Theatre and the Right to have Rights

Creative intercultural encounter between Israelis and Palestinians in Israel promoting principles of peace and Human Rights in the context of reconciliation of intractable conflict

By

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Declaration Form

To whom it may concern,

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in the Dissertation, which is not my own work, has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Signed: _D. _____   Date: __22. May 2015__

Dominique Rosenbohm

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Abstract

There are many rather idealistic writings upon the effects that art can have on conflict societies and the role that art can play in the promotion of Human Rights. In the context of intractable conflict with a discourse of dehumanisation, it becomes particularly important to reemphasise everyone's right to have rights and general related principles of equality, that are central to both Human Rights and reconciliation or peace efforts. With equality as the guiding principle, what can theatre really to promote set principle in the context of micro level encounter for reconciliation of intractable conflict?

This case study will compare literature on micro level reconciliation of intractable conflict, peace education, human rights education and creativity with interviews and observations at the bilingual Jaffa Theatre in Tel-Aviv in order to asses what theatre can really contribute to the communication of Human Rights principles in the context of micro level reconciliation of intractable conflict.

Table of Content

Introduction

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

Mahatma Gandhi

There is much to be said for the power of art to move people. We access art in a different way than other pieces of information, which gives it the ability to affect a person, a room full of people even an entire nation. Both governmental and nongovernmental initiatives concerned with Human Rights and reconciliation frequently use art and theatre in particular as a medium. It can assist in attempts to overcome trauma or teach complex processes, problems and solutions in a practical and relatable way by granting participants either access to art or encourage them to produce art themselves. With an increased focus on the local level in international development cooperation, especially to international NGOs who are funding local initiatives, there is a growing interest in the possibilities of intercultural encounter. In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in, such local initiatives of encounter seem especially ambitious while facing far reaching power dynamics in all levels of society, culture and politics and problems that can be related to almost any human rights violation stated in the UNDHR (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights) and related conventions.

This research reflects upon the possibilities of creative intercultural encounter and will draw conclusions upon observations and Interviews at the Arabic, Hebrew Jaffa Theatre in Tel-Aviv, Israel[1]. The Jaffa Theatre has been bringing together Jewish and Arabic actors, directors and members of the audience since it was established in 1998 and has been working towards mutual cultural appreciation and intercultural encounter for societal change ever since.
In this research, participant observation of several plays and a theatre festival as well as interviews with three of the directors and other people from the Jaffa theatre, will be compared to literature on local/micro level reconciliation for intractable conflict, communication of the shared ideals of human rights and peace education and literature on the use of creativity in the context of Human Rights and reconciliation in order to assess the possibilities and limitations for creative micro level encounter to initiate social change toward reconciliation and a more inclusive understanding of Human Rights in particular, as it is precondition for the former.

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[1] http://www.arab-hebrew-theatre.org.il/en/about_us.php

Through this it might be possible to gain a new understanding of the possible influences of creative intercultural encounter in general and on the social division of asymmetric, intractable conflict in particular. Specifically, the case study will give insight into an attempt of creative intercultural encounter between Israelis and Palestinians[2] in Israel, in the context of the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, the research might be able to identify aspects of the creative examination of peace and human rights issues through theatre, that contribute to the effective communication of issues and perspectives central to Peace and Human Rights education.

Throughout the thesis, particular attention will be given to several underlying concepts of Human Rights such as social justice, agency and human equality, and their relation to creative intercultural encounter and the context of reconciliation on a micro level. The underlying assumption for this decision is the realisation that these underlying concepts of Human Rights are preconditions and underlying principles of many attempts at reconciliation and the struggle towards peace, equality and political stability is often inherently linked to the struggle for Human Rights in turn. As conflict situations frequently produce dehumanising images, it becomes particularly important to counteract them. A basic appreciation of humanness is necessarily one of the preconditions for the acknowledgements of one another's equality and Human Rights. This acknowledgement for equality is moreover a precondition for lasting peace. The central principles that Human Rights shares with attempts at reconciliation are therefore precondition for both Human Rights and peace. This research will therefore focus on the ways in which theatre, in the form of creative intercultural encounter, can contribute to these underlying qualities and thereby to the micro level to reconciliation practices of intractable conflict.

Research Title

Theatre and the Right to have Rights

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[2] As this research mainly focuses on the population of Israel, the term Palestinian will generally refer to the Palestinians of 1948 and the term Israeli to the culturally Jewish population of Israel. The term Arabic Israeli will include both Palestinians and Arabic migrants living in Israel, while the research will if necessary refer to Palestinians living in the OPTs (Occupied Palestinian Territories) as such specifically.

Creative intercultural encounter between Israelis and Palestinians in Israel promoting principles of peace and Human Rights in the context of reconciliation of intractable conflict

Research Question

What are the possibilities of creative intercultural encounter to counteract to contribute to promote underlying principles of Human Rights and reconciliation in the context of intractable conflict?

1. What are the main similarities of Human Rights Principles and the Principles of Peace education in the context of micro level reconciliation through encounter in times of intractable conflict according to the literature?
2. What elements of creative work can contribute to the communication of principles, central to reconciliation and Human Rights according to the literature?
3. How do experiences of the Jaffa Theatre in Tel-Aviv resonate with the literature on the topic of possibilities of creative encounter for reconciliation in intractable conflict situations?

Delimitations

The focus of the research is very much narrowed due to its interdisciplinary. It is focusing on very specific aspects of each field and the way in which they play together and benefit each other. Even though it is in the context of micro level reconciliation of intractable conflict, it is not focussing on all aspects of such reconciliation practices, merely those aspects who correlate with theatre and those, which are particularly based upon Human Rights principle. Even though it is focussing upon the communication or education of those principles, which unite Human Rights and reconciliation, it is not depending on structural elements of formal education. In terms of education, the research is merely concerned with the links between communicating peace and Human Rights values.

Even though some of the ideas of influencing social change originate from a sociological understanding, sociology does not play an essential role in the research, as effectively assessing the theatres influences upon society was difficult within the scope of this research. The focus is therefore rather on theatres impulses upon social change and its immediate,

rather than longterm effects upon the audience. Effects upon community and society could only be estimated.

The choice of Jaffa Theatre

I chose to visit Jaffa Theatre, because it's approach of intercultural encounter and educational theatre and its 17 year tradition of addressing issues of peace and social justice greatly appealed to me. Within the theatre, I decided to approach the level of the directors through interviews and the level of the audience through participant observation. The decision to exclude the level of the actors came after my first interview with an actor. I realised that there was a lot to be learned about the development of the actor's worldview and I would not be able to do it justice in my limited amount of time. To do so would have required not only more time but moreover a much higher level of familiarity with the actors and a very high level of reflection on their part regarding the development of worldview. Although I am still very interested in the different ways in which theatre is able to reach its participants, the ways in which theatre is able to reach the audience fascinated me in terms of theatres potential to initiate social change. Especially in the context of Israel and the OPTs, where identity and social dynamics seem greatly influenced by structure, constructing perspectives upon reality through theatre seemed an interesting approach and I wanted to learn more about it. I therefore decided to choose upon the level of the directors and the audience in particular.

Creative encounter and theatre

As creative encounter in the context of the case study of the Jaffa theatre means encounter through theatre, it seemed necessary to incorporate some literature on narratives and even encounter, specifically, in addition to the literature on reconciliation, education and creativity. I chose to focus on the element of encounter in particular, as the theatre seemed intrigued by the people to people principle of meeting and creating in particular, which became popular in the region after the Oslo Agreement 1993. This supports the idea of discourse between actors and audience and the approach at finding solutions or rather finding truth together.

Human Rights Principles

Even though this research is in the field of Human Rights it does not focus on one particular Human Right and its discretion or existence. If I had to decide upon the one Human Right this

research focusses on, I would have to choose Hannah Arendt's philosophical principle of the right to have rights itself. It focuses upon the conditions and some of the implications of the Right to have rights in the context of micro level reconciliation in intractable conflict.

While Human Rights cover many forms of social injustice, Human Rights education teaches the set of those laws, their application and the underlying values and principles. Some, if not all of those underlying principles are very central in the practices of reconciliation and peace education initiatives. This researches focus will be on exactly those principles, which are central to both Human Rights and peace studies literature. In simple terms, the underlying principle of both the strive towards peace and Human Right is the struggle for equality before anything else. This however is connected to social justice, empowerment, empathy and respect etc.

Whether we believe that peace is a requirement for Human Rights or Human Rights a requirement for piece, they are inherently linked and both existentially dependent on the basic acknowledgement of humanness. This might go without saying, except in conflicts that are very focused on Identity like the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In such contexts we frequently meet with dehumanisation, which makes any attempts at arguing for peace or Human Rights very difficult.

Literature

The literature review will build a theoretical fundament towards an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of creative intercultural encounter and its contribution to underlying principles of peace and Human Rights in the context of reconciliation of intractable conflict, particularly encounter between Palestinians and Israelis in Israel.

The literature review is set up to develop gradually from a rather theoretical to a more and more practical perspective. It will begin by placing the research within the context of intractable conflict, illustrating the possibilities and limitations of micro level initiatives towards reconciliation in intractable conflict situations. To assess different ways of communicating points which are central to Human Rights and the conditions for peace, the literature section will continue by focussing on the intersections between Human Rights and

Peace education to identify ways of communicating related principles that are preconditions for inspiring social change towards reconciliation. The following section will be concerned with the advantages of intercultural encounter. The literature review will conclude with a look at literature on creative in the context of reconciliation to detect elements of the use of creativity that might benefit or hinder the successful communication of Human Rights principles that are preconditions for reconciliation. This theoretical overview from the structural settings to the specific effects of creative encounter in intractable conflict situations will enable the research to gain a better understanding of the broader implications of the Jaffa Theatre's efforts and the context in which they operates. With this, the research will be able to compare the experiences of the Jaffa Theatre with the literature and draw conclusions upon the possibilities and limitations of creative encounter to convey central Human Rights principles that support reconciliation.

Micro level reconciliation of intractable conflict

To put the research within the context of micro level initiatives for intractable conflict reconciliation, the literature review will begin by looking at writings on intractable conflict resolution. In particular, this section will focus on literature on micro level reconciliation with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Intractable conflicts to which the Israel-Palestine conflict is frequently counted are long lasting, complicated and with multidimensional conflict dynamics which makes it difficult to generalize conflict resolution processes. Yet there are attempts at theoretical approaches to conflict resolution. Literature on the subject often suggests a rather multidimensional, multilevel, multi-institutional approach towards conflict resolution for intractable conflict Rupesinghe (1987). Social change of perception and reconciliation on the local level are however vital parts to most literature on the subject and will be the primary focus of this literature review, as this research focuses on possibilities of creative encounter for social change, which makes it necessary to look at attempts that focus on micro level initiatives.

Horton-Deutsch and Horton (2003) established that in intractable conflict, developing a mindfulness of the situation, could work towards reconciliation.
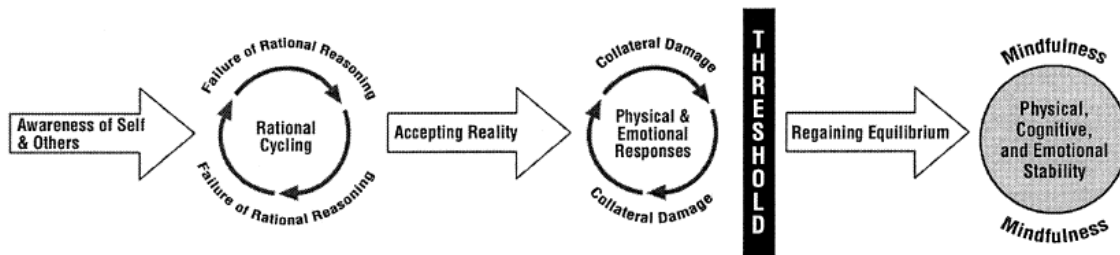
Fig 1.   Overcoming conflict through mindfulness.

