

Performing Hatred

Or Hate Speech as a Performance



VILI NISSINEN

LIVE ART AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Päiväys:

<p>TEKIJÄ</p> <p>Vili Nissinen</p>	<p>KOULUTUS- TAI MAISTERIOHJELMA</p> <p>MA in Live Art and Performance Studies</p>		
<p>KIRJALLISEN OSION / TUTKIELMAN NIMI</p> <p>Performing hatred or hate speech as a performance</p>	<p>KIRJALLISEN TYÖN SIVUMÄÄRÄ (SIS. LIITTEET)</p> <p>106 s.</p>		
<p>TAITEELLISEN / TAITEELLIS-PEDAGOGISEN TYÖN NIMI</p> <p><i>Vihapuhenäytelmä – Julma komedia.</i> Dramaturgy and direction: Vili von Nissinen. Sound, light, videos: Lauri Sirén, Performers: Liisi Kilpelä, Kirsti Larja, Kaisla Puura and Vili von Nissinen. Performers on videos: Salvador Alogo, Henri Jokinen, Arttu Kurttila, Eero Tiilikainen. Producer: Theater Academy. Premier: 20.08.2015, Theatre Academy, Helsinki.</p> <p>Taiteellinen osio on Teatterikorkeakoulun tuotantoa</p>			
<p>Kirjallisen osion/tutkielman saa julkaista avoimessa tietoverkossa. Lupa on ajallisesti rajoittamaton.</p>	<p>Kyllä X Ei</p>	<p>Opinnäytteen tiivistelmän saa julkaista avoimessa tietoverkossa. Lupa on ajallisesti rajoittamaton.</p>	<p>Kyllä X Ei</p>
<p>This thesis analyzes hate speech from a performance studies perspective. The theoretical aim is not to justify hate speech, but rather to deconstruct it and discuss hate speech as a performance, and how it can be performed through language, prejudices and power relations. I will analyze the dramaturgy of hate speech and its performers, as well as the audience needed in order for this performance to happen. I will also reveal that there is a little racism inside us all. We can either let it take control over us, or we can try to deal with it and silence it when possible. In this thesis, I refer to this phenomena as the Charm of the Black Sun. Along with these theoretical issues, I'm also writing critically about my artistic thesis <i>Vihapuhenäytelmä 2015</i> (Hate Speech Play). The style of this thesis is mostly autobiographical and the primary theoretical framework comes from the Cultural studies tradition from such writer as Sara Ahmed, Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler and Slavoj Zizek.</p> <p>Approaching hate speech as a performance in a theoretical view is a new approach to the issue. When observing hate speech through the performance studies lenses, we will find a performative, stating that <i>someone is something</i>, with a purpose of hurting the target. The symbolic violence of hate speech works through language: hateful language simplifies the target violently as a single feature containing our expectations and visions of the object. The linguistic injury, as Judith Butler puts it, can also build social constructions. The aim of the expression is many times intended to situate the target in a subordinate position against the speaker. The performative aspects of hate don't work only on the linguistic level, but also on a non-verbal symbolic level: different gestures and visual messages (such as a burning cross) deliver the same hateful messages.</p>			
<p>ASIASANAT</p> <p>Esitystaide, esitysteoria, vihapuhe, rasismi, ennakkoluulot, asenteet, syrjintä, maskuliinisuus, sukupuoli, queer</p>			

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis paper is mostly about me being anxious and trying to understand and theorize horrible concepts and myself. It is also about conquering my angst, or as Germans would put it, *Angst Macht Frei*. And a bit of rule-breaking.

My theoretical aim is not to justify hate speech, but rather to deconstruct it and argue about hate speech as a performance, and how it can be performed through language, prejudices and power relations. I will analyze the dramaturgy of hate speech and its performers, as well as the audience needed in order for this performance to happen. I will also reveal that there is a little racism inside us all. We can either let it take control over us, or we can try to deal with it it keep it silent when possible. I refer to this this phenomena here as “The Charm of the Black Sun”. Along with these theoretical issues, I’m also writing critically about my artistic thesis *Vihapuhenäytelmä 2015* (Hate Speech Play).

The style of this thesis is mostly autobiographical. The primary source materials are my personal and working diaries from the years 2013 to 2015. My primary theoretical framework comes from the Cultural studies tradition, from such writer as **Sara Ahmed**, **Hannah Arendt**, **Judith Butler** and **Slavoj Zizek**. Zizek is especially important to me, because reading his writings helped me to understand my own prejudices. Zizek also helped me to understand Ahmed’s and Butler’s writings because of passages describing loaded expectations and the performative aspects of hate. Through them I’m also referring shortly to Lacanian psychoanalysis, but psychoanalysis is not the main framework. Since my thesis paper concentrates on hate speech in the Finnish context, I will also refer to Finnish newspapers. Some parts of this thesis are straight from the script of *Vihapuhenäytelmä* (later VPN). The images used in this thesis are mostly documentation from the process and the performances of VPN supporting the text with visual guidance.

The thesis itself is divided into five chapters. Later in this introduction I will open my own history and artistic thinking. Since this thesis writing

process has taken several years, it will concentrate on my current philosophy about art. In chapters 2 and 3, I will open more what inspired and driven me to make a performance about hate speech. I will discuss the process of creating VPN and with a description of the performance, I will also try to analyze my decisions, inspirations, and map VPN into the art field. In the following chapters, I take a more theoretical approach.

Chapter 4 is based on one of the scenes from VPN and answers the question: “what is hate speech?” The chapter also expands as an examination of hate speech as a performance in a theoretical framework: what is the motive and what is happening in that performance? Who are the performers? Who is the audience, and how is the hate speech performed through language. In the last chapter, I will make a conclusion and will give an overview what has been going on in Finland while I was processing this thesis.

Apology of Vili

Before I can define hate speech, I have to define myself and my right to deal with this issue. This part is based on my own autobiographical monologue dealing with the problematics of being a tall blonde male and being stereotyped as a “Nazi” from *Vihapuhentelmä*.

In August 2014, during the Helsinki Festival, I saw a performance *Ganesh Versus the Third Reich* by the Australian **Back to Back Theatre**, which presented two storylines: the Indian god Ganesh claiming the Swastika back from the Nazis, and a theatre group preparing the performance. The mixture of fiction and devised meta scenes was tempting. What made the performance interesting was that all the performers except for one were disabled. Throughout the performance, they were asking one question: who has a right to make performances about the Holocaust? While making VPN, I was heavily criticized by my LAPS classmates. They felt that queer or not, my position as “a privileged white male” is too problematic and that because of this, I didn’t have the right to work with this topic. For the disabled people, it is, of course, okay to ask those questions and make a performance about the issue. They were the ones suffering from the Nazi-era and the associated hatred. But what right did I have to deal with this issue as “a privileged white western man”? I might have even passed as a proper German and survived If I

have lived in affected areas during that era. I might have left Germany behind me and escaped, or otherwise ended up in one of the concentration camps if I had lived the fully queer lifestyle. I don't know.

Also, since hate speech happens always in a relation to the other, I also have to define my own "other". The presence of the duality of "I and others" is already present in many old mythologies--the so-called "antonym" is needed. Indeed, otherness is one of the basics of human thinking. "Other" doesn't have a real selfness. **Simone de Beauvoir** wrote that woman is an "other": she is always the second to the man.¹ But who am I, really, and who is my other? I will try to explore this through my own history and experiences.

My burden was to be born as a blond, white/Caucasian male nine months after the Chernobyl disaster, as a bastard offspring of a redneck rocker. During my early childhood, my mother used to tell me that if I did not act properly, she would sell me to the Gypsies. My grandparents told me to eat all my food, or otherwise starving kids from Africa would come and eat my leftover food. To protect my food, I would dig holes in the garden so that the African kids would fall in them if they tried to come and eat my food. The fear of others was seeded on me at an early age.

Since upper comprehensive school, my "other"-related baggage has increased. Every time that history teachers talked about the Third Reich, I was the model example of the pure Aryan, due to my genetic appearance: tall, blonde, and blue-eyed. I became a specimen in a sort of reversed version of Nazi Germany's "human menageries" presenting different racial groups. Later on, I occasionally found myself in situations where people have misread and -casted me in the role of a Neo-nazi. It might have been partly because I was a headbanger wearing typical Finnish metalhead gear during my teenage years: camouflage-trousers, combat boots, t-shirts with images of Asa-Gods and Finn-Lion tribals; clothes you see on metalheads, but also on skinheads and Neo-nazis.

When I was twenty-something, I started my Live Action Role Play (later LARP) career, partly because I was not accepted to study in Theatre Academy's Acting Department. I spent most of my time with fellow LARPerS. One evening, they were talking about Yöntimos (roughly translation into

¹ 1981, 12-13.

English as “Night Creature”). Since the majority of my LARPer friends were into fantasy games, I thought it must be an evil character from the *Dungeons and Dragons* or *Dragonlance*-saga. Later I learned, that it was a racist Finnish term for a black person.

During those early LARP-days, I wrote and organized couple LARPs dealing with Nazi-themes (partly because I was inspired by the movie *The Producers – Springtime for Hitler* (2005) especially **Gary Beach**’s portrayal of “gay Hitler”. I even played **Adolf Hitler** once in a camp style LARP. Thanks to those games, I received a nickname: Nazi-Nissinen. Some of my fellow LARPer thought that I had changed my political opinions and become a real Nazi. When I realized this, I wanted to rip that label off of myself. My whiteness became a problem for me. I dyed my blonde hair into black, blue, and red, so I would not be as “Aryan” as my appearance implied. But it didn't help. Still, I was misjudged as a Nazi.

I remembered one situation when in Northern Germany, in Dortmund. This working-class town was struggling with a nasty Neo-nazi problem, and of course, the citizens of Dortmund treated me as if I was one. In those days, I was going through a punk/goth period, and wore black Mohawk and a shemagh scarf. In Finland, shemagh is widely used in the leftist circles showing support to the oppressed Palestinians. What I did not know was that in Europe, Neo-nazis use the shemagh scarf to point their “kill Israeli” sentiments.

During August 2011, SlutWalk was held in Helsinki. While I was marching, one businessman-looking guy came to me and wanted to high five with me. When our hands touched, he yelled: "Suomi suomalaisille!" (Finland to Finns). Maybe because I was dressed as an edgy and punky rentboy, and was wearing combat boots, a way-too-short pair of black shorts, and a blue dress shirt with the top buttons open, he thought I was part of the Soini-Jugend (though, during those days, I had a red Mohawk.)

Soon after the SlutWalk incident, I started to work at the VR-Company as a community traffic train conductor. To maximize my opportunities for getting that job, I shaved my Mohawk off and was bald for a while. Very soon I noticed that my racist coworkers were pouring their hateful and anti-immigration attitudes onto me in the privacy of the train's small operating

room. Maybe they thought I was sharing the same ideas. Even when I applied to LAPS, the entrance examination board had to discuss what I was and which political views I am representing.

As a *punavihermädättäjä*² and a queer person, I find it extremely hilarious when people misreads me sometimes. Other times, it feels extremely offensive, especially when it becomes too personal and physical. Once, an intoxicated man attacked me on a tram and started to strangle me because he saw and an imaginary swastika on my arse. The misreadings continue to happen totally outside of my control .

