects may not be comfortable sharing everything that the interviewer hopes to hear. Alternatively, even the research participant may not recognise the importance of something in their own lives about which the researcher wants to learn. To add further complexity, gaining the trust necessary to overcome the hesitancy that participants may feel can be further influenced by “differences between interviewer and research respondent in race, class, gender, age, and ideologies.” For example, a young woman (of reproductive age) would find it difficult or impossible to conduct meaningful interviews on traditional birthing practices in some Southern African cultures due to a social taboo against discussing such issues with women of reproductive age, for fear of ‘bewitchment,’ not attributed to older, post-menopausal women. In the context of this study, with the interviewer also being the director of the show and the creator of the research, encouraging open and honest discussions of the show and the research may be challenging, with participants being potentially hesitant to express ‘negative’ views in order to avoid offending or upsetting the interviewer. These concerns provide further support for the use of multiple data collection methods in general and open-ended questions on the questionnaires in particular.

**Informal Post-Show Discussions**

In response to suggestions from previous studies to attempt to create a more ‘natural’ setting for post-show discussions, *Two Merchants* incorporated a small bar into the set which was also a functional bar before the show, during intermission and after the performances; essentially turning the theatre itself into a small pub. Audiences were invited to stay after the show for a drink and for informal discussions.

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617 Charmaz, 27.
618 Marshall and Rossman, 145.
619 Charmaz, 28.
discussions. After each performance, crew members placed audio recorders on a number of tables throughout the theatre, set to record. Audience members could either allow them to record their conversations or, if they preferred, turn them off or pause them at will.

This was an untried data collection technique, without any facilitator or moderator to encourage or direct discussions. The benefit of this approach is that it enables a more ‘natural’ approach to understanding audience responses, attempting to create a common setting in which audience members may discuss a performance. The potential disadvantage is the obvious one of having no input or control over the direction of the discussion. The researcher has to trust that the participants will discuss topics of relevance to the research, or alternatively, to adapt the research in response to the outcome of these discussions. The other main disadvantage is its unfamiliarity; participants will be unfamiliar with this kind of post-show discussion format and may not respond as the researchers hope.

**Sampling**

For this study, the only requirement for participating in any aspect of the research was that participants had to have seen a performance of *Two Merchants*. There were no limits on who could purchase tickets and several opportunities to purchase discount tickets (for example, for a preview). The sampling technique and sample size varied for every data collection method used. Most research participants were self-selected. Anybody choosing to see the show on dates during which the audience was observed participated in the audience observation; people could then choose to complete questionnaires or allow their post-show discussions to be recorded. All audience members who volunteered for an interview or focus group discussion were contacted and all those who responded participated in that portion of the research. Two instructors at UBC offered to use their class time for focus groups discussions, one conducted by myself and another conducted by the usual instructor for that class. The description of the entire sample is included in the Results section of this dissertation.
Consent

Most of the data collection methods used during this research required that audience members actively choose to participate. They could complete the questionnaire if they wished to and had the ability to turn off any audio recorders during post-show discussions if they so desired. Participation in either of these data collection processes constituted consent to participate in the research. All audience members were provided with consent forms, at their seats, published in the program, and on the show website. Similarly, when participants chose to participate in interviews or focus group discussions, they were provided with consent forms when they were contacted to schedule their interviews and again at the start of the interview.

Audience observation was the only exception to this process. Audiences were informed of the research being conducted when they purchased their tickets as well as on all publicity materials. Consent forms were available on the show website as well as additional information about the research. If audiences wanted to see the show without participating in any aspect of the research, we offered three performances during which there was no audience observation, including opening night, the matinee performance, and on one evening performance mid-way through the run of the show. As the matinee performance was being sponsored by various university departments either requiring or strongly encouraging their students to attend, audience members were only invited to complete a questionnaire and, if they chose, volunteer for an interview or focus group discussion in order to ensure that students did not feel pressured to participate.

The study design made it impossible to select or even monitor who participated in the research. This presented a challenge to issues of ‘informed consent’, particularly as those ethical guidelines, in this context, primarily apply to research participants who were under age. It was determined that including all participants – regardless of age - would be less harmful to them than excluding them. To have done
so would have been stigmatizing and exclusionary to younger participants; would deny them a voice on a subject that could be extremely important to them; and would deprive the researchers of valuable information from a particularly vulnerable and - in the future - influential group of participants. In addition, given the nature of the subject matter, requiring younger participants to obtain parental consent for participation (over and above their obvious ‘permission’ to attend a performance) would have created additional ethical problems. For example, if a teenager came from a family with particularly strong ideological connections, the parents may have attempted to control or limit what their son/daughter could say on this topic. It is not uncommon for parents and teenagers to have highly divergent views on issues relating to prejudice and the Arab-Israeli conflict and a teenager with differing views may not be encouraged to express them.

**Ethics**

There were a number of ethical considerations that were necessary to consider for research of this nature. Some of these have already been mentioned, including who would be included in the research, the decision to invite teenagers and younger audience members to participate without parental consent, and the ways in which we ensured audience members were aware of the research portion of the performance before they purchased tickets. Beyond these specific issues, as with all research involving human participants, it was essential to consider any possibility that participation in the research may be harmful to participants, as well as the possible benefits of participation. UBC’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board evaluated and approved the study itself, as well as the plans for sampling, recruitment, consent, and approaches to mitigating risks to participants.

**Risks and Harm**

There were two primary sources of risk for participants in this study. Firstly, as with most research, ensuring the anonymity (where possible) of participants, or the confidentiality of their
personal information when anonymity was not an option was a high priority. In most cases, it was possible for audiences to remain anonymous: questionnaires were completely anonymous, as were the post-show informal discussions and the audience observations. A few audience members were video recorded and in some instances there was the possibility that participants’ recorded voices in post-show discussions may be recognised; in both cases, the privacy and confidentiality of that identifying information was protected. At no point in this dissertation are any participants referred to by name. When participants were recognised from audio or video recordings, their personal information was never recorded or noted in any way. Participants who shared their personal information when participating in interviews or focus group discussions, were assured that their information would remain confidential. Such information was stored separately from their recorded interviews and transcripts, which are only ever identified by a number or date. All transcripts and audio recordings are stored in password protected folders.

In addition, there was one instance in which someone other than myself was coding a portion of the questionnaire data. In that case, all personal information such as participants’ age, religion and ethnicity was removed from the responses. The coders were only given the qualitative responses identified by a participant number. This was done to add further protection for the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of their personal information.

The contentious nature of the play created a number of risks that, while common to any controversial performance, are worthy of note. It was possible that some or all of the production would be offensive to some individuals; in which case they were free to leave at any point during the performance. In addition, they could write comments on the qualitative questionnaire to communicate their displeasure. They were also free to discuss their thoughts with me after the performances, as some participants did. In addition, it was possible that some of the issues discussed in the show may upset audiences and research participants. Members of the research team, crew and front of house staff had
the contact information for UBC counselling services in the unlikely event that an audience member should need them. I was also available after every performance if people wanted to talk about their responses.

The greater risk to participants was the controversial nature of the study itself. This was, in fact, a risk not only to participants but to the research and production team as well. This production was intentionally controversial and inspired a range of responses from audiences. At the extremes, these varied from enthusiastic support for the show to vehement opposition. As a preventive measure, campus security was informed of the production and the issues it addressed prior to opening night and a number of contingencies were devised in the event that people chose to protest or object to the performance. Any audience members who disrupted the performance or endangered the safety of other audience members, cast, crew or front of house staff would be asked to leave the theatre. In this case, the definition of a ‘disruption’ was any activity that would ordinarily be unacceptable in a theatrical performance (excessive heckling, talking on a cell phone, protesting, threatening others, etc.). Protests outside the theatre would be dealt with similarly: as long as the protests remained peaceful and did not negatively impact the opportunity for others to see the show, there would be no objection to them. Campus security would be informed and would monitor the situation. Disruptive audience members or protestors could still be invited to participate in a private interview, depending on the nature of their disruption, however they would not be allowed to endanger other audience members or research participants.

In fact, while the production raised some controversy, most performances ran smoothly. After the third last performance, however, one of the submitted questionnaires contained a death threat aimed at myself and the cast and crew of Two Merchants. Fortunately, we discovered the threat before any cast or crew members left the theatre. We were able to call campus security and the RCMP immediately and arrange for actors and crew members to get home safely. We provided both the RCMP
and campus security with a copy of the questionnaire. Campus security offered to escort cast and crew members around campus for the remainder of the run and beyond if they felt threatened or concerned. Theatre at UBC arranged for security to be present both in the audience and backstage for the remaining two productions. In addition, the stage manager and I immediately contacted the cast and crew to explain what had happened and to invite them to phone me if they had any concerns. The faculty in the Department of Theatre and Film also spent several hours discussing the threat with the cast the next day to ensure they felt safe to continue the run. Before the next performance, I met with the entire cast and crew to explain the nature of the threat and to offer anybody who wanted to the opportunity to see the threatening questionnaire. Most people took the opportunity and found that the knowledge of what it actually said was far less scary than what they were imagining. I made myself available to anybody who wanted to talk about the threat, as well as providing the cast and crew with the contact information for UBC counselling services and the RCMP victim services. While several people talked to me about the threat, to my knowledge, nobody felt the need to take their concerns further.

Benefits

As much as the show and participation in this research could upset people, there was an equal or greater likelihood that the show and participation in this research would have an extremely positive impact on participants. The ideal impact of the show was to help people think about, question and debate their preconceived ideas about Jews, Muslims, Arabs and Israelis and the relationships between and towards those groups. The show highlighted the common ground between the groups and the similarities in the prejudices they face. Similar research in Israel has demonstrated that a show of this nature could help people be more optimistic regarding the possibilities of peace in the Middle East and the theory behind the research suggests that the show should have a positive impact on how people
view individuals from within these groups. The data that emerged from this study demonstrated that this ideal was a reality for most participants.

This show and research provided an opportunity to discuss important, internationally and nationally relevant issues in a relatively safe environment and through a relatively unthreatening medium (theatre). With levels of antisemitism and Islamophobia rising throughout the world, and the general hesitance to discuss such controversial issues, this was a powerful way to address some of these issues and open a productive dialogue. Just as some audience members spoke to me about their concerns and opposition to the production, many more approached me to thank me for creating the production and giving them the opportunity to explore these issues.

Pre-Testing

Approximately one week prior to the opening of Two Merchants, the data collection processes were pre-tested with a small group of participants who participated as part of a graduate level class on qualitative research methodology. The class then engaged in a mock focus group discussion, followed by the opportunity to provide feedback on the data collection process.

The feedback provided through this process resulted in a number of minor changes to the language used to describe and introduce the study as well as a discussion of the applicability of the term ‘entertainment’ to this form of research. They also suggested some minor changes to the data collection procedure, for example, speaking with people in the video recorded section five minutes prior to the show starting, letting them know that they have the option to change seats if they so wished. In addition, in response to a request to be more inclusive on the questionnaires, the demographic question regarding sex was re-phrased to include the response categories of ‘other’ and ‘neither’ in addition to ‘male’ and ‘female’.
The processes used to understand the audience responses to *Two Merchants* utilised the greatest strengths of each method and helped to compensate for each of their weaknesses. The use of multiple methods of data collection, in addition to strengthening the research process, also ensured that the effort and expense required to create an intervention such as *Two Merchants* was exploited to its fullest possible potential. Even without knowing how many participants would choose to engage with the research, it was clear that the data would likely provide enough material to transcend the scope of one dissertation and facilitate an array of possible analyses. More importantly, this research design offered the opportunity to explore this phenomenon from multiple perspectives, using multiple techniques and to hopefully emerge with the fullest possible understanding of it.
Chapter 9: Description of the Analysis Process

A recent article published in the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* posits an integrative approach to analysing data from mixed methods studies. Unlike other approaches, which tend to analyse qualitative and quantitative data either in parallel or sequentially, an integrative approach “integrates various data analytic procedures for a seamless transfer of evidence across qualitative and quantitative modalities.” Such an approach depends on a unified approach to the study in which all data is conceptualised within a single unified framework. The analysis involves a cyclical process of qualitative analysis leading to quantitative analysis, which then informs further qualitative analysis. In the original model, the cycle ends with a qualitative process that creates a ‘story’ from the combination of one round of qualitative and one round of quantitative analysis.

First Round Analysis

Broadly speaking, I started with a preliminary analysis procedure involving transcribing or entering the data into an electronic form from which I could conduct my analyses. The data was cleaned to correct errors or inconsistencies. The open-ended demographic questionnaire questions were then coded into quantitative variables and all categorical variables with too many categories for an effective quantitative analysis were collapsed into binary variables or categorical variables with only three or four categories.

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623 Ibid., 344.
624 Ibid., 348-355.
I then analysed the qualitative questionnaire responses and interview data using a combination of content and thematic analyses, utilising empirical coding strategies. I connected many of these to broad themes, which could then be distilled into binary quantitative variables in which the coding represented simply the presence or the absence of the theme in a response. Only the questionnaire responses were included in the quantitative coding in order to avoid potentially duplicating responses from those who completed questionnaires and participated in interviews. These were analysed further, together with the quantitative dependent variables. Each of the themes were analysed from the responses to the two main impact questions on the questionnaires: did participants reconsider their views, and will participants discuss the show with others.

The quantitative analysis took place in several stages. The first was to explore the data through frequency and crosstab analyses. According to Castro et al. any dependent variable represented by fewer than 20% of the sample is unlikely to provide a large enough data set for effective analysis. All the themes represented in this analysis were mentioned by at least 20% of the respondents. I then conducted a regression analysis for each of the themes (dependent variables) with the same independent variables included in all the models. With all the dependent variables coded as binary variables, I used a binary regression analysis for all the themes.

Table 2: Dependent and Independent Variables: First Round

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Version of the Play Seen First</td>
<td>- Reconsider Views (RV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Age</td>
<td>o Already Agree/Other (Binary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sex</td>
<td>o RV Ideology (Binary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ethnicity: Western or non-Western</td>
<td>o RV Theatre (Binary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ethnicity: Multiple Ethnicities or Single Ethnicity</td>
<td>o RV Arab-Israeli Conflict (Binary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Religion: Identify with a religion or spirituality; do not identify with religion or spirituality</td>
<td>o RV Religion (Binary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Religious Importance</td>
<td>- Talk with Friends (Binary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

625 ibid., 348.
Second Round Analysis

I then returned to the qualitative data and reorganised the responses based on the significant predictors indicated by the regressions. For example, if Religion was a significant predictor of whether participants reconsidered their views I reorganised the qualitative responses to Reconsidered Views so all the responses from participants who identified with a religion or spirituality were grouped together. I subsequently conducted a second qualitative analysis, again using empirical coding but with the specific intention of furthering my understanding of the relationships between the dependent variable and its predictor; in this example, between religion and reconsidering views, and the differences between the participants who identified with a religious or spiritual belief and those who did not.

With so many of the themes repeated across both questions (reconsider views and talk with others), it was logical to change the way in which these were coded. Rather than divide the participants’ responses based on the individual survey questions, the responses to the entirety of each individual’s responses on the questionnaire were coded together, thereby creating a set of main themes that transcended the boundaries of the questionnaire questions. The responses to the survey questions regarding reconsidering views and talking with others could then become additional main themes in themselves. In addition, this round of qualitative analysis made it clear that the audience’s attitudes
towards the show (whether they liked or disliked it) were connected with these thematic responses. Consequently, I created an additional variable – attitudes to the show – to be included as an independent variable (potential predictor variable) in the quantitative analyses.

This resulted in the creation of the ‘main themes’ of the willingness of participants to reconsider their views, and the intention to discuss the production with others after the show, ideology, role reversal, theatre, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. These themes were part of both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. One additional theme – that of contradictions – was only included in the qualitative analyses. All of these themes were highly prevalent in the qualitative responses and supported by the theoretical foundations of the study discussed previously.

Once again, the qualitative analysis and coding of new main themes led to a repeat of the quantitative analysis process described earlier, including exploring the data and conducting binary regression analyses. The final step was to return to the qualitative data in order to ensure that the variation of responses and relationships explored in the quantitative analysis could be represented and to discover any ‘outlying’ responses that were not represented by the quantitative analysis but reflected elements of the qualitative responses. Castro et al. describes this as ‘recontextualisation’.626

The complete cyclical analysis process described above is depicted graphically below. Details of the independent and dependent variables for the second round of analysis will be reported with the results of the analysis in chapter 11.

626 Ibid., 354.
Principles Informing the Quantification of Qualitative Data

Both the independent (demographic) variables and the dependent (outcome) variables included responses to open-ended questions that needed to be transformed into quantitative variables for part
of the analysis process. In the initial stages of this process, the focus was to use empirical qualitative coding in order to represent the range and variation of the qualitative responses. From there, I combined the codes into increasingly broader categories or themes, finally resulting in quantitative variables with categories containing enough participants to create a meaningful analysis. For the demographic variables, this often meant that a complex variable such as ‘ethnicity’ or ‘religion’ had to be broken down into several different variables (for example, multiple ethnicities, Western/Non-Western ethnicity), each representing a different aspect of the original responses. For the dependent (outcome) responses, this process allowed me to analyse the frequency with which a given theme emerged in the responses of the entire sample.

**Problematic Variables**

A few variables were problematic and the results from these should be considered with some caution. The first of these is sex. In the initial pilot testing of the questionnaire, one participant objected to the inclusion of only ‘male’ and ‘female’ as categories under ‘sex’. In response to this feedback and my own understanding of discussions of inclusive approaches, I added categories for both ‘other’ and ‘neither’. Far more participants than expected identified with ‘other’ (almost 9%). While this may be an indication of a diverse and open-minded demographic, it may also be an error with participants identifying as ‘other’ as a joke or by accident. There is no way to tell if this is accurate or not, and as such it is treated as an accurate reflection of the audience but should be considered with caution.