This mindfulness, according to him, develops through gaining a greater awareness of one's own role within the conflict, comparing one's situation to the that of someone on the other side of the conflict and thereby gradually changing one's view on the situation. The development of a different, more objective kind of self-awareness enabled people to relate differently to the other.

> "Participants were able to define their own values and make more evidenced-based decisions. Participants no longer felt responsible for how others viewed them and were able to recognize that it was something out of their control. What was within participants' control was their response to the other person" (Horton-Deutsch and Horton, 2003: 192).

By these means, as Horton-Deutsch and Horton point out, it is possible to counteract intractable conflict situation by helping people on an individual basis to realize the entanglement and thereby the magnitude of their hostilities and enable them to entangle it. The importance of a greater self-awareness through reassessment and comparison that Horton-Deutsch and Horton focus on may have the possibility to change one's world view but seems rather difficult to create. It seems that in the context of a conflict, the preservation of one's own and one's group identity in connection to (and often as victim of) the identity assigned to the enemy group is not only driving force for social division or disassociation with the enemy group, but also necessary for the justification of one's conduct. To question such identities will therefore be rather difficult and seems to therefore require steps leading up to it rather than being the first one.

Fiol et al. (2009) for instance establish, that identity is the very core component of intractable conflict and therefore put it in the center of the module they developed for the management of intractable conflict. They believe that intergroup harmony can be achieved through several steps of promoting different values and goals (Fiol et al., 2009: 37ff). Like Horton-Deutsch and Horton, their last step includes the concept of Mindfulness as a state of

a new and greater conflict awareness that includes different perspectives and that according them leads to harmony and happiness. They make clear however, that identities, like intractable conflicts, are complicated and varying and attempts at reconciliation therefore need to focus on different levels and include a practical perspective (Fiol et al., 2009: 46ff). Reason for this conclusion seems to be the fact that this research is partially based on practical experiences.

Alexis Heraclides identifies 10 main problems that contribute to the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and makes suggestions as to how to target these problems (Heraclides, 1989: 205ff). Many of these suggestions focus on collective psychological or social change to open up strongly divided lines of opinion, as Heraclides believes that denial policies that are enforced rather than negotiated have not are self-defeating when recognizing the conflict as almost intractable and putting it in the context of ethnonationalist movements. He therefore calls for acceptance policies, which to him would work towards a shift in focus on material values to social values in order to be able to go beyond power politics and focus on solving problems and achieving peace. He suggests that social change through change of perception happens after several steps:

> "First, to indicate how factually erroneous are certain percep-tions of the outgroup and of its motivations. Second, to reveal the other side's suspicions and almost paranoic fears of one's own side and then compare them with one's own negative stereotypes, fears and suspicions … Third, to elaborate on the various classical misperceptions in all intergroup and international … and indicate the dynamics of conflict attitudes" (Heraclides, 1989: 206).

All this is to enable change as the last step (Heraclides, 1989: 206). He acknowledges however that even with these objectives of social change, the remaining obstacle in this conflict in particular is and will be the tangible, material but also spiritual and emotional value that is placed on the land as such (Heraclides, 1989: 206ff), to which every negotiation or discussion about possible solutions necessarily comes back to and fails.

Heraclides suggests that factual errors and misconceptions in the perception of the enemy group will, when discovered enable people to question the dynamics of the conflict itself in a different way. Change of perception to him is therefore linked to a change in the intellectual understanding of the conflict. His steps are not too difficult to the steps, which Horton-Deutsch and Horton suggest. They merely aim at bringing about change of perception through a more intellectual approach that focuses on facts rather than psychological

elements. His approach to micro level reconciliation of intractable conflict seems therefore slightly more straightforward and simple, might however be less applicable to ground level reconciliation cases where emotions and tensions are high.

Drawing upon his experiences with the Education for Peace Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina Danesh (2008) explains how a culture of healing develops, which he defines as a communities capacity to develop unity and harmony after a conflict.

He is proposing similar steps to social change. He states that a culture of healing can only develop alongside a culture of peace. All participants need to reflect and realise their own and their groups role within the conflict and "learn the dynamics of transformation from conflict-based to unity-based worldviews" (Danesh, 2008: 822). This, according to him, can only happen on the foundation of mutual trust and an acknowledgement of the human race being one. Then it is possible to form new bonds and new kinds of relationships and behavioural transformations from violence to peace will become evident (Danesh, 2008: 822f). Through this process, individual and societal healing under a culture of peace can work towards establishing unity-based rather than conflict-based identities, ideas and relationships. Danesh's attempt at reconciliation seems rather value driven and more practical than some of the previous ones. Comparison with the enemy group to Danesh should lead to an acknowledgement of equality, which appears to be a rather idealistic approach, which resonates however with Galtung's notion of positive peace (Galtung, 1969) also the ideological ideas behind Human Rights. A greater self-awareness and more reflective comparison with the group one perceives as enemy, has according to him, the potential to make one understand that we all are equal and one and human most of all. The acknowledgement of humanness is thus not just precondition for equality and entitlement to Human Rights, but the acknowledgement that we are equal is moreover the realization that we both are human and deserve the same rights, respect and protection from suffering.

These reconciliation attempts for intractable conflict all share a similar pattern of steps that aim at a greater and more reflective personal understanding of all sides of the conflict. All aim at awareness and reflection of oneself or one's arguments and a renewed comparison with the opposing group in order to eventually change in worldview. To Danesh, this comparison should lead to the realization that we all are one and equal. To Heraclides as well as Horton-Deutsch and Horton it leads to a greater understanding of the conflict, which then leads to social change.

Danesh goes further in his establishment of the argument for a culture of healing, by stating that the process ends not with a mere change in world view, but with the building of relationships between people from opposite sides of the conflict and a preceding change of action. This practical dimension somewhat resonates with Fiol et al. (2009). Heraclides also mentions social change being the last step and it is possible that Horton Deutsch and Horton only omitted it as there focus lay upon the preconditions of that change in violent action, or the underlying tensions both in times of violent and nonviolent conflict in Israel-Palestine. Both Danesh and Fiol et al. who have drawn upon their practical experiences in particular seem to be more reflective on their theoretical attempts and place greater importance on varying factors of practical work, which make attempts of generalization difficult.

Attempts at reconciliation of intractable that are applicable on a personal, micro level basis however, overall seem to focus on questioning conflict identities, gaining greater self-awareness, changing perceptions and ultimately gaining mindfulness or a new, more informed understanding of the conflict that includes different perspectives. Some attempts focus more at the psychological development within participants, some on the intellectual development of understanding conflicting positions upon the conflict, all of them however seek resolution through exposure to different opinions and most of them use the spreading of information or the promotion of ideals to bring about the desired social change.
The next section will therefore dwell upon the communication of ideals and its possibilities to bridge Israel's social division to establish necessary elements of a beneficial environment for such education.

Communication of Human Rights education and peace education principles

As education is a vital part of Israel's cultural division, (next to the separation through language and culture and a separate private and religious life,) educational efforts towards reconciliation must be especially aware of set social division of Israel. Al-Haj examines Israel's social division between Palestinians and Israelis and concludes that "the asymmetrical relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel is manifested in the educational and cultural system" (Al-Haj, 2002: 181).

In order to identify necessary qualities of an encounter or other efforts of ground level reconciliation that target the social divide, try to build bridges and communicate a broader and more inclusive understanding of equality and Human Rights, the literature will in the following focus on educational efforts to communicate peace and Human Rights principles in settings of intractable conflict. Education in this context will be seen not necessarily as bound to the parameters of educational institutions and curricula set by the state, but rather as a broader concept of conveyance of information. This will enable the research to non-discriminately look at various forms of information conveyance and compare those methods of conveyance without being distracted by structural settings.

 The section will therefore aim at identifying effective means of communicating principles of equality, social justice, agency and others related to Human Rights and efforts of reconciliation.

Human Rights education

There is a strong connection between Human Rights Education and Peace Education. Several authors have place Human Rights education within the context of peace education as a part of the process of reconciliation or conflict prevention. They both share many of the same underlying principles, as their ultimate goals are very similar as well: peaceful coexistence on the basis of mutual respect and equality. Even though there are many, varying definitions for both, many of which include the element of the conveyance of ideals that are undeniably central to them (Jones, 2006).

Johannessen and Unterreiner (2010) talk about the pedagogy of social justice, which they define as gestures of humanity executed in education. They explain that, while the meaning of social justice and with it the parameters of teaching it are shifting, expanding and developing, it becomes more and more necessary that those who seek to communicate ideological principles and ideas lead by example and teach through actions not merely through words. The 5 guiding principles for teachers of social justice according to this definition of the pedagogy of social justice should be: the integrity or the degree to which ideological believes are encored within the teachers life, caring about the development of the pupils characters, respect for everyone's voice and opinions, commitment to service and thereby to everyday ethical actions that demonstrate their integrity and finally accountability to themselves and to

others who might critically reflect upon their actions and values (Johannessen and Unterreiner, 2010: 79ff).

Reimers and Chung (2010) underline the connection and cooperation of Human Rights education and Peace Education and point out that

> "Human rights education provides a common framework that acknowledges people's fundamental rights; coupled with peace education, which teaches people to work out differences in respectful, empathic, tolerant and therefore non-violent ways, an education system grounded in human rights education will help to reduce incidences of violent political conflict " (Reimers and Chung, 2010: 505).

They also agree that nonviolent attempts at conflict resolutions require basic respect and acknowledgements of everyone's fundamental rights (Reimers and Chung, 2010: 505f). The Compass Module for Human Rights education from the council of Europe provides vary detailed guidelines on how to teach Human Rights (Council of Europe, 2014). They agree with Johannessen and Unterreiner, that these teachings should be expressed through actions as well as words and focus on all building a culture of Human Rights, respective and knowledgeable of all themes, rights and responsibilities of the UNDHR and related conventions.

While education for social justice, peace education and Human Rights education share similar underlying principles and ideals, there is room for interpretation regarding it's the form of education. It should however include a practical dimension of leading by example and striving towards accountability. The shared ideals build a strong ideological framework of mutual respect and responsibility that not only adds to, but is in many ways requirement for peace education. Human Rights education is a necessary part of peace education, because it provides the basic acknowledgement of (not merely legal) equality, which according to Galtung is the only basis on which lasting peace can be achieved (Galtung, 1969: 183ff; Galtung, 1996). Other authors express rather similar views on the necessity for Human Rights education in the context of conflict (Jones, 2006; Grodofsky, 2012; Davies, 2010; Martin, 1987).