On the other hand, I am no more innocent with misreading than others. One eye-opening scenario happened for me one night in the trains. A young Finnish Romani man was playing music loudly from his stereos. I asked him to turn the music down. Suddenly and quickly, he rose up from the seat and started to move towards me. At that moment fear took over me and I rapidly start to move further from him. All the horror scenarios rolled in my head: what if he has a knife? What if he is going to hit me with it? But he just jumped off the train at the station. That was the moment I got caught with myself: I was reflecting all the negative stereotypes about the Finnish Romani people onto him, the very same ones I have been learning since early childhood from family and from media. And now I was acting based on them.

In totalitarian systems, privacy is demolished. The systems don't want to face individuals; they are seen only as an impersonal mass that is easy to erase³. This is the same way that racists want to see all the individual immigrants as a stereotyped versions of their origins. Before the incident on the train, I had just read Zizek's thoughts about how we mirror the learned stereotypes towards individuals of the core group. The stereotypes violently simplify the individual.⁴ The situation that I had experienced opened the text in a very concrete way. I wondered: is the reason why I criticize hate speech because I am afraid of my own "inner racist"? Do I have an inner propensity towards racism? In the terms of lacanian psychoanalysis, enjoyment, or

² Roughly translates into "person spreading left- and green ideology", derogatory term used by right wing politicians.

³ Arendt 2016, 522 .

⁴ Zizek 2012, 75-6, 80. I will go deeper into Zizek's views in the chapter 4.

jouissance, of me and my “other” are in collision. The *jouissance* of my other disturbs me because I cannot find a proper way to relate into my own one.⁵ I realize that my desire is merely a vain detour with the aim of catching the *jouissance* of the other— there is a *jouissance* beyond the pleasure principle⁶. For Freud-influenced writers, for example, homophobia can be seen as an expression of a secret desire, driven out of consciousness and converted into hatred⁷.

My “other” is a hate preacher. This traumatic intruder with his *jouissance* of different social behavior and rituals disrupts my daily life⁸. If he is inside me, does that mean that I am my own other? As **Arthur Rimbaud** writes on a letter to his teacher **Georges Izambard**: “*Je est un Autre*”⁹. I is an Other. I am split, fundamentally alienated from myself . There is no escape from this division, no possibility of ‘wholeness’ or synthesis, as **Dylan Evans** explains in his interpretations of works by the French philosopher **Jacques Lacan**. For Lacan the little other (with a small o, *autre*) is the other who is not really other, but a reflection and projection of the EGO. With capital O (as Rimbaud wrote it) the big Other designates radical alterity, a sort of otherness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification. The big Other is something like God. Alienation is an inevitable consequence of the process by which the ego is constituted by identification with the counterpart: ‘the initial synthesis of the ego is essentially an alter ego, it is alienated’.¹⁰

I am now imagining my other as me. If I am my own Other, is it possible that there are two of me? Like in *Twin Peaks: the Return* (2017): the good **Dale Cooper** is locked inside the Black Lodge while the evil doppelgänger-Cooper is doing his mischievous acts in our world. Could there be Good-Vili and my evil shadow? In the end, a human being is a morally

⁵ Zizek 2017, 79.

⁶ Lacan 1998, 183-84.

⁷ Connell 2015, 40.

⁸ Zizek, 2017, 78.

⁹ Rimbaud 2004, 24.

¹⁰ Evans, 1996, 9, 135-36.

fragile creature, who fulfills his needs and aims at the expense of others. “The Devil” might be seductive, but still, all evil can be located inside one’s own weakness.¹¹

Send in the clowns – about my artistic thinking and philosophy

I will continue attempting to define myself through my artistic philosophy.

The world of cabaret and circus has tempted me for years. Equally, reality inspires me, and very often the mashup of these two worlds provides me with a looking glass to observe and analyze the world through. Some people do burlesque; I do grotesque. It is the marriage of carnival and reality that forms my art. I want to educate people through my art to see reality and inspire in them a will to reshape it. But to succeed in that goal, I must also entertain them. Therefore, I present my political commentary in an amusing wrapping to reveal the hideous face of our society. I call this unholy trinity as my 3Es art philosophy: educate, entertain and evoke emotions.

While finishing my BA in visual art, I planned to join a freak circus as a sort of ‘Plan B’ if I would not be accepted to do MA-studies. I felt that my skills and presence would fit perfectly to that world. Luckily, (?) I was accepted into the Fine Art MA-program at Aalto University, so my circus dreams were pushed aside. I have not totally left that dream aside, and from time to time I escape from the art world to the world of cabaret and do burlesque, stand-up, and drag. Since high school, my friends have called my attitude toward life and art-making “carnavalesque.” Maybe I’m a kind of a Bakhtian character: I don’t respect laws and restrictions, I question authorities, and I have no shame. There are not many issues I cannot make jokes about. For me, art is an playful exploration to break traditional cultural presumptions.¹²

The show is on all the time. I am a clown trying to make everyone feel happy, though I may not always be happy. Sometimes my everyday life becomes a comedy show. Some days I’m just observing the world through different lenses: queer or political, and making ironic notions. Identifying myself as a queer person, I am constantly performing; not just with glitter and

¹¹ Bacon 2010, 12-14.

¹² Carlson on Bakhtin 2006, 42-43.

unicorns, but by understanding my privileges as a white male and having a lifelong internal anxiety about it.

Very often, my stage personas are horrible people. They might be rude and arrogant--total divas. The total opposite of my true self: kind, warm and helpful. The punk attitude and aesthetics are there¹³. I am a provoker, spitting my worldview on the audience's face. I have no religion, but I tend to crown and give a divine status to persons, movies, cultural phenomena, et cetera (usually, what I call, normal people's dislikes.) I think this has more or less something to do with the concept of "camp." In her well-known essay *Notes on "Camp"* **Susan Sontag** sketches what this could be: to put it simply, Sontag's "camp" is a form of love towards the unnatural, the artificial, and exaggeration. A sensible form of sophistication, a question about taste or bad taste in art, design, and lifestyle.¹⁴ For me, my "carnavalesque" life attitude is an unholy crossbreed between punk and camp.

Marvin Carlson draws lines from contemporary performance artists, live artists, monologue performers and stand up-comedians to all classic historical entertainers (troubadours, jugglers, minstrels, fire tamers, and jesters.) This is due to their performance techniques (sense of humor, and wittiness, verbal acrobatics), themes (stories, ballads and commentaries of heroes, noblemen and kings) about and ways to perform in locally popular venues and markets.¹⁵ As a live artist, I see myself in this group rather than in the frames of classical body and image-based performance art. Artists such as **Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe** and **Brian McCook** (with his performance persona *Katya Zamolodchikova*) inspires me. Watching their art feels like I am observing myself from the mirror. The aspects of fun and the political are present also in their art.

¹³ Roselee Goldberg writes about the influence of punk in the arts in the 70s, how artists turn into musicians wearing leather jackets and sunglasses, doing their own music and bringing punk's anarchistic, sadistic and erotic attitudes in the art in a sophisticated blend with own lifestyles and sensibilities. (Goldberg 2011, 181-183.) In my other performances, like autobiographical punk rock story "The Man with His Demons" and interventions made by my drag personae 'Anita Bang' the punk aesthetics have been more visually present than in Vihapuhentelmä.

¹⁴ Sontag, Susan 2009, 18-29.

¹⁵ Carlson 2006, 129.

My relationship with the traditional image-based performance art is problematic. This might be partly because of my eternal in-between position. In the same moment, I feel I belong to different fields (visual art, theatre) but also feel I am an impostor being there (which I know is ridiculous.) I have the full right to be where I am. I've been mocked for being a "theatrical" performer, but I don't see it as a problem. I rather take it as a praise for doing things differently--a reclamation of the title. Long durational processes of doing something very serious in a black suit (typical, for example, for the performance collective *Black Market International*) is not for me. I have done it couple times, and even with **Marina Abramović** in her durational performance *152 Hours*¹⁶, but it's just not my cup of tea. I was facing and experiencing just being in a situation and doing nothing. I had an extremely slow hand-in-hand walk with Marina. Of course, it was magical to walk in hand-in-hand with her, but otherwise, it was just boring. I was thinking of starting to run, but I did not want her to lose her mind because of me, so instead I showed some respect.

As an ambitious artist, and a performer, I can't allow myself to bore my audience. I would be a failure. I will use all the possible stunts, effects and tricks to keep my audience awake and aware.

The aspect of personal is always present in my art. The personal is political, as the classical second-wave feminist slogan tells. Since the late 1970's there has been a long history of the revealing personal monologue tradition in performing arts, especially in feminist and queer performances¹⁷. As **RoseLee Goldberg** put it, "artists recreated episodes from their own life, manipulating and transforming the material into ... film, video, sound and soliloquy. ... Autobiographical performances were easy to follow and the fact that artist revealed intimate information about themselves set up a particular empathy between performer and audience¹⁸". For me, autobiography offers a way to deal my own history, traumas and insecurities: I'm picking different aspects of my life and watching my life through that aspect as my lens. It is a game of pain and pleasure when I am revealing and exposing myself. Private

¹⁶ *152 Hours*, 07.08.2014.

¹⁷ Carlson 2006, 180-81.

¹⁸ Goldberg 2011, 172, 174.

becomes public. The connections between personal experience and larger social and political structures grow.

In his famous directions for a theatre troupe, **Hamlet** states that art is a mirror reflecting nature. The German poet and playwright **Bertolt Brecht** goes to such lengths with this idea explaining in his well-known quote that art is not a mirror to reflect the reality, but rather a hammer with which to shape it. Like some Puritan theologians, as **Burstein** put it, Brecht was fascinated by the brutal and the Satanic aspect of human nature¹⁹. I think Brecht manifests this in one of his lyrics for *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) in which he asks a question: what keeps mankind alive?

“What keeps mankind alive?/The fact that millions are daily tortured/
Stifled, punished, silenced and oppressed/Mankind can keep alive thanks to
its brilliance/ In keeping its humanity repressed/ And for once you must try
not to shrink the facts/ Mankind is kept alive by bestial acts.”²⁰

I personally share the same fierce attitude and interest to that theme as Brecht. One of the reasons for me doing VPN was to expose the nasty little built-in feature--racism--to the audience.

For me, art is the hammer. As told before, my own philosophy is formed by three Es: educating, entertain and evoking emotions. Brecht himself also worked with the questions of educating and entertaining. For him, the one who can't teach entertaining or entertain teaching is not suitable for theatre.²¹ For Brecht, the theatre with no connection to the audience is a bubble²². After the True Finns got a big win in the parliamentary election in spring 2015, a discussion about "a culture bubble" ensued. It rose from the divided country, from the "those versus us"-attitude. Due to my then part-time job as a train conductor, I had an opportunity to travel inside and outside

¹⁹ Burstein 1964, 231-32.

²⁰ Brecht 1928. *The Second Threepenny Finale*. Translation by John Willett.

²¹ Brecht 1991, 176.

²² Brecht 1991, 41.

the bubble, trying to build a conversation. Vihapuhenäytelmä was part of that conversation.

Moving on

Hate speech is interesting, though a pressing subject to write. It is like a big river dividing into smaller streams which divide into even smaller streams.

After this long, serpentine introduction, I might need to submit myself back to the academic frame and move forward with this thesis. Later, I will say more about hate speech itself, but now it is time to jump into the next stream and look to the process of Vihapuhenäytelmä.