The second potentially problematic variable is ‘ethnicity’. Participants clearly interpreted the term ‘ethnicity’ in exceptionally broad ways, including responses indicating religion, ‘race’, nationality, cultural heritage and, of course, ethnicity. While the final variables used in the analyses are relatively simple, focusing on whether participants identified with multiple ethnicities or whether they identified
with western or non-western ethnicities, there could be some validity concerns based on the wide-ranging responses.

*Attitudes to the Show*

During the qualitative analysis, when questionnaire responses were reorganised based on their relationship to the significant predictors revealed in the regression analyses, an interesting phenomenon emerged. For every binary variable (such as did a participant mention ideological issues or not), one group of qualitative responses seemed ‘positive’ and the other seemed ‘negative’. This indicated the need to create a measure of the positive or negative responses that could be included in the quantitative analysis.

Recognising that evaluating these responses for ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ qualities is an extremely subjective process, three people coded the responses. I was one of the coders, the second was the woman who conducted the audience observation portion of the data collection - a senior and highly respected academic researcher - and the third was a First Nations (Anishinaabe) man with a degree and experience in social work who had not seen the play but was familiar with the relevant ideological issues. The coders were asked to rate responses as positive, negative, neutral or impossible to determine. Regarding what qualifies as ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ coders were given the following instructions:

In this case ‘positive’ can mean any or a combination of the following:

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627 I have a personal relationship with both of these coders: the first, in addition to being a highly respected researcher, is also my mother. The second is a social worker and the father of a close friend. While I acknowledge that some may consider these relationships to be an indication of a higher degree of bias than would normally be expected, both individuals were asked code these responses based on their understanding of the need for an honest interpretation of the responses. They are both familiar with the ideological constructs under examination as well as academic research approaches. Their desire to help me personally was expressed by their attention to detail and genuine attempt to interpret the responses on their own merits. Furthermore, one coder saw every performance of the show and the other never saw the show, thereby creating some balance between the perspectives they presented. Finally, I used inter-coder agreement as an additional check on the reliability of this coding process.
• Overtly positive language such as ‘well done’, ‘good job’, or ‘excellent’ (which may be ‘extremely positive’)
• Thoughtful reflection on the issues reflected in the play.
  o These may sometimes include viewpoints that we consider to be ‘bad’ (prejudiced, for example) – in such cases, the responses are still coded in a ‘positive’ way because the audience member is positively responding to the play.
• Constructive suggestions within an otherwise thoughtful or positive response

Negative, likewise, can mean any or a combination of the following:

• Clearly negative language such as ‘terrible’, ‘horrible’, ‘patronising’, etc.
• Commenting on the issues or themes in a way that is clearly sarcastic or otherwise insincere
• Repeated complaints such as ‘the statue got in the way’, ‘I couldn’t hear the actors’, etc.

Some comments will not be definable as positive or negative or may not be clear, in which case they should be coded as ‘0’

This is also an interpretive process, so if a comment clearly ‘feels’ positive or negative, go with your instinct.

All three coders evaluated the responses independently. I took the mean score for each response and this was used for the analysis. All three coders agree on their interpretation in 65% of cases. When taking the mean of all three responses, inter-rater reliability was 0.87. Given this high level of agreement, subsequent analyses used the average of the scores from all three coders. When we differed in our coding, the coder who had not seen the show was more likely to perceive negative responses in the data, the coder who had conducted the audience observation perceived more positive responses, and my perceptions of the data tended to take the middle ground between the two. The use of three independent coders for this variable was intended to mitigate the greater degree of subjectivity inherent in this coding.
**Detailed Descriptions of the Analysis Procedures**

The following sections describe the various analysis procedures used in this dissertation. In addition, I have explained what each of these analyses contributed to the overall understanding of the data.

**Preliminary Analysis**

**Transcriptions**

Questions for which the possible answers were ‘yes’ or ‘no’ were immediately coded into quantitative variables with missing data and alternative responses coded appropriately. I did not transcribe the audio recordings of the post-show discussions, interviews and focus group discussions as they could be analyzed directly from the audio recordings.

It was exceptionally rare for an interview or focus group participant to mention something that had not been raised in the questionnaire responses. The number and depth of responses to the questionnaires created a wealth of data that reached saturation. Moreover, the questionnaire responses were almost as detailed as the interview data and represented a far greater variety of responses. Consequently, the majority of the results included in the analysis and discussion come from the questionnaire data. I reference interviews and focus groups when appropriate and when those responses best illustrate the relevant points, but they have not been reported separately in order to avoid extensive repetition.

**Coding**

Many of the questions on the questionnaires, by their phrasing, created their own a priori codes. For example, questions such as age, sex and the degree to which religion is important in one’s life all imply a set of categorical codes. In addition, some of the open-ended questions also included a
binary response option, such as asking participants if they will discuss the show with others. Again, these questions implied a set of a priori codes to be used in the analysis. In some cases, questions requiring a ‘yes or no’ response on the questionnaire had to be recoded to account for greater variation in the responses – such as participants adding ‘maybe’ as an option or participants qualifying their responses in such a way as to require an additional category. This was particularly relevant for the question asking if participants reconsidered their views.

In addition, some of the demographic questions, including those asking participants to identify their occupations, ethnicity (ethnicities) and religion(s) were intentionally open-ended in order to allow participants to identify in the ways that made the most sense to them. The qualitative demographic responses were initially coded using empirical coding strategies with some of them re-coded based on a priori codes, often obtained from Statistics Canada census models. These qualitative responses were then distilled or collapsed into a number of categorical or binary quantitative variables for analysis.

One example of the coding process used for these demographic variables is the process used for coding responses to the question: “With what religion(s) do you identify?” Participants identified a significant range of possible responses to this question, including participants identifying with multiple religions and non-religious spiritual beliefs. I started with a small number of a-priori codes: namely participants identifying as either Jewish or Muslim. In this case my own bias played the small role of including an a-priori code for participants identifying with multiple religions.

From this point, I began the process of empirical coding of this variable. The result was almost thirty categories representing the religious variation within the sample. These included:
1. No Religion/Atheist
2. Many/All religions
3. Multi-faith
4. Not religious; culturally based or hereditary religious identification
5. Not religious, culturally Jewish
6. Not religious, culturally Muslim
7. Spiritual
8. Christian
   a. Catholic
   b. Anglican
   c. Protestant
   d. United Church
   e. Lutheran
   f. Unitarian
   g. Mennonite
   h. Mormon
   i. Maronite Christian
9. Jewish
10. Muslim
11. Agnostic
12. Buddhist
13. Hindu
14. Scientology
15. Sikh
16. Taoism
17. Cree Spiritual
18. Rastafarianism
19. Norse Heathenism
20. Other

Quantitative analysis based on such a large number of codes would be unusable in a sample of this size. Consequently, I collapsed some of the categories into the following seven codes.

1. No religion or Atheist
2. Multi-faith
3. Agnostic, Spiritual or Hereditary Religious Beliefs
4. Jewish or Culturally Jewish
5. Muslim or Culturally Muslim
6. Christian of any denomination
7. Other

These codes were used for early analyses requiring specific differentiation between Jewish and Muslim participants, however, statistically speaking, these groups were still small enough to require a particularly cautious approach to any analysis results. For the majority of the analysis, these categories were further collapsed into a binary code: those identifying with any religious or spiritual beliefs and those who identified as atheist.

**Control Variables**

Several of the independent variables were included in the analysis primarily as controls, rather than with any thought that they may have had a significant impact on the audience responses. Some of these included: performance date, performances on weekdays or weekends, the start and end times of
each performance, the running time of each performance, the weather and house sizes. These were also valuable in analysing variations in the response rates.

**Qualitative Analysis**

The initial qualitative analysis separated responses to individual questions. For these responses, I used a combination of content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is, at its most basic level, “the process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data.” During this process, one examines the meaning of specific sections or paragraphs and determines categories based on the data. Thematic analysis is “the process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across the data set. The word ‘thematic’ relates to the aim of searching for aggregated themes within the data.” This kind of analysis involves three main aspects – searching for commonalities among the data, differences or peculiarities and relationships.

Qualitative coding can be conducted in a number of ways, the two most common being a priori and empirical: a priori codes are those that are identified or defined before the data is examined. Empirical codes are generated through the process of examining the data. Each of the questions on the questionnaire created their own a priori codes such as ‘reconsidered views’ or ‘talk with others’. In addition, there were a small number of a priori codes that I included based on the topic of the research, such as mentions of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Jews, Muslims, Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians. In addition, I combined these codes with an empirical coding strategy to understand what themes and concepts emerged from the data beyond the specific concepts that were directly relevant to the research question. In this case, I started by identifying as many small, specific themes as possible within the responses. Some of these included people talking about prejudice, hatred, *The Merchant of Venice*,

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628 Maria J. Mayan, *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry* (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2009), 94.
629 Ibid.
630 William J. Gibson and Andrew Brown, *Working with Qualitative Data* (Los Angeles, CA; London, UK; New Delhi, India; Singapore; Washington, DC: Sage Publications, 2009), 127.
631 Ibid., 128.
632 Ibid., 130.
individual characters or theatre in general. Very quickly the sheer quantity of codes became unwieldy, but at the same time, it became apparent that many individual themes could be grouped into broader ‘families’ of themes.\(^\text{633}\)

With specific codes identified, the next layer of analysis was to identify themes – common threads woven amongst and between categories, connecting them.\(^\text{634}\) Each of these themes was originally considered within the context of the questionnaire (or interview) questions to which audiences were responding. In later stages of the analysis, some of the themes were broadened to incorporate all questionnaire responses – in other words, to transcend the initial a priori codes imposed by the questionnaires themselves.

In order to understand how these qualitative concepts interacted with the quantitative variables, I also created quantitative codes for each of these themes. This process was also helpful in understanding the frequency with which a given theme was mentioned among the participants. With so many respondents and themes to explore, quantifying the results was the only effective way to explore this aspect of the data. A binary coding system was the most efficient, identifying if people mention the theme or not. This level of coding made no distinctions between the ways in which the theme was discussed. For example, if a person mentioned any topic relating to ‘ideology’ in their responses to a given question, the response would be coded as ‘yes’ in that variable, while if no mention of ideology was included, the response would be coded as ‘no’.

After completing the quantitative analysis, I returned to the qualitative data in order to further my understanding of what both analyses were revealing about the data. The recontextualisation process was essential to both understanding the results of all the analyses and to ensuring that the full extent of the responses were included in my understanding of the results. While quantitative analyses focus on

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\(^{633}\) In grounded theory language, this process combines both open and axial coding. Steve Borgatti, "Introduction to Grounded Theory" http://www.analytictech.com/mb870/introtogt.htm (accessed 20 December 2013).

\(^{634}\) Mayan, 97.
majority perspectives, recontextualising the results helped to ensure that dissenting voices were also included.

The presentation of the qualitative responses is somewhat unorthodox in that I have chosen to present quotes from audience members in tables, dividing the responses thematically. I chose to do this as a way to ensure that audience responses were presented as close to their original form as possible.\textsuperscript{635} I wanted to ensure that my voice did not obscure the voices of the research participants. In addition, presenting the responses in this way made it possible to share both majority and minority perspectives among the audience. At the same time, however, the number of responses demanded an organisational structure that revealed some of the similarities and differences among the responses and the ways in which those responses are reflected in the quantitative analysis. Tables of audience responses, divided by the themes used in the quantitative analysis, was the most effective way to honour these requirements.

\textit{Quantitative Analyses}

The quantitative analysis took place in two stages, including exploring the data and the regression analyses.

\textbf{Frequency and Cross Tabulation Analysis}

The frequency analysis provided information on the percentage of audience members in each category (for example, the percentage of men in the audience, or the percentage of participants who discussed Ideology in response to the question 'Will you reconsider your views?'). Similarly, the cross tabulation analysis made it possible to determine, for example, how many men would discuss ideology or how many of the people who had seen the JDW first discussed theatre. This process is the first step in understanding the ways in which variables relate to one another.

\textsuperscript{635} Richards and Morse, 119.
Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis identifies which variables correlate with one another in a statistically significant way. This type of analysis indicates a linear correlation, meaning that if both variables increase together, they are positively correlated and if one increases where the other decreases, they are negatively correlated. It only identifies the relationship between two variables.

All the correlation analyses used Spearman’s rho or Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient with \( P < 0.05 \). The statement that ‘\( P < 0.05 \)’ means that there is a 5% possibility that this result was arrived at by chance. In other words, it is highly unlikely that this result is an accident. \( P \) reflects an estimate of probability and the statement that \( P < 0.05 \) indicates that the result may be regarded as ‘statistically significant’.

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis

A regression analysis is, at its simplest, a method of analysing the influence one variable has on another.\(^{636}\) A binary logistic regression analysis models “the relationship between explanatory variables and a binary response variable.”\(^{637}\) In this model, there are multiple potential explanatory variables (also described as independent variables) and one binary response (dependent) variable, which indicates the presence or absence of a given response. The regression analysis determines which of the explanatory variables best predict the response variable. For example, if one hopes to understand which demographic variables have the greatest impact on whether audiences would reconsider their views, the model would include ‘reconsider views’ as the response variable and several explanatory variables such as age, version of the play seen first, sex and ethnicity. The result would reveal whether, for example, one’s age is the most significant predictor of one’s likelihood to reconsider existing views. Once again, a ‘significant predictor’ was one in which \( P < 0.05 \).


\(^{637}\) D. Cook and others, “Binary Response and Logistic Regression Analysis,” in *Beyond Traditional Statistical Methods* (Iowa State University, 2001), 1.
On Software

I conducted analyses using a combination of MS Excel, Atlas.ti, and SPSS. I entered all the questionnaire data into an Excel spreadsheet, including the qualitative responses. From there, I analysed the qualitative responses using Atlas.ti and the quantitative variables using SPSS. Atlas.ti was extremely useful for the initial qualitative coding, reorganising quotes, and finding common themes while SPSS was extremely valuable in providing a relatively user-friendly mechanism for conducting the quantitative analyses.
Chapter 10: The Sample

The Performances

Including the preview and the matinee, there were 11 performances of Two Merchants. The preview performance featured the JDW first, with the order alternating with every performance. 67% of audience members saw the show on a weekend (Friday or Saturday nights) while 61.5% of audiences saw the version of the show in which the JDW was performed first. Coincidentally, the performances with the two largest house sizes (opening night and the matinee) were performed in different orders – with opening night featuring the MDW first and the matinee featuring the JDW first.

There were three unusual performances during this run. The first was opening night, which always has an atypical audience, according to cast, crew, faculty and staff of Theatre at UBC. The second was a dedicated performance for students and faculty from UBC’s Arts One program and students from UBC’s Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies. This was the only matinee performance. Finally, the second performance of Two Merchants was held on Remembrance Day, which is a public holiday in British Columbia.

During every performance, the stage manager recorded details that may influence the audience including the running time, start time and end time of the performance as well weather information. The running time for the show, including a fifteen-minute intermission, ranged from 143 minutes to 150 minutes with an average running time of 147 minutes. Excluding the matinee, the end time of the performances ranged from 9:54pm to 10:04pm with a mean end time of 9:59pm. The average temperature across all the performance nights was 6 degrees centigrade, ranging from 3 degrees to 11 degrees. The mean precipitation level was 6.16 mm, ranging from 0 to 18 mm.
Description of the Sample

In total, 860 people saw Two Merchants over its run (including the preview). Of these, 448 completed questionnaires resulting in an overall response rate of 52%. Ten people completed individual interviews and there were an additional two focus group discussions, both taking place within classroom environments with 22 participants in one and 6 participants in the other. Despite having an equal number of performances with either the Jewish or Muslim Dominated Worlds first, 68.5% of the audience watched a performance in which the act containing the Jewish Dominated World was performed first.

Response Rates

While the overall response rate – the number of questionnaires submitted as a percentage of the total number of people attending the show – was 52%, the average response rate – the mean of the response rates for each performance – was somewhat higher at 59%. The discrepancy is primarily due to a significantly lower response rate on opening night, however, there is also a strong indication that higher house sizes result in lower response rates. The correlation is significant at the P < 0.01 level using the Kendall tau rank correlation coefficient (See Figure 3). It appears that the only time the response rates drop below 50% is when the house size is higher than 100 audience members (even the matinee performance with 150 audience members has a response rate of only slightly higher than 50%, despite almost the entire audience being students). The average house size was 79 and approximately 59% of participants saw the show as part of an audience larger than 100 people.

638 This number is only approximate because we do not have an actual house count for the only matinee performance. The performance was sold out, but not everybody who had a ticket attended the show. The house size included for the matinee is based on the best estimates of myself and the observer who, while not recording observations, did attend the performance.

639 If you include the preview performance which had 35 audience members attending (8% of the total sample), there were 6 performances with the JDW first and 5 performances with the MDW first. If you exclude the preview, there were an equal number of performances of each version.
An additional external influence on response rates was the weather, specifically the precipitation accumulation. It should be noted that precipitation accumulation is also significantly correlated with house size (P < 0.01). Higher levels of precipitation result in higher response rates and smaller audiences (please see Figure 4).
Audience Demographics

One of the most common concerns with audience response research in theatre is that the audience demographics are never (or rarely) representative of the population as a whole. The same is true of *Two Merchants*. The audience for *Two Merchants* was mostly comprised of young students (Figure 5 and Figure 6), the majority of whom were female (Figure 7).

![Age of the Audience](image1.png)

![Sex of Participants](image2.png)

![Occupation](image3.png)
Most of the audience members were from Western backgrounds (75%), however a third of these (25% of the entire sample) identified with more than one ethnicity. 640 Almost 41% of all participants identified with more than one ethnicity and only 13% identified with a religious or ethnic background that is directly connected to the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Figure 8).