If Human Rights are understood under Hanna Arendt's philosophic approach of the right to have rights (Näsström, 2014), that is to say, if Human Rights are understood as a more or less universal principle applicable to each and every one with the sole requirement of being human, rather than a legally given framework or construct that legitimises political power, it is simple to say that Human Rights are a reality for every human being. What makes interdisciplinary research interesting and necessary in this regard is therefore that Human Rights can be seen under many different aspects and only fully understood if grasped as not merely a philosophical ideal of equality and thereby condition for the possibility of working towards positive peace, but also as a socially constructed, politically reproduced and legally/institutionally reinforced collection of functions with different meaning and consequences in different settings. Some of the basic principles underlining principles of Human Rights, that this research will be focussing on in the following are therefore equality, social justice, agency and empowerment, mutual respect and appreciation of differences.

Coexistence and Peace education in intractable conflicts

To expand the focus upon the principles of Human Right education that are beneficial for reconciliation, it is necessary to set them against literature on peace education.

Bar-Tal (2004) explains the concept of education for coexistence and its importance for intractable conflict on the basis of ethnocentrism in comparison to its effects on conflict based on intergroup dispute. To him coexistence

> „Refers to the conditions that serve as the fundamental prerequisites for the evolvement of advanced harmonious intergroup relations. It refers to the very recognition in the right of the other group to exist peacefully with its differences and to the acceptance of the other group as a legitimate and an equal partner with whom disagreements have to be resolved in nonviolent ways" (Bar-Tal, 2004: 256)

It is to be understood under as a nonviolent, equal partnership on the basis of mutual recognition of each other's existence and humanity (Bar-Tal, 2004: 256ff).
On a societal scale, education for coexistence can have many forms and is usually initiated by a small minority of people. He proposes however, that it demands a multilevel, multi-institutional process of planned as well as informal processes, the involvement of societal, cultural, educational, political and religious leaders and institutions, the support of all

channels of information/media as well as sanctions and legislations to support new norms (Bar-Tal, 2004: 264). Such educational processes can have great impact on conflicts that are based on ethnocentrism he believes. In the context of intractable conflict however, education for coexistence can only play a small role, as "change of the psychological repertoire is related to a conflict resolution process that includes negotiation, compromises, statements of the leaders, unilateral and bilateral acts of good will" (Bar-Tal, 2004: 267) etc.

The notion of recognition of humanity sheds particular is requirement of an understanding of Human Rights as well as peace education or education for coexistence. Here, it becomes clear, that both are inherently linked to the aspects of conflict identity, which is, as Bar-Tal explains, often linked to a powerful societal discourse reproduced in the media. A change in worldview, as suggested by the literature on reconciliation for intractable conflict, requires reflection upon the one's own identity and the identity assigned to the enemy. If the later does not include a basic acknowledgement of humanity, it becomes redundant to argue for Human Rights or mutual respect and efforts of reconciliation and peace education must therefore face similar problems. Identity and the media discourse are therefore a vital part of the process of communicating peace and Human Rights principles.

Peace education also requires an infrastructure of surrounding conditions to be effective in the context of intractable conflict. These condition can are mainly concerned with governmental or political commitment, cooperation and willingness to contribute to peace and reconciliation processes and the related institutional support of the educational efforts (Bar-Tal and Rosen, 2009: 560ff). Without these political-societal conditions however, there is still room for indirect peace education which might not have imitate, but still might have long term effect on its recipients. Such an indirect peace education is to him, still happening in a classroom, but does not openly or too directly negate the ethos of conflict. It would still focus on similar themes, and in the end

> „Encourage openness, criticism, and scepticism, exposure to and consideration of alternative ideas, sensitivity to human rights, empathy toward other groups, and knowledge and skills concerning conflict resolution" (Bar-Tal and Rosen, 2009: 563ff).

He very much sees school education as the primary tool of socialising and raising future societies. Yet its success is greatly dependent on outside factors like governmental cooperation and multilevel institutional support. The shape of peace education will always

concentrate on a few central values ("tolerance, reflective thinking, peace, acceptance of the "other," rejection of violence, and human rights" (Bar-Tal and Rosen, 2009: 569)); its form however will vary. It is always designed to facilitate peace and reconciliation by developing holistic worldviews of peace. Even indirect peace education, according to him always needs to be conscious of the political-societal conditions in which it is taking place (Bar-Tal and Rosen, 2009: 569).

This broader focus is important to keep in mind, when putting reconciliation efforts into perspective as there is only so much that can be done on the micro level of intractable conflict.

Salomon (2004) sees the effects of peace education in the context of intractable conflict as preventive rather than actively improving (Salomon, 2011: 271f). Yet his experimental studies showed that learning about the processes of peace and conflict in general and forming personal relationships and learning about personal narratives in particular can have an impact.

> „It became evident that honest and detailed personal storytelling that involves the sharing of memories and pain, inner conflicts and insights, combined with the emotional support of the group, allows one to go "beyond victimhood." This in turn supports the reconstruction of a more complex identity no longer fixated on one's sense of being a victim. ... (S)uch changes underlie the legitimization of the other side's perspective" (Salomon, 2011: 269).

Like Bar-Tal, Salomon is mentioning the influences of identity, acknowledging the effects of narrative in influencing society and contributing to peace education and outlines the power of the connection between the two. His narratives however are not merely social once reproduced through media, but moreover personal narratives. The impact of such will be put into focus again in the following chapters.

Peace education seems to be summed up by the strive towards equality as well. There are also elements of identity and perspective, which aim at fighting attempts at dehumanisation of the enemy and victimisation of one's own group. These however, are ultimately also conditions for Human Rights. The structure of peace education seems to be along the lines of the more practical and wholesome Human Rights education approaches of the Compass module and Johannessen and Unterreiner (2010).

Humanness

As established earlier, the acknowledgement of somebodies humanness is vital to the acknowledgement of her or his equality and human rights and thereby essential to any peace process.

One aspect that seems however particularly central to Israel's social division seems to be the dehumanization of the enemy, which is in line with the general importance of identity, previously established as central to intractable conflict and which underlines the importance of intergroup encounter.

> "a wealth of evidence points to the specific association between dehumanized perceptions of the other and large-scale violence. ... In the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, for instance, dehumanization has been reported to increase support for retaliatory aggressive policies in the conflict" (Leidner et al., 2013: 181f)

Leidner et al. did two studies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to illustrate the notion, that dehumanisation effects both the Israelis and the Palestinians notion of justice and thereby the forms of violence used within the conflict. The study found, that the ability to empathise with the other people or in fact to recognize the "sentience of the other" (Leidner et al., 2013: 182) can make the difference between choosing retributive justice (punishment, revenge) over restorative justice (symbolic compensation). See the own people as the victim does in turn advocate for retributive justice.

In intractable conflict (which they call protracted conflict), they argue, retributive justice will drive the conflict forward, as both parties see themselves as victims and a people that sees themselves as the victim, will react stronger to punishment. Restorative justice in turn, will be harder to navigate.

> "The victim status is experienced as psychologically rewarding (Nadler et al., 2008), each group usually sees itself as suffering more than the other—a problem exacerbated by minimization of the other's sentience, seeing "them" as unable to suffer as "we" do. If all conflict parties view themselves as victims (e.g., in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict), it follows that all of them are more in need of empowerment rather than acceptance. ... It is possible, however, to achieve restorative justice by having all sides reciprocally provide material and, more importantly, symbolic compensation to each other" (Leidner et al., 2013: 190)

This notion seems to be dominant in the literature following Israeli Palestinian encounter as a means of reconciliation. Creative encounters, or encounters between Israelis and Palestinians in general seem to serve as examples, to offer different ways of thinking and the opportunity to broaden one's horizon around the social divide within Israel or between Israel and the Palestinian Territories. As ground level projects however, they are generally not considered to have a tangible impact on the overall conflict. Yet most writings on the subject end on either a vague or a rather positive note, suggesting that, if an intercultural encounter works on a micro level, there might be the possibility to adopt elements of it on a macro level as well. The literature suggests that successful encounters can be leading examples to imitate (Brinner, 2009: 326), can build lasting relationships which are condition and foundation of lasting change (Halabi and Zak, 2014: 73f), or can make for more productive, different kinds of conversations, which are needed in order to work towards resolutions (Maoz et al., 2002).

Creativity

Finally the literature will focus on the element of creativity and its possibilities and limitation to contribute to the reconciliation-purposes of intercultural encounter. This section will begin with a look at creative narratives in particular and move on to literature on the subject of using music and theatre.

Trzebiński (2005) explains how social data is received when communicated through narratives. According to him narratives enable people to internalise information in a different, more intense way. People are more capable of distinguishing the narrative from its social background and more eager to understanding the motivations and emotions of the person, the narrative belongs to. This leads to more empathy and a higher emotional understanding.

> "Seeing another person within a story context affects the kind of information we are looking for, remember better and process more deeply. … Within this context a person is seen as more coherent and understandable and therefore subjectively is more real and distinct from others.
> … Stronger empathy and identification caused by the narrative mode results from:
> a) Accentuation of motives and emotions in processing personal data; and
> b) The fact that our personal experiences are organised mainly within narrative frames as self-narratives." (Trzebiński, 2005: 23).

Senehi (2002) adds, that narratives are accessible and thereby accessed in ways that other information is not. Furthermore, telling a story, she explains, is empowering to the narrator, who is voicing his or her story (Senehi, 2002: 45). To the Audience, constructive Storytelling, which according to her

> is inclusive and fosters collaborative power and mutual recognition; creates opportunities for openness, dialogue, and insight; a means to bring issues to consciousness; and a means of resistance (Senehi, 2002: 45)

has the means to create an emotional understanding and a different awareness of the conflict, but moreover as the possibility to target all areas of intractable conflict. She concludes that, while stories are very powerful in transporting truths, their power in transforming conflict is however limited by outside factors, as they can only ever be as powerful as the action they inspire. This action in turn will be decided by people, their surroundings and internal worldviews (Senehi, 2002: 57).

Many attempts at localized conflict resolution focus on encounter with the enemy to give both parties the chance to deconstruct myths and stereotypes, overcome fear and rationalise their hostilities. Narratives in the form of encounter especially, seem to can have the ability for great impact.

Ifat Maoz identifies 4 models of Israeli-Palestinian planned encounter that have developed over the last 20 years: "the Coexistence Model, the Joint Projects Model, the Confrontational Model, and the Narrative-Story-Telling Model" (Maoz, 2011). He found that all modules have evolved out of lessons learned from one another and have strengths and weaknesses that determine some level of success or failure in the attempt to improve intergroup relations to work towards reconciliation.

Especially in the beginning, joint encounters tended to be less confrontational. Those where more generally socially accepted and enabled a broader range of people with opposing political opinions and even children to participate, but at the same time often reproduced the status quo by not addressing asymmetries in social or political power relations. Jewish participation in such encounters is also often higher than the participation of Arabic people. Less confrontational projects can succeed however, in reducing fear and hostility, finding commonalities and even sometimes in creating a joint purpose and identity to exist alongside

the existing ones. This according to Maoz is especially true for encounters that involve a shared purpose like sport or art projects etc., which became the second module.

After that he deduces, more confrontational kinds of encounters developed that discuss issues and thereby often lead to a deeper understanding of both sides of the conflict with its dilemmas and implications for both peoples. A more confrontational nature of a project however, alienates many possible Jewish participants according to Maoz. They also bare the possibility of turning into less productive kinds of arguments even though, or possibly because more confrontational encounters are generally more egalitarian and socially just and thereby less prone to reproducing outside asymmetries.