2. DISASTER ARTIST

Tommy Wiseau, a visionary auteur and the mysterious man behind the movie *The Room* (2003), is depicted as a Disaster Artist in an autobiography book (2013) by the actor **Greg Sestero**, who worked with Wiseau on the cult movie *The Room*. Wiseau wrote, directed, produced and played the main character in his infamous film. It is often described as one of the worst movies ever made, and of course, it has a strong cult status. When I saw the movie for the first time, I just felt it was something that only an alien without no understanding of human behavior could have produced. While I watched the movie version of Sestero's book *Disaster Artist* (2017), directed by **James Franco**, I identified a bit with Tommy Wiseau. It reminded me of the struggles I had while making my first big production, *Vihapuhentelmä*.

In this chapter, I describe my own "disaster artist" journey and the process of making the *Vihapuhentelmä* from the beginning of the project until the end of the performance period. I have gathered happenings, inspirational performances, and readings that have affected the process. This chapter is mostly based on my personal and working diaries from the years 2012 to 2015 accompanied with additional documentary material from the process.

The Beginning of the Journey

The starting point for this performance was in March 2012, when I started to work at the VR-Group's local traffic as a deputy conductor. Very quickly, I noticed that a large number of my coworkers were racists. The amount of hate speech they were producing was astronomical. The first marks in my diaries about hate speech are written on the 6th of April 2012:

"[...] at the end station, I tried to wake up a decent looking black man. Finally, when he woke up, he started to spit on me and point me with his middle finger and yell that I am a racist and I have no right to wake him up because I am part of the wrong race. I left him there. I

don't know was he on drugs or what. I was in shock. The worst part was that I couldn't share and talk about my nasty experience with the coworkers since they would have covered me with their racist's thoughts and opinions. [...] I decided that I will start to collect this hate speech and make something out of that. [...] It is strange, that when there is hate speech towards dossers, junkies and other 'white trash', I don't care. But when it hits the immigrants or asylum seekers, immediately I start to feel uneasy."

In the beginning, I carried a small notebook. During the breaks, I wrote down stuff based on my memory. Sometimes while the hate speech was going on, I wrote down some keywords on my cell-phone to memorize later "the best parts". Later, I started secretly record the hate speeches with my cell phone. In the first phase, the performance was very simple. One performer dressed as a security officer speaks hate speech while doing pushups and in the end, he will be overwhelmed and lay on the ground sweaty and exhausted. Later, other characters started to come along based on people I faced during my work shifts.

The Piece Grows More Complex

In December 2012, I was in London, and I saw an all-male staged version of *Clockwork Orange*²³ directed by **Alexandra Spencer-Jones**. It made a huge impact on me and I wrote that though I couldn't get much of the text due to the Russian-based language created by the author **Anthony Burgess**, I really enjoyed it, especially the ballet-like choreographed violence. This also gave me other inspirations of how to stage the performance. Because of the minimalist stage design, the performing bodies were the main focus. I understood that you don't need a massive set to present something.

At that time, this piece was supposed to be my thesis at Aalto University. At the end of the January 2013, I had a meeting with my professor **Teemu Mäki**:

²³ 11.12.2012

"I got many important pieces of advice from him for the text and the performance itself. He told me to bring philosophical questions to the stage and personal stories, not just authentic hate speech material to make the piece more complex. [...] there should be banal and realistic aspects of the characters, otherwise, they are just comedy show characters. Usually, realism is more fun and grotesque. [...] it is more powerful when a black person performs hate speech about a black person. [...] He also advised me not to do this project at Aalto, but apply grant for it." He also encouraged me to apply to the Theatre Academy's LAPS-program.²⁴

During spring 2013, I applied to LAPS. This was the project I applied with. At the end of the May, I watched *The Great Dictator* (1940) with my friends. I was impressed by the famous balloon scene, because instead of violently screaming angry man, it portrayed Adolf Hitler as kind of "a sissy boy". It offered me a way to play with masculinity. I also had started to collect other hate material, not just my coworker stories. One of the most interesting pieces of hate speech I encountered was a sermon, given by Reverend **Eero Jaakkola** in June 2013. It ended up in the final version of the piece.

The autumn of 2013 and spring of 2014 were quite quiet with the project. I had started studying at LAPS, and I was doing a socially engaged art project at the Kerava art museum. I was also writing a musical for a touring student theatre group. From the student theatre group, I found my first performers. My problem then was that there were now three caucasian blondes in the group. I would need some brunettes and ethnic performers to make the hate speech performance look not so "Aryan".

The Inspirational Season

Summer 2014 started an important and interesting period of workshops, encounters, and self-reflection that gave me material and tools to start to produce my thesis performance. In late June, I took a five-day-long workshop with **Dagmar Glausnitzer-Smith** in Cyprus about presence and being

²⁴ 13.1.2013, notes from the meeting

present. She used yoga as part of her workshop teaching. Though the workshop was a bit too "old-school performance art" for my taste, I learned ways and tools to strengthen my presence. I kept these tools with me and used them when started workshopping VPN later next spring.

After Cyprus, my LAPS group traveled to Shanghai to attend to the Performance Studies international Conference. During the second day of the conference, two things happened: a meeting with one of the founders of performance studies, **Richard Schechner**, and a workshop by **Chloe Johnston**. For me, the experience with Schechner wasn't a pleasant one:

“Schechy started with the Guru attitude: ‘Start ask questions or I walk away.’ I told that I've been reading Turner and wrote about him, and tried to ask something about their collaborations, but he interrupted me and wanted to know what texts from Turned I have read. I said the titles of the collections Schechy himself has edited, but I couldn't remember the titles of the essays. He wasn't satisfied: ‘I'm not going to waste more time on you’. My classmates didn't have any questions for him, and he was pissed of us, so he ended up giving a lecture about privileges. I didn't felt good after the meeting. I had done my best to show respect to him and get answers, but as a not morning person, maybe I wasn't clear enough. But the meeting inspired me to create an arrogant ”The American Guru”-character for VPN.

"After the horrible meeting, I took part in a praxis session given by American performer and director Chloe Johnston. [...] I really enjoyed these exercises. We were sitting in a circle and everyone had to present themselves, but not in a basic way, but telling where one is coming. It could be concrete or abstract. [...] The main score for the workshop was great: The first phase was to write a personal Creed. Then to stage it and perform it. Later we wrapped this exercise by sitting eyes closed and saying things we remembered and experienced during the Creeds. I think it is a good exercise for my hate speech project".²⁵

²⁵ 13.1.2013, personal diary

Thanks to Schechy and the culture shock caused by being first time in Asia, I regressed into "an anxious teen-Vili." The biggest problem for me was the enormous amount of people all around and the chaotic traffic. The older I grow, the more exhausting big crowds are for me. And it didn't help at all that my classmates felt that my culture shock was cute and funny. I wanted them to take my anxiety seriously. I tried to channel my inner angst and the culture shock into my notebook, but in the end I just escaped the conference to explore the chaotic city.

In early August, I spent some days in London. **Young Vic's** production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*²⁶ directed by **Benedict Andrews**, captured me with its IKEA-realism. The whole experience was very cinematic, because of the round rolling stage. In some parts, the performers were very close to you, in the next parts, they were very far. You got different angles all the time. It is got more under your skin the closer it was, and the closer it got, the more uneasy it was to watch and experience. Later, during the last days of August, I suddenly got a Christmas themed inspiration:

"I'm dreaming of the White Christmas' is haunting me.

Coincidental it is horrible and brilliant! It is an immigration critical discussion! What white Christmas means here in Finland? Snow all over? No immigrants and asylum seekers anywhere?"²⁷.

Later this note grew up as a scene combined with documentary material.

In the September 2014, I participated in **Ken Mai's** Butoh course and started to take Voguing classes²⁸. Butoh gave me tools and ideas how to give a form to one's own inner darkness: how does it look and feel in the body? This inspired me to create exercises for my thesis workshops. Voguing classes gave

²⁶ 6.8.2014

²⁷ Working diary, 28.08.2014

²⁸ Butoh is a grotesque Japanese dance/performance form created by Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo in the late 1950's, inspired by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki traumas and the German expressionism. Voguing is a dance based on mocking model poses and walks on runway, rising from the Harlem's black gay community's ballroom scene in 1960's and popularized by Madonna in her 1990 music video and song "Vogue".

me different kind of movement sources along with aspects of battle and power plays. Hieroglyph-hands, giving shade and the idea of using this empowering dance created by oppressed black homosexuals to make something completely different inspired me. Later, **Pilvi Porkola's** "Self as Material" course gave tools how to use autobiographical material into performances. An encouraging talk with the Australian dramaturg **Peter Eckersall** in early November gave me good paths to continue with. From him, I got several good tools how to present documentary material on stage and he also pointed me some artists (for example, **Anna Deavere Smith**) to check inspiration from.

The "violence ballet" in the *Clockwork Orange* production I had seen earlier was still in my memory when I saw the movie version of *West Side Story* (1961). Afterwards, I was more convinced that I wanted to have a ballet scene:

"After the long exhausting overture, finally comes an interesting ballet like bluster/fighting scene. The other one's happens closer to the end. The discipline and sublimity of ballet takes an arrogant and violent form. The soft airy gestures turn into raw and sharp violence. The aspect of violence is already attached to practicing classical arts. I remember my Russian piano teacher, who threatened to use violence on me unless I would play better. How would the movement change if the performer had a weapon? How can you release emotions confined by discipline?"²⁹. Later, in the beginning of the 2015, during **Maija Hirvanen's** Body Work course, I did some experimentations based on the memory of these ballet scenes and questions of violence and facing the one's inner anger. There I also started to play with the idea of a Mexican standoff scene, which ended up in the final version of the performance.

²⁹ Working Diary 04.09.2014

The Workshop Period: The 1st. workshop

The open workshops leading to my final performance started in late March. The first workshop with the theme "Presence and Not-Performing" happened in 22.03.2015 at the LAPS Suvilahti studio. Along with my fellow performers and other enthusiastic people attending the workshop, the aim was concentrate on the performer and to do small autobiographical performances without any roles. We began with yoga-based breathing and movement exercises just to get connected with one's self, and to strengthen one's presence. Following this, participants did two-minute-long solo performances inspired by Chloe Johnston's workshop exercises in PSi. Everyone had 10 minutes' time to write down a personal creed. Another 10 minutes were used to stage and rehearse it. After that, we performed. The participants found it both challenging and relieving, working through selves, not through roles. They felt it was more honest being him or herself there. "It was more a pleasure, than a horror", as one of the participants told during a discussion afterwards. They also felt that working with such short time was relieving, because you really were forced to grab onto the first idea and go with it.



Image 2.1. Kirsti performs Sara Ahmed dressed as a Jedi. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

After the exercise, we had a discussion based on Sara Ahmed's text *Affective Economies* (2004). In her essay, Ahmed talks about affects: how we humans reflect learned attitudes and expectations to other people, and how one emotion leads to another. For example, she uses an extract from the Aryan Nations Website to show how they are justifying their racism and hatred by stating it is love towards the country, not hate. She's also talking how different expressions can alienate and exclude people not belonging to the core group. This article was very challenging for all of us, but it also inspired us. **Kirsti**, one of my performers, found a wonderful passage to the text through *Star Wars*, which we used also in the final piece (Image 2.1). Based on the article, we also started to collect our own hate speech dictionary, character list, and made a map about how emotions work and lead to another (Image 2.2).