The religious breakdown of the audience included a wide range of different religious identifications, which were then collapsed into broader categories. The two largest categories in this breakdown are people who identified with no religion (or Atheists) and people who identified with one of the various denominations of Christianity. Only 10% of the sample identified with either Judaism or Islam (5% each). When asked how important religion was in their lives, 24% said it was ‘very important’, 25% said ‘somewhat important’, 17% said ‘not particularly important’ and ‘33%

640 For more details on the specific questions asked to obtain this data, please refer to the copy of the questionnaire in Appendix 1.
said it was not at all important.

Finally, almost half the audience had read Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* before seeing *Two Merchants*, with slightly fewer having seen a previous production of it. In total, 58% of the audience had some previous experience with *The Merchant of Venice* before seeing *Two Merchants*.

**The Sample and Rigor**

The sample for this study varies depending on the data set one is discussing. Concerning any audience observations, the sample includes all 860 people who saw the show. Any quantitative data such as the frequencies and regression analyses only use the data from the completed questionnaires (creating a sample of 448 participants). Of the 448 questionnaires, 338 (approximately 82%) included responses to open ended questions. The remainder only completed the demographic portion of the questionnaire. Qualitative data came from several sources including the questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and recorded post-show discussions. Since the questionnaires and post-show informal discussions were anonymous, it is possible that people who completed a questionnaire, also participated in an interview or focus group and possibly even a post-show discussion. As such, the sample size for the qualitative data is anywhere between 338 and theoretically 860 participants if all audience members participated in the post-show discussions. Since it is highly unlikely that the entire
audience participated in the post-show discussions, I estimate a sample size for the qualitative data to be in the range of 400 participants. Overall, the sample for this study was somewhat biased towards young females engaged in post-secondary education. That being said, there was also a significant range of participants from varied ethnic, religious, and occupational backgrounds.

**Generalizable, Transferable and Saturated**

In quantitative analyses, a key question is whether or not the sample is ‘representative’, meaning does it accurately reflect (represent) the responses of a larger population and could the data be used to predict the responses of that population. In this case, practical considerations such as time requirements and the limits of the amount of data collection to which you can subject a voluntary audience member, made a representative sampling strategy or a strictly experimental research design impossible.

As a result, statistically speaking, this sample cannot be said to ‘represent’ anything other than the views of those who participated – in other words, the data is not statistically generalizable. Statistics aside, however, one could logically hypothesise that the responses of those who participated may reflect the views of the entire audience or perhaps even of those who would choose to see a show of this nature. Even if these results represent nobody other than the participants themselves, the results are still valuable given the likelihood that people will discuss the show, share their views and may themselves have been influenced by the production.

While the results of this analysis may not be statistically generalizable, it is likely that they are transferable in the sense that the study has the study can be valuable in a variety of situations and contexts. Transferability is determined by the readers of the research in that it is achieved when “readers feel as though the story of the research overlaps with their own situation and they intuitively

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transfer the research to their own action." The responses from audience members indicate that the performance itself was ‘transferable’ in that many participants connected the content of the production to their own experiences and lives. It is extremely likely that the results of this audience response research will be transferable to other contexts, particularly in light of other recent research reporting similar findings.

From a qualitative perspective, the representativeness of the audience is de-emphasised in comparison with the desire to reach ‘saturation’: “when no new data emerge, when all leads have been followed, when negative cases have been checked, and when the story or theory is complete." While this description is not entirely accurate, as new information will almost always emerge, “there comes a time when doing another interview or analyzing another document or image is not helpful.” Alternatively, saturation can be said to be the point at which the interviewer is able to think with the story – to understand the ‘story’ being told by interviewees well enough that the interviewer can predict participant responses.

In this case, with so much qualitative data from such varied sources, saturation was reached relatively quickly, particularly given the range and variation of the questionnaire responses. In fact, the questionnaire responses revealed more varied information than the interview responses, which, while reaching saturation within themselves, did not represent the full range of possibilities explored by the questionnaire responses (interview responses were almost entirely ‘positive’, with very little criticism or disagreement with the premise of the production).

642 Ibid.
643 Gesser-Edelsburg, "The Israeli–Palestinian Conflict through Theatre: A Qualitative Study of Israeli High School Students."
644 Mayan, 63.
645 Ibid.
Chapter 11: Results

The main themes emerging from the data and constituting the dependent variables for the regression analyses included discussions of the two questions aimed at understanding the impact of the production on the audience:

1. “Do you think anything in Two Merchants will inspire you to reconsider some of your already existing views? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?”

2. “Do you think you will talk about Two Merchants with your friends/colleagues/family in the next days or weeks? If yes, what do you think you’ll talk about?”

In addition, the main themes explored in this analysis include: ideology, role reversal, theatre, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Furthermore, the audience attitudes towards the show were a significant predictor for most of the regression analyses and consequently, will be discussed in more detail in this section. Finally, I will include the results of the qualitative analysis of one recurring pattern prevalent in the data – that of contradictory responses.

Overview of Main Themes and Statistical Data

Reconsider Views: The discussion of whether or not participants said they would reconsider their views in response to seeing the show is more complicated. A simple count of the responses reveals that 31% of the participants said they would or might reconsider their views in response to the show. A number of respondents, however, explicitly stated that they would not reconsider because they already agreed with the concepts they perceived in the production (15% of the total respondents). A smaller number stated that they did not have a pre-existing perspective and consequently could not reconsider (7% of the total respondents).

A second analysis, which excludes participants who either already agreed with the views, or did not have any views to being with, reveals that 40% of the remaining participants said they would or might reconsider their views in response to Two Merchants. In subsequent quantitative analyses relating
to participants who would or would not reconsider their views, participants who already agreed or did not have pre-existing views are excluded unless specifically stated. The qualitative analysis includes all participants.

**Talk with Others:** When asked whether participants would discuss the show with their friends, family or colleagues, 86% of the participants said they would. There is close correlation between those who said they would reconsider their views and those who said they would talk with others (97% of those who would talk with others also said they would reconsider) (P < 0.01). That being said, even those who indicated they would not reconsider their views were likely to talk about the show (78%).

**Ideology:** This is one of the most broadly defined themes in this analysis and refers to comments relating to some of the underlying ideological themes of the play such as equality and prejudice, concepts of race, culture and religion, and issues of justice and law. In total, 70% of the audience mention ideology in at least one of their questionnaire responses. Ideological themes dominate participants’ discussions of whether or not they would reconsider their views, with 72% of participants mentioning ideology in their responses. 44% of the audience, on the other hand, said they would talk with others about ideology.

**Role Reversal:** The concept of ‘role reversal’ is a central component of *Two Merchants* and consequently features prominently in audience responses to the show. Some audience members mention ‘role reversal’ specifically while other responses allude to it through comments on the need for greater understanding of multiple perspectives, or of the ‘other’ perspective, for example. 45% of participants mention role reversal at least once in their questionnaire responses. When discussing whether participants reconsidered their views, 32% of respondents mention role reversal in their responses. When asked what participants would talk about with others after the show, 34% mention role reversal.
**Theatre:** Any responses mentioning the play itself, the adaptation, expressions of praise or criticism about the play, or ideas about the nature of theatre were all included in this single broad theme. Theatre is second only to Ideology in the frequency of its appearance in the data, with 69% of the audience remarking on some element of theatre in general or *Two Merchants* specifically in their questionnaire responses. When broken down by individual question, the frequency of theatre is an almost exact inversion of the frequency of ideology, with 36% of participants mentioning the play in response to the question about reconsidering their views, and 67% saying they would talk about theatre or the play with others after the show.

**The Arab-Israeli Conflict:** A play set in the Middle East, with obvious connections to the Arab-Israeli conflict, generated a surprisingly small number of comments related to this specific conflict. A total of 31% of participants mention the Arab-Israeli conflict in their questionnaire responses. Only 26% of participants mention the Arab-Israeli conflict in response to the question on reconsidering their views. An even smaller number of people – only 8% - said they would mention the Arab-Israeli conflict in discussions with others after the show.

**Reconsider Views**

40% of participants who did not explicitly state their pre-existing agreement with the values they perceived in the play said they would or might reconsider their views after seeing *Two Merchants*. The most frequently recurring theme in discussions of how participants would reconsider their views is ideology (85% of those who said they would reconsider their views mention ideological issues such as discrimination and stereotypes, increased understanding or tolerance, and justice in their explanations). Of those who mention the Arab-Israeli conflict in their explanations, 54% said they would reconsider their views. In all cases, participants who reconsidered their views did so in the direction of increased tolerance or a greater awareness of different perspectives. No responses to any question on the
questionnaire indicated that an audience member became less tolerant after seeing the production. Many of the issues discussed in response to this question are included in analysis of subsequent themes of ideology, role reversal, theatre and the Arab-Israeli conflict, however the table below gives a few examples of the kinds of comments people included when explaining how they would reconsider their views.646

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Reconsider Views and Ideology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discrimination, Prejudice and Stereotypes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 135: It has inspired me to re-consider in the sense as to how I view Judaism and Islam and how stereotyping shouldn't be the main factor in a decision because a fault can come about in any religion (18, F, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased Tolerance/Understanding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 8: Coming from a community (Campbell River) of 30000 with a substantial first nations population, I have certain beliefs about this population. There are many stereotypes towards this group, many of which I believe in because I have seen them in reality. I question whether or not these fulfilsments of stereotypes are noticed because they are the minority and it is a common belief. (E.g. would I notice and make a remark to myself if I saw a drunk, loud, white man causing a scene downtown) (18, M, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 88: More tolerance and understanding is needed for all societies. It is not enough to believe in what is right and act accordingly yourself. It is up to people to teach others about equality and respect and find out the truth about what is really going on. We must actively encourage understanding in others. Theatre is an excellent forum to raise issues, start important conversations and provide alternative perspectives (28, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justice and the Law</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 265: I think the discussion about mercy and justice that occurs during the trial is very interesting. It makes me consider that the concept of justice, when separated from human values and empathy, not only becomes absurd, but may be employed for ends that are perverse (29, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For those who did not reconsider their views, the most commonly recurring theme for discussion was theatre (57% of those who said they would not reconsider their views discuss theatre in their explanations). Further details and examples of comments reflecting these views can be found later in this chapter in the discussion on the main theme of ‘theatre’.

In addition, 17% of respondents to the question of whether they would reconsider their views mentioned religion in their explanations. While many of these comments overlap with issues that will

646 In all of the tables in this chapter, comments from the question on reconsidering views are marked by RV; Talk with others are marked with Talk; and comments from other questions are marked with Other. I have also noted participants’ age, sex (male (M), female (F), and Other), and the version of the production they saw first.
be discussed in subsequent themes, participants focusing their comments primarily on religion discussed its importance or value. For those who did reconsider their views, participants gained an increased awareness of the role that religion can play in people’s lives and conflict. Those who did not reconsider dismissed religion as unimportant, or irrelevant.

Table 4: Reconsider Views and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased Awareness of the Importance of Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 348: It will make me realise how important religion is in some people. For some people it can mean the world whereas other people can’t really care about it neither do they live their lives according to their religion. It also makes me remind about all the hate and discrimination existing in our world (19, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 86: I didn’t know that much religious hatred still prominently existed (19, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dismissing Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 198: If religion didn’t exist, this wouldn’t even be a problem. It’s stupid. I don’t care what religion a character believes in, I care about their actions (18, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 260: Religion should never be the reason for hatred, this has always been my view. I don’t see the necessity in religions. As beliefs should be guided by an individual only by him or herself, not cause of a religion (18, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, several participants report being inspired to further their own education, usually in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict or the broader context of current events in the Middle East.

Table 5: Reconsider Views and Inspiring Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspired Further Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 283: I’m fairly ignorant about the current Israeli Palestinian conflict and it has inspired me to educate myself. It made me curious about the gender politics in modern day Israel and Palestine and the rest of the Middle East (21, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 415: I am aware of the conflicts, but choose not to identify with them on a personal level. However this show has in fact inspired me to follow up on situations and understand the relations more clearly (18, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reconsider Views: Regression Analysis

The regression analysis reveals two significant predictors for whether participants would reconsider their views. Positive attitudes to the show and identification with any religious or spiritual beliefs both predict that participants are more likely to reconsider their views.
Table 6: Binary Logistic Regression: Reconsider Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>β (Beta Value)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p Value (Significance)</th>
<th>Exp(β) (odds ratio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reconsider Views</td>
<td>First Act</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.963</td>
<td>.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.296</td>
<td>2.725</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.258</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>.737</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>1.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Ethnicity</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.989</td>
<td>1.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>4.699</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>2.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Religion</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>1.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>1.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seen Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude to Show</td>
<td>1.630</td>
<td>27.647</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>5.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Model Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.324</td>
<td>5.406</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Talk With Others

86% of participants said they would talk with others about the show. 44% of respondents to this question said they would discuss ideology and 67% said they would discuss theatre when talking about the show. Most of the concepts present in responses outlining what participants stated they would discuss will be included in explorations of other themes later in this chapter. Two issues that are not explored elsewhere are participants’ intentions to focus their discussions on the research itself. 12% of participants said they would discuss the research with others. The nature of the remarks focuses, primarily, on discussions of the concept of theatre as a means of promoting discussion and comments on the novelty of the approach.

Table 7: Talk with Others: Research Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Use of Theatre to Encourage Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 323: I will tell them it is a very interesting idea of discussing a subject (25, Other, MDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11: Mostly about the concept. Using theatre to spur dialogue and understanding (58, M, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 51: The usage of theatre as a means of social change. More in terms of artistic direction rather than the issues (21, F, MDW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Talk with Others: Novelty of Research

Novelty and Evaluation of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 303</th>
<th>I will explain to friends in the UK that I saw a play as part of a doctoral dissertation. That is novel to me (52, Other, MDW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 427</td>
<td>Tell them about the unusual research and the production (52, Other, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 421</td>
<td>The premise of the show, the uniqueness of the format (20, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 144</td>
<td>The purpose of the show vs. the effect (20, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 341</td>
<td>We will discuss the concept of the play as a dissertation study and how successful (or not) it was. Probably whether or not it’s even a viable idea, in this context (21, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Talk with Others: Regression Analysis

Two significant predictors of whether participants said they would talk with others about the show include the audience’s attitudes to the show and their age. Participants with positive views of the play were more likely talk about it with others than those with neutral or negative views. Similarly, younger audience members were more likely to talk about the play than their older counterparts.

Table 9: Binary Logistic Regression: Talk with Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>β (Beta Value)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p Value (Significance)</th>
<th>Exp(β) (odds ratio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk with Others</td>
<td>First Act</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.685</td>
<td>.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.511</td>
<td>6.412</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>2.390</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>1.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.847</td>
<td>1.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Ethnicity</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>1.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.974</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Religion</td>
<td>-.114</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.589</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.867</td>
<td>1.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seen Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>2.607</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>2.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude to Show</td>
<td>1.514</td>
<td>23.993</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>4.543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Model Evaluation

1.835 110.300 .000 6.263
Ideology

Approximately 70% of participants mentioned ideological issues in their questionnaire responses, making it the most frequently discussed theme in the responses. Most participants mention ideology in relation to the ways in which they will reconsider their views or the reasons why they will not. The key ideological themes that emerge in discussions relating to the show are connected to discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes; concepts of race and culture; and relating to justice and law.

Table 10: Ideology: Discrimination, Prejudice and Stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discrimination, Prejudice and Stereotypes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 8: How the perspectives and stereotypes towards minority are passed down by a general societal stereotype, and how much individuals develop their own opinions towards groups (18, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 281: I actually want to discuss ya'lls version of the play with my dad. He loves Merchant but has conservative (Texas version) views of the Middle East (22, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 270: [I will] try to focus on reducing the discriminating behaviour I unconsciously have (27, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 337: Some discomfort came up as I realised some of my prejudices towards certain groups. Seeing this play made me feel uncomfortable in seeing that division and viewing as separate has the potential to create conflict (27, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequencies: Ideology

![Frequencies: Ideology](image)

Figure 11: Percentage of participants discussing Ideology overall; when asked if they would reconsider their views; and when asked if they would talk with others.
Table 11: Ideology: Race and Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talk: Participant 256:</strong> about what who is deemed evil and good and why - is it just the view of the majority of people? (21, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RV: Participant 219:</strong> Cultural differences are just that - cultural differences - and as much as these are not fully understood or appreciated, this play illustrated (through Shakespeare) the humanity needed to appreciate one another as people, fellow human beings. Mercy and forgiveness are highlighted through the text to remind us that there are better options than greedy vengeance (43, M, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RV: Participant 422:</strong> Interesting concept of actions being unrelated to race (67, M, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RV: Participant 177:</strong> I already know that racism can occur anywhere to anyone from any race. However, the flip around in <em>Two Merchants</em> was rather shocking and placed it more strongly in my mind (14, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Ideology: Justice and Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justice and the Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talk: Participant 127:</strong> 1) What is 'quality of mercy' 2) whether judges rulings are limited to the issues before the court. How widely are his recommendations allowed to reach? 3) Are judges dispensing justice or mercy or both (65, F, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talk: Participant 428:</strong> the innovate double staging and the impressive performances of the cast. But also, the difficulty of simple judicial solutions = the 'law does not solve the problem of justice (the scales of justice are inadequate in healing the injury of othering that gives rise to the sense of entitlement for blood revenge (52, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RV: Participant 246:</strong> [I will] question the way laws are written. [I will] redefine [my/the] definition of justice (21, F, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RV: Participant 21:</strong> It will cause me to think more about justice in general and justice in cases in which there is a distinct minority-majority based on culture or other factors (19, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ideology: Regression Analysis**

The only significant predictor of whether participants would discuss ideology in their responses was the audience members’ attitudes to the show. Once again, audience members with positive views of the play were more likely to discuss ideological issues in their questionnaire responses.
Table 13: Binary Regression Analysis: Ideology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>$\beta$ (Beta Value)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p Value (Significance)</th>
<th>Exp($\beta$) (odds ratio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>First Act</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>1.712</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>1.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.711</td>
<td>.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>1.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Ethnicity</td>
<td>-.506</td>
<td>1.864</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>-.554</td>
<td>1.956</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Religion</td>
<td>-.195</td>
<td>1.492</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>1.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seen Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>1.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude to Show</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>10.609</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>2.076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Model Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p Value</th>
<th>Exp($\beta$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>44.986</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Role Reversal

As one of the most unusual and arguably most memorable aspects of the show, 45% of the questionnaire participants commented on some aspect role reversal. Discussion of role reversal can be broadly categorised into comments relating to the content of the play, the structure of the play and the reality beyond the play. Audience members discussed three main concept-related themes: developing greater empathy, concepts of multiple perspectives and common ground, and the idea of being a minority in a different majority culture. Discussion around the structure of the play focuses on the role reversal itself and issues relating to repetition. Finally, many

Figure 12: Percentage of participants discussing Role Reversal overall, when asked if they would reconsider their views, and when asked if they would talk with others
audience members connected *Two Merchants* to the reality beyond the world of the play, either commenting on the play’s reflection of reality (or lack thereof, in some cases) or self-reflexively applying the concepts to their own experiences.