The last emerging module of encounter included personal narratives, which are just harder to argue with. They were not only successful in conveying empathy and an emotional understanding of an individual destiny but moreover broadened the many peoples understanding of different complexities on both sides of the conflict. True narratives make it impossible to avoid addressing social and political asymmetries and "the discussion of these issues through personal stories enables an increase of intergroup acceptance and understanding while avoiding dead-end" (Maoz, 2011: 121). The challenge here lies in the quality of the narrative to convey an emotional message and in avoiding pitfalls of accidentally offending or alienating people. He seems to question however, to what extend ground level encounters are able to address an intractable conflict like this one at all. Although Maoz repeats the notion of the power of narratives, this time in the context of encounter specifically, to him it is relative to the realities of social and political asymmetries, which must be stronger and more dominant than single stories. The narrative module however is the most evolved one according to him and the one most effectively eradicating past mistakes.

In short, narratives are proven to increase access and emotional understanding of complicated coherences and enable reflection upon issues of conflict identity.

Music and Theatre

Lederach (2005) establishes that some form of art is a vital part of peace processes on the local level (Lederach, 2005: 34ff) and that reconciliation processes would be improved through a more creative, intuitive approach (Lederach, 2005: 159f).

To him, art is connected to our humanity as well as our capacity to love (Lederach, 2005: 161f). He explains creativity not as a mere tool, but an entire approach and a path towards reconciliation.

Several chapters in *Music and Conflict Transformation* deal with the possibilities and advantages of using music in conflict transformation processes. Laurence (2007) focuses on the possibilities of music to increase an emotional understanding of experiences (Laurence, 2007: 13ff) that enable people to identify with one another, find similarities and accept differences on the basis of respect, humanity and human dignity (Laurence, 2007: 24). Such an emotional understanding often requires no particular language or education (Cohen, 2007: 26ff). Galtung (2007) explains how through producing music in a group, it is possible to not merely communicate peace but rather becoming peace itself and that through working together the creative creation can become more than just the sum of its parts which to him is the very core of not mere settlement of conflict but actual peace building (Galtung, 2007: 53ff, 58ff). Kent (2007) however, warns to consider that music or art can have the opposite impacts on conflicts as well, as its purpose is determined on those in power. Music can promote love or hate, heal or hurt, unite or divide, depending on the intentions and feelings of the people in charge of it (Kent, 2007: 104ff). If we recognize the power of creativity, it is not enough to celebrate its beauty and recognize the ways in which it can be used for good. Their needs to be a sense of integrity and responsibility linked to the power of reaching people on an emotional level and communicating ideals.

Musleh (2011) analysed several theatre initiatives in the OPTs (including The Forum Theatre, Alrowwad Theatre, and Theatre from the inside Out and Ashtar Theatre) upon their abilities to contribute to peace building and resistance. He found that theatre can incidentally have the ability to help students of creation or performance of theatre to "develop self-esteem, maturity, acceptance of others, dialogue skills, and the ability to work as part of a team", and that such initiatives can "encourage performers (directly) and audiences (indirectly) to question prevailing ideas and norms" (Musleh, 2011: 106). These theatres, according to Musleh, encouraging people to critically reflect upon themselves and the conflict, express themselves and accept differences while using theatre to address "their daily struggles, resist injustices at all levels, and strengthen their compassion and humanity" (Musleh, 2011: 119). The engagement in such initiatives can encourage a "sense of responsibility and agency" (Musleh, 2011: 109) and generally assist the communication of sensitive or complicated

issues (Musleh, 2011: 107ff, 110, 112ff, 114), strengthen community (Musleh, 2011: 115ff) and have the ability to assist negotiations and peace building initiatives (Musleh, 2011: 117). Many of the advantages of theatre that Musleh describes resonate with both Human Rights principles of respect, agency and equality and with general negotiation and peacekeeping efforts. If we recognise Human Rights or at least equality as a precondition of any form of lasting peace, theatre seems to provide a great frame and the structural conditions for initiatives that seek to unite the communication of peace and human rights principles. Giving participants the opportunity to voice their struggles, take responsibility and critically reflect upon themselves, see themselves in a different light unites many of the previously established preconditions for reconciliation processes in intractable conflict situations and the preconditions for claiming human rights. The dimension of adding an audience to this sort of self-reflection offers the possibility to spread this critical reflection upon one's own role within the conflict, the resulting new perspective and the openness to new ideas, a new understanding of complicated coherences as well as the having a voice and a sense of agency and responsibility. All these revelations can be transported to a community and encourage reflection, new perspectives and a sense of responsibility and agency within the members of the audience in turn. All these possibilities of theatre initiatives face certain challenges however according to Musleh such as finding uninterested donors who reframe from interfering with the work or content of the theatres, the general political instability and implications of living and working under the occupation (Musleh, 2011: 117ff). Ramsbotham et al. (2011) agree with the powers of music and especially theatre to contribute to conflict resolution, enable emotional understanding, demonstrate and spread ideas and encourage new perspectives and reflections upon conflict, and identity to contribute to harmony and understanding on different levels of society (Ramsbotham et al., 2011: 349ff).

Creativity does seem to have the great ability to cater to the processes of reconciliation of intractable conflict effectively. Narratives in particular, as established earlier have the possibility to personify and communicate the central principles of Human Rights in a unique way. They can contribute greatly to broadening one's understanding of the conflict with different perspectives. They have the ability to address sensitive issues in harmless ways, demonstrate mutual respect and the ideal of every experience and every voice being equal, and can enable people to re-evaluate judgements upon the conflict and all parties within it.

There are several practical examples of creative or educational initiatives that focus on encounter. While this is a firm argument in favour of using theatre for peace education, there are arguments against it as well. O'Toole and Burton (2006) focus on the DRACON project and its outcomes and investigates the effects of drama techniques in teaching children to understand processes of conflict and the concept of conflict literacy. It is an example of a creative initiative, using encounter for Peace education. In the DRACON project, the concept of conflict literacy is described as the acquired ability to apply the understanding of conflict and use it to avoid and reconcile conflict in everyday life. O'Toole and Burton however "believe that the twin demands that drama makes on its participants, for empathy and distance, both make it normally unsuitable for use in direct conflict mediation and resolution in school contexts" (O'Toole and Burton, 2006: 271).

Yet other practical examples of creative encounter like the West Eastern Divan Orchestra have made more favourable experiences. Under the basic principle of harmony and mutual respect Israelis and Palestinians rehears and perform together all over the world as a symbol of the possibility of coexistence (Beckles Willson, 2009).

Normalisation

Many Palestinians are however rather critical towards the idea of encounter through projects etc. Due to the long history of the conflict and the mass of NGOs and international institutions active in the field, the cultural Normalisation discourse or the discourse around a normalised relationship between Israelis and Palestinians is very present, especially within Palestinian society. In the context of creative or other projects working with both Israelis and Palestinians in Israel and the OPTs it criticizes initiatives that reproduce or ignore structural, social and political asymmetries between Israelis and Palestinians and thereby reinforce Israel's power or legitimacy. To such critics, normalisation and integration in society can only be agreed to after there is equality and an end to the occupation. Not addressing and condemning social asymmetries and the oppressed position of the Palestinians is therefore counterproductive and therefore resented by many Palestinians (Mi'ari, 1999: 342ff; Schulz, 2008: 40, 44). Some literature however suggests that not all Palestinians resent the general idea of a normal relationship with Israelis in the present already (Mi'ari, 1999).

Literature Conclusion

The possibilities of creative encounter to communicate central principles of Human Rights in the context of micro level reconciliation seem to be rather high according to the literature. The relative power of micro level reconciliation needs to be taken into account, which can only ever have local effect such a multidimensional conflict. Yet it can be concluded, that creative encounter seems particularly well suited for broadening identity, encouraging reflection upon ideas, perspectives and worldviews and increasing the general understanding of the conflict and its different sites on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The engagement in creative communication of opinions or experiences has an empowering character and the possibility of raising issues of social injustice that in turn might have an impact on social power dynamics. Especially the dynamic between identity and narratives, how the revaluation and comparison of ones own identity and ones perspective of the enemy can be assisted through narratives, seems to be rather effective in terms of counteracting dehumanisation, which is counterproductive for both an inclusive understanding of Human Rights and for the possibility of reconciliation.

Methods

In terms of methods, this research will conduct a case study of the Jaffa Theatre in Tel-Aviv, Israel, that has an element of Palestinian-Israeli encounter and joint performance that encourages communication around peace and human rights principles. The Jaffa Centre in Tel-Aviv is a cooperation of two local theatres companies who frequently work together to conduct plays in Hebrew and or Arabic and have discussions with the audience after some of their performances. Otherwise the companies are independent and merely share the venue. Jaffa Theatre was founded in 1998. It was founded through donations and government many. Its ideological ambition is to bridge the social divide and to increase appreciation for the Arabic language and culture. The social divide they are focussing on, is attached firstly to language and secondly to culture rather than to ethnicity or religion. Many of the plays are concentrating on important social issues that resonate with the peace and Human Rights discourse.

Participant Observation

Through Participant Observation of the theatre, one festival and 7 plays in total, I could gain an understanding of the processes within the theatre and the immediate effects of the plays upon the audience. This enabled me to draw conclusions upon how the theatre and its communicated ideas are received by its surrounding community and to estimate possible effects the theatre might have on the communication of peace and Human Rights principles to audience and society (Creswell, 2009: 181). Observations where entirely captured through notes, as video recording presented unnecessary technical difficulties and ethical issues. As an observant I tried to interfere as little as possible during the plays, but tried to engage people in conversation after them, in order to assess people's reactions better.

During the observations I played special attention to not only the reactions of the audience but moreover the theatres attempts at communication of Human Rights issues and ideals that were comparable to or resonated with the literature (Creswell, 2009: 177ff).

Interviews

Although I initially intended focus group interviews with the actors, I decided upon interviews with the directors instead later on, for both practical and content-related reasons. I was particularly interested in the way structural elements are influencing the theatre in relation to society and was wondering in what ways creating theatre can counteract social structure. While that proved to be a big task for this particular research to fully understand these dynamics, I decided to still limit my focus on to directorial level and the level of the audience, excluding the actors in my analysis (Newman, 2014: 465f; Creswell, 2009: 177ff, 181). Through semi structured interviews with three of the directors of the theatre, as well as two more unstructured interviews with one of the actors and another women working in fundraising at the theatre, I tried to gain insight in the inner workings of and the ambitions and motivations behind the theatre to understand the processes of creating and communicating alternate perspectives on reality with the intention of social change (Newman, 2014: 465f).. The semi structured interviews were supposed to be guided by the following questions:

However, after I introduced myself and stated my thesis idea to the interviewees, they generally immediately started talking. In my opinion, everybody has and has to have a strong opinion on the conflict, on politics and society, which is due to the conflict situation. It is a

very vital and central part of many peoples identity. Therefore I did not need to focus too much on having the questions not be too leading towards a certain answer. Everybody was very willing and able to give me their opinion on the division of society as well as the impacts of theatre, regardless of how I might receive it. Their political opinion and social identity was apparent in every part of their being, which becomes very apparent during the interviews. As this research is mainly looking at the directorial level, the interviews I mainly focus on in the analysis are the ones with the main director of the Hebrew company (who can also be considered gate keeper of my research), the main director of the Arabic company and one interview with another director of the theatre, who in her plays focuses a lot on women's and other Human Rights issues. Other, unstructured interviews I did with one of the Palestinian actors and a women working in fundraising are mainly used for background information and context, as the main focus is on the directorial level. Those two interviews are also not transcribed.