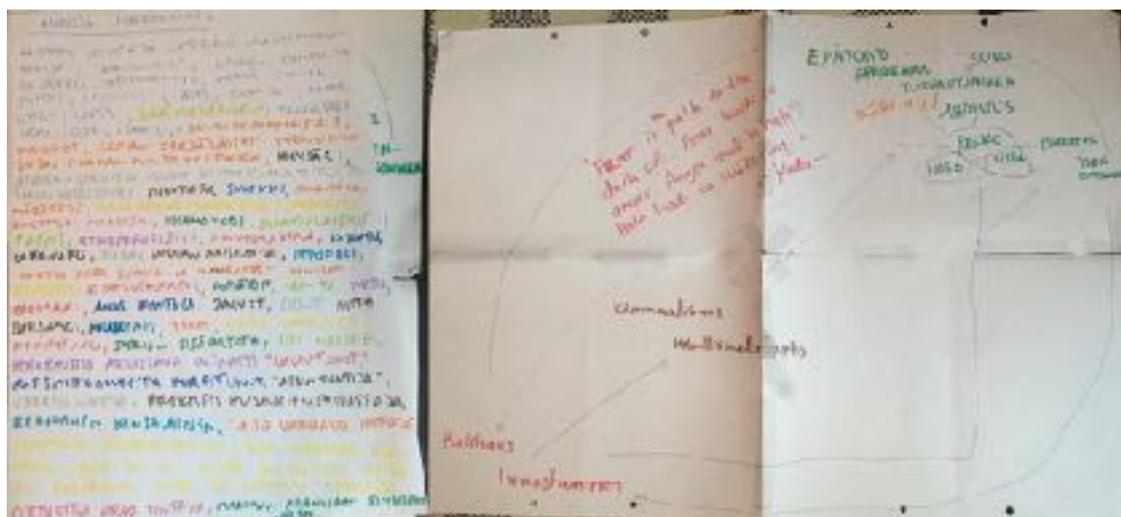


Image 2.2. The Hate speech dictionary, and the Emotion map based on Sara Ahmed's text, created in the workshops. © Vili Nissinen 2017.

After the discussion, we made another solo performance. The structure was same as in the first one, but now the theme was "I hate". What was interesting in the staging of these pieces, was that in most of them, the performer was hiding inside a locker while performing. Some opened the doors, some didn't. In our discussions about the locker performances, we came to a conclusion about how easy it is to produce hate speech while anonymously hiding in the internet behind a nickname or anonymous statements. For some of the participants, it was hard to express hate and for some, it was wonderful to find how strong an hate-emotion can be (Image 2.3). Inspired by these

performances, there was supposed to be a scene on the final piece, in which the audience was given a chance to go inside a closet and produce hate speech there anonymously, but I had to cut it in the end.



Image 2.3. Various demo-performances produces during the first workshop. Screenshots from the video documentation.

The 2nd and 3rd Workshops

I had difficulties to find a supervisor for my artistic part of the thesis, since one by one all my candidates refused the honor. But still, I continued. For the second workshop, we read extracts from *Väkivalta* (2012) by Slavoj Žižek . Like Ahmed, Žižek discusses how we humans treat other humans through learned stereotypes, and how the fear and desire of others affects and causes hatred (Image 2.4).

The next workshop happened in the 16th of April and the theme was “Rhetoric’s and internet”. We started with a improv game called “Three things about...” The idea of the game was that participants are standing in a circle, and one participant gives a word to another. He must then tell the first three things that come to his mind without any censorship. Very soon, we figured

how horrible game it was--how it was based on stereotypes. I decided to take the game as part of the final piece (Image 2.4).



Image 2.4. Discussions during the workshops. Screenshots from the video documentation.

For the first performance exercise, I asked the participants to bring one wonderful and nasty object along. Inspired by Sara Ahmed's text, the task was to present the nasty things as to most wonderful things in a world and vice versa. We were supposed to discuss based on Zizek's text, but my participants hadn't read the text, so we had to skip that for the next session. In the end, we continued building the emotions map and hate speech dictionary. All participants got one Finnish internet discussion page³⁰ to get familiar with and collect discourses, words and characters linked to the hate speech topic. These pages are notorious for the amount the hate people are producing on them.

A couple days later, on the 19th of April, I organized the third workshop at one of TEAK's dance studios, in which we explored hatred through different kind of movement and dance exercises. First, we started with West Side Story-

³⁰ For example, hommaforum, vauva.fi, suomi24.fi and patriootti.com.

inspired "ballet" exercises: moving towards the mirror and facing "a rival gang". Changing rhythm, attitude and style from classical ballet to more realistic combat. Then, we continued with Mexican standoff situations in small groups. One by one, participants tried to lead the situation and made the circle move. After a break, we moved to butoh-based exercises. During Ken Mai's butoh course, I felt that butoh gives nice tools to express one's inner darkness and confined aggression. We did some basic butoh walkings, and tried moving with a twisted body. We then did some butoh improvisations to find the ways how hate affected to one's body.

After butoh, we moved to voguing exercises. I asked my participants to bring their heels, so we could try different runway techniques, catwalk and duck walk. We also did some basic hand performance, concentrating on lines, boxes and hieroglyph arms. Then we formed "totem poles" to create moving human swastikas, which also ended up in the final piece. For the last task, I asked my participants to bring a song, which causes aggression and hate on them or somehow represents hate for them. Everyone created an easy movement pattern for the song and teaches that to others and then others performed the choreographies. All these exercises took so much time, so once again, we didn't have time to discuss about Zizek's writing.

The 4th and the 5th Workshop

After the previous workshops, I attended in the Helsinki University's *RAGE: Hate speech and populist othering In Europe: Through the race, age, gender looking glass*-research seminar on the 27th of April and had a chance to discuss with couple researchers about the hate speech issue. Due to the huge conflict I had had with my classmates about my thesis topic and my role as a privileged, white, meat-eating western man, I was a bit unsure of what I was doing and what I can do, but then I went to the Finnish National Theatre and watched a performance called *Maaseudun tulevaisuus*. It was the most politically incorrect theatre piece I have ever seen. Among other things, it included human-animal relationships, cannibalism and obscene language. For me, it was very encouraging. If they can make a piece like this in the National Theatre, then I can do anything in my thesis performance.

On the 6th of May, it was time for the 4th workshop. This time we made a field trip to one of the most notorious suburbs in the Helsinki area, Jakomäki. During the trip, I asked my participants to walk around the area individually, making notes and gathering material from the site: what is essential for this area, what kind of people there are, what is happening there, what kind of objects can be found from there, et cetera. After the exploration, we headed back to the Suvilahti studio. The main task was to make a performance based on the gathered materials. I had spread "the stage" in different areas. Every area had its own "topic": in the first area, participants used persons and objects found from the location, in the second happenings, and in the last one, they used feelings found from the location (Image 2.5).



Image 2.5. Kirsti's Jakomäki performance. On the floor are the marked areas pointing where to use certain materials. Screenshot from the video documentation.

Between the workshops, I hunted for more performers for the thesis performance and I managed to find two. The hunt for the thesis supervisor was still going on. In the last open workshop on the 12th of May, we did exercises that were supposed to have been done already in the previous workshops. We started with some runway walks to cheer the mood up. Then we made different listings, such as favorite foods, nice places, and favorite books, and created small performances based on them, and one bigger group performance using all the gathered material.

The Rehearsal Period

Organizing the LAPSody-festival and Performance Collab in Hildesheim, Germany interrupted my thesis process for a couple weeks. Between LAPSody and Hildesheim trip, I had a chance to have one meeting and workshop session with my performers. It was also the first time the whole ensemble was meeting. In the meeting I asked them to write a personal autobiographical monologue about how hate speech and hatred have impacted them. The aim was to prepare material for the video shootings after my journey to Germany. I also gave some small tasks for my performers to prepare for the shootings.

I spent one extra week in Germany after the Performance Collab to have a small summer vacation before spending the rest of the summer with the thesis performance. Of course, I couldn't leave my project behind, so it was with me all the time. I had a chance to visit *the Wewelsburg Castle*, which belonged to **Heinrich Himmler** and used to be the spiritual home of the Third Reich, serving as a ceremonial centre. Now, it serves as an educational youth center and exhibits Nazi memorabilia. The most interesting part of the building is the North Tower. In the basement of the tower lies a room called *Valhalla*. Its purpose was to be the gathering space for the 12 highest SS-officer and in the middle of the room was supposed to burn an eternal fire in a round fireplace referring to **King Arthur** and the Knights of the round table. Some floors higher lies a Marble hall, earlier the Führersal. The room is known for its floor mosaic decoration, the infamous *Black Sun* (in germ. Schwarze Sonne), one of the symbols Nazis appropriated and took for their own purposes.³¹ The room served now as a classroom, and the Black Sun was covered with the Fat Boys. It was against rules to take photos of the Black Sun, but of course, we had to get a shot. It became an obsession. My friend dug the symbol under the huge pillows, and then I got a couple bad photos before we were told not to do that.

³¹ To read more about Nazi-esotericism or Ariosophy, there are few academical studies available. Late historian, professor Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, specialized in the Western Esotericism, have written about the roots and history of Nazis occult and pagan interest in his seminal book *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (1985, revised 2004). Also historian Eric Kurlander's *Hitler's Monsters. A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (2017) opens the issue.

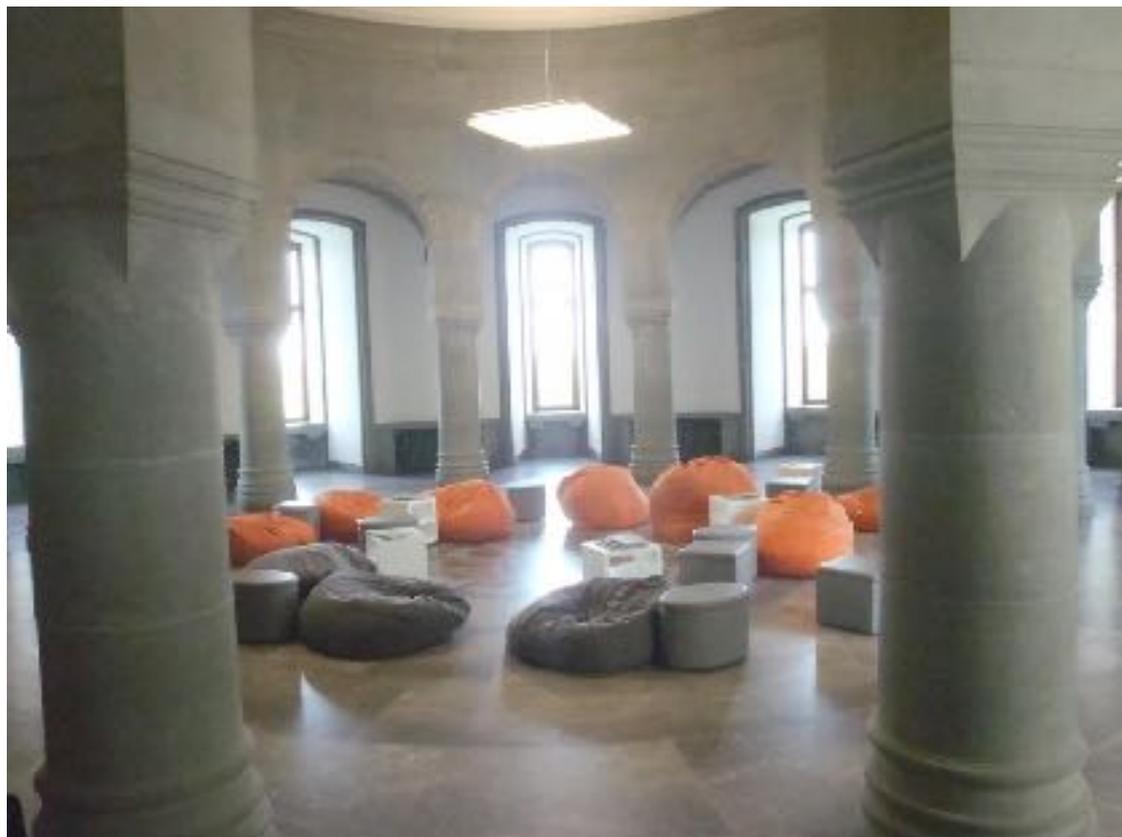


Image 2.6. The Führersaal with the Black Sun in the middle. (c) Vili Nissinen 2015.