### Table 14: Content and Role Reversal

**Greater Empathy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RV: Participant 345:</th>
<th>I will re-consider the idea of being an outsider and what means to Palestinian and Jewish people. In terms of religious views or views considering my image of Jewish or Palestinian people, nothing truly changed (18, M, JDW).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 62:</td>
<td>It will allow me to have more empathy towards the plights of the Muslims in the world. I have limited knowledge of Muslim hardships and this gave me a detailed picture of those hardships. I will be able to understand those hardships better through seeing this show (18, M, MDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Multiple Perspectives and Common Ground**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk: Participant 159:</th>
<th>I would talk about how it forces you to take both sides into account, especially when considering current issues (21, F, JDW).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 168:</td>
<td>Tell them that this play showed different perspectives of humanity; than any group of people can ‘other’ another group; that we need to embrace our similarities rather than create a divide of differences (21, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 423:</td>
<td>I think that I have always had more sympathy for the Palestinians. This play makes me consider the ill-will of both parties towards the other. I think it was interesting how the current situation (who has power) was more true to the first play and the past was reflected in the second play. this served to remind us that if the Palestinians were to have power over the Jews, the conflict would still exist (18, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 160:</td>
<td>It showed a great similarity in 2 cultures that I didn't see before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Minority in a Different Majority Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RV: Participant 208:</th>
<th>Not identifying with either of the two featured communities I have trouble empathizing with the Jews/Muslims when they appear in a majority situation. When they appear as the persecuted minority I’m more inclined to empathize with them, even as they resentfully demand their pound of flesh in the court (20, M, JDW).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other: Participant 375:</td>
<td>It was interesting to see how a minority can be bullied. It would be a great thing to start discussions in schools - if cut [if it were shorter] (50, Other, MDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 15: Structure and Role Reversal

**Dual Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk: Participant 170:</th>
<th>The concept of a reverse role play and the portrayal/reception of the play were it to be put on in different parts of the world (20, F, JDW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 245:</td>
<td>The unique attempt at a different format for theatre (repetition of the same play over two acts) (18, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 76:</td>
<td>I have always held a great interest in the politics of the Middle East. Reading Robert Ash is as common a daily practice as strong coffee every morning. [Seeing] the two POVs back to back was an excellent tool to immediately see and feel the extremes of the situation (55, M, MDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Repetition

**RV: Participant 129:** It impacted my view on theatre, first most. Repeating was extremely effective in that it allowed me to first view the story and then view the telling of the story. I also feel encouraged to read the text of the *Merchant in Venice* (18, M, MDW).

**RV: Participant 149:** This production makes no argument as I see it. The script evokes modern issues of tension in the Middle East but stops at evocation. The doubling of the script has little pay off, I find. The message of equality could be made far more economically. Even the actors had little new to do in the second half (35, M, JDW).

**Other: Participant 170:** While I love the concept, I wonder how effective an exact hour long duplicate is...I do think it's important to relive the scenes in the reverse roles, but duplication can be exhausting for the audience (20, F, JDW).

### Table 16: Reality and Role Reversal

#### Reflection of Reality

**Other: Participant 232:** The parallel juxtaposition of two almost identical plays is problematic, in my opinion. The current sentiments around this issue are very complex, made even more so by events that occurred after 'merchant' had been originally written by Shakespeare. This project feels to me a reduction, almost a camouflage even, of an inhumane statehood that is Israel. to attempt to discuss this matter though the lens of 'racism' really obscures the political, social and economic oppression that Israel supports systematically. Are we discussing Arab-Israeli conflict, or anti-Semitism? Too many concepts at once, perhaps? (33, Other, MDW)

**Talk: Participant 423:** I think I will talk about what I took out of the play and as well [if] the play was an accurate depiction of the cultures - however, I don't think this matters. I think that the power dynamics are most important - but still very interesting to discuss (18, F, JDW).

**Participant 310:** I was conscious of the history of the Jewish 'Shylock' (Pre-Christian oppression, Christian antisemitism, pogroms, Nazism, Holocaust) that could fuel his intense anger and stubborn desire for a 'pound of flesh' - and play did not change that perception. Muslim 'Shylock' does not have that history except in more modern times (1948 expulsion, lack of a state for Palestinians) - and play did not change that view for me (64, M, MDW).

**Other: Participant 146.5:** Interesting idea. I think the complete repetition of the entire play could have been portrayed more discreetly [discretely?]. The reality in modern day Israel is that the Palestinian lobby is much more discriminated against than the Israeli one - perhaps this should have been represented somehow (19, F, JDW)
Table 17: Role Reversal and Reflexivity

Participants 47: I tried to reconsider my views while watching the 2nd half of the play, but I was unable to change them. The Jews did not have the history of persecuting others, they were persecuted. Also no matter how I try to change my view of Muslims they will not change. Muslims have a very strange religion based on Jihad and vengeance, making me see the Muslim as the villain in both cases. I will add though that I have had Muslim friends in Canada, but they were Canadian raised. I do not believe any religion should take vengeance on another. Harmony among all things is Cree spiritual belief (40, F, MDW).

RV: Participant 106: To learn more about my own South African cultural background and the Apartheid my family suffered through. I have always considered my family to be the 'victims', but never considered the 'opposing' side (25, F, JDW).

Role Reversal: Regression Analysis

The only significant predictor of whether participants would discuss role reversal was their attitudes to the show. In this case, however, participants were more likely to discuss role reversal if they had negative attitudes to the show.

Table 18: Binary Logistic Regression: Role Reversal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>β (Beta Value)</th>
<th>Wald (Significance)</th>
<th>p Value (Significance)</th>
<th>Exp(β) (odds ratio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Reversal</td>
<td>First Act</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.187</td>
<td>1.925</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.628</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>1.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
<td>-.415</td>
<td>2.715</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Ethnicity</td>
<td>.210</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>.473</td>
<td>1.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>-.304</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Religion</td>
<td>-.107</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>1.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seen Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>-.210</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude to Show</td>
<td>-.592</td>
<td>8.761</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Model Evaluation

-.250  4.585  .032  .778
Theatre

69% of audience members discussed theatre in questionnaire responses that did not specifically solicit responses on this theme. Audience responses included comments relating to the adaptation, the quality of the production, specific elements of the play, the relationship with Shakespeare’s original and comments on Shakespeare in general.

The adaptation and the quality of the play were the most frequently mentioned concepts in these discussions. The nature of these remarks varies significantly depending on the question to which they were responding.

Table 19 shows a selection of responses to the adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* divided by the question to which participants were responding. The first two columns both refer to responses to the question on reconsidering views, however, the nature of the comments differs between participants who said they would reconsider and those who said they would not. Those who said they would reconsider, tended to view the adaptation favourably, appreciating the relevance of the modern context and the reinterpretation of Shakespeare’s script. In contrast, those who said they would not reconsider questioned the validity of the modern interpretation and disapproved of the changes made to the original play. As noted before, most of the participants who commented on theatre in the latter context said they would not reconsider their views.

![Frequencies: Theatre](image)

Figure 13: Percentage of participants discussing Theatre overall; when asked if they would reconsider their views; and when asked if they would talk with others.
The third column includes a selection of comments from audience members who said they would discuss the show with others. In contrast with the comments emerging from the Reconsider Views question, most people who said they would talk about the adaptation express favourable views of it. When discussing whether they would reconsider their views, there are no comments on the quality of the play from participants who said they would reconsider. Participants who said they would not reconsider, however, comment on the play in a frequently unfavourable light. When asked what participants would discuss with others, on the other hand, most participants who mention the quality of the play focus on the aspects of the production they appreciated, emphasizing high quality performances by the actors, the interpretation and strong production values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 19: Theatre and the Adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reconsidered Views</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 21: While I know the story of the Merchant of Venice before seeing Two Merchants I had never thought about the story outside of fiction or outside of Venice of 400 years ago. Seeing Two Merchants has made me realize just how applicable the relationship between Shylock and the Christian 'protagonists' is today and in different cultures. It will cause me to think more about justice in general and justice in cases in which there is a distinct minority-majority based on culture or other factors (19, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 63: I think that by forcing the religious conflict, the message that Shylock delivers in his monologue is watered down, misdirected and lost. Shakespeare's message, the timelessness of it disappears; we no longer talk about the base humanity of these characters is lost (22, M, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 428: A wonderfully inventive adaptation that reframes the act of witnessing the transferable identity of the victimized other ('Jew' or 'Arab'). We are familiar with the interpretive problem of the play (i.e. Is the Shylock/Kalev character a victim or victimizer? This UBC version brilliantly connects this interpretive challenge to the contingency of the historical situation (52, M, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 374: I liked seeing it recast but have always felt 'Merchant of Venice' was more universal than 'Jewish' vs. 'Christian' (28, F, MDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20: The Quality of the Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did Not Reconsider Views/Already Agree</th>
<th>Talk with Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 149:</strong> This production makes no argument as I see it. The script evokes modern issues of tension in the Middle East but stops at evocation. The doubling of the script has little pay off, I find. The message of equality could be made far more economically. Even the actors had little new to do in the second half (35, M, JDW)</td>
<td><strong>Participant 301:</strong> how brilliant it was. I don't think in my wildest dreams I'd have even imagined The Merchant of Venice acted in this way! (50, F, MDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 349:</strong> No because I feel like if you wanted to show a comparison or a difference between the two religions it needed to be more apparent. I felt each act was biased toward the 'villain' religion. I feel like if you wanted to show how horrible hate crimes are, then show it!! (21, F, JDW)</td>
<td><strong>Participant 418:</strong> fabulous production. Interesting interpretation and incorporation of current events (19, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 226:</strong> the production’s many shortcomings (27, M, MDW)</td>
<td><strong>Participant 165:</strong> The actors were amazing and inspirational. Very well presented. Gave a wonderfully strong message. Powerful emotions (21, F, MDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 326:</strong> the awesome set (21, F, MDW)</td>
<td><strong>Participant 326:</strong> the awesome set (21, F, MDW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theatre: Regression Analysis

No significant predictors for whether participants would discuss theatre emerged from the regression analysis.

Table 21: Binary Logistic Regression: Theatre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>β (Beta Value)</th>
<th>Wald (Significance)</th>
<th>p Value (Significance)</th>
<th>Exp(β) (odds ratio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>First Act</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>.238</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.785</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td>1.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
<td>-.465</td>
<td>2.842</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Ethnicity</td>
<td>-.314</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>1.309</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>1.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Religion</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>1.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>.557</td>
<td>1.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seen Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td>1.300</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>1.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude to Show</td>
<td>-.335</td>
<td>2.072</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Model Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>26.281</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli Conflict, despite being the focus of the issues explored in *Two Merchants*, is the smallest of the main themes discussed in this section. 31% of participants mention the Arab-Israeli conflict in their questionnaire responses.

When participants mentioned the Arab-Israeli conflict, the key concepts they address overlap with those explored in the role reversal sections of this chapter, including recognising the multiple perspectives involved in the conflict, indicating greater empathy for relevant ethnic or religious groups, and developing new perspectives on the conflict as a whole (Table 14: Content and Role Reversal). Likewise, there were participants who disagreed with the representations in the play, as shown in (Table 15: Structure and Role Reversal).

Beyond these themes, discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict, like discussions of Theatre, primarily differ based on the question to which participants were responding. When discussing reconsidering views, participants appeared to dismiss the conflict as ‘futile’, ‘irrational’, ‘needless’ and ‘meaningless’. When asked what participants would discuss with others, however, respondents focused on understanding the conflict.

![Frequencies: Arab-Israeli Conflict](image)

Figure 14: Percentage of participants discussing the Arab-Israeli Conflict overall; when asked if they would reconsider their views; and when asked if they would talk with others
Table 22: Arab-Israeli Conflict Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dismissing the Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 317: The major inter-religious conflicts of history have always struck me as futile and frustratingly meaningless (24, M, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 365: I hold no views in regards to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict except that it is irrational as the real culprit is intolerance in society (50, M, MDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 313: I believed before that both Jewish and Muslim population had valid reasons to hate each other, and that it is foolish of both to do hate each other (Unknown, M, MDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV: Participant 421: I have no views partial to either side, just that such conflicts are needless (20, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding the Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 196: Our views on Muslims. Personally I find much to criticize [sic] about their 'faith'. However I feel that the issue in Palestine puts everyone in an awkward position. The Jews were just planted there, an environment which is probably not suited to them since the Muslims are against their presence there (18, F, JDW).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 329: The root of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their views on its origin (19, F, JDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 76: The way the play in its interpretation explains the situation in the Middle East. GOD BLESS THE BARD (55, M, MDW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk: Participant 302: I will talk about the unique presentation of the play and its commentary on current conflicts and events. A good friend of mine is from Israel and it would be very interesting to discuss this with her (22, Other, MDW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Regression Analysis

The regression analysis revealed one significant predictor: participants who had not seen a production of *The Merchant of Venice* were more likely to mention the Arab-Israeli conflict in their responses. It is noteworthy that a similar relationship does not exist between participants who had read *The Merchant of Venice.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>β (Beta Value)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>p Value (Significance)</th>
<th>Exp(β) (odds ratio)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab-Israeli Conflict</td>
<td>First Act</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.562</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td>1.078</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.900</td>
<td>.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>.471</td>
<td>1.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western Ethnicity</td>
<td>.344</td>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td>1.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>-.173</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Religion</td>
<td>-.152</td>
<td>.941</td>
<td>.332</td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>.830</td>
<td>.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seen Merchant of Venice</td>
<td>-.929</td>
<td>8.090</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude to Show</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>.413</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>1.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Model Evaluation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.773</td>
<td>34.359</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attitudes to the Show**

The audience’s attitudes to the show was a significant predictor for four of the six dependent variables discussed here (reconsidered views, talk with others, ideology and role reversal) and was the only predictor that was significant for more than one dependent variable (main theme). More than half the audience (55%) expressed clearly positive views of the play; a further 30% expressed views that combined positive and negative characteristics or were neutral. Only 15% of the respondents expressed negative views of the play.

**Contradictions**

One common feature of the responses to all of the main themes was the presence of contradictory views within the audience. What one audience member perceived as insightful, another thought was mundane; what one perceived as good theatre, another thought was theatrically boring; an experience one person thought was educational, another found patronising. The responses to *Two Merchants* reveal highly polarised views amongst audience members. Table 24 includes examples of some of the most prominent contradictions among audience responses.
### Table 24: Polarised Responses within Reconsider Views

#### Ability of Theatre to Influence Audiences

| Participant 278:...don't know yet...but theatre has the power to do so (18, F, JDW) | Participant 65: no, its just a play (71, M, JDW) |

#### Value of Repeating the Same Script Twice

| Participant 8: At 1st I stereotypically assumed certain roles were placed for certain reasons - i.e. The Jew as the merchant, and then when the roles were changed I realised my own bias (18, M, JDW) | Participant 10: I didn't think there was enough contrast between the two versions to really trigger any insights as to whether it made a difference whether the merchant was a Jew or Arab (55, F, JDW) |

#### Audience's Prior Experiences with Similar Conflicts

| Participant 86: I didn't know that much religious hatred still prominently existed (19, M, JDW) | Participant 230: Being brought up in Canada and living in Hong Kong, racism is easily seen everywhere. Nothing changes (19, Unknown, MDW) |

#### Transposing The Merchant of Venice into a Modern Context

| Participant 21: ... I had never thought about the story outside of fiction or outside of Venice of 400 years ago. Seeing Two Merchants has made me realise just how applicable the relationship between Shylock and the Christian 'protagonists' is today and in different cultures (19, F, JDW) | Participant 56: I have comment about the choice of transposing the play in Palestine-Israel. It does not work. 1) Usury and antisemitism are relevant in Europe i.e., it would not work in the M.E. if we were dealing with Arabs and Jews. Palestinians and Israelis have political issues not racial (66, F, MDW) |

#### Connecting The Merchant of Venice with the Arab-Israeli Conflict

| Participant 428: A wonderfully inventive adaptation that reframes the act of witnessing the transferable identity of the victimized other ('Jew' or 'Arab'). We are familiar with the interpretive problem of the play (i.e. Is the Shylock/Kalev character a victim or victimizer? This UBC version brilliantly connects this interpretive challenge to the contingency of the historical situation (52, M, JDW) | Participant 354: The Merchant of Venice alone is enough to inspire a change in views - views of human nature and the power of avarice. The addition of allegory about the Arab-Israeli conflict only muddies the original message (23, M, JDW) |
Chapter 12: Discussion and Conclusions

The audience responses to Two Merchants offer a wealth of insight into the potential for entertainment to effectively challenge conflict ideologies, existing perceptions of ideological conflicts in general, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular. With almost 40% of audience members who did not already agree with the premise of the production stating their intentions to reconsider their views after seeing Two Merchants, there can be no doubt that productions of this nature have tremendous potential to challenge existing, even entrenched, ideological views. After seeing Two Merchants, many audience members gained increased awareness of their own prejudices, recognised the persecution and discrimination faced by minority groups and an increased awareness of the potential for unjust laws to perpetuate and codify injustices.