About the Data

I documented my observations through notes while I was observing and recorded and transcribed my main three interviews. I did not transcribe the unstructured interviews, as I mainly used them for background information. While I could resort to the English language during the interviews, the observations presented a challenge, as I neither speak Hebrew nor Arabic. Although I thought that the language barrier would be an obstacle to fully understanding the social dynamics within and around the theatre, the ideological implications of the plays or the audience's reaction upon them, I found that eliminating the language component had advantages as well. While I did not fully comprehend the plays, especially those who were less visual and put more emphasis on text, I could focus more on the audience than I otherwise could have done. I could focus on body language, tone of voice and facial expressions more intensely and thereby could see whether they were engaged in the play and the emotional journey of the characters or not, whether they laughed, caught their breath and felt the tension or where disinterested and disengaged.

Before I came I was not aware, that the Arabic company had decided not to work with the Hebrew company anymore. My ideas might have rather naïve in fact and maybe they are still to some extent. It was particularly interesting for me therefore to meet with the disillusionment of many people at the theatre who had been disheartened by the recent

outbreak of conflict in the summer of 2014 and where disappointed by the more conservative political change after the elections earlier this year. When I realised how far my hopes for the abilities of theatre to impact society where from the reality, (so much so that the foreign discourse of coexistence had already become redundant to most people I met with,) I was however able to leave most of my ideas behind and shape my research in a way that hopefully does justice to theatres abilities and the experiences of the people I talked to.

The case study however, as it was done on a limitied number of people has very little claims to present conclusive truths. It seemed to correspond rather well with the literature however.

Epistemology & Methodology

Methodologically, the research was conducted as a Case study of a theatre in Israel, and vicinity for creative Jewish-Arabic encounter within an intractable conflict (Creswell, 2009: 13).

Epistemologically the research will be conducted along the lines of Creswell's social constructivist Worldview (Merry, 2006 39ff). That is to say that the research will in the praxis be looking at processes of interaction between the audience and the actors, and the social, cultural and political context in which the theatre is working in. The data will be used in an inductive way. Through this, the research will attempt to understand the constructed, subjective meaning of the participants work to them and their audience and in relation to its implications for the surrounding social, cultural and political setting in which it takes place. These impressions of the way the theatre is shaped by society and is shaping society in turn, will be related back to the literature (Creswell, 2009).

In constructivism, meaning is "constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (Creswell, 2009: 6ff, 8). In the theatre the authors, directors and actors views of the world come together to influence the final play. This play is interpreted and made sense of through the eyes and thereby with the worldview of each and every member of the audience. Theatre therefore can be seen an intensifying mirror, a product, critique of and influencing element to the social construct (Creswell, 2009: 8).

As a researcher I will make use of my knowledge and experience to conduct meaning, will however be reflective of the influence of my preconducted ideas and notions because I believe

that every truth must be subjective and its legitimacy determined by personal experience. For this research, as I seek to understand an experience within a social, cultural and political setting I did not grow up in, the interviewee's truth must be the guiding principle and cannot be overshadowed by my preconceived ideas. The experiences I have gained in assisting and participating in multicultural, armature youth theatre groups and while working with children at an integrative Jewish-Arabic summer school in Jerusalem undoubtedly assisted me in understanding the cultural setting and nature of work. They can be background information on intercultural encounter, creative work and the social and cultural situation in Israel and OPTs but will not be driving force in this researches quest for a greater understanding of the use of creative encounter between culturally Jewish and Arabic people in Tel-Aviv.

Ethics & Safety

While conducting on observations I payed attention the power dynamics between me and the observed whenever possible to assess whether my questions might be leading towards an answer or whether my presents might influence the behaviour of the observed. I did not however detected much influence on my side. Upon reflection, I probably did have more of an impact than I thought, it was however evident, that especially the interviewees hat very strong opinions already, as none of them waited for my questions and began to talk as soon as I had told them about my thesis subject, the purpose of the interview and had asked them whether I might be able to record the interview. To most of the members of the audience I was one of them, I believe. The only time they suspected I was not was when I did not understand their request for me to find a way to turn down the air-condition or they otherwise decided to speak to me and realised I could not answer in Arabic or Hebrew.

Whenever asked, I was very open and honest about my personal background and my purpose for being there. This I think, and the fact that I came back day after day, watching more and more plays, enabled the people belonging to the theatre to trust me and open up gradually. According to Creswell, trust is the best way to counteract harmful power dynamics (Creswell, 2009: 8f). As a foreigner, to be there and try to understand something that was very basic and central to the existence of most people belonging to the theatre, made me question my legitimacy immensely to do this research immensely which made me decide upon trying to gain a theoretical understanding of the processes and out that in the centre of my research slightly more than the experience so the literature might learn from reality, and I would still

be able to critically reflect upon what I learned. I do not have any claim to entirely understanding Israeli society or even the processes of the theatre better than anyone. I can reflect upon my impression and rely upon the narratives I collected. I can even put them in perspective to some extent, but I have no claim to a greater truth and I will not pretend I do either. To do so would be to put myself above others.

All the interviewed have agreed for me to use their names for my research and where not concerned with any danger to their safety or privacy for doing so. I still decided to use first names only, even if anyone seriously attempting to, might still be able to easily identify my interviewees. During the analysis I took great care not to misrepresent anyone's perspective, this was assisted by my constant self-reflection upon my expectations and the origin of my ideas. As my expectations varied greatly

Analysis

Jaffa theatre is working within its immediate community with the aim to expose the audience to both cultures. Meeting the other ones culture, they believe can help bridge the social divide. The theatre houses two autonomic, independent companies that work both together and independently on several plays and a few theatre festivals for the community every year.

Encounter and exposure

Igal, the main Hebrew director explained, how unique the possibility of encounter can be. His daughters for instance have the possibility to come to the children's festival every year, meet Arabic children and learn that neither those children nor their language is something to be feared. Some of their friends, due to the separation of schools, might never come in close contact with either the language or culture and grow up, understanding Arabic merely as "the language of the enemy" (Igal). This broadening experience, he says, is what he aims for with both the plays and the festivals at and around Jaffa Theatre. The women's festival the theatre participates in increases exposure even further, he explains, as very pious Arabic women who would not necessarily attend events with strange men unaccompanied, are able to go to the women's festival and meet Hebrew women. Through the festivals however, the theatre is able to reach out not just to its immediate community and introduce itself, its work and its ideas.

Not just the festivals, also the joint Arabic and Hebrew plays are interesting to focus on, in terms of access. The fact that many of the joint plays are in both Hebrew and Arabic, sometimes using subtitles, makes the information and message of the play equally accessible to Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. As one of the theatres ambitions is to create an appreciation for the Arabic language and culture, some of their plays are in Arabic only or use Arabic songs and texts. Igal explained how especially one play, with texts of the celebrated Palestinian author and poet Mahmoud Darwish had great effect on the audiences cultural appreciation of the Arabic language, as many of them did not know before, that they could meet with so much beauty and such a captivating message in the Arabic language.

This alternate form of access to information, as the literature suggests as well, is different than accessing information through a screen or through text alone (Senehi, 2002; Musleh, 2011; Maoz, 2011: 121). It is more intense and offers a different emotional understanding and a different kind of integrity to the audience, which is assisted by the discussion after some of the plays, between director, audience and actors. This element of discussion may have a great educational component, as it enables intercultural encounter and discussion on relevant social and political issues on the basis of respect.

Even though I was not able to witness one of these discussions during my time with the in Tel-Aviv and would not have been able to fully understand it either, I was able to witness the relationship between the actors and the audience and among members of the audience as well. Depending on the play, I observed varying degrees of admiration for the actors. This admiration did not, in my opinion depend on the actor's ethnicity or mother tongue, but upon their abilities and role within the play, which seems rather favourable for the conveyance of Human Rights principles.

Between members of the audience there was polite respect and civility while they laughed and gasped together, felt the cold of the air condition and sometimes shared snacks with one another. I therefore do not doubt what I heard in unstructured interviews about the quality and fruitfulness of the discussions with the audience. Everyone I talked to, during my two weeks in Israel and the OPTs had rather strong opinions upon the social and political situation of the region, so any discussion that was facilitated would be rather intense. The theatre provides room, incentive and structure for respectful and mindful discussion after giving impulse, like

the literature suggests, for rethinking identity and perspective of oneself and others (Musleh, 2011: 119).

He and the theatre put language and its cultural implications in the focus when talking about social division and the possibilities of encounter. This, he explains, is deliberate because a language division, rather than a religious or ethnic division is less complicated and easier to grasp than the multitude of religious denominations and ethnic heritage. It might also make it easier to identify with the other, if one focuses on language as the dividing factor rather than religion, ethnicity or political opinion, even though one's own identity is generally a combination of these and many other factors. As it is the theatres intention to bring both cultures closer to both peoples, many of the joint plays are in both Arabic and Hebrew and use subtitles.

The simplification of the identity of the enemy group however is driving factor to conflict as established earlier and the ability to see beyond it has been goal to most of the reconciliation literature.

On the other hand however, the theatre faced several problems in reaching its audience. Even though Jaffa used to be an area in which a lot of Palestinians lived, there are less and less and not many of them choose to come to the theatre anymore. The population the theatre is able to reach is therefore limited. It is also questionable whether non-liberals would decide to go to a cooperative initiative like that at all. Moreover, last year, with the new director of the Arabic theatre company, they decided to end the cooperation of plays for now, while they still share the same venue and some of the Arabic actors still work for both companies. After the recent war last year, in the summer of 2014 and the even more recent elections this year, there seemed to be a general wave of disappointment and disillusionment to go through the theatre. After more than 17 years of working against the social divide and promoting peace and social justice, the situation seems to only get worse.

Narratives and the composition of Plays - messages communicated through emotional journeys:

Like the literature, the theatre also recognises the power of narratives, as they are the very core of their efforts to impact society (Maoz, 2011: 121).

Igal for instance, explained how even personal narratives of the actors are sometimes used for plays. In one of them, everyone had to collect a refugee story of one of his or her relatives, which then have been put together in one play in order to show different perspectives and similarities of experiences and to illustrate that there is a sense of victimhood on both sides of this conflict. The literature would suggests, that the audience emotional understanding of the narrators journeys and the different setting, that enabled another kind or reception of the information, encouraged the audience to incorporate this new perspective and rethink their own (Maoz, 2011; Musleh, 2011). The element of re-reflecting upon one's own identity and position within the conflict through comparison with others would be assisted in such a case. By all accounts, audience was rather affected by what they saw and eager for more information during the discussion.

Another very successful play Igal described, illustrated the checkpoint situation, at Qualandia, one of the main checkpoints between Jerusalem and the West Bank. Here, the Arabic and Hebrew actors each hat to play roles on both sides of the checkpoint and thereby enabled the audience to recognise the humanity on both sides of the checkpoint, while improving their reflections and understanding upon the subject themselves. This play, according to Igal, also illustrated the idea of victimhood on both sides of the conflict to the audience, as the Israeli soldiers have no choice but to follow orders, whether they meet with medical emergencies, aggression or pregnant women. On the other hand, the sense of annoyance, indignity and injustice on the other side of the checkpoint could be communicated as well, and both sides where communicated effectively and accessibly, because both Hebrew and Arabic actors hat to play both kinds of roles. This shifting of roles can have the power of communicating a sense of equality gives the mans of identifying with either side of the conflict not just to the actors, who have to identify with both roles, but moreover to the audience who have to take part in this shift of perspective to be able to follow the play and the journey of the different characters intellectually and emotionally.