A bit later, I wondered why they were hiding the symbol and why they had made the room an educational space. Probably for the obvious reason that no-one would make a pilgrim to the Sun. But why put school kids sit in the middle of the bad sun? (Image 2.6) The museum part with all kinds of Nazi relics did not cause any strong emotions, not even the lampshades made of human skin. But this room and our actions there made me look at myself. The historical burden that the place was carrying came to my shoulders. I realized I had just experienced the spell and charm of the Black Sun³². How easy it was to follow and surrender to it. This was the point for me to think about the ethics of the performance. The Black Sun found its way to the performance. During the Hitler-scene in *Vihapuhenäytelmä*, the Black Sun was rolling on the stage. A couple days later, in Heidelberg, my friend and I visited an amphitheater designed by Hitler's architect, **Albert Speer**. *Thingstätte* worked as a place for big Nazi-rallies and other party happenings. Again, I was charmed by the place. The perfection of form! The stage and the seating area

³² Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity* (2003) dwells deeper into the Neo-Nazism and meaning of the Black Sun for these contemporary followers.

together formed another sun. Beautiful things are dangerous and hide horrible things inside.

After Germany, it was time for the filming. The first days I spent choosing costumes for the videos with the performers. After that we filmed all of the video monologues and other videos for the performance (Images 2.7, 2.8). Finally, just before midsummer, I managed to get a supervisor for myself for the thesis performance: **Janne Saarakkala**, a director and a live artist. The midsummer week was inspirational. A lot was happening around the world. There were horrible events, like the Charleston church shooting in the United States, and a Finnish right wing oriented male writer under heavy intoxication sent "Heil Hitler"- messages to feminist and rape support internet discussion forums. I was in a schizophrenic mode: scared, and at the same time, excited about all the materials popping up for my thesis performance and making it very topical.



Image 2.7. Pics from the green screen filmings. © Vili Nissinen.

After midsummer, I had the first meeting with my supervisor. It was inspiring and I felt that, *yes, I'm on the right track*. Janne advised me to read

George Orwell's 1984 (1949), because for him, what I had already written for the performance resonated with the book somehow. I read the book and got some ideas and inspiration for a couple scenes. In the beginning of July, we did all the rest video shootings.

In the beginning of the rehearsal period, I lost both of my male performers for burnout and summer jobs. So in the end I had only Kirsti, **Kaisla** and **Liisi** on the stage. I had to rethink everything again. I had planned to concentrate on directing and dramaturgy, but suddenly my own time on the stage expanded, which also caused my biggest challenge during the rehearsal period: trying to be on stage and direct at the same time. I should have just concentrated on one of them, but in that situation, I just did my best and did what I had to do. I couldn't get more performers, so I had to re-imagine the whole performance and cut a lot of material.



Image 2.8. Filming illustration for Kirsti's video monologue. Screenshot from the video.



Most of July, I was working on the final version of the script. **Aito Avioliitto**-movement started work with their anti-equal-marriage law propaganda. On the Utøya massacre anniversary, a True Finn politician **Olli Immonen** quoted **Anders Behring Breivik's** manifesto on his Facebook wall. More and more hate speech issues started to pop out, and at the end of the

July, I had to decide that this material is enough for us. The core group

became tighter. I was inspired by the fourth outcome of FX-network's *American Horror Story: Freak Show*. It tells a story of one of last touring freak shows in the US. The performance itself was a kind of a side show with all the horrible real-life freaks, and I was it's ringmaster.

In the beginning of the August, we finally got into the performance place and really could start the rehearsals (Image 2.9). The video monologues we had shot in the June became vital. They gave rhythm and also time for the performers change costumes and breath. There were collapses and drama in the core group caused by stress and exhaustion. Due to lacking two performers, the other performers had to do more, including me. Also, the performers' old traumas affected the process. I am proud how I managed to handle and solved all the crises, and kept myself together, though I felt angry and worthless many times. I realized if I want to get this performance ready, at least I must act as a grown-up. The set-building didn't finish on time, which also gave me some gray hairs.

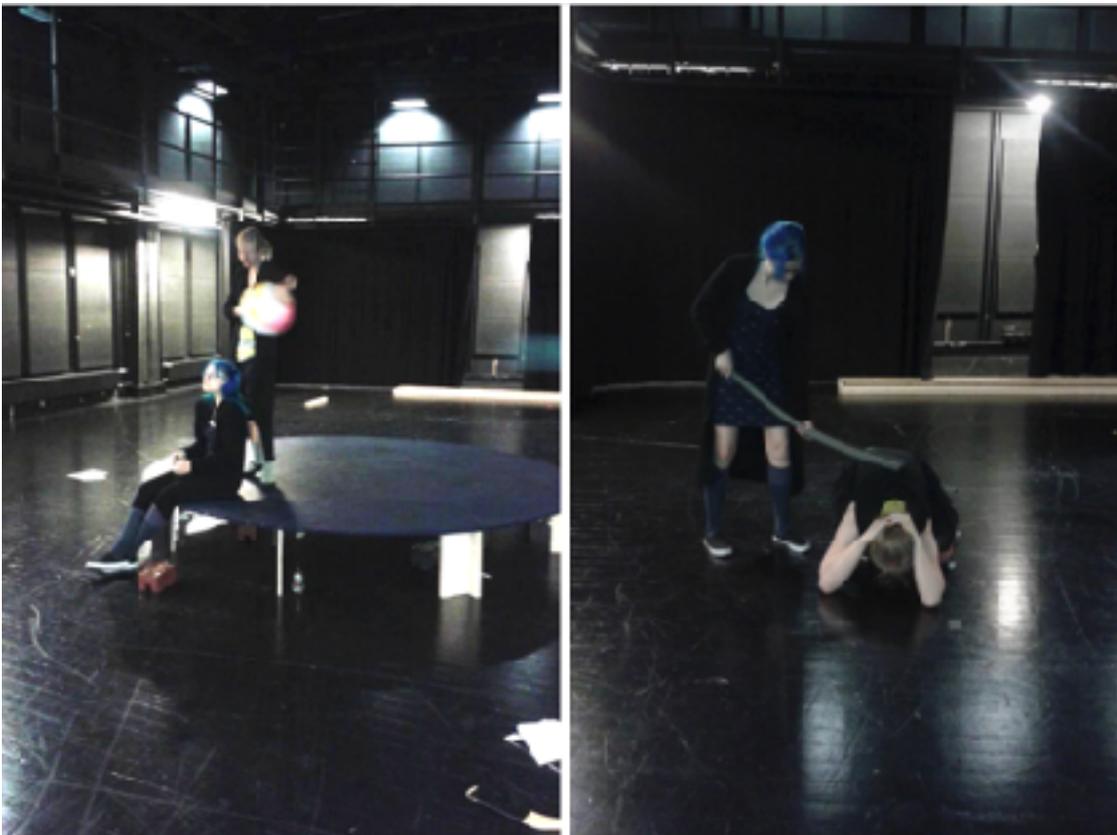


Image 2.9. Rehearsals at the Theatre Hall. © Vili Nissinen 2015.

One of the most satisfying moments for me as a director was getting the ending work. We had filmed Liisi's monologue, but it didn't work well because she is a dancer, not an actor. Her speaking was problematic, but when I asked her to re-write her text and add something about the social stigma she has to carry as a mentally ill person, the whole thing came together. It was there. It didn't need anything else. It was spooky, beautiful and mind-blowing. To get her out from the shelter and to see how strong her presence was in that scene was so satisfying.

Working with OPTE-staff worked well. They figured out how to produce my wild visions with costumes, props and stunts. Also, my lightning designer Lauri was priceless. I had a chance to see and learn how big productions are built and how everything works. Working with my supervisor was fruitful because I had a chance to develop my skills as a writer and director, and I had someone to turn to when I reached a dead end.

The performance received some media time and publicity when National Broadcast Company YLE interviewed me for the radio. I usually hate speaking publicly about my art, since often I start to panic and lose my train of thought. But this piece had been in my mind so long that it was easy to talk about my motivation for this performance--what had inspired me and what audience can expect when attending.

The Performance Period and the "Afterlife"



Image 2.10. The ensemble of Vihapuhenäytelmä © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

The opening night started well. Due to the Helsinki Night of the Arts, the performance was almost fully booked. Then, in a critical moment, technology betrayed us. There was supposed to be a video, but the video didn't start. The program running the media had crashed. I had to improvise something when technician announced that there was a problem. I explained shortly what was supposed to happen next and gave a improved short hate speech towards technology. The audience was awake and gave comments like: "during the winter war everything was better". Luckily, it was only that one video that didn't work. The rest worked perfectly. During Kaisla's transgender-monologue and discussion with the audience, a couple of elderly ladies got furious with her. Close to the end, while Liisi was "killing" me with the baseball bat, a couple of people left the auditorium. Very soon after that, while lying on the floor, I realized something white and moist was dropping on my shoulders. I was sure that someone had protested my performance, thrown yogurt at me, and escaped. Afterwards, I heard the ladies arguing with Kaisla had left during the ending. It was the fake baseball bat that had exploded while hitting on me and ejaculated liquid latex on me. The audience loved the unintentional effect.

On Friday, we had the smallest audience. They were all hiding in the end of the auditorium and they were quite passive. Of course, that affected our energies. The Friday show wasn't bad, but it lacked something the other performances had. On Saturday, something magical happened and the show moved to another level. The audience was very active from the beginning and many of them also took part in the end discussion I organized. On Monday, our show was full of high-schoolers. They were also an active audience, but they found fun in other things than older audiences did. Also with them, we had an end discussion session. Monday and Tuesday were our best performances, so it was quite sad to end on Tuesday. I really enjoyed being on the stage and I was proud what I had created.

After every performance, we spent some time with the audience if they wanted to comment or discuss with us. Most of the critiques we got concerned the first half. Many people felt that it was just the ensemble giving out hate speeches, not processing it anyway or bringing anything new to it. Also, people felt that the "Päivi-character" was boring. Otherwise, the audiences really

enjoyed the show. *"Everyone's a little bit racist"* song was a punch in the face for the audiences. The common audience reaction was: "you can't do that!", because it revealed the little inner racist within. Also, the mood changed after the school-tv, from comic carnival to deeper and darker processing of the hate speech worked for the audiences. Here are some comments the performance received: "outrageous!"; "made me laugh, cry and aghast"; "The fashion show segment depicts our time and the future a bit too well", "the personal remark is so touching"; "pure Vili"; "at the same time it made me amused and horrified"; "have to watch myself from mirror after seeing this"; "tacky and shoddy!".