The attitudes to the show expressed by audience members were a significant predictor for almost every one of the outcomes measured in this analysis, emphasising the importance of the entertainment quality of the performance. Regardless of its academic or ideological content, the production is far more likely to encourage thought, debate and even ideological change if it is appealing to the audience. This finding is not at all surprising from a theoretical perspective. Audiences who do not respond positively to the production will not be ‘transported’ into its imaginary world and, consequently, will be unswayed by any persuasive content. Conversely, audiences who are transported into the world of the play are more likely to express positive responses to the experience. Common sense also suggests that audience members who disliked the play, the adaptation or the ideological message will be highly unlikely to either be persuaded by its content or even consider its content worth discussing.

This is further supported by the direction of the influence of attitudes to the show. Positive attitudes to the show predicted the audience’s likelihood to reconsider their views, talk with others
about the show and mention concepts related to ideology in their questionnaire responses. These are all measures of audience engagement with the content of the production; with its message and ideologically challenging themes. Negative views of the show, on the other hand, predicted audience’s likelihood to discuss role reversal. The discussion of the role reversal for participants with negative views of the show focused on issues related to the structure of the play or the research – not the content. In other words, when people liked the play they were able to engage with the content, when people disliked the play, they focused on its technical elements.

**Quality of Production**

As crucial as the quality of the production was to the efficacy of the ideological intervention, this particular finding presents some challenges for those trying to increase the efficacy of entertainment based interventions; specifically the challenge of how one ensures the ‘quality’ of the production and its transportive effects. Defining the ‘quality’ of the production is – to borrow a favourite phrase – ‘like nailing jelly to the wall’. There are so many elements that contribute to a ‘good’ theatre experience that it is very difficult to say which elements are the most important. With regards to *Two Merchants*, the audience’s comments indicated several contributing factors to the positive experience of many audience members. These included the Shakespearean foundation for the script, the quality of the acting, unusual theatrical setting, engaging and interesting ideological content and the innovative research. Unfortunately, it is not now, nor is it ever likely to be possible to create a production to which every audience member will respond positively. Individual tastes and experiences will always influence the unique responses of each audience member and, much as artists may try, we cannot please every

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647 The criteria for a ‘positive’ response is outlined in Chapter Nine in the discussion of the coding criteria for this variable. In summary, ‘positive responses’ refer to: overtly positive language such as ‘well done’, ‘good job’, or ‘excellent’ (which may be ‘extremely positive’); thoughtful reflection on the issues reflected in the play; and constructive suggestions within an otherwise thoughtful or positive response. ‘negative responses’ refer to: clearly negative language such as ‘terrible’, ‘horrible’, ‘patronising’, etc; commenting on the issues or themes in a way that is clearly sarcastic or otherwise insincere; repeated complaints such as ‘the statue got in the way’, ‘I couldn’t hear the actors’, etc. Coders were also asked to follow their instincts if a response ‘felt’ positive or negative in the absence of any other specific criteria. The coding was done on a 5 point scale from extremely positive to extremely negative with an additional option for responses that were impossible to classify.
audience member. However, several thousand years of theatrical practice combined with the far smaller body of knowledge created in this research reaffirms that it is not a single element but the combination of all of them that helps to create a positive audience experience.

**Conflict**

The audience responses also offer insight into the ways in which some audience members respond to the ethno-religious identities represented in *Two Merchants* as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict. With regards to some of the ethno-religious representations, *Two Merchants* intentionally challenged some of the stereotypical representations of Jewish and Muslim characters. In many cases, the non-stereotypical representations contributed to the changes in perspectives reported by audience members. For a small group of people, however, these challenging representations were perceived as mistakes. Some audience members believed so powerfully in the truth of the stereotype that a representation that challenged those images was seen as inaccurate. Perhaps one of the most common example of this was in the responses to the depiction of women. One student approached me after a lecture I gave on *Two Merchants* to comment on the costuming ‘mistake’ she recognised in the play – not all the Muslim women were wearing the Hijab. She was surprised when I told her that it was because not all Muslim women chose to wear the Hijab. It was clear that she doubted my knowledge on the subject. Similar views emerged in the questionnaire comments.

> Here at the play we are talking about the use of Shakespeare, the lack of attention to culturally appropriate clothing - appropriate to the portrayal culture eg: in how the women are dressed

  (Participant 90, female, JDW, 21 years old)

> I wondered why not all women in Balda wore head scarves

  (Participant 171, female, JDW, 20 years old)
People also expressed surprise and even disbelief at our depiction of women as potentially violent contributors to the conflict:

- It seemed too weird that the women characters carried out the murders. (They were soo [sic] violent - seemed unusual)
  (Participant 210, female, JDW, 23 years old)

- [The ending was] a cop out, women are not so silly in their revenges, plus, they had insufficient motivation. You could have given the murder to Bassanio and I would have bought it
  (Participant 263, female, JDW, 48 years old)

A single intervention like *Two Merchants* would have a difficult time challenging such deeply held beliefs.

*Two Merchants* also offered insight into the ways audiences perceive the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this case, it became apparent that many audience members disdained either the Arab-Israeli conflict or religion as pointless, unsolvable or beyond their understanding. In some cases, audience members recognised the complexity of the conflict, but saw it as an obstacle to both their own understanding of it and any possibility for future resolution. Many responses expressed frustration with the conflict and a sense of resignation that it is something that will never be resolved. Similarly, participants expressed frustration with religion, viewing *Two Merchants* as a further illustration of how religion is ‘pointless’ or even a source of violence in the world.

These sentiments pose a challenge to future productions like *Two Merchants*, to those who are working towards the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and to those who are working to educate the world about both the conflict and the various ethno-religious groups who are connected with it. In trying to challenge deep-seeded stereotypes, it is possible that some audience members will resist any representation that diverges from their own expectations of the ‘true’ image. In addition, it is necessary to convey the complexity of the conflict, however it seems that the fear of such complexity can become
an obstacle to even the willingness to attempt understanding. Moreover, if people disbelieve the representations or dismiss the conflict or religion, they are unlikely to engage with the issues involved in any meaningful way. Without that kind of engagement, the apathy or even hostility towards the Arab-Israeli conflict will make further attempts at resolution even more challenging. These attitudes and the consequent lack of engagement are problematic for examples of ICE that hope to engage with ideological principles that transcend a specific conflict.

While *Two Merchants* was a powerful mechanism for engaging the moral imagination in many audience members, for more resistant participants it will be necessary to connect with them in different ways. Further research is required to determine if such engagement could take the form of a different example of ICE or if the needs of those participants could be better met with an entirely different intervention.

**Audiences**

The findings of the regression analyses offer a number of insights into the audience that could help to enhance the efficacy of future productions of this nature. When considering which participants were willing to reconsider their views in response to *Two Merchants*, the regression analyses suggest that this play was more effective for young audience members as well as for participants who identified with any religion or spiritual belief.

**Age**

Younger participants were significantly more likely to discuss the play with others than their older counterparts. For many, the increased appeal of the production to younger audiences will come as no surprise. In addition to the general perception of older people as being more ‘set in their ways’, there is some research that indicates that as we get older, our tendency towards dogmatism
increases. While some of the research suggests that older individuals are less susceptible to persuasive messages, the results of the research in this area has not always been consistent. One theory posits that since persuasion is influenced by the cognitive resources devoted to the persuasive message, older individuals who have experienced a reduction in cognitive resources would be less likely to be influenced by the persuasive messages. This is not, however, a theory to which I subscribe. These theories do not always account for differences in the content of the messages and their relative appeal to different demographics.

There are a number of other likely interpretations for the influence of age the likelihood of participants to discuss the show with others. It is possible that older participants may have already defined their views over many years of hearing about the Arab-Israeli conflict and be consequently less interested in discussing a production aimed at challenging those views. It is also likely that older audiences may have had more previous experience with The Merchant of Venice and be resistant to the adaptation process. Likewise, they could have more firmly established expectations regarding appropriate theatrical styles and, as a result, might have been opposed to some of the unconventional approaches used in Two Merchants. Comments supporting all of these interpretations were present in the qualitative data.

Just as older audiences may have resisted the unconventional aspects of the production, it is possible that these components contributed to its appeal for younger audiences. Young audiences who may have only encountered Shakespeare in a classroom may well have found an adaptation into a modern setting with contemporary relevance particularly appealing. Similarly, the young cast may have facilitated the transportation process for young audiences by creating characters with whom it was easier to identify. Moreover, younger audience members, particularly those under 21 years old, are in

650 Ibid., 587.
the process of establishing their views of the world around them. Such a process could contribute to their willingness to accept different perspectives than the ones with which they are familiar. It could be argued that creating this production in a university setting, where many young people are encountering – often for the first time - perspectives that significantly differ from those expressed by their families, may have contributed to the impact of Two Merchants.

Another possible interpretation for the relatively powerful impact of this production on audience members under 21 years old could relate to the narrative form itself. The youth of today, particularly in North America, were raised in a world in which television, video games and movies are ubiquitous. The prevalence of narrative entertainment in their lives is possibly more than in any other previous generation. It is possible that, as a consequence of this aspect of their lives, today’s youth are even more attuned to the messages within these narrative forms than other generations. Just as it is a skill to glean relevant information from a textbook, lecture or experiential learning processes, so too is it a learned skill to find meaning in narrative forms. It is possible that audience members who have grown up with narrative entertainment as a pervasive influence in their upbringing may simply be more able to be transported into a narrative while still engaging with its message on a cognitive level.

Religion

The influence of the audience’s spiritual or religious attitudes is not something that is commonly discussed in the literature on attitude change or persuasion. In some cases, the identification with a particular religion is associated with less tolerant views, however, there have also been studies that indicate that religious views are associated with lower levels of prejudice.\(^651\) Certainly in the current political climate in which religious fundamentalism is an archetypal enemy akin to communism during the height of the Cold War, the idea that people identifying with a religious or spiritual belief would be

more likely to reconsider their views on a conflict in which religion plays a fundamental role may be surprising to many readers.

The influence of religion on the willingness of participants to reconsider their views inspires many possible interpretations. One theory suggests that, since atheists are still a minority in North America, those subscribing to such a belief will be more dogmatic in their attitudes in order to defend against possible encroachment from the dominant culture. Consequently, they may be less open to changes in their perspectives. If this explanation is accurate, it stands to reason that those who identified with minority religions should, theoretically, have the same need to ‘defend’ their beliefs. Unfortunately, the sample size for this study was not large enough to measure such an effect for other minority religious beliefs. Such an analysis may be useful for future research.

Another possible explanation is that many religions are dogmatic or authoritarian in their structures, making the world-view shift that takes place in Two Merchants even more shocking (and more effective) than it would be for someone more accustomed to changing perspectives. This interpretation does not account for the responses of those who identified as ‘spiritual’ rather than ‘religious’, those who identified with multiple religions or those who only nominally identified with any religion or spirituality but who claimed to live more secular lives (thus, by their very nature, accepting multiple world-views). Once again, the sample size was not adequate to effectively account for all these possible variations to determine if there was any significant differences between them. Other explanations with similar limitations suggest that those who subscribe to religious beliefs are more accustomed to accepting externally imposed ideological frameworks or that the structure of a ‘moral’ lesson within a narrative such as a parable is one that is familiar to and accepted by those subscribing to religious beliefs.

None of these explanations are particularly satisfactory. They all imply a homogeneity among participants with religious or spiritual beliefs – despite the representation of a diverse array of belief
systems within this sample. Moreover, they impose a stereotype on those identifying with a religion as being unthinking, uncritical followers of an externally imposed doctrine, rather than as individuals who have carefully considered their beliefs.

An alternative explanation, based in the theories of both narrative persuasion and accepted theatrical practice, is that audience members for whom religion or spirituality is – even nominally – a part of their lives, may be more inclined to identify characters for whom religion is a significant motivating factor for their actions. Moreover, they may be more able to ‘transport’ themselves into the imaginary world of a religiously influenced ideological conflict – thus increasing the potential efficacy of the persuasive messages inherent in Two Merchants. In addition, people who accept religion or spirituality as an aspect of their own lives – regardless of the degree of importance they ascribe to it – could be more able to understand the actions of others when those actions are even nominally or superficially inspired by religion.

Implications

While the influence of Two Merchants may have been enhanced for younger audiences or those identifying with a religion or spiritual belief system, that does not necessarily mean that the same would hold true of other productions. These results could imply that future productions of this nature could be most valuable for audiences under 21 years old or audiences with some spiritual or religious connections. They could also suggest, however, that it is necessary to find a way to reach those participants who were most resistant to this production. In fact, both are likely true. Two Merchants was influential for some audience members. The results of the regression analysis help to identify not only those audience demographics to which future productions like Two Merchants should be addressed, but also the demographics for which different interventions need to be created.
**Contradictions: A Projective Test?**

Some elements of the production that enhanced the experience of audience members can also explain why others were unwilling to reconsider their views. Some of these include the role reversal, use of Shakespeare, inclusive set design and the story itself.

While some found the role reversal to be challenging, interesting or even shocking, others perceived it as dull, redundant or patronising. Similarly, while some audience members praised the adaptation, loved Shakespeare’s language or were stunned by its applicability to a modern context, others were angry with the ‘destruction’ of a classic play, found the language incongruous with a modern interpretation and rejected its applicability to the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Just as those who liked the play or were influenced by its message were often effusive in their praise, those who disliked the production were, at times, angry and aggressive in their condemnation.

These contradictory responses, coupled with the, often, emotional content of the comments could have many possible interpretations. It is easy to dismiss the variety of data as a reflection of personal preferences, however there is another possible interpretation. *Two Merchants* intentionally refrained from ‘taking sides’ in its representation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It offered no definitive hero or villain, no solution to the conflict and no judgement on who is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. Some audience members appeared to find this ambiguity frustrating, presumably preferring an interpretation that advocates a given position. Despite this, the approach was intended to encourage audience members to make their own determinations – to discuss, debate and think about the issues raised.

It could be argued that this intentional ambiguity created the theatrical version of a projective test. As a result, the contradictory audience responses, rather than describing the production, may have revealed the views or concerns of the individual audience member. For example, what one audience member perceived as a stereotypical depiction of Muslim women as ‘submissive’, another saw as the
Muslim women being more ‘controlled’ or intense. The audience’s own perceptions and ideological views had a dramatic impact on not only their enjoyment of the show, but in creating the show. If the contradictory responses often appear to be descriptions of entirely different productions, it is possible that, for individuals in question, that is how they seemed.

With only this data set it is difficult to predict the implications of this interpretation of the contradictory audience responses, however one possibility is that productions of this nature could become a valuable tool for understanding audience’s perceptions of current issues. Such an application may function as a kind of projective test on a group level. As with any projective test, however, the results would be open to many possible interpretations and would have to be viewed within a much broader context. For example, an audience member who perceived the Muslim women as more submissive than their Jewish counterparts could be interpreted as believing that Muslim women actually are more submissive. Alternatively, such a comment could represent a concern that other people may believe in the stereotype of Muslim women as submissive. Similarly, the frustration some audience members expressed with a production that offered no ‘solution’ to the problem could be interpreted as reflecting similar frustration with the Arab-Israeli conflict itself, which is often presented as incredibly complicated but is rarely represented as a conflict that could be resolved fairly. Another interpretation could be that such frustrations represent the audience’s desire for a resolution to the conflict coupled with their belief that they have no role in contributing to such a resolution.

The value of using a production like Two Merchants as a ‘projective test’ is the same as that of any psychological projective test; often individuals may be hesitant to express certain views, particularly when dealing with politically or socially questionable perspectives. Audiences may be less hesitant about ascribing such perspectives to characters in a play or those creating the play, thereby enabling a more open discussion about those issues. The practical application of a play for this purpose, however, would
require greater research and refinement not only of the production techniques, but also of the appropriate research methods and analysis process.

**Value of Discomfort**

Whether it was the ambiguity of the ideological stance of the production, the interpretation that challenged stereotypes or the theatrically unconventional structure and staging of the play, it appears that *Two Merchants* created a degree of discomfort for the audience. Some participants expressed this in their responses as being uncomfortable with their new awareness of prejudices they held. It is possible that this discomfort created a ‘teachable moment’ during which those audience members who were so inclined used the opportunity to challenge their own preconceived ideas – to become open to new perspectives.

The importance of emotions and even discomfort in the process of engaging with issues relating to ideological conflict is one that has been emphasised by other researchers as well. In their work on creating a parallel historical narrative of the Israeli and Palestinian perspectives on their histories, Adwan, Bar-On and Naveh also discuss this phenomenon. “This work with our teachers vividly demonstrated the central role of emotions in the teaching and learning of historical accounts.”

They recognise that anger is a normal response to being exposed to a different narrative from one with which one associates one’s own identity. Given that the express intention of *Two Merchants* was to challenge some existing worldviews, it is not surprising that some of the audience responses to the show appeared to be quite aggressively angry, just as others expressed strong feelings of gratitude and enthusiasm for the production.

In some cases, the discomfort of the audience members created an immediate impression of resistance to the message expressed in the play. In other cases, audience members discussed their

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652 Adwan and others, *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*, xiii.
653 Ibid., xiv.
discomfort and their attempts to work through those feelings by challenging their own perspectives.