Human Rights Theatre

Hannah believes that theatre is always political and many of her plays deal with issues of Human Rights. Her two recent plays focus on women's issues like femininity, agency and social justice. An older play she focused on her family's migration to Israel. This thematic is very central to her she says, because Israel, like she, unites two different cultures and she believes there is a possibility to unite them.

She explains that theatre is an expression of social power dynamics in both its effects and its creation. It reflects those dynamics as well as serves them. Because of this, the audience is not merely able to see themselves in the characters, they are able to experience a "catharsis" and process their own issues, traumas and experiences through reliving them with the characters on stage and see them in a different light. This is especially powerful for issues that are not frequently thematised.

She creates the conditions for this catharsis, by choosing actors who generally have experienced similar situations and by combining story, characters, vision, sound and gestus or performance for effective emotional effects upon the audience.

Not only the audience, but moreover the actors are often empowered through the ability to effectively communicating a powerful message.

The responses of the audience and reviews are generally very positive which might indicate that plays that thematise Human Rights issues do have effect upon people, re-evaluating their values and perspectives. The interaction and experience of theatre in her eyes has the ability to call for social justice in a different way than politics and media can by presenting different perspective and seeing experiences through the eyes of someone else. Approaching known societal situation with familiar power dynamics and experiencing stories or discrimination or social injustice similar to those that happened to yourself or your friend etc. can be very powerful through the eyes of a different narrator.

To Igal, the power of theatre lies in the emotional understanding of issues. People leave their political opinions outside the theatre to some extent, in order to understand issues in a different light.

Identity

The concept of reassessing ones perspective upon one's own, ones groups and the enemies identity, which was very present in the literature (Rupesinghe, 1987; Heraclides, 1989; Fiol et al., 2009; Danesh, 2008)was rather present in the theatre as well.

The shared experiences I witnessed within the theatre, I do believe offer great possibilities. No matter their cultural background, I was able to observe people laugh, gasp and hum, hold their breaths together and experience the entire emotional journey of the characters with one another. They identified with the same character, felt and maybe thought similar things, had similar realisations at the same and lived through this 90 minute experience together, next to one another. There might be an aspect of creating different group identities is worth focusing on.

Furthermore even though the actors are not the focus of this analysis, it became clear that working in such a creative environment of encounter became possible not through group exercises for respect and trust like I expected, but through the mere professionalism of actors who identify themselves during their work first and foremost as actors in favour of the process and progress at hand. This appeared to enables cooperation and friendship, but occasionally tends to have people reframe from political discourse within the group.
The idea of an intercultural group working together, creating a new discourse together however does have an impact upon the audience. It is not merely a symbol of the possibilities for cooperation and mutual respect, it gives a different kind of legitimacy to the portrayed messages of the play and it gives all members of the audience the possibility to identify with the experiences of both Arabic and Hebrew actors. Through identifying with the characters and experiencing their emotional journeys the members of the audience get the opportunity or even responsibility to reflect upon the characters thoughts and behaviours and thereby ultimately reflect about their own identity and position. By having both Arabic and Hebrew actors upon the stage, there is also the element of comparison, which often leads to finding similarities in each other's situation and reflecting upon one's view upon one another. This form of teaching, leading by example under appreciation of different opinions and on equal footing is also central to the literature of Human Rights education (Johannessen and Unterreiner, 2010: 79ff).

If we trust the literature, this is exactly the desired effect of micro level reconciliation initiatives compared with appreciation of each other's humanity (Fiol et al., 2009; Heraclides, 1989; Rupesinghe, 1987; Danesh, 2008) and most plays messages of social justice, peace or Human Rights principles, this seems to be a rather effective initiative. In reality, it might be for the immediate community that actually attends the plays and might come more than once. There is however no indication for any effect upon the larger society.

Hopes and dreams and reality – the realities of living a vision

Amil the director of the Palestinian company is rather critical towards the idea of bilingual theatre or creative encounter for social change. He does respect the attempt and the people attempting it, but does not see himself in a position to support those attempts.
To him, it appears to be a matter of continence, which seems to resonate with many Palestinians. They see no point in pretending that there are no asymmetries and no social division within society or that these issues could be fixed in such a way. He explains that there are limits to your life as a Palestinian in Israel. "Everything is imbalanced to their favour, so why should I play their game? I prefer to play a different game where they don't have the ability to be the superior".

Since he filled the position last year, there has not been cooperation between the two theatre companies, although the Hebrew companies still does bilingual plays and uses both Hebrew and Arabic actors. "We share a venue. Nothing more. And in a way this is the psychology of this whole country: We share a land, nothing more." There is civility in it, and even a sense of mutual respect in the case of the theatre, but he does not see a possibility for cooperation at the moment and is filling this position merely temporarily. This might be another indication for the general disillusionment I encountered; it might also just be a general opinion, or a bit of both.

The conflict however, can in his opinion not be concurred by theatre. Bringing people together to see a play can in his opinion not have a lasting impact on their views and values, not even their feelings because, like Heraclides (1989), he suggests that any discussion will boil down to the land question. It is part of the Jewish believe system, that Israel should be a Jewish state, which implies not merely entitlement to the land, but to some people, as especially recent politics have shown, a state which laws and other systems are in favour of

Jewish people. In his opinion, the Jewish population can and will not give up on the idea of entitlement to the land because without it, they would have to see themselves as "common thieves". Thereby, to him it is an identity question again. Therefore it is almost impossible for them to rethink their position upon the entire conflict, because discussion around any injustice, the conflict or any sort of solution will ultimately always come back to the land issue. That does not mean he is incapable of respecting or befriending Jewish people, it merely means that attempts at cooperation and attempts at ground level reconciliation and value communication through encounter and theatre will not work in his eyes and are not worth his efforts. On the other hand, he does feel, that theatre is unique in its ability to have people meet on equal footing. "It is the most intimate of art forms … a way into a human sole that is very different than any art form". But it is not enough to change people's minds entirely. It can be very honest in unexpected ways, which is what reaches people. It can move people, but can only have temporary impact on individuals and cannot change people or realities entirely. It can give impulses however.

His only attempt is to do street theatre in Arabic, to "reclaim the city" through performance. This idea has a different air of agency about it and uses theatre as an attempt at empowerment itself. He does believe however, that doing theatre can have an impact on the actors or petitioners. Similarly to Igal, he acknowledges that one of the first things an actor needs to understand is empathising with any role. Amil describes it as acknowledging that there is no ultimate truth, as you have to be able to empathise, identify and understand the motives of any character if you want to be able to play it. Whether it is male or female, a murderer or a saint. "You understand that everything is a ball and you can see it from different places" and that "there is always somebody else's narrative". This has the ability to change people and give them a different perspective upon the world and society they live in. Doing theatre is "a constant act of compassion" that can have an impact on your worldview and system believes and perspectives. This however only reaches as far as the actors.

Conclusion

From comparing theory and practice, it is possible to draw the conclusion, that creative intercultural encounter can contribute to counteracting social division by communicating and promoting principles of Human Rights in the context of intractable conflict. According to

both the literature and the information gathered at the Jaffa Theatre, Human Rights and Reconciliation efforts share the core principle of equality and many related attributes. Effective communication efforts do not only work on the basis of equal footing and mutual respect, with the help of creativity they have the ability to reach people on an emotional, instead of merely an intellectual level and thereby spread messages more effectively. Narratives especially proved very effective according to both the literature and the practice experience. The concept of identity, reflections upon one's own identity and the enemy's identity where very central to the literature and where concepts that were also used by the theatre.

However, while the literature was rather positive in general towards the idea of using art, in practice this was met with more critique. Although the theatre was rather disillusioned towards the idea of having any sort of lasting or changing impact upon society in general, many of them did not despair. The Arabic company however decided to not partake in joint, bilingual plays as a group anymore (even though single artists still did), and most Palestinians I met with where rather sceptical towards the idea of intercultural encounter as such. The need for equality to many overshadows the idea of harmony of normalisation of the situation without eradication of asymmetries. To believe in the capacity of theatre to impact society moreover seems to actually be a question of believe for many and the more inequality you are faced with, the less likely you are to believe it seems.

Theatre has the ability to create alternate realities or alternate perspectives of social realities, reproduce power relations and shade different lights on them. It is influenced by its surrounding society and structure and it often aims at influencing this society and structure in turn. The possibilities of creative encounter lye therefore, much like the literature suggests, in starting the reconciliation process by assisting reflections and creating an emotional understanding, appreciation of each other's humanness and similar conditions for reconciliation. Other Human Rights principles that are assisted by theatre, like agency and empowerment, can only be deemed beneficial to lasting peace under acknowledgement of Human Rights being necessary for peace, the not separate from this acknowledgement like the previous ones. In asymmetric conflict, a strive towards equality is often related to the struggle for lasting peace, but may include more violence short term.

In the context of Jaffa theatre, the society seems to be stronger. There is no positive indication for a revelation that spreads across Israel or can influence the way people think and feel in the long run. The short term effects upon the immediate community and their positions upon core Human Rights principles need to be assessed further. Although, to be fair, even though the theatre aims at social change and the communication of peace and Human Rights principles, it does not seem to be their intention to start an actual revolution of sort, peaceful or otherwise. It does not seem to be its intention to directly oppose Israel or its politics, as it depends greatly on government funding at the moment. Its intention seems to be merely to offer the possibility to critically reflect upon issues of social justice, Human Rights and every day power relations, to offer new perspectives on society and the possibility to experience and discuss them, ideally in a multicultural setting of Israelis and Palestinians.

Throughout the research I became moreover more and more wary of the idea of educating society in one way or another. There is a sense of entitlement to it which I tried to be very conscious of throughout the process. Assuming it were possible to influence peoples opinion and identity through theatre, it would be a terrible weapon as much as it is considered a blessing now that its effects are questionable. What theatre can offer however, and what constitutes its beauty however, is to inspire reflections. Those little, steady steps towards social change are after all the very core of micro level development cooperation.

An intractable conflict, or any large scare conflict would need a multilevel approach of national and if applicable international political negotiation, multilevel institutional support and local empowerment and reconciliation. As Amil explained, the surrounding reality is stronger than anything that can be created through theatre. It is often not much more than a drop of sweet water in an ocean.

As this researches focus however was on the micro level, the short term effects are suggestive of success.

Further research

There are several areas for further research. These might include: lasting or long-term effects of creative encounter upon the imitate society, street theatre and its possibilities for empowerment, interdisciplinary research on Conflict narratives and its relation to conflict identities, interdisciplinary research on the relationship between peace education and Human

Rights education, a long term psychological analysis of value development of actors within the theatre (which I thought about but it would require too much trust and reflection and time. Value development seems to be a rather difficult area of study) or sociological analysis of power relations and social structure in times of intractable conflict.

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Appendix

Interview Transcripts

Hanna

? Do you also work with both languages Arabic and Hebraic?