It was sad that I had to cut away so much of the amazing material I had been creating and testing already in the workshops, but with the three performers plus myself, I just did what I could to make the performance happens. That meant that I had to cut away the most experimental parts, such as the movement scenes and the hate closet. Looking the performance now with some distance, I'm still quite happy about it. At least it gave a zeitgeist of what the political atmosphere in summer 2015 was. It was the first piece I ever directed, and it looked like it. There are some parts that feel now very naive, and for some parts, I wish I could have spent more time "sharpening" them. The end result would have been even better if I could have concentrate just on the directing and the dramaturgy.

In the next chapter, I will give a description and a critical overview of the performance, linking it with my inspirations, artistic decisions, and the art field.

3. VIHAPUHENÄYTELMÄ - WHAT AND WHY?

Beautiful art works may contain elements that, taken in isolation, are hideous. ... The emergent form, the whole, is alive and therefore beautiful, as awful things may be – as gargoyles, and fearful African masks, and the Greek tragedies of incest and murder are beautiful. Beauty is not identical with the normal, and certainly not with charm and sense appeal, through all such properties may go to the making of it. Beauty is expressive form.

- Susanne K. Langer³³

In this chapter, my aim is to discuss and analyze the artistic part of my thesis, Vihapuhentelmä. Together with the description of the performance, I will tell about the methodological approaches, artistic choices, and also trying to map the performance in the traditions and fields of Live Art and other performing arts.

For VPN, I gathered a lot of different documentary material based on newspapers, various private discussions, interviews, Facebook posts, manifestos and academic articles. Most of the spoken text on stage was an edited version of that material, so taking methods from the documentary theatre tradition felt relevant. Due to the fact that all my performers were "caucasian persons," it was very important for me as the dramaturg and director to bring our own personal views and experiences of hate speech on display. As privileged white people, we can't speak about these issues on behalf of other people; we can't appropriate their voices and stories. We can't represent asylum seekers, any minorities or any group we are not belonging ourselves. The personal monologues also brought the hate speech on the audiences' skin better than the documentary sequences. The end result was kind of a documentary fiction, zeitgeist and a mental depiction of the atmosphere Finland was having throughout the summer 2015.

³³ Langer 1953, 395-96.

Dramaturgy and the Documentary Approach

My first ever experience with documentary theatre was in the February 2015 when I visited London and had chance to see **Stephen Sondheim's** (1935-) *Assassins* (1990)³⁴ at the Menier Theatre, a revue-style musical about real-life people who have attempted, successfully or not, to assassinate the Presidents of the United States. In many ways this performance has become one of the most influential for me:

"The atmosphere and the environment are like an abandoned circus dystopia. - - - I really enjoyed the piece's political incorrectness: how it portrays the murderous monsters in a very sympathetic manner and how it combines documentary material, fiction, and musical theatre. For example, the dialogue between **John Wilkes Booth** and **Lee Harvey Oswald**, in which Booth encourages the hesitant Oswald to shoot **John F. Kennedy** . - - - Due to the small venue, the performers are very close to the audience all the time. The final image for me is **Aaron Tveit** (portraying Booth) half a meter from me, pointing my forehead with a pistol“ .³⁵

During summer 2015 ,while working with the Hate Speech Play, I was inspired by *American Horror Story: Freak Show*. It became influential and together with *Assassins*, it gave me the framework for the performance: a sideshow with all the horrible real-life freaks--politicians, racists, and hate criminals. It was also a natural choice. Marvin Carlson sees the roots of modern performance art in the vaudeville (US) and especially in cabaret (Europe) scene. Due to cabaret's popularity among big masses and the variety of entertainment it offered (music, mime, theatre, propaganda speeches, dance etc.) it provided a fruitful playground for the reformers of theatre, like Brecht, avant-gardist movements such as the Dadaist, the Surrealists, and the Futurists and the early Soviet historical spectacles. They all had their roots in cabaret.³⁶ In the style of the cabaret evening, VPN contained short cabaret-like

³⁴ *Assassins* 03.02.2015.

³⁵ Personal diary, 03.02.2015.

³⁶ Carlson 2006, 135-143.

acts based on different hate speech issues. There are song and dance numbers, manifestos, political propaganda and satire, even an educational part.

Brecht was inspired by the cabaret scene, but instead of joining forces with the surrealists, he rather formed his own method which he called “epic” to wake-up the audiences. This was a follow-up of that era’s theatre-revolt in Berlin: the purest state of Piscatorian theatre and learning-plays made possible by the development of the theatre techniques and the rise of film ³⁷.

Director **Erwin Piscator** brought already in the 1920s films (news, animation etc.) as part of the dramaturgy. He stated that films have three missions in theatre:

1. the documentary/historical films either guide or give temporal and spatial dimension
2. the dramaturgical film helps the story forward and "saves" lines
3. commentary film underlines the moral teaching.

Brecht was part of Piscator’s working group in the 1920s and was impressed with his theatrical experiments. Unlike Brecht, Piscator was involved in the Dada-movement and he organized dada-happenings in Berlin between 1918 and 1919. Piscator’s collaborators were visual artists **László Moholy-Nagy** (later one of the leading figures in Bauhaus) and **Georg Grosz**, who visualized his theatre pieces. Grosz’s caricatures were an important part of many Piscator's pieces. Documentary theatre was part of *The New Objectivity* (in German: *Neue Sachlichkeit*) movement, which born as a force against the emotion-driven expressive art movement. ³⁸

For Brecht, the difference between truth and illusion was important. He wanted the audience to concentrate on feelings instead of catharsis, and empathize with what was happening on stage. What Brecht called *Epic Theatre* was a combination of three methods: *verfremdungseffekt* (distancing effect/ alienating effect: methods of making the audience reacting and criticizing to the happenings instead of emphasizing them)³⁹; *historicization* (setting the play in another historical context and milieu to reveal that the

³⁷ Wickham 1992, 232.

³⁸ Junttila 2012, 37-38, 40.

³⁹ Wickham 1992, 232-33.

man never change)⁴⁰; and a *dialectical structure*, in which commentary out of the character, songs, dance and film projections are breaking the narrative⁴¹. In *Vihapuhentelmä*, there was no straight narrative. Instead of different scenes, characters, songs and videos alternated, and performers were dropping their roles to give context and commentary to the scenes. Sometimes even freezing the scene with a commentary break. This created a kind of cliffhanger, what happens in tv-shows when the commercial comes. The music in the performance served as an atmospheric element, but also it was a great part of the dramaturgy, giving breaks for the sometimes heavy documentary scenes. To add one more documentary theatre level, the setting was modern Finland, instead of a historicization⁴².

It was mid-March 2015, when *The Little Girl in Red Coat* arrived:

“Last night I had a dream and it gave me an impulse for my thesis performance. This character from *Schindler’s List* (1993), the *Little Girl in Red*, was in my dream all the time. When I woke up, I understood, that this is something special. I don’t know yet how, but she will be there somehow”⁴³. Little did I know then. She was to become one of the most important elements in my thesis performance. In the image 3.1, on the left, she is portrayed in *Vihapuhentelmä* and on the right in *Schindler's list*.

For a long time, she was just a visual element there: a character staying all the time on stage. But she ended up being the most important part of the dramaturgy. She is there all the time witnessing all the events, and it is her who is facing the change. She was to anchor putting everything together. It is her journey from the innocence to perdition. She is kind of a *Little Red Riding Hood* -character: curious little child, ending up in different situations and dangers. She works as a metaphor/archetype for human: we all are innocent in we born, but sometimes environment, education, life choices, company etc.

⁴⁰ Brecht 1991, 128-29.

⁴¹ Wickham 1992, 233.

⁴² Junttila 2012, 43-44.

⁴³ personal diary 14.3.2015



Image 3.1. The Little girl in Hate Speech Play on the left and in Schindler's list on right. Left photo © Neonilla Narjus 2015, right screenshot from the movie.

factors turns some people into racists. They will get embraced by the Charm of the Black Sun and give into inner fears and prejudices.

Visual Design

My background is in fine art. I did my BA in a media-oriented art school, so it was a natural choice for me to use media and videos as a basis of the stage design. I am also part of the generation who have learned all the valuable lectures from TV-shows and movies, so pop-culture gave me lots of references to use and a way to compose the performance.

In 2012, I saw a production of *Green Day's American Idiot*⁴⁴ in London. I was impressed how wonderfully the piece captured the mental atmosphere of the post 9/11 world. But what really impacted me, was **Christine Jones'** stage design combined with **Kevin Adam's** lightning, and **Darrel Maloney's** video projections (Images 3.2 and 3.3). It was a rock concert/pop-spectacle mashup with concert lightning, scaffoldings and dozens of flat screen-monitors swarming endless flow of news clips and propaganda. When I started to discuss of the visuals with my lightning designer Lauri Sirén, I used this show as reference material to express what I wanted the

⁴⁴ Green Day's American Idiot 12.12.2012.

performance to look like.

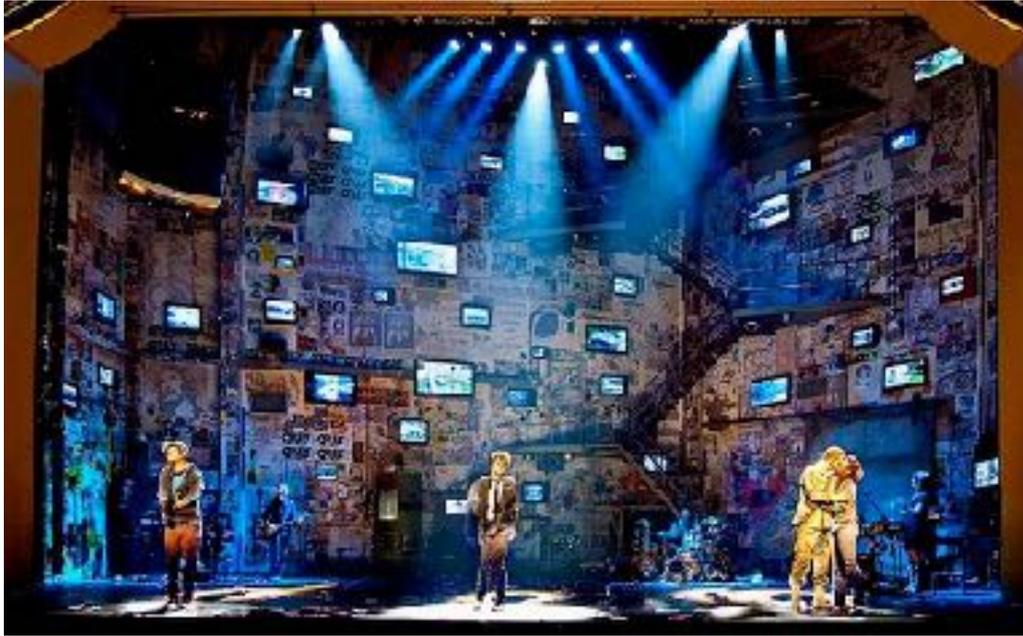


Image 3.2. American Idiot, Stage design, <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/0a/07/69/0a07692268f276cbf9a98a870ca43b75.jpg>.



Image 3.3. American Idiot projections/lightning, <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/ee/af/a5/eeafa5d9d6bo997e9befb38ba7125969—stage-design-set-design.jpg> (Next page)

Because I wanted my performance to look more like a pop show than a traditional theatre/ performance piece, I decided that the stage itself is a catwalk (Image 3.4). I also wanted a huge demon like clown head on the stage that would vomit all the characters to the stage. It was Lauri's suggestion that

we could keep all the surfaces white, so we could project onto all of them and create more landscapes and spaces. In the final version of the set design, there were four more elements for projections. Since the performance took place on the Theatre Academy's big theatre hall, the floor railings added a nice industrial feeling. The sound and light was built as it would have been built for a rock concert. Lauri is experienced in concert and rock festival light designing, so he was the perfect guy for the work.