One of the limitations of this study is that the nature of the recruitment process was such that long-term follow-up with audience members proved to be impractical. Some audience members who initially expressed strong anger and resistance to the production may have reconsidered that position if given more time to think about the issues with which they had been confronted.

**Adaptation**

Audiences appear to respond differently to a play that is an adaptation, in contrast to an original script – or what they experience as an original script. In the case of *Two Merchants*, audiences who had seen a production of *The Merchant of Venice* were less likely to focus their comments on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

There are a number of possible interpretations for this finding, the one most strongly connected to the literature suggests that some audience members resist the transportive effects of a narrative when the play diverges significantly from their horizon of expectations. It is possible that people who had seen *The Merchant of Venice* had more specific expectations of the production than those without that experience. When *Two Merchants* diverged from those expectations, those audience members focused on the changes to the script or production concept rather than allowing themselves to be transported into the imaginary world of *Two Merchants*. This may be particularly relevant to a play that has been adapted from a well-known and liked script, like *The Merchant of Venice*.

This finding is particularly interesting in light of the fact that having read *The Merchant of Venice* did not have the same predictive effects as having seen a prior production. This suggests that simply having knowledge of the play and its content is not enough to influence an audience members’ response to it; rather it is the specific experience of having seen the play performed that changes the audience’s experience of a production. This question would benefit from additional research, particularly to
determine if the specific nature of the previous performance changes the audience response. For example, did audiences who had seen a film of *The Merchant of Venice* have the same reaction as those who had seen a live production of it?

When using Shakespeare, the quality of the play, resiliency of the scripts and depth of the language enhances the entertainment potential of the adaptation, as expressed by a number of audience members. In some cases, however, the comparison with the original play may encourage audiences to focus on the structure of the adaptation rather than the content of the play. This consideration takes on additional dimensions when using Shakespeare, as a few audience members objected, on principle, to any changes to Shakespeare’s scripts while others appreciated an adaptation that made Shakespeare more ‘relevant’ to a modern context.

**Audience Response Research**

Much can be learned from the results of this audience response research, however, the process of collecting that data also provided insight into the efficacy of the data collection mechanisms and the process of conducting research of this nature. Throughout the process of creating *Two Merchants* and conducting the post-show research, it became apparent that one imperative of this kind of research is the need for all those contributing to it to understand the entirety of the process - even if only at a basic level. This ideal helps to ensure that the community of researchers, designers, actors and artists that work on the production are all working towards a common, unified vision. This is a philosophy that is common in the theatrical production process but becomes infinitely more challenging when combining artistic creation with academic research. Even during the creation of *Two Merchants*, taking place in an academic setting with some time devoted to educating the production team about the less familiar elements of the production (such as the Arab-Israeli conflict), there were still some significant tensions arising between some of the academic requirements and the realities of theatrical practice.
Just as it is necessary to create a unified team, it is also helpful to divide responsibilities, particularly between those responsible for conducting the data collection and analysis and those creating the entertainment itself. It is necessary for audiences to be free to express critical and even negative views of the production when sharing their responses. It is likewise necessary for the researchers and analysts to be able to collect and analyse those perspectives without the influence of the emotional investment in the production that is necessary for those directly involved in the production process (directors, designers, actors, etc.).

The data collection itself can also be refined further based on the Two Merchants experiences. While most of the data collection processes used on this project had been tested in other contexts, the informal post-show discussion structure was untried. While the principle of establishing a more ‘natural’ post-show discussion environment is sound, in this context it was not a particularly effective method for data collection for a number of reasons. Audiences appeared to expect a more formal discussion process, such as the ‘talk back’ sessions that are becoming popular for many productions. The unfamiliarity of this process for the audiences coupled with their expectation of some degree of moderation may have inhibited discussion. For such a process to be effective in the future, it might be preferable to use multiple moderators around the theatre to facilitate discussions among smaller groups while still retaining a degree of informality that is not present in deliberately planned focus groups.

An additional influence that appeared to reduce the extent of both post-show discussions and participation in interviews or focus group discussions was the nature of the questionnaires. The questionnaires included several open-ended questions to which many audience members provided highly detailed responses, often staying in their seats for as long as 30 minutes after the performance in order to do so. This process almost certainly reduced the frequency of post-show discussions and also may have contributed to the relatively small number of interview volunteers, as audiences may have felt that they had provided enough of a contribution through the questionnaire. While the comprehensive
questionnaires may have inhibited some forms of data collection, the incredible wealth of information contained in these responses should not be undervalued. They were unquestionably the most valuable source of data for this research and their anonymity enabled audiences to provide full and uninhibited responses to the production resulting in an exceptionally wide range of perspectives being represented.

The greatest limitation of all the data collection processes used in this project, and in fact, for audience response research in general, is the challenge of assessing long-term impact. The anonymity of the questionnaires and post-show discussions made following up with those participants an impossibility. Likewise, with such a low response rate for interviews and focus-groups, revisiting those individuals after any significant amount of time would have proved exceptionally difficult. The nature of the sampling process for research of this nature makes any data collection other than that conducted immediately after the performances challenging. This is a problem both in terms of collecting clarifying data from participants and for understanding the long-term impact of the production and can hopefully be addressed in future studies.

One finding from Two Merchants that may help this process was the relationship between house size and response rate. With the exception of the matinee (which was an unusual audience comprised mostly of students who were required to attend the production), the only time the response rate dropped below 50% was when the house size exceeded 100 people. In fact, the smaller the house size, the higher the response rate. From a research point of view, this indicates that audience response researchers may wish to limit house sizes to less than one hundred participants. It should be noted that the effect may be unrelated to the total house size, but rather to the percentage of the total possible house size (in this case, 100 people is slightly less than one-half the potential house size of the theatre). In other words, the effect may be due to audiences witnessing a half-full theatre and feeling more compelled to participate. Further study may be helpful in refining the relationship between house size and response rates in order to maximise the potential responses for research of this nature.
The house size to response rate ratio, however, reveals another of the methodological challenges inherent in this type of research: the tension between the theatrical and academic requirements of these productions. The indication that smaller houses may improve response rates, while potentially beneficial for the researchers is problematic for theatre artists for whom large house sizes are necessary, primarily for recovering the financial cost of the production. The process of creating *Two Merchants* was replete with similar contradictions from the timing of the ethics review process in relation to the production schedule to the timing of academic feedback on design elements. In the first instance, it was necessary to submit completed marketing materials for ethics review long before such materials had been created on the standard production schedule. Similarly, the academic team needed to give feedback on completed design elements, however, in a, usually, tight production schedule, by the time the necessity is recognised, there is often not enough time to make significant changes. While both the processes for creating theatrical productions and conducting research are effective independently, when attempting to combine the two there are often tensions and oppositions between the requirements of each.

Such differences are not only apparent in the respective processes of theatre and research, but also in the content of the production itself. Many of the intellectual subtleties included in *Two Merchants* appeared to go unnoticed by most audience members. It is possible that these subtleties were unconsciously accepted by audience members, but also likely that they were simply too subtle to be effectively conveyed in a theatrical setting. One example of this is the variation in ideological perspectives included in all the characters of *Two Merchants*; many audience responses suggest that most of this subtlety appeared to be subsumed under the more dominant binary clash between Jew and Arab. This is not to say that intellectual complexity and subtlety are wasted on theatre; on the contrary, such subtleties are essential to the success of productions of this nature, however they need to be conveyed in such a way as to be ‘readable’ to an audience. The frequent clash between academic and
theatrical requirements further supports the need for an integrated theatre-research team who can collaborate to resolve the process differences and support one another on the presentation of intellectually elusive content.

**Reflections of a Director/Researcher**

The length of time devoted to this process and my single-minded determination to make this a reality resulted in an unsurprising but powerfully intense emotional connection to the show and to the research. When rehearsals started, I made a conscious choice to share what had been my life for two years with the almost 100 people who worked on creating *Two Merchants*. I wanted the show to be as much theirs as it was mine. There were times when I did not live up to that ideal, but I credit myself with good intentions and a belief that for the most part, I was successful. I have no doubt that my passion for the work helped to make it as successful as it was, but I am equally aware that I could not have done it without my advocates and the vast number of people who contributed to the production.

I was frequently surprised by what emerged during rehearsals. For example, I had been reading and re-writing *The Merchant of Venice* for two years, and it was not until we were in rehearsals that I could find anything funny about it. I had never understood why it was a comedy, but it truly is. My apologies go to Shakespeare for making it more of a tragedy. One of the most surprising, if not shocking experiences, however, took place when I asked some of the actors to ad-lib some lines during a rehearsal. One young actress created an insult aimed at the Muslim Shylock that shocked me. After years of researching hate literature and propaganda, this one insult was genuinely shocking to me. Moreover, when I asked her to find something a little less offensive to say, she agreed, but also noted that I had no trouble with characters spitting on Shylock, kicking him, shoving him and murdering him, but apparently this insult was going too far. What we find offensive or shocking is fascinating. I have yet
to reconcile the apparent contradiction, but believe that I should find violence far more offensive than a shouted insult – no matter how derogatory.

As much as my passion for the project was an asset when I doggedly pursued the dream of *Two Merchants* and as a director when I helped to bring it to life, it presented challenges during the data collection and analysis phases of the study. As an actor, I am accustomed to standing on a stage and accepting that an audience will either like or dislike my performance. As a director and researcher combined, however, standing on the stage every night and acknowledging that this controversial creation was my idea made me feel unusually vulnerable. Moreover, to hear audience members criticise the show, to read some of the anger-infused questionnaire responses, and to receive my first death threat were deeply disturbing experiences. My instinct in these moments, rather than to listen to the responses and attempt to understand them, was to defend myself. I am pleased and relieved that I was able to struggle past these instincts and genuinely listen to such comments, think about them and respond appropriately rather than defensively.

Similarly, when I started reviewing the data, I found myself magnifying the negative responses in my imagination and ignoring the positive ones. Fortunately, I recognised this early in the process and tried to find ways to consciously distance myself from those inclinations. In many ways, the time-consuming nature of the analysis process proved to be a blessing. With time and repeated exposure, I was able to gain some emotional distance from the responses and begin to view them with a perspective that embraced the positive with the negative. If I still wish to defend myself against some of the comments, I accept that as part of being human and a person who loves a good debate.

These emotional responses provide further support for my suggestion that future research should allow for a combination of separation and collaboration between director and researcher. As a director, my knowledge of the research and the bodies of literature that informed it were absolutely essential, just as my understanding of the process of creating theatre in general and *Two Merchants* in
particular were necessary to my understanding of the audience responses. That knowledge should be common between director and researcher, but they should be different people whenever possible. For this research, I make no claims to objectivity, something I believe to be impossible in this context. I did, however, with some difficulty, exercise a kind of ‘moral imagination’ which allowed me to accept and try to understand the views of those who disagreed with me. I hope I have represented their views in that spirit and with honesty and respect.

As challenging as the research may have been in some respects, some of the responses I received, both immediately after the show and years later, were empowering and exceptionally touching. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to talk with a class of international students, many from the Middle East, who had seen Two Merchants. After the discussion (which was not recorded as it was not part of the data collection process), several young women from various Middle Eastern countries came to thank me, repeatedly and with tremendous passion. They were so grateful to see these stories and these perspectives on the stage, to have an opportunity talk about them. I felt incredibly proud at that moment. Other audience members thanked me for being brave enough to tackle these issues and still others asked me to remember them for future work I do of this nature. I had never thought of myself as brave before. Perhaps the audience responses were as transformative for me as the play was for some audience members.

In my discussion, I have been careful to note that I could not measure any long-term impact of the show, nor could I measure any impact beyond the scope of the immediate audience members other than their expressed intention to discuss the show. My personal experience, however, suggests that the impact of the show has lasted, and has affected people far beyond the immediate scope of the audience. At social gatherings more than a year after the show, people still approach me about it. They tell me how people are still talking about it. In fact, many people I meet, when I tell them about the show, will tell me that they never saw it, but they heard about it. One particularly interesting encounter
was with a colleague who had recently moved from Ontario. When I told her about the show, she said she had heard about it from a friend at Ryerson University. Apparently the friend had also not seen the show, but had heard about it. This admittedly anecdotal evidence does suggest that the influence of ICE possibly extends even further than the data presented here might suggest.

**Limits and Obstacles**

Several of the limits of this study have already been mentioned, however there are a few worthy of additional mention. As much as these limits could be addressed in future research, there are some obstacles to such studies that should be noted. The first and perhaps the most prominent limit of this study is the fact that, as compelling and powerful as the data may be, it does not formally prove that this intervention had any impact on behaviour, nor does it demonstrate any long term influence.

The limits of the sampling structure have already been noted, however, a further concern raised by one of the audience members at *Two Merchants* was the suggestion that a study such as this one only attracts audience members who are already sympathetic. The wide range of responses to *Two Merchants* including both glowingly positive and hateful and aggressive suggests that this is an inaccurate assumption. Furthermore, many younger audience members attended because it was a class requirement. Several classes in three different departments in the Faculty of Arts were either required or strongly encouraged to attend the show. This likely explains why so many audience members were under 21 years old. These participants were among those who were the most affected by the production. It is possible that they would not ordinarily choose to attend such an event and, consequently, were more affected by it. This suggests that future productions should attempt to broaden their audiences beyond those who traditionally attend theatre.

There were a number of obstacles to overcome in creating this study that will likely continue to be problematic for future research. The first of these are the academic preconceptions about using
entertainment, particularly theatre, as a mechanism for socio-political engagement of this kind. From the perspective of those familiar with this kind of work, the idea that theatre has a significant impact on the audience and society is common knowledge. This belief was, in fact, justification for some of the opposition to this study; why would one study something that has been an established truth for hundreds, if not thousands of years? In other disciplines, however, the preconceived notions are exactly opposite, with many academics expressing extreme disbelief that theatre might have any impact on conflict ideologies. In other cases, there appears to be some significant prejudice against theatre as an academic discipline. When I was applying to do my PhD, one potential supervisor from the department of Political Science (at a university that shall remain anonymous), when told that I did my bachelor’s degree in Theatre responded: “Well that’s not a selling point.” It is hoped that this study, in addition to challenging the ideologies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, also challenges the academic ideologies that oppose this kind of research.

A final obstacle to this study, and probably the most problematic for future research, is financial. The funding limitations in the Arts and Social Sciences are hardly a new issue facing academics, however there are some special considerations for entertainment-based research. The data from this study leaves little doubt that the quality of the production has a powerful impact on audience response. While it can be argued that good entertainment does not have to be prohibitively expensive, with audiences accustomed to Hollywood movies and multi-million dollar productions on Broadway and The West End, attempting to even approach that level of production value is often exceptionally costly. Obtaining funding to create a production like Two Merchants would have been almost impossible if the department of Theatre had not included the show in their season and encouraged their students to contribute their time in exchange for course credit.
Conclusions and the Future

While this research does not and cannot answer the numerous questions it inspires, it does answer many of the more profound, foundational questions of the efficacy of ICE. Firstly, this research combines several different disciplines, theoretical perspectives and approaches to create a unified, cohesive theoretical foundation for the creation of ICE. This offers a new approach to creating ethical entertainment to challenge ideologies, which emphasises presenting multiple perspectives without advocating for any of them. This is a new contribution to the existing body of practice of ethical entertainment, AT and TfD. Furthermore, ICE’s requirement that the audience responses to the production become the primary measure of its efficacy, and an ethical imperative, suggests a new mode of practice to AT, TfD and more traditional entertainment. The production of Two Merchants not only implemented the theory of ICE, but also demonstrated that the theory can coexist with conventional, entertainment-based theatrical practice in which the experience of the audience determines the entertainment value of the production. The audience response research firstly demonstrated that ICE does have a significant impact on the ideological views of the audience members. It confirmed that such a production inspires significant discussion and debate that extends beyond the boundaries of the audience members who attended the production. It creates a starting point for research into the most effective staging techniques and ideological interventions. Similarly, it provides the initial steps to refining our understanding of the best demographic characteristics of audiences to which such productions can be targeted. Finally, the research further reinforced that the efficacy of ICE is linked, inextricably, to the audience perception of it as a ‘good’ production.

It is clear from Two Merchants that the quality of the production, as perceived by the audience, is directly linked to its persuasive power. Unfortunately, perfecting a mechanism for reliably creating highly entertaining productions is something that artists have been struggling with for millennia; there is no formula that will guarantee a positive response to a production. Even a good script, great cast and
fabulous director can result in a deeply disappointing experience for the audience. That being said, a few millennia of theatre, and more recently film, television and video game history make it clear that the best, most entertaining productions create an immersive imaginary world, which creates the opportunity for audiences to transport themselves into the story and be affected by it. Elements such as a fluid boundary between the audience and performers can help to support and enhance this process.

When audiences encounter themes within such an imaginary world that counter their ideological beliefs, they respond in a variety of ways. Some recognise their own views in the play while others see unfamiliar, disliked or disbelieved perspectives represented. For those who find harmony between their own beliefs and those they perceive in the production, the play is an opportunity to reinforce those views. For the rest of the audience, some reconsider, some resist, and others doubt the truth of the views in the play. People often react with intense emotions ranging from amazement to disdain, and gratitude to anger. The different responses reveal a great deal about the tremendous potential of ICE to engage audiences on ideological issues, particularly those related to conflict, ethno-religious and socio-political tensions. For some audiences, ICE can be a transformative experience, one that engages the moral imagination and invites them into a world in which the perspectives and beliefs of the ‘other’ are given equal weight with their own. It can inspire dramatic changes in perspectives on prejudices that have been held for a lifetime. In these cases, ICE is an exceptionally powerful mechanism for challenging the beliefs that are fundamental to ideological conflict.