No, but my parents came from Europe, they speak Arabic and the culture they come from is Arabic. I am very interested in the Jewish – Arabic inside you, not just the Jewish or the Arabic, but also in the bridge in your self that you can make about the Arabic and the Jewish culture. When Arabs come to Israel, they have to delete the Arabic part in themselves – and the culture of them and the music. In all what I made in theatre I am interested about finding the roods. I am born here in Jaffa, nearby from here and my work fits here; I made a work called 'Papagena', it is about myself when I was a child and it is about the Arabs and Jews that lived in Jaffa in the 70s.

? Do you like the idea of a bilingual theatre, why?

We life in the Middle East, we are not in Europe now, I want to give a place to both cultures, to raise them. I love Arabic, I love the language, I see similarities and Arabic people want to belong to this place, to the Middle East, not be at distance. I believe that theatre is politics because it is telling the story of power, the relationships in power. What is politics is about? In politics, someone wants to make a show, but why he wants to make it? Theatre always reflects the power at all the different levels of society.
When people come into our show they feel that it is about them, they feel like catharsis.

? Do you think it is the same for the audience and actor? Does it affect their views on society?

For the audience it is like a catharsis, because they experience themselves in the character. For the actors it is empowering, theatre empowers the actors because they are portraying some think very powerful.

? Are there specific elements of the theatre that helps people understand the catharsis specifically?

It is the story, the smell, the visuals, the look, the music, and the gestures of the actors, the whole performance. I red the reviews - people are affected emotionally, because they see themselves or people they know who went through that. We are living through some think very strong and emotional. They want other people to go through the same experiences; they want to bring their families, and to discuss it. After every show there is a discussion between the actors and the audiences, for example on the differences between oriental Jews and the Ashkenazi's. And now the younger generations are showing themselves as they are and do not feel like the underdogs and the shows strengthen them and gives them a voice. The shows are very emotional, they show for example the identity of the oriental families and specifically woman in those families voicing themselves, and not as an underdog and saying that they have a culture. There is a satirical way of doing it, a kind of protest. It is about social justice for women from the oriental society.

? What is different compared to other means as TV?

We are a theatre that deals with Arab and Hebrew and Middle Eastern culture; and this is special, we specifically deal with these different cultures. We have also a festival of modern Arab theatre to transfer this also to the Jewish audiences, so they can experience and understand the Arab culture. In theatre it is in your face, there is an interaction between the actors and the audience, a lot of people have the same experience and now they can speak about it as they see someone speak.

? Does it affect the audience' and actor's values?

It is like wearing glasses that show you what is real. Yes it is an eye opener, some say it is like having a fist in your stomach that is how some of the audience feel. And the actors are deep in it, they feel it, it is in Israeli society. I work especially with women, it is about their story, and it is real, something that people are still dealing with. It is always voicing politics, theatre is powerful, and you can talk to the people that portray the story. So it makes a difference to see this on stage.

Igal, director

We call it Jaffa Theatre or the Arab Hebrew theatre or the stage for Arab Hebrew culture. And the title says every think. It is the Arab Hebrew Theatre of Jaffa – so first of all it is a theatre and we are theatre people. Second Jaffa is a mixed city, and the Jaffa population are Arabs and Jews living together. And we call it Arab Hebrew because we are dealing with languages and not religions because other wise it would be may be Jewish and Christians and Moslems. We did not want to be involved with all the questions of the religious agenda, so we said languages, and languages are of course representatives of cultures.

The idea is meeting, first of all of the level of directors and managers - I am the Hebrew one and there is an Arab director, on the level of actors, that we have Jewish and Arab actors and the third level is the level of the audience, that we try and mix audiences, in order that the show is not just watching theatre but is meeting. Although I said Jaffa is a mixed city, the population is divided. Jews and Arabs are studying in their own schools and live in their neighbourhood, so population does not meet so much. That's why in theatre we want people to meet. We try to make discussions after the shows with the audiences in order that audiences can express themselves and meet.

We do every year a children's festival. It is a theatre inside and it is exciting to see 200 children, Jews and Arabs, and you cannot see who is who, watching shows together, taking part in panels and workshops. I have two daughters and they study in a school in Nord Tel Avis. In their school they don't meet Arab children. But since they are coming here every year and they take part and they know the other children of the Arab actors, so for them, I can see that Arab children it is not a frightening title. These are children that they know by name and they play with them and they are not different. So I can see the difference compared to the friends of my daughters, they don't know Arab children. So for them it is still frightening. Arabic is the language of the enemy. So I say that the same process that my daughters have been passed, I expect, I hope, the audience will pass. That the Jewish will see that Arabic is a beautiful language, and they get to know the Arab culture. We try to get to know the other one through his culture. So we take our plays, translate them to Hebrew and then the Jewish Israeli get to know Arab literature or plays and visa versa. Also in Arabic they took Israeli plays and translated them into Arabic. So that is what theatre can offer to the discussion, to

the politics or social discussion – to get to know the other one through his culture, to see the other as a beautiful culture. And the moment you can listen to the other one, you seem to be more tolerant. And that is the idea of the theatre.

We have a women's festival – and again it is exciting to see the difference, to see the women with the shad and all the costume together with the Jewish woman with shorts. There you can see the visual difference, in Germany you can't see the difference, but in this women I could see it. And there are shows and there was a very interesting panel, good discussions. And for most of them with the Muslim religion it was the first time they have been to a theatre at all, because they are religious and usually they don't come when there are men. So because it was woman festival, they could come. So again you see the idea of the theatre.

We are working here for 15 years and as I said its two groups, two independent groups. It is important to have the Arab group and the Hebrew group and there is a shared management that decides what we do together. And still each one of the groups has autonomy and we say that equality is the basis. So I can't tell to the Arab group what they produce and they can't tell me what to do. The two groups are autonomic, independent; each one has its own money system.

? How did you decide to do this, to work together?

I was involved in politics, I was member in a group called 'There is a limit'. That was a group of Israeli soldiers, who refused to solve as soldiers in the territories in the Lebanon war. I was young, I mean, 30 years ago. And then I studied theatre, so I try to combine what I believe what should be citizen with my profession. And we are a group of people. 30 years ago we came here, we got the building from the city of Tel Aviv because we came with the idea of an Arab Jewish theatre. So we got the place free to work, and since then we are working.

? What do you think is it about theatre that can communicate these thinks to people?

If you are coming to a political lecture or educations you come with your ideas and you are looking after yourself. But if you are coming to us, you are more willing to experience some think. You leave your political believes at home and you are ready to listen. And you don't listen to politics, you listen to people that are telling stories. We are having a show in which

each one of the actors is telling a story of his family, about some one who is not living in a place that he was born. We didn't start from a play we started from an idea. And each one of the actors went to a sort of root research about his family and found some one with an interesting story. So I could see that not only the audience see that Arabic is such a beautiful language, but also the other one was a victim. So it is this idea that through theatre you are meeting the other one. Each one is bringing his own food, his own music, so you hear a personal story and so you are ready to identify yourself and do not feel hostile that this story is there instead of your story.

But the problem with the Jews in Israel is that they are afraid about if we are legitimising Palestinian stories of the refugees. Because a refugee that means the Jews are to leave. But no, we live here together. They have a right for the memories of the stadia, because there were many Arabs that suffered in 48.

It is a paradox of Jewish state. We had to have a Jewish state after what happened in Europe et cetera et cetera but it became a treat for the Arabs, so it s not fair.

? Do you think the actors and yourself are changing doing this work, are you experiencing meeting Arabs differently compared if you would not do theatre?

The first tool as a theatre person is to identify yourself, so the profession forces you to identify yourself with the character. We have shows in which Jews are playing Palestinians and visa versa. So it forces them to put themselves in the other ones place. And that is the good think about theatre. We have a show called "wicked Columbia" it's about the checkpoints. So the actors are playing all the characters. In one scene you are playing the role of an Israeli soldier that does not let the Palestinians cross the checkpoint.

(Igal has to take a phone call, short interruption) Where were we?

In this show you are doing different thinks. In one scene you are the soldier, next scene you are the Palestinian, so you see both sides. An Arabic actor said to me: you know; now I understand it. Before I though every Israeli soldier is complete evil. Suddenly I realise it is an 18 years old boy that is standing in a checkpoint and he is town between different contradicting orders. On the one hand they say you are not allowed to let anyone if he doesn't

have a permit. On the other hand I see pregnant woman and I feel sorry for them. So the Arab said that suddenly I realise the soldiers are also victims and visa versa. The moment the Israeli has to play the role of a Palestinian that is standing you know, 8 hours in a checkpoint and nobody would let him cross. So you can feel the suffering of the other one. So I hope that everybody will study theatre then they can be more sympathetic to the other ones suffering.

? Do you think that your environment and the people you know are influenced by your views; do you talk about it a lot?

Of course, my friends I force them to come here and I talk about it all the time. It is not simple because what I tell you it sounds very ideal.

But you know, reality outside is different, and we do not divide ourselves from reality. So there were Intifadas, people were killed and there was Gaza war and we are living in poetry, we try to. Even if there is some think bad happening outside we are staying here and in a way give a model of a different way of living. But is not simple.

? But you never want to give up?i
What choice do I have? You know when you do this it gives you a meaning to what you do, although I am very pessimistic. You know last week I had a meeting with my students, I am teaching in a colleague. And I said for 40 years we are fighting for the 2-state-solution and for Israel to be more democratic and the situation is becoming worst. So we are not naive. So we work for 40 years on change and nothing is changing. Today Israel is more racist and less democratic and the 2-state-solution is becoming far from us. So there is overall 50% of me that says ok, give up because there is no change and the other 50% says you are the one to survive, so keep on hoping and keep on doing what we do.

? Do you think your work has an impact on the audience?

First of all it has an impact on the other participants, the actors. And yes, as I said, because sometimes we work with students, with young students from high school. They come to see the show, because it's a good theatre and I talk to them after the show. And they say it is the first time that I realise the beauty of the Arabic, the musical language, and for the first time I could understand what Palestinians are talking about. Of course theatre can bring change, not

if you come to a one-hour show thinks will change. But little by little it in a way gives a different perspective. They can see that the Arabs also have a beautiful culture and a beautiful theatre and a beautiful poetry. We have a show about a famous Muslim Palestinian poet, Machmed Ausch and the Israelis didn't t know him. He has wonderful poetry. Some knew him because he was considered enemy. They did not know he writes wonderful love songs, and they are ready to listen.

Amil

The think is, there is his narrative usually coming from the West towards this country. Full of good intentions it wants us to all live together happily. But the reality on the ground is very different. And in that case, the question is what do you do as an artist in such a complicated reality as a good one. I have been a Palestinian director, a professional Palestinian director for the last 20 years. So I started very young and I worked a lot in the West Bank and worked in Galati and now I am in Jaffa. And the one thin that I understood very quickly is the biggest endeavour I can do is to work with my community. Because my community is the community I understand first and foremost and the only way to do good theatre here is through lots of integrity. Because the West is fascinated by this idea of co-existence, so there is lots of money for these projects. These projects are ridiculous. They don't really exist, they are a bluff, and they are a bluff to get the money from you Westerns. That's the truth.

? Why?