Image 3.4. The stage of *Vihapuhenäytelmä* © Vili Nissinen 2015.

With the costumes I wanted realism, since the characters were mostly real-life characters or references to pop-culture. I wanted them to look as realistic as possible, so people would recognize them easily (Image 3.5). With some of the characters I wanted to show them as media presents them, for example Vladimir Putin was portrait as a shirtless guy with camouflage trousers and ice hockey garments, an immigration-critical politician in an unfitting black suit with tasteless tie, and a Muslim as a terrorist. Some characters wore accessories adding symbolical levels to the characters. For

example, the Great American Guru wore Mickey Mouse ears to underline Yankee culture (Image 3.6).



Image 3.5. Original persons versus stage versions.

Image 3.6. The Great American Guru. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

Since the show contained violence and use of guns, I wanted the guns to look extremely unreal and make the violence more in a comic book style. The AK47-rifle and the baseball bat used in the performance were pink (Image 3.7, next page). In one of the videos, when a pistol triggers, instead of a bullet a flag with a text “bang” comes out (Image 3.8 next page). The final scene contained choreographed violence. It started realistic, but was slowly distanced from realistic action, in the style of the movement workshop I organized to prepare material for this performance. For example, characters were killed with just a single finger snap.





Image 3.7. Little Girl and her pink riffle. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.



Image 3.8. Comic book-violence. Screenshot from the video documentation 2015.

Description of the performance

Haunting jazz music is playing while the audience arrives to the theatre hall. Red curtains, a huge clown head and a long catwalk dominates the space. A Freak Show is ready to begin. The jazz suddenly stops, when the first sounds of *Du Hast* (1997) by **Rammstein** fill the air. The Ring Master or Master of Ceremonies (Image 3.9. next page), later MC, walks out from the clown's mouth. He walks slowly closer to audience and lip syncs the first words from the song, pointing simultaneously at someone in the audience. The music fades and he welcomes audience in: "Willkommen to the von Nissinen's, or

Nazi Nissinen's, like some likes to call me, Freak Circus! On this stage, tonight all kinds of horrible real life freaks! The passing theme of tonight's show is hate speech. What is hate speech? Where does it come from and what it causes to a person?" The MC promises, that after tonight's performance audience will know answers to these questions.



Image 3.9. The MC welcomes audience into the Freak show. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

I have been fascinated with the Cabaret's MC-character since the first time I saw the movie version and later the different theatre productions. How the Emcee is the representation of the political and historical events and atmosphere from the Weimar Germany to the Third Reich. It has also become one of my dream roles. Via Youtube, I have had a chance to enjoy **Alan Cumming's** portrayal as the Emcee in **Sam Mendes's** legendary Broadway revival of *Cabaret* (1998). In 2012 I saw *Cabaret*⁴⁵ on stage in London and wrote about it:

"I'm impressed by the MC, he reminds me of Heath Ledger's Joker. The combination of clown and devil is interesting. The feeling of fun and danger"⁴⁶. With all these different Emcees in my mind, I created my own MC/ringmaster character for Vihapuhentelmä. As the freaks show's MC, I had the power and ability to link all the stage happenings

⁴⁵ 13.12.2012.

⁴⁶ Personal diary 13.12.2012.

in the historical events and social context, keeping the audience aware that what they see is real.

Having a narrator breaking the fourth wall is a common effect in Brechtian and documentary theatre⁴⁷. For example, in **Susanna Kuparinen's** documentary theatre piece *Eduskunta- III* (2015)⁴⁸ there is the narrator, but also the performers throughout the show present themselves one by one as performers behind the characters, keeping the audience awake and aware. In VPN, my performers were presented at the beginning and in couple scenes, they gave the context for the scene or the scene was about their persona, like Kaisla's talk about being a transgender person.

Then the MC introduces some of the real-life freaks audience will see tonight. There is Kaisla, a person with no shame. There is mademoiselle Torsti, who is very mundane. And then there is the most horrific creature on earth: Liisi, the Little Girl in Red Coat. After that the first sideshow act starts. A fictional girl



band (Image 3.10.) performs a propaganda song based on racist and misogynist internet writings. The band is dressed in long red jackets, they are not smiling and their movement is very militant while they are singing.

Image 3.10. The girl band, from the left: Liisi, Kirsti and Kaisla. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

⁴⁷ Junttila 2012, 46.

⁴⁸ III Eduskunta 2015.

With the cabaret form, there are also echoes of Finnish television traditions. During the 1960's and 1970's, young leftist artists produced radical, cabaret-style programs in the Finnish Broadcasting Company. These shows contained music, humor, and interviews with different specialists, such as sociologists⁴⁹. The first song heard on the show, "Tango Pecunia", refers to this tradition. It is a pastiche of the era's politically tinted music: the composition sounds very much like **Kaj Chydenius's** and **Eero Ojanen's** songs, and most of the lyrics are picked from political speeches or internet discussions. The red coats the performers are wearing and the marching choreography also anchor this scene to the Finnish political television cabaret tradition.

The song is followed by video. In the video, Kirsti, one of the female performers, is talking about rage and how expressing rage is hard for her, unless the goal is someone very close to her. During the interview the audience can see short glimpses of a Spartan female warrior with a sword having her own personal fight.

Adding the Spartan woman in the video was my visual idea to make the interview kind of a video more interesting and documentary look-a-like.

The MC cuts off the video. It is time for the daily Two Minutes of Hate, in which everyone in the audience is encouraged to express hate. MC guides audience how to express hate: ugly facial expression combine with fist shaking. MC and the audience practice this together. After that the Two Minute of Hate begins, presenting various hate propaganda collected from internet discussion forums, hate speech from interviews etc.

In Orwell's book *1984*, the citizens of dystopian Oceania have to gather every day to express public hatred towards enemies of the state. With this scene, I wanted to create an audience participation moment with easy movements everyone can do or not do in the darkness of the theatre hall. It was also my social experiment to see how many would really play this hate game. Quite many did.

⁴⁹ Yle.fi

The audience didn't express enough hate during the propaganda moment. The MC teases them for their hypocrisy. He comments that of course only the left side/all the green leftist, of the audience is expressing hatred towards the propaganda, but the right side is just sitting there enjoying. He asks questions from the right side: *"How many of you are vegetarians?"*. Several hands rise. *"Hitler was too! How many of you supports animal rights?"*. More hands rise on the right side. *"So, did Hitler. The human kind never changes."* The MC is bit disappointed while walking off the stage.

There was no script for this audience roasting sequence. Roasting is a form of stand-up comedy, in which the comedian "mocks" his targets with the warm heart and witty comments. The more performances we had, the better my roasting started to be. The comments presented are from several performances and they born at the moment.

The Little Girl in Red Coat has followed the hate session. She tries to escape, but before she walks out a priest starts to preach. He is worried about female priests and homosexuals filling churches and society. The Devil is doing his job. The priest is gloating in his fear and loathing. The Little Girl in Red Coat curls up in anxiety.

After the sermon, the leader of the Finnish Christian Democrat party, **Päivi Räsänen**, starts her daily prayer. Elsewhere a Straight White Male with a very fragile masculinity organizes a Herero-Pride march to celebrate oppressed straight people and asks the Little Girl in Red Coat to carry demonstration signs with him (Image 3.11. next page). While he gives his speech, Päivi whips herself every time the guy says a word related to sexual orientation or perversion. "Aito Avioliitto (True Marriage)"-guy collects names for address to collapse the new sex neutral marriage law.

Susanna Kuparinen says, that in documentary theatre, the point is to not imitate these real-life characters, as it would just be just a bleak copy of the original. On the stage, you make the character more grotesque than original. Through exaggeration, you can make the characters look like humane while their actions are anything but.⁵⁰ In VPN, I asked a female performer to

⁵⁰ Kuparinen 2011, 198-99.

perform the misogynist and homophobic sermon by a male priest wearing a ridiculous fake beard. My direction for her was that the character should be aroused while talking.

For the audience, this whole "religion" sequence was the most boring. But because most of the members of the working group belonged to the Queer-community, it was very relevant for us to deal with these Anti-equal marriage law, Hetero-Pride etc people.



Image 3.11. Hetero-Pride demonstration. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

After the list is full, Päivi Räsänen celebrates and gives a press talk. The Little Girl in Red Coat figures out what is happening around her. She throws the signs away and interrupts Päivi and tries to convince her that it is okay to be gay, while Päivi just smiles and tells the press that it is just not working that people can marry whoever they want. After her words, the MC freezes the situation and gives and context for the discussion we just heard

(Image 3.12). Again, Päivi is interrupted, this time by the drunken Straight White Male telling her that, he does not need the True Marriage between male and female, while a Somali male can have several sexual relationships with Finnish women without a blessing from a priest.

The dialogue between Päivi and the Little Girl was based on Angela Merkel's talk with a Palestinian refugee girl in which Mrs. Merkel tells that not all migrants can stay in Germany and "some will have to go home". She then "petted" the crying girl saying: "You are an extremely nice person, but you also know that there are thousands and thousands of people in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon."⁵¹



Image 3.12. Päivi explains marriage to the Little Girl and the MC freezes the situation. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

On the video, Spanish guy tells his story about how people can change for the better and leave the anger behind if they just want to. The MC comments the video and tells that maybe there is a change for the better world. The MC then opens a fashion show. Patriotic march music begins. On the screen The Third Reich Army is marching. One by one, the models walk on the catwalk presenting white t-shirts, with various horrible texts within: female genital manipulation, transphobia, racism, homophobia, sexism, genocide (image 3.13). The models are joined by the Little Girl in Red Coat. Bit later the models starts to fight about the place in the spotlight and who

⁵¹ bbc.com

has the most horrible text on them, trying to leave the other models on their shade.

For the fashion show, I wanted to create kind of a Piscatorian film comment with the marching Nazi-army underlining the horrific things and attitudes the t-shirts were selling. For example in Piscator's play *Sturmflut* (1926) while on stage there is a heated stock market battle about Albania's oil fields going on, on the screen behind the stage a film shows warships heading to destroy Albania.⁵² (Image 3.14).



Image 3.13.
The horrible fashion t-shirts.
(c) Vili Nissinen 2015.



Image 3.14.
Models with their horrible t-shirt marching on catwalk. Behind them German army marches ready for conquest whole Europe. © Vili Nissinen 2015

⁵² Junttila 2012, 37-38, 49.

Suddenly, the fashion show ends. The Great American Guru is descending from heaven in SWAT-style. An aggressive patriotic anthem plays while the landing happens. Behind the Guru images of the Bald Eagle, rifles, Republican Elephants, cheese balls, Statue of of Liberty etc. rolls behind (Image 3.15.). The Guru introduces himself as Richard Schechner and his book *“Performance Studies - An Introduction”* and asks how many of the audience members have read the book. Couple has. He asked them to tell the title of a random chapter. They don’t know. The Guru is seemingly pissed off by the audience who do not worship him enough, but he decides to give them a lecture about being privileged and grabbing the opportunities when they land on you. The lecture is mostly misogynist ego pumping and bitter words towards the audience. The Little Girl in Red has been monitoring the lecture behind the Guru. She doesn’t understand a word of it. Afterwards the MC comments shortly the Guru and tells a short story about meeting with Richard Schechner.