In addition, the intensity of the emotions expressed by audience members, coupled by both the strong resistance and extreme gratitude expressed by some participants suggest that not only is ICE powerful, but it is necessary. The lack of understanding, misconceptions and prejudices expressed in the audience responses serve to highlight that Two Merchants appeared to fill a void, one in which the conflict is addressed in an inclusive rather than polemical manner. Too often, the loudest voices are
those advocating a single position. It is apparent that while such voices serve their purpose, there is also a need for a more inclusive view.

Some of the responses also provided insight into the ways in which some aspects of the Canadian national identity play a role in audience responses to ICE. That some audience members considered the attempt to present multiple viewpoints or to challenge to ideologies of the Arab-Israeli conflict to be brave further reinforces both its rarity and perhaps how controversial such approaches still are. For those who accept the Canadian national belief in a multicultural, all-embracing, non-discriminatory Canada, this may be rather surprising, after all, such multiplicity is inherent in this aspect of the national identity, as some audience members asserted. How can it be brave to proclaim that which Canadians supposedly accept? Moreover, those audience members with a strong connection to this particular Canadian ideal viewed *Two Merchants* as unnecessary, predicting that the results would support them. The results however, frequently do not reflect this ethos of multicultural acceptance.

This kind of simple dismissal of the issues raised in *Two Merchants*, while not common enough to allow for any statistical measure, was not unusual. While some dismissed these issues as irrelevant in a multicultural Canada, others saw no value in religion in itself, or as a contributing factor, to the conflict. Such responses reveal a disturbing tendency among some audience members to disregard or even disparage the conflict and those for whom it holds meaning. How can a conflict with such international ideological connections be resolved when people can simply ignore it? In some cases, there is even a distinct impression of perceived superiority for doing so.

These outcomes offer both challenges and hope. It will be challenging for those fighting ideological intolerance to break through the existing prejudices, myths and indifference that make even engaging in a discussion on the subject difficult. The fact that so many responded with willingness to reconsider their views, however, offers hope that ICE, carefully crafted to suit the audience and perhaps to challenge these specific obstacles, can be beneficial in this context.
The model for ICE proposed in this dissertation contributes to the emerging field of ethical entertainment, and particularly, the ethics of theatre and entertainment aimed at challenging social and political issues. The approach proposed by ICE emphasises the inclusion of multiple and opposing perspectives. It stresses the need for detailed and comprehensive research into the identities, situations and relationships related to the relevant conflict, and to reflect the contradictions and complexities that emerge from that research in the production. ICE also advocates an approach that encourages audiences to question, discuss, debate and ultimately make their own decisions about the issues explored in the production. Furthermore, ICE includes the audience in the production in ways that are not common in existing entertainment, specifically by expecting audiences to provide their own interpretations of the content and by understanding the impact and efficacy of ICE through the responses of the audience. Finally, the discussion of morals, ethics, propaganda and responsibility for the outcome of ICE discussed in Chapter 3 contributes additional considerations to the existing practice of ethical TfD and AT, while making a new contribution to the practice of creating entertainment.

Audience response research conducted in mostly conventional theatrical settings for any purpose beyond market-research is still a relatively uncommon phenomenon. Even in more academic or AT settings, coupling theatre and academic research is still an emerging research approach. It seems clear that when conducting research on this scale, with the hope of obtaining as many varied perspectives as possible, research methods such as questionnaires are the strongest data collection mechanism. Mixed-methods studies that take advantage of the strengths of both approaches can significantly enhance the possible analyses and applications of those outcomes. While the sheer quantity of data collected through a predominantly qualitative questionnaire can be daunting, particularly with a large sample, the benefit of such an approach cannot be understated. The ability to quantify some of the qualitative responses, however, makes it possible to not only understand the

654 Creswell, Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research, 8.
subtleties, but also their prevalence and how they connect with other themes, demographic information and experiences.  

For example, one very rare theme that emerged in response to *Two Merchants* was the view, held by only a small handful of individuals, that the Jewish characters were over-sexualised. As a highly rare comment, it did not manifest in any of the quantitative data but it was interesting enough to warrant some further exploration. This criticism primarily seemed to exist for audience members who saw the MDW first, suggesting that perhaps this viewpoint emerges when the Jewish characters were being compared with their more publically conservative Muslim counterparts (since the production takes place in public spaces, there are some cultural differences in how intimacy is appropriately communicated in the respective dominant cultures). When the Jewish characters appeared first – with no existing Muslim frame of reference for comparison – such comments were exceptionally rare, if they existed at all.

While the questionnaires had significant value, the more personal approaches to the data collection such as interviews and post-show discussions will likely be more suited to other studies. The experience of this research suggests that such approaches need to be designed with the expectations of the audience members in mind. A process that is unfamiliar or actively diverging from conventional techniques should be approached with caution and, perhaps, combined with familiar elements.

**The Future**

As significant as the results from this study may be, they are one of the earliest steps in a much longer academic and artistic journey. There is a vast wealth of information about ICE that we do not yet understand. When audiences reconsider their views in response to ICE, has the production changed attitudes or ideologies and is there a difference? Are these changes permanent or transitory and do they

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655 Ibid., 12-13.
have any impact on behaviour? What is the best mechanism for reinforcing the messages and supporting its transformational potential?

With regards to discussions of ethno-religious identities and prejudices in Canada, the results indicate that not only are prejudices alive and well in Canadian society, but also that many people appear to be blind to them; they believe in the national myth that multiculturalism has defeated prejudice in Canada. Such a belief is unsurprising given that this is one of the admirable stated intentions of Canada’s multicultural laws and is common rhetoric in Canadian education and political discussions. Unfortunately what exists in the legal code and politics does not always exist to a similar degree in social practice. While hate crime numbers in Canada are relatively low, there are still thousands of these crimes every year, with the likelihood of many more going unnoticed or unreported. Despite the belief that multiculturalism and tolerance go hand in hand, some communities in Canada believe that “multiculturalism hides the practice of racialism and does not deal with the issues of inequalities of power and resources.”

In addition, the results of this study suggest that some of these stereotypes may be so deeply believed that even when confronted with an alternative, individuals will disbelieve it. For example, the one of the participants stated “no matter how I try to change my view of Muslims they will not change. Muslims have a very strange religion based on Jihad and vengeance, making me see the Muslim as the villain in both cases.” (Participant 47, 40, F) How then can any intervention – whether using ICE, education, or social programs – challenge stereotypes, ideologies and prejudices that are unrecognised or denied? While this example of ICE challenged the views of many individuals, one avenue of

exploration for the future will be to reveal prejudice and discrimination that exists within Canadian society and find ways to challenge even the most powerful ideological perspectives perhaps in the hopes of making the Canadian ideals of tolerance and acceptance a reality. Such a process will not only help to challenge familiar manifestations of intolerance such as antisemitism and Islamophobia, but will allow us to begin fighting discrimination that is, as yet, almost entirely unchallenged, such as prejudice against individuals with undesirable (and sometimes excessively desirable) body types. Moreover, it would also be exceptionally beneficial in challenging longstanding discrimination such as that faced by the First Nations population.

Yet another area for future research will be to determine if audiences would respond similarly to different incarnations of ICE. While it seems unlikely that the effect of Two Merchants was a fortunate accident, further study is needed to ascertain how different scripts, design choices, house sizes and staging influence the audience responses. Future research will need to determine which elements of conflict ideologies can be challenged most effectively through ICE, the kinds of conflicts most suited to this type of intervention, and the stage in the development of the conflict at which ICE can be most effective.

Just as the nature of ICE interventions can be refined, so too can its relationship with audiences. While Two Merchants was somewhat more effective for younger participants, it is likely that different productions will appeal to different demographics. These studies would also benefit theatre companies attempting to market their productions to specific audience demographics.

ICE does not always have to take place in a theatre or even utilise live performance techniques. Many powerful AT productions take place in non-traditional settings. Moreover, there is a wealth of film


and television that challenges or supports ideological views. In fact, any narrative-based entertainment form could be used. Given this, further research is needed to determine which medium is the most effective. For example, if one compares theatre, film and video games, it is necessary to determine which of these has the greatest impact on an audience, which has the potential to reach the greatest number of people, and how that influence balances with the vastly different financial requirements of creating each of those interventions. Theoretically, video games offer the greatest potential for influencing audiences based on the degree of immersion in the narrative, the possibility for audience participation and the time an individual audience member will devote to playing the game. That being said, such games lack the personal connection that can only be obtained through live entertainment. Likewise, while film is a medium that can reach far more people than theatre, it is likely that the intimacy of a theatrical setting enhances its efficacy. Further research is needed to determine if the intensity and intimacy of the experience (theatre) has greater transformative value than the breadth of its dissemination (film).

Even within these different media there are many possible refinements to enhance the efficacy of ICE. For example, is comedy more or less effective than drama? Do role-playing video games have a greater impact than strategy games? Beyond these refinements, how do these performed narratives compare with print narratives?

The possibilities for further research built on the foundation of this study are both exciting and vast, just as the possible applications for ICE are staggering. With the knowledge of its potential efficacy and the cohesive theoretical approach to its creation developed in this study, ICE can be used to challenge a range of ideological concerns. Beyond its applications to challenging racism, prejudice and stereotypes, it can be used to encourage productive dialogue on controversial issues such as the pro-choice vs. pro-life debate, gay marriage and religion vs. science. It can provide a forum for promoting discussion and sharing information on complex and sensitive medical research such as stem-cell
research or genetic testing. ICE can also be used to teach about some of the moments in history that prove difficult to address in classrooms. The Arab-Israeli conflict is one example, but so are the histories of the Canadian residential schools, North American colonialism, the histories of prejudice and genocide in countries experiencing the shame and trauma of those events. Just as it can be used to teach, it can help in the reconciliation process. Understanding the views and experiences of ‘the other’ are essential to lasting reconciliation and this study clearly demonstrates that ICE is a remarkably effective mechanism for inspiring at least the start of that understanding. In fact, any element of life in which ideology – broadly defined – plays a role, can be engaged with ICE.

With all its possibilities, it is easy to forget that the potential to teach, encourage tolerance, reveal multiple perspectives and help in reconciliation, is mirrored in the ability of the same techniques to promote conflict, hatred, fear and violence. Part of the inspiration for this research was the knowledge that entertainment has been and still is used to promote ideologies of fear and intolerance, particularly in conflict situations. In many ways it is easier to create entertainment that encourages fear – there is no need for the complexity of multiple perspectives or the challenges of respecting views with which you may not agree. The same techniques that make ICE such a potentially powerful medium are already being used to support individual ideological perspectives, some of which support ideological conflict, violence and even genocide.

Moreover, even ICE with the best of intentions can have some pitfalls and dangers. David Kerr, an AT artist and activist in South Africa, discusses his experience at an AT conference in Bangladesh. At the conference, many of the delegates “argued passionately for a show of force against oppressive language in a local village. “However, the Bangladeshi delegates [...] argued equally passionately against such adventurism. They explained that once the international delegates had jetted out of Bangladesh

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662 Kerr: 182.
the landlords would retaliate severely.\textsuperscript{663} Challenging established, and particularly oppressive, ideologies can be dangerous even when the participants are fully aware of the nuances of the political system. For someone attempting to conduct research of this nature in an unfamiliar environment it can be far more so – particularly for any local participants! That is not to say that ICE can only be conducted by ‘local’ populations, but rather that it is not a ‘short-term’ intervention, nor is it one that can be imposed solely from the outside. Collaborating with local populations is possible when such collaboration is respectful of their expertise and takes the time necessary to understand the complexity of the issues.

Even without the dangers of violence or retaliation, ICE can go wrong in any number of ways. Perhaps the most obvious is that people are fallible and will consequently make mistakes. Sometimes the background research has been unintentionally limited, or perhaps one has trusted sources that had a hidden agenda. There are no foolproof ways to guard against creating productions containing errors, however, extensive research, an open mind and the willingness to adapt to new information – even if that means making changes to a production at the last minute – will all help to minimize the risks of inadvertently harming when one hopes to help. This is one challenge when creating ICE in a traditional theatre context; the conventions of theatrical practice (not to mention limited budgets) do not always allow for last-minute changes or even changes to a production during the run of a show. With some forethought and planning, however, it may be possible – with the right company – to plan for such eventualities and have a strategy in place to deal with unexpected changes that are not necessarily part of the ‘normal’ production process.

Finally, ICE, by definition, takes on issues to which audiences are passionately and personally connected. Audiences may have intensely strong emotional reactions to the productions. Depending on the nature of the production and the audiences, it may be appropriate to have a way for audiences to

\textsuperscript{663} Ibid.
deal with these emotions, and perhaps even have professional resources available to help those who need it. As always, a key preventive measure is to understand the complexity of the material being presented and the likely makeup of the audience. One cannot predict every problem, but being sensitive to the impact of the production can help to mitigate the potential for ICE to cause harm.

For decades and, in some cases, centuries, we, as a society, have been struggling with issues of violence, intolerance, ideological war and fear. ICE is not a magical cure – much as we may wish for it, such a cure does not exist – but ICE is a weapon in the arsenal. In a speech given when I was a child in South Africa under Apartheid, a student stated that there are no blueprints to follow in seeking solutions to the racial, social, economic and political problems we face. ICE does not offer a blueprint, nor does it offer a magical cure, but it offers one more powerful weapon in the struggle.
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Appendix

Interview Scripts and Questionnaires

Preliminary Interview Script

Note: These questions are intended to initiate further discussion and, as such, there will likely be several follow up questions and tangential discussions that diverge from this script. The questions below are a starting point and a basic template, however, each interview will be slightly different based on the direction the research participant takes the conversation. The order of the topics discussed may change depending on the participant.

General interest in popular culture questions:

- What kinds of movies do you like?
- Do you have any favourite TV shows? What about when you were younger?
- Do you watch/read the news?
- Are there any fictional characters you particularly identify with?

Image of Jews/Israelis in popular culture questions:

- What do you think the popular image of Jews is in movies, television, or the media?
  - Do you think this is a fair representation?
  - Can you think of any examples? Characters? TV shows?
- How do you think (other) Muslims view these characters?
- How do you think Jews should be portrayed in popular culture?
  - If you were writing a screenplay, what kind of Jewish characters would you include?
- What about Israeli characters – how should they be portrayed?

Image of Muslims/Arabs in popular culture:

- What do you think the popular image of Muslims is in movies, television or the media?
  - Do you think this is a fair representation?
  - Can you think of examples? Characters? TV shows?
• How do you think (other) Jews view these characters?
• How do you think Muslims/Arabs should be portrayed?
  o If you were writing a screenplay, what kind of Muslim characters would you include?
  o What about Arab characters?

**Image of the Arab-Israeli conflict in popular culture:**

• What about the Arab-Israeli conflict? What do you think of how that is represented in the media?
  o Is it fair?
• How do you think entertainment should approach this issue?

**Influence of entertainment on audiences:**

• Do you think TV and movies influences the way people think about these groups?
  o Can you think of examples?

**Regarding the clips/images:**

• What do you think of this clip?
• What do you think of that character?
• What about the costuming? Dialogue? Accents?
• Do you think this is a fair representation?
Two Merchants Audience Response Research Questionnaire

Please complete as much of this questionnaire as you wish to. The more information you are able to provide, the more helpful it will be to the research. Any question you prefer not to answer or which does not apply to you, please just leave blank or write ‘N/A’.

The following questions provide a little background about who you are:

1. How old are you? _____________

2. Are you: __ Male? __ Female? __Other? __ Neither?

3. What is your occupation? ________________________________________________

4. What is your cultural or ethnic background? ____________________________________

5. With which religion(s) do you identify? _______________________________________
   a. How important is your religion in your life?
      ____ Very _______ Somewhat
      ____ Not particularly ____ Not at all

6. Have you ever read The Merchant of Venice? _________________________________

7. Have you ever seen a production of The Merchant of Venice? __________________
   a. If so, approximately when and where? _______________________________________

The following questions are about the play you have just seen – Two Merchants.

8. Do you think anything in Two Merchants will inspire you to re-consider some of your already existing views? _____ Yes ______ No
   a. If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
9. Who was/were the hero(es) and who was/were the villain(s) of the play? And why?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

10. Do you think you will talk about Two Merchants with your friends/colleagues/family in the next days or weeks? ______ Yes ______ No

   a. If yes, what do you think you’ll talk about?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

11. In what ways did Two Merchants reflect or connect to ‘real life’ situations you know about?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

12. What did you think of the ending?

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

13. Please share any other ideas, opinions or thoughts you have about the show, the research, post-show discussions, or any other aspects of this production.

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
Two Merchants Audience Response Research Interview and Focus Group Script

Note: These questions are intended to initiate further discussion and, as such, there will likely be several follow up questions and tangential discussions that diverge from this script. The questions below are a starting point and a basic template, however, each interview will be slightly different based on the direction the research participant takes the conversation. Not all questions will always be asked. The order of the topics discussed may change depending on the participant. The same basic template will be used for both one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions.

Before the Play:

- Why did you volunteer for this interview?
- What were you expecting about the show when you bought your ticket?
- Why did you decide to come see this show?
- What do you think of the concept of using entertainment to reduce conflict?

Questions about the play:

- What did you think of the play?
- Were there scenes/moments you particularly liked/disliked?
- Do you remember how you felt when you were watching the first act? The second act? What about now?
- Was there something you would have preferred to see? Something we didn’t do?
- What did you think of the ending?

The Play and Politics:

- What did you think of the play’s political themes?
- Do you think it represented real life situations? In what ways?
- Were there parts of the show you particularly agreed or disagreed with? Such as?
- Do you think a play like this could be helpful in promoting peace? Or do you think it would make conflicts worse?
- How do you think other people would react to this play? Religious Jews/Religious Muslims/Arabs/Christians/non-religious people?
Questions about the characters:

- Did you think the characters were realistic?
- Who was the hero? Who was the villain? Who was the victim?
- What was your opinion of Shylock (each act)? Portia? Anthonio?
- Were there characters you particularly identified with? Which ones and why?
- What did you think about the Arabs/Muslims in the play?
  - What about the Jews?
- What did you think about Jessica eloping with Lorenzo?