Because we don't co-exist, there is no co-existence in this land. This country was created in 1948 on the ruins of somebody else's land. And until this isn't fixed, there is no opportunity to co-exist. You can't co-exist. You know, the Jews in the Germans can now move to a new level of relationships, because the Germans went: we were to blame, you paid a lot of money, that's what build this country. But until there is no recognition in the wrongdoing there can't be friendship. So there is day-to-day mutual living, which means we live in the same city, sometimes we interact, and we have friends on a personal basis. I have lots of Israeli friends but they are my friends on a personal basis. They don't do theatre with me, I don't want to co-exist with them on the political level, and we are completely separated. We are separated in schools, in every think. Now, this is a racist country. At the end of the day if you scrap the

makeup off it, and the big words you know. In the last elections, a bit of the masks fell off, so you could hear the prime minister saying the truth, going 'The Arabs are flocking, the Arabs are coming here to vote', this is what he said. In any other country, he won't be a prime minister. But in this country, which is Jewish, racial, very ethno-centric, very quick to blame everyone this is the reality of the place. In this reality we can't co-exist. And when the reality is stronger then your good will, because the good will is one think. But even in these valleys a lot of my left-wing Israel friends are left wing until there is a war and then they all become very extreme right. And that happened again and again throughout my life. So I don't trust them, I don't trust the good words. The only way we can co-exist is co-existing in fighting occupation. But in arts, in theatre, why should I? I don't want any think to do with them, we are good friends but why should I? I want one think with them and the reason is that it's so detached from the real reality. You know, Jaffa now has an ongoing attempt to turn it into more and more Jewish, to gentrify it and to Jewdefy it by evicting people from their houses. Now these houses are their houses since the war. They were thrown out of their houses during the war, they came back, but when they came back to their own houses they got permission but they didn't get the status to keep them. So now there is an ongoing attempt to kick them out of their own lands, of their own houses. Why should we co-exist? You know it's so far fetched from the reality. Now, its very easy to be very angry when you are in my position, because you go through an up-bringing of racial inequality and a aggregation. And my way to solve it is to get not angry; I am doing the theatre I want to my people. I try and do good art; I don't care about the political agendas of it. In that way all my work is very political because we live in a very political world, here especially. I wane do politics that are interesting for me and not politics that they want to hear. I don't care if they come to see my shows or not. If they want they are welcome, if not, so be it. Throughout my career I have worked in performances all over the world, you know I worked in very big theatres abroad. People want to hear what you have to say if you are honest about the job. And in a way that's the biggest social difference I can make to my own community. And giving us a voice, a real voice, not a voice that wants to please or to make friends in an unfriendly reality. One of the very obvious thinks here is that all these attempts are very, very detached from the reality of the place. And they become funding opportunities, and once you do your art because of funding, I hope you can understand that's not necessarily good art. Can I change reality? No. Earthquakes and wars change reality. I am being completely honest, its sad but I don't think you can change any think. You can change yourself, you can change your immediate surroundings, you can

may be make small shifts in the way people see thinks, but its silent its redundant. And this place, you know, this place is becoming worse and worse and sadder and sadder.

? Why?

Why? Because they are drunk from power, this country is drunk from power; its completely corrupt and there is no solution. You know, the 2-states-solution isn't a solution, the 1-state-solution isn't a solution hence there is no solution. There is apartheid that will just become more violent and more fearful until it will collapse like all these regimes collapse at the end. And the backbone of this country is fleeing, which is the truth; they are all going to Berlin. Berlin is full of Israelis that are fleeing from this place, which is the young, upcoming, smart generation of Israelis. They don't want to be here, because they see this place is only becoming worse. Is that a bad think? I don't know, maybe it's correcting the path of history, may be they are going home. Because Israel from the beginning was not part of this region, it's literally, its funny. You know you look at Tel Aviv, we are sitting in Jaffa and one think about Tel Aviv is that all the boulevards of Tel Aviv run parallel to the see. And all the small streets run from the see inwards. And that's why Tel Aviv is one of the most humid cities on the Mediterranean. Its impossible to be here during the summer, it's hot it's stingy you can hardly breath. And the reason is, they build it as if they build it on the Rhein, according to a very European mindset. Because the winter winds are coming from the black see, so all the big roads are parallel to the sea so the winds don't blow in. In the East we build the other way, so there is wind coming in during the summer. That's our problem, not the wind of the winter, the wind of the winter isn't that bad. So all the other cities here are built in a different pattern then all other Eastern cities, they are not connected to this land. They tried and they came and they build an amazing, very prosperous, very modern country, but they stayed on the surface. Most of them know it, also the Israelis deep inside know it that their on the surface. And they have biological roots here. From my point of view, every one of them that was born here has an equal right to be here. But with that said and done, their mindset is westwards. They don't know what's happening east of them, they don't care. They don't want to know. You are not part of the region you know, even when they play basketball they are part of Europe. They pretend they are in Europe and that's always a way to fail. It's like somebody living in Paris and thinking that he is somewhere else. If you are in Paris, after a while, the third generation needs to become part of the region. And Israel is very schizophrenic as Israel has a big minority. 20% of Israelis are actually Palestinians. There is no creature called Arab Israelis,

we are Palestinians. This was Palestine, they came, and we didn't change. We stayed the same. So there is 20% of us that are Palestinians in all our believes. In our nationhood we are Palestinians, in our culture we are Palestinians. The 19 years of difference between us and the West Bank are 19 years of difference when we were occupied and they did not change who we are. So, there is 20% Israelis that are Palestinians, then the rest are almost half half Israel Jews that came from the Arab countries with Arab culture and 40% Ashkenazy Jews that came from Europe. And they are the elites. They are the people that run the country, they have the money, that's were the governance is. And for their new generation there is obviously a problem. They look around and they go 'what is this place?' All my friends, all my upcoming young friends are getting their European passports back. And that's a psychological disease, that's already a mindset of a failure. So this place is going to be very sad in the future and that's obvious for me. And when they leave I wont be happy, its not about that. They are part of who we are, they were always part of this region as well, there were always Jews here, usually very welcomed, unlike in Europe, we didn't slaughter them. They lived here for centuries unharmed.

And that's the truth, a lot of the time people say, 'why don't you do shows with Israelis or for Israelis, why don't you go through the effort to bring Israeli audiences into your theatre'? And the truth is they don't want to come, they want to say that we don't do the effort but they don't want to come. There are theatre managers and a theatre scene that is completely entrenched in the racist mindset of this country. Just now, Haifa has a mixed population, there was a big children festival in Haifa. The Arab children were not catered for, there were no play in Arabic, there were no publications in Arabic. Its for Jews only, Now, they are more clever now, they don't call it for Jews only, but its for Jews only. And that's true in every think here. And I don't have the mean to please the European in order for the European for 'oh look how lovely', the savages. Because you are very racists in your 'look at the savage Jews and the savage Arabs holding hands' because of us because of our European money we are able to cultivate them and civilise them. Now I don't need that money for that I can live. I have Jewish friends, we have big arguments, we fight a lot, and we love a lot. I don't need the European in the middle to tell me hold hand and be friends. And once you get the European out of the fucking way you end up with the idea of 'why should we talk right now'? Unless you want to shout together with me against your occupying ration, separatist, almost apartheid like state. If you don't want me to join to talk about that, there is nothing to talk about. What should I talk with you about? Nothing. You are a racist, I am not. Its not simple for me and

it's not against any of them, its just the reality. What do I need to tell my reaper? Enjoy while you rape me. So it's a bleak reality, there is nothing-optimistic right now, its true. We had a war last summer. Metal pipes flue out of the moon, I think only in Syria there are places more miserable then Gaza on Earth. And in Africa, you know, the place has been blockaded for 10 years, it starved. Israel doesn't talk about this, most of you don't know about this but Gaza is held under a brink of salvation. Israel counts their calories for Gaza and they are only allowed that much food. If you say that in Germany you are a anti-Semite, but that's the true. There are Israeli publications about that. They are doing Nazi ghettos there, same think. These people are living for the last 15 years almost of blockade, were you are not allowed coriander and shampoo. You don't want to hear that because missiles flying out of Gaza. The reality is that during 15 years of blockade, 10 Israelis were killed, most of them from heard attacks and thousands and thousands of Gaza'nis, most of them children were macerated by the Israeli defence. No, I can't sit with somebody and talk with him who justifies this and thinks its normal. I cant talk with them there is nothing to talk about. There is time that will pass, that's it.

Now, can theatre create a social change in my community? I am not even sure about that. What it can do is let air out, ventilate some of our anger, and give a voice to people. We cab ask questions that we don't ask ourselves about us. Not about them, I don't care about them. Igal is a nice man but I want o put my energy and my efforts into my community, my people. And we have lots of work there; the Palestinian society is not a healthy one.

? So why did you start with this theatre in the first place?

I am honest I am her for a really short time. And I went in because they were about to close it. And I have enough international know how to keep it open. I am not staying here for long, But this theatre is not linked to the other theatre, there is two separate institutions. We share a venue, nothing more. There is nothing more to do together right now. Maybe in the future, when we have mixed children, when he speaks my language. Every think is imbalanced here, I prefer to play a different game were I don't have to be their superior. As a minority group a lot of us end up wanting to be part of the establishment, but the establishment has a very thick glass ceiling that you don't see until you hit against it. I will never be able to run a big theatre here. What we are doing we go abroad. So I was part of the Royal Shakespeare Company, of

another theatre in London and I worked in America. So in career terms I am much higher than most of my Israeli peers, so this very temporary for me.

? Why do I do this here?

I worked abroad and made some pieces here in Hebron, there are good actors and writers all around the world. Talent isn't geographically. I think one of the greatest poets is Mahmud Ausch.

? If you could with an Arab play reach Jewish people, would you?

No, you cant. It will not work.

? May be there is an element of education as we did in Germany?

But nobody gives up power; no I don't believe in this, you need to change the power. That's the reality of this place. When will this change? I don't know. But what you do know is when the young people leave, it is near to end.

? In the broader scheme nothing, but here in Jaffa

No it's not important, our population does not come to this theatre, and they hate it. Did you look around here in Jaffa? It is Disneyland. The Arabs hate coming here. We use this as offices, we do performances elsewhere. I am full of respect for their attempt. Igar will say and he is right It is important to tell my people about Arab culture.

? Do you think that theatre can teach differently?

Yes of course, theatre is the only art from the human scare, and the human scare is not manipulative. It is the only places were one man could meet another man in its own size. It's the most imitative art form. It is a way into a human soul that is very different from any other art form. But it is only one hour once a month; it's not enough to dilute the poison. It's a drop

of sweet water in a sea. It can move individuals it can't move a community. But then the next word changes him back to his old ways.

? I want to know if there are tools or specific thinks that can teach?

You know, war, war is a great teacher. That's the only think that teaches us any think throughout the human history. I did a show in Switzerland about Syria. The only good think that show did was that it raised money and we send it to a refugee camp in Syria. And that's the only think that really affected reality the rest is nothing. So I don't want to be a layer and tell you that ' now that you have seen the show about Syria you will understand the pain of the people' that's bullshit. I did that show because I felt guilty, and I wanted to do something, so it's all very selfish it's all very tiny. And you go to the show because you feel guilty and you want to do something. And maybe in this there is a small tiny moment of compassion. That is great but it is only a tiny little moment. And may be out of 300 one will do something after the show, but he was going to do it anyway. He was on the grind and you gave him a small push, the wind could have pushed him, you can't take credit for that. I don't believe in the social brachial method of theatre can change people. But doing theatre can change you. How? Because the first think you understand as a theatre person is that there is no truth. If you understand this you understand that there is always somebody else's narrative that you need to reckon. It's a constant act of compassion.

? But in conflict zones every think is constructed, so maybe you can change the narrative?

No, because the reality on the ground is always stronger