Post-Play Response:

- Have you talked about the play with friends/colleagues/family since seeing it?
  - What did you talk about?
- Have you been re-thinking or re-considering any of the ideas you held before the play? If so, in what way?
- Did you recommend the play to anybody else? Would you advise others not to see the play?
Recruitment Materials

Recruitment for participation in the study was done through Theatre at UBC’s normal production marketing campaign. The process included a poster for the show, a press release, numerous smaller ads in programs for other shows and newspapers in Vancouver, and social networking posts, particularly on Facebook and Twitter. The Poster and the Press release form the foundation for all advertising for the show, with smaller ads combining the poster image with excerpts from the press release. All advertising contained, at a minimum, the sentence “Two Merchants is part of a Doctoral Research Project” to ensure that participants were aware that the show included a research component. I have deleted references to names or phone numbers for individuals in the press release in the interests of protecting the privacy of the individuals involved.
Poster

Image 12: Two Merchants Poster
Press Release


TWO MERCHANTS

an Adaptation of William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice
Director Dana Lori Chalmers

November 10 - 19, 2011
TELUS Studio Theatre, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, UBC

Set amidst the modern day Arab-Israeli conflict, Two Merchants is a twist on Shakespeare's classic The Merchant of Venice. This original adaptation retains the famous story of an unpaid debt, a daughter's defection, and ancient antagonisms leading to a trial without mercy and the renewal of old hatreds. Amidst religious persecution and fear, two enemies engage in a life and death battle over an unfulfilled contract, family loyalty, and justice.

But things are not as they once were; where once an infamous Jew battled his Christian neighbors, now it is Jews and Muslims, Israelis and Arabs who must find their way through the treacherous waters of Shakespeare's 'Venice’. In one act, Shylock, the Jew, seeks justice and vengeance from within a Muslim dominated culture. In the other act, Shylock, the Muslim, strives for the same things within a Jewish dominated culture.

Two Merchants is a doctoral research project: More than a theatrical production, Two Merchants is also a research endeavor aimed at developing the use of entertainment to counter ideologies that spur entrenched conflicts. Every performance features a brief questionnaire and audiences are invited to join us for a beverage at the in-theatre bar and questions, discussion and debate after every performance. Evenings performances will also have observers in the theatre to note audience responses to the shows. In addition, audience members can volunteer to participate in a focus group discussion or one-on-one interview/discussion with the director and researcher – Interdisciplinary Studies Doctoral Student, Dana Lori Chalmers.

"The villanie you teach me I will execute, and it shall goe hard but I will better the instruction." – The Merchant of Venice

Nov. 10 - 19, 2011: TWO MERCHANTS an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice, Director Dana Lori Chalmers | TELUS Studio Theatre, Chan Centre for
the Performing Arts, Map: [http://bit.ly/9SgiLX](http://bit.ly/9SgiLX) | Curtain: Mon. – Sat. @ 7:30 p.m. | **Opening: Thur. Nov. 10** | Tickets: Reg. $22/Senior $15/Student $10 | **$7 Preview: Nov. 9** | Mondays $5 for UBC alumni! | Tickets: 604.822.2678 or **Online:** [http://www.theatre.ubc.ca](http://www.theatre.ubc.ca)

Note: Two Merchants is a doctoral research project.
Consent Forms

General Consent Information

Two Merchants

Principal Investigator: Stephen Heatley
Department of Theatre and Film
University of British Columbia

Co-Investigators:

Dana Lori Chalmers
Doctoral Candidate: Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
University of British Columbia

Susan Cox
W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics
University of British Columbia

Shafik Dharamsi
Department of Family Practice, Liu Institute for Global Issues
University of British Columbia

Richard Menkis
Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies

This study is part of a doctoral dissertation entitled “The Play’s the Thing!” Promoting Peace Through Performance being completed by Dana Lori Chalmers (co-investigator) at the University of British Columbia. The dissertation will be publicly available at the UBC library and it is likely the research will contribute to future academic publications. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Dana Chalmers, or to Susan Cox (Co-Investigator).
Purpose:

Two Merchants is part of a larger study on how entertainment can be used to help resolve conflicts. The purpose of this part of the study is to understand what people think about the Theatre at UBC production of Two Merchants. We think your opinions will be very helpful. The ideas gathered through the observation notes, interviews, focus group discussions, post-show discussions and questionnaires will be combined to help us understand how entertainment can be used to help resolve ideologically charged conflicts.

Study Procedures:

Attending a performance of Two Merchants means you are participating in this research simply by watching the show. During each performance there will be a small number of observers taking notes on the audience response to the performance (when people applaud, laugh, etc.). One, clearly marked, section of the audience will also be video recorded – you are welcome to sit in this section if you choose to. On your seat, when you arrive in the theatre, there will be a short questionnaire that we are asking you to complete. You can answer as much or as little of the questionnaire as you choose to. Finally, after the show you are also invited to join us on the stage for some informal discussions and a drink. There will be audio recorders on the tables on the stage which will record these discussions. If you prefer not to be recorded, you are always welcome to turn off the recorder. While these discussions will not be organised by any researchers, Dana Chalmers (co-investigator) will be available for questions and discussion.

Potential Risks:

There is a small risk that, during a discussion, you may find some of the topics addressed during the show or post-show discussions upsetting or hear ideas with which you do not agree or find mildly offensive. If this should happen, you are always free to withdraw from the discussion, leave the theatre or share your thoughts with a member of the research team (you can also provide feedback on the questionnaire).

As this research is taking place in a public space, for the observation, video recordings and possibly the post-show discussions, you may not be able to remain anonymous (your responses on the questionnaire can be anonymously submitted). Please be assured that the research team will keep any identifying information we may have confidential. For more information, please see the ‘confidentiality’ section of this document.

Potential Benefits:

While there are no definite benefits to you of participating in this interview, it is likely that you will enjoy having the chance to talk about your opinions and share your insights in the post-show discussions and on the questionnaire. We also hope you will find it rewarding to
contribute to research that seeks to understand the ways in which entertainment can be used to help find peace in serious conflicts such as the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.

Confidentiality:

Throughout this research, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The transcripts from any discussions will be identified only by a pseudonym – never with a real name. Any references to personal information (your name, for example) will be removed from the transcripts. The only people with access to the audio/video recordings, observation notes and questionnaires will be Dana Chalmers (co-investigator), those members of the research team taking part in the collection of this information, and possibly a transcriptionist. In the event that a transcriptionist has access to the recordings, they will be asked to keep any identifying information confidential as will the observers and research team. The original digital recordings, as well as any documents which identify you by name will be stored on a password protected computer, in a password protected file (backups will also be password protected). The transcripts of discussions, observation notes and questionnaires will only be accessible to the research team. It is possible that short quotes will be used in publications and reports on the research although we will never identify you by name but will use a pseudonym in such publications or reports. If you would like your opinions and views to be attributed to you personally, please volunteer for a one on one interview in order to explore your views more clearly. Alternatively, you may clearly state this preference on your questionnaire and include whatever identifying information you would like us to use.

We will not be destroying any transcriptions or recordings from this study after the research is complete, but all such materials will continue to be stored in password protected files and on password protected backups.

Remuneration/Compensation:

We are unable to provide any remuneration for your participation in this study however, we will do everything possible to minimise any inconvenience to you.

Contact Information about the Study:

If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, you may contact Dana Lori Chalmers (co-investigator) via email at [email address deleted].

Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.
Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If you purchase a ticket for *Two Merchants*, we assume that you have consented to, at least, the observation portion of this study. If you choose to participate in the informal post-show discussions, your participation will be taken as providing consent. The questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions each require additional consent and separate consent forms are provided for them.

In the event that you chose to sit in the video recorded section of the audience and you would like to withdraw from the study, we can – if we can identify you – refrain from referring to any information we gather from you on the video recording. Unfortunately, as we will be recording multiple participants at the same time, we cannot destroy the recordings but will refrain from using your information in the study. You are free to withdraw after being video-recorded up to one week after the date on which you saw the show.
Consent Form for Interview Participants

Two Merchants

Principal Investigator: Stephen Heatley
Department of Theatre and Film
University of British Columbia

Co-Investigators:
Dana Lori Chalmers
Doctoral Candidate: Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
University of British Columbia

Susan Cox
W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics
University of British Columbia

Shafik Dharamsi
Department of Family Practice
Liu Institute for Global Issues
University of British Columbia

Richard Menkis
Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies
Department of History (cross-appointment),
University of British Columbia
This study is part of a doctoral dissertation entitled “The Play’s the Thing!” Promoting Peace Through Performance being completed by Dana Lori Chalmers (co-investigator) at the University of British Columbia. The dissertation will be publicly available at the UBC library and it is likely the research will contribute to future academic publications. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Dana Chalmers, or to Susan Cox (Principal Investigator) who is supervising this aspect of her research.

**Purpose:**

The interview you have been asked to participate in is part of a larger study on how entertainment can be used to help inspire discussion, understanding and a greater awareness of issues relating to conflict. The purpose of this part of the study is to understand what people think about the Theatre at UBC production of Two Merchants. You have been invited to participate because you indicated you might be interested in participating in an interview of this nature when you saw the show. We think your opinions will be very helpful. The ideas gathered through these interviews will be combined with all the other information we have about people’s responses to the show to help us understand how entertainment can be used to help resolve conflict.

**Study Procedures:**

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will be between 60 and 90 minutes long. During the interview, you will be asked a few open-ended questions about your thoughts on Two Merchants. We may then discuss a few specific parts of the play (we can show you video clips to help your memory). You may be asked if you see any connections between the show and other events in the news or in history. You will always be free to not answer any questions you choose. The interviews will be audio recorded to make sure your opinions are represented accurately. If necessary, the interviewer might contact you at a later date if there is something in your interview that needs to be clarified.

**Potential Risks:**

There is a small risk that, during the interview, you may find some of the topics we discuss upsetting or hear ideas with which you do not agree or find mildly offensive. If this should happen, you are always free to ask the interviewer to move on to a different topic – you are not expected to discuss topics you find objectionable.

Since we are doing an in-person interview, you cannot remain anonymous during this study. We will, however, ensure that your privacy is respected and confidentiality maintained. For more information on this, please see the section of this form titled ‘confidentiality’.

**Potential Benefits:**
While there are no definite benefits to you of participating in this interview, it is likely that you will enjoy having the chance to talk about your opinions and share your insights. We also hope you will find it rewarding to contribute to research that seeks to understand the ways in which entertainment can be used to help find peace in serious conflicts such as the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.

Confidentiality:

Throughout this research, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The transcripts from your interview will be identified only by a pseudonym – never with your real name. Any references to personal information (your name, for example) will be removed from the transcripts. The only people with access to the audio recording of your interview will be Dana Chalmers (co-investigator) or possibly a transcriptionist. In the event that a transcriptionist has access to the recordings, they will be asked to keep any identifying information confidential. The original digital recordings of your interview, as well as any documents which identify you by name will be stored on a password protected computer, in a password protected file (backups will also be password protected). The transcripts themselves will only be accessible to the research team. It is possible that short quotes will be used in publications and reports on the research although we will never identify you by name but will use a pseudonym in such publications or reports. If you would like your opinions and views to be attributed to you personally, please inform the interviewer and initial your preference where indicated at the bottom of this form.

We will not be destroying any transcriptions or recordings of your interviews after the research is complete, but all such materials will continue to be stored in password protected files and on password protected backups.

Remuneration/Compensation:

We are unable to provide any remuneration for your participation in this study however, we will do everything possible to minimise any inconvenience to you.

Contact Information about the Study:

If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, you may contact Dana Lori Chalmers (co-investigator) at [email and phone number deleted].

Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.
Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provide (including digital copies of your audio recorded interview) will be permanently deleted unless you specify otherwise. You are free to withdraw your participation in the study any time prior to, during and within one week of your interview.

Your signature below indicates that you have had an opportunity to obtain answers to any questions you have about your participation in this research and that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Please complete the following:

Would you like us to destroy the original recording of your interview in five years?

_______________ Yes, please destroy them

_______________ No, I don’t mind if you keep them.

Would you like your comments or ideas to be attributed to you personally?

_______________ Yes please (Your comments will be attributed to you)

_______________ No thanks (Your comments will be attributed to a pseudonym)

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study and that you have received a copy of this consent form.

______________________________  ______________________________
Subject Signature                  Date

______________________________
Printed Name of Subject
Consent Form for Focus Group Participants

Two Merchants

Principal Investigator: Stephen Heatley
Department of Theatre and Film
University of British Columbia

Co-Investigators:

Dana Lori Chalmers
Doctoral Candidate: Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
University of British Columbia

Susan Cox
W. Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics
University of British Columbia

Shafik Dharamsi
Department of Family Practice
Liu Institute for Global Issues
University of British Columbia

Richard Menkis
Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies
Department of History (cross-appointment),
University of British Columbia

This study is part of a doctoral dissertation entitled “The Play’s the Thing! Promoting Peace Through Performance” being completed by Dana Lori Chalmers (co-investigator) at the University of British Columbia. The dissertation will be publicly available at the UBC library and it is likely the research will contribute to future academic publications. Any questions or concerns should be directed to Dana Chalmers, or to Susan Cox (Principal Investigator) who is supervising this aspect of her research.

Purpose:

The Focus Group you have been asked to participate in is part of a larger study on how entertainment can be used to help inspire discussion, understanding and a greater awareness of issues relating to conflict. The purpose of this part of the study is to understand what people think about the Theatre at UBC production of Two Merchants. You have been invited to participate because you indicated you might be interested in
participating in a focus group of this nature when you saw the show. We think your opinions will be very helpful. The ideas gathered through these discussions will be combined with all the other information we have about people’s responses to the show to help us understand how entertainment can be used to help resolve conflicts.

**Study Procedures:**

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a discussion with other people who have seen the show. The discussion will take between 90 minutes and 2 hours to complete. During the discussion, you will share your thoughts on *Two Merchants*, specific parts of the play and any connections you may see between the play and current or historical events. You will always be free not to answer any questions you choose. You are also free to leave the discussion at any point. The discussion will be audio recorded to make sure we can accurately represent your opinions. We will also video record the discussion in order to help us recognise who said what during the conversation (to be sure we can track the speakers as we transcribe the discussion). If necessary, the focus group facilitator might contact you at a later date if there is something in your discussion that needs to be clarified.

**Potential Risks:**

There is a small risk that, during the discussion, you may find some of the topics we discuss upsetting or hear ideas with which you do not agree or find mildly offensive. If this should happen, you are always free to withdraw from the discussion – either temporarily or permanently – you are not expected to discuss topics you find objectionable.

Since we are doing an in-person discussion, you cannot remain anonymous during this study. While we, as the researchers, will do everything possible to respect your privacy and confidentiality, there is a possibility that other participants in the discussion may not be as cautious. We will ask all participants in the discussion to respect the confidentiality and privacy of other participants, but we cannot ensure that they will do so. For more information on this, please see the section of this form titled ‘confidentiality’.

**Potential Benefits:**

While there are no definite benefits to you of participating in this interview, it is likely that you will enjoy having the chance to talk about your opinions and share your insights. We also hope you will find it rewarding to contribute to research that seeks to understand the ways in which entertainment can be used to help find peace in serious conflicts.

**Confidentiality:**

Throughout this research, your identity will be kept strictly confidential by the researchers. The transcripts from your interview will be identified only by a pseudonym – never with your real name. Any references to personal information (your name, for example) will be removed from the transcripts. The only people with
access to the audio or video recording of your discussion will be Dana Chalmers (co-investigator) or possibly a transcriptionist. In the event that a transcriptionist has access to the recordings, they will be asked to keep any identifying information confidential. The original digital recordings of your discussion, as well as any documents which identify you by name will be stored on a password protected computer, in a password protected file (backups will also be password protected). The transcripts themselves will only be accessible to the research team. It is possible that short quotes will be used in publications and reports on the research. We will never identify you by name but will use a pseudonym in such publications or reports. If you would like your opinions and views to be attributed to you personally, please inform the facilitator and initial your preference where indicated at the bottom of this form.

We will not be destroying any transcriptions or recordings of your interviews after the research is complete, but all such materials will continue to be stored in password protected files and on password protected backups.

As noted above, other participants in your discussion will be asked to respect the confidentiality of all the participants in the discussion. We will explain the above procedures to all participants and attempt to convey the importance of respecting the privacy of all participants.

Remuneration/Compensation:

We are unable to provide any remuneration for your participation in this study however, we will do everything possible to minimise any inconvenience to you.

Contact Information about the Study:

If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, you may contact Dana Lori Chalmers (co-investigator) at [email and phone number deleted].

Contact for Concerns about the Rights of Research Subjects:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, as much as possible, all information you provide will be permanently deleted from the transcripts unless you specify otherwise. Your contributions to discussions may not be deleted, however, if they are essential to understanding the contribution of another participant. In such cases, we will continue to respect your privacy and confidentiality. While we cannot delete the video-recording of your focus group discussion (as we will require it to understand the
participation of other individuals), we will not use any of your contributions or refer to your contributions unless they are essential to understanding the contributions of another participant. You are free to withdraw your participation in the study any time prior to, during and within one week of your focus group discussion.

Your signature below indicates that you have had an opportunity to obtain answers to any questions you have about your participation in this research and that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

**Please complete the following:**

Would you like your comments or ideas to be attributed to you personally?

________________________ Yes please (Your comments will be attributed to you)

________________________ No thanks (Your comments will be attributed to a pseudonym)

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study, you have received a copy of the consent form, and you agree to respect the confidentiality of others in your focus group.

__________________________ ____________________________
Subject Signature Date

__________________________
Printed Name of Subject

__________________________
Signature of Interviewer

__________________________
Interviewer Name