Image 3.15. The Great Guru lands. Image on the left bar © Neonilla Narjus 2015. Images on right screenshots from the performance documentation.

This sequence is based on my experience and memory of the meeting and discussion I had with Richard Schechner, with additions from several male lecturers from US. With this character I wanted to create an archetype of a narcissistic, all-mighty male character in a power status, who can't take any criticism towards his offending and inappropriate actions and attitudes. British documentary theatre maker **Robin Soans** is against imitation, though if the person has a strong feature, it is okay to use that. Like a strong accent⁵³. My version of "Richard Schechner" was based on my memory, and I didn't even try to imitate him. By simply highlighting the arrogant attitude, a strong American English accent and having the Mickey Mouse ears on my head, the character called "The Great American Guru" was ready.

After the Guru, the Little Girl in Red Coat sees an election interview from a parliament candidate from a small racist party. The candidate is worried because society and its attitudes are getting cold. Nobody cares about the elderly people. After that she tells she was evicting asylum seekers from her hometown and that she was proud of it.

Brecht and Piscator weren't the only ones that gave me methods for working. Peter Eckersall had pointed me earlier to American Anna Deavere Smith and British **Alecky Blythe**, artists who are known for their documentary theatre pieces about conflicts affecting small communities. Smith is known for her plays about racial conflicts: *Fires in the Mirror* (1992) and *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (1994) and Blythe for her *London Road* (2011), about five murders of young women in Ipswich. What makes these shows special is that the scripts consist of actual interviews of actual witnesses of the cases. ⁵⁴ Smith films all the interviews for her plays and edits the text based on them. Her method or tool is making the character on stage by following every movement, and every tone of voice of the interviewee. Blythe records the interviews for her plays and composes a tape from the actual recordings for the performers to learn and follow. She doesn't use written text

⁵³ Junttila 2012, 178.

⁵⁴ Junttila 2012, 112,135.

at all--only recordings.⁵⁵ These methods are called Verbatim or word-for-word due they are based on actual interview recordings.

In VPN, the video described earlier used these methods. I watched through all the election candidate interview from Yle's election gallery for the 2015 parliamentary elections and picked one especially juicy piece for the performance. I downloaded the video and gave it to one of the performers. I played the interviewer. We "mimicked" every word, every tone, every moment from the original video. Even the physical appearance of the actual persona (Image 3.16).



Image 3.16. The election interview of Eila Hassinen as performed Vihapuhenäytelmä. Video follows every movement, word, and tones of the original video. Previous page. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

The Little Girl in Red Coat tries to run away, but an educational tv-show begins. Another kid takes her hand and brings her to the show. During the theme music, a Finnish pop song from late 1970's titled "*Me halutaan olla neekereitä/ We Wanna Be Niggers*", the program hosts arrive dancing in a 70's disco style. The mood in the show is very uneasy. The hosts discuss with the kids about their experiences with dissimilarities, racism and bullying. The hosts opens shortly about what is hate speech and how it works in everyday

⁵⁵ Junttila 2012, 112-13, 135.

life (Image 3.17). They demonstrate shortly how easily people judge each other based on prejudices by playing a short game. The point of the game is to give a word for someone else and the person must tell the first three things comes to her mind from the subject. Soon the game turns into a racist battle between the hosts. When they figured out what just happened, they try to explain how easy it is to relate on prejudices and produce hate speech. An awkward silence follows.

After the silence, the hosts gives a lecture about hate speech. What its historical roots are and how it works nowadays. They bring along theorists Judith Butler and Sara Ahmed to tell how they describe hate speech. The lecture is enlivened by educational movies demonstrating the issue: a Tarantino style video about the vicious circle of hate speech in the Finnish context and a clip from a documentary about a summer festival in which the journalist uses insulting words when describing the festival goers and stating that vegetarians, civil servants, etc. are Satan worshippers.



Image 3.17. The Educational TV-show about racism and hate speech. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

Before the ending, the Hosts ask one question which is one of the key questions around hate speech: what I should tolerate if I demand toleration from the others? The program ends with a joyful song Everyone's a Little Bit Racist:

- “You’re a little bit racist.”
- “Well, you’re a little bit too.”
- “I guess we’re both a little bit racist.”
- “Admitting it is not an easy thing to do...”
- “But I guess it’s true!
- “Between me and you, I think”
- ”Everyone’s a little bit racist sometimes./Doesn’t mean we go around committing hate crimes./ Look around and you will find no one’s really color blind./ Maybe it’s a fact we all should face/ Everyone makes judgments based on race./ Everyone’s a little bit racist today./ So, everyone’s a little bit racist okay!/ Ethnic jokes might be uncouth,/ But you laugh because they’re based on truth./ Don’t take them as personal attacks./ Everyone enjoys them - so relax!/ If we all could just admit that we are racist a little bit,/ Even though we all know that it’s wrong,/ Maybe it would help us get along.”
- “Evlyone’s a ritter bit lacist!”

This scene was inspired by an old awkward Finnish sex-ed document from the 1960 's and the Finnish comedy show Studio Julmahuvi. The dark and absurd humor of Julmahuvi combined with the awkwardnesses of the sex-ed document was a very fruitful basis. In this sequence, my philosophy of teaching while entertaining was most well presented.

After the song starts an interview video, in which a guy talks about his father’s fears about his son’s future, manhood and sexuality, because his son is quitting medical school and wants to become an artist. This video was another comment against the toxic hegemonic masculinity. The first was in the beginning with the Hetero-Pride man and the next one is where Hitler arrives on the stage.

A dismal child choir version of **Metallica’s** *Nothing Else Matters* plays. The Little Girl in Red Coat is sitting in a church bench. Restless young American punk, **Dylan Storm Roof** walks in. He wears a hunting jacket, which is

decorated with the US and Confederate flags. He carries a bag and sits next to the Little Girl in Red. The youngsters share a small conversation about belief and God. Roof is annoyed by the Little Girl's childish faith to the loving God. For him the Christian God doesn't love, because He allows all kinds of bad things happen. He asks the Girl leave him alone. Then the Girl goes a bit further (Image 3.18).



Image 3.18. Roof and the Little Girl talks about God. © Neonilla Narjus 2015

Roof is nervous and takes his bag. An inner battle begins. He starts to open the bag, but he encounters with the Little Girls gentle smile. He takes his bag and is leaving the church, when his God, Anders Behring Breivik appears to encourage him. Roof turns around and comes back. His inner battle continues, but Breivik convinces him, that someone must do something concrete, not just bubbling on the internet (Image 3.19). Breivik continues by referring these internet speakers to sea lion males who rape penguins, when one can't get laid with female sea lions. Breivik continues telling examples of Finnish politicians fantasizing about 1930's and quoting him on Facebook on the Utøya-anniversary day.

Finally, Roof is ready to kill. He takes his gun, rises up and yells: "I am here to shoot black people. You've raped our women, and you are taking over the country. I must do what I must do. I am starting a race war." He points at

the audience and is ready to shoot, when the MC freeze the situation and introduces the facts about Charleston Church shootout to the audience.



Image 3.19. Breivik convinces Roof. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

This scene with Dylann Storm Roof and Anders Behrin Breivik is the breaking point in the performance. After seeing a production of Cabaret in London⁵⁶ I have written down some words about my experience:

“The first half of the show was hilarious and dirty, but suddenly the whole ambiance changed: what used to me joyful and debauched is now the opposite. Dark and eerie. It is like a punch straight to spectator’s face”⁵⁷.

For my thesis performance, I wanted to create something similar. The first half of VPN is partly silly and childish. The audience was laughing and from the stage, I could see happy and amused faces. But in the middle, with this

⁵⁶ Cabaret 13.12.2012

⁵⁷ Personal diary 13.12.2012

scene, happens the change. I also wanted to create kind of uneasiness what I had felt while watching *Streetcar Named Desire* in London 2014. The scene was based on the manifestos of Roof and Breivik: they are having their dialogue through their manifestos. I was inspired by the scene from *Assassins*, in which Booth, the assassin of **Abraham Lincoln** convinces Lee Harvey Oswald to shoot JFK.

The scene is followed by a video, in which an immigration critic dreams about a Real White Christmas, with no immigrants and asylum seekers in Finland. He blames immigrants for climate change and snowless Christmases. He hopes that immigrants could follow the Star of Bethlehem away from here.

This was actually the only hate speech that wasn't based on actual hate text, but was written specifically for the show. I was inspired by the song "White Christmas" and a project that happened in Italy in which the asylum seekers were evicted from a town just before Christmas. The end result was another Julmahuvi-style sequence.

The Little Girl in Red Coat has witnessed all the previous actions. She is confused and it doesn't help that a sensual sissy version of Adolf Hitler, portrayed by a female performer, arrives. Hitler plays with the globe while singing **Lana Del Ray's** song *Gods and Monsters*. Hitler invites the Girl inside the Black Sun (projected on the catwalk), manipulates the Girl, teaches her how to make a Nazi Salute and gives her own Hitler mustaches. They are dancing together in swastika inspired dance, when the shirtless **Vladimir Putin** in ice hockey gear arrives (Image 3.20). Putin yells to Hitler, that in their league there is no space for sissies and evicts him. Hitler runs away. Putin turns the Little Girl in Red Coat into a Putin Girl, by giving her an I love Putin t- shirt.

With the dancing sensual Hitler, I wanted to invoke a disturbing atmosphere and create images of seducing evil. The swastika-dance was something I created for the workshops based on voguing. I also wanted to play with the male roles here. Hitler was based on the balloon scene from the *Great Dictator* and **Liza Minnelli's** famous Mein Herr-scene from the *Cabaret's* movie version. The sissy Hitler is evicted by ultra-masculine Putin. The words Putin uses while banishing Hitler are from the Ice Hockey manager **Juhani**

Tamminen. In an interview in 2014, he stated that ice hockey is a masculine sport and you don't find "little mice" there⁵⁸. In this scene, I also wanted to reveal horrible and toxic structures through absurd/parody.



Image 3.20. "A Sissy" Hitler seducing the Little Girl and belting the final notes while Putin arrives. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

Putin continues to manipulate the Girl, but is interrupted and evicted by a transgender performer. She thinks that the show is getting too political and she can't understand what is the point in it. Does the Director of the performance just want to dismantle his Nazi past? After that, she introduces her plushie alpaca. During the scene, The Little Girl in Red Coat walks around the stage in her Putin shirt doing a Nazi Salute. The performer talks with the audience about being transgender and tries to find answers to questions her therapist was asking her: how does it feel to be woman? How does it feel to be a man? She reminds us that in some countries, being a trans person is dangerous, and asks kindness and understanding towards trans persons. In the end, she shows a cute video with a bunch of animals playing Here Comes the Sun by the Beatles (Image 3.21).

We had filmed also Kaisla's monologue, but it didn't work on a video. Instead of having a talk with the audience with these issues was at the end much

⁵⁸ iltasanomat.fi

fruitful and interesting decision. I also wanted someone to criticize me on the stage, so this scene was logical also for that purpose.



Image 3.21. On the left: Kaisla with her alpaca talking about being a trans-person. Upper right: The Little Girls marches and doing nazi salute behind Kaisla. Lower right: The Cute Hipster Animal band, Kaisla created to bring something nice to the show. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

Halfway through the music video, the atmosphere changes. Red curtains are appearing and the air is filled again with haunting jazz music (Image 3.22, next page). I as myself appeared dressed in my own train conductor uniform. Soon my character finds out, that he is trapped in a Lynchian Black Lodge, like special agent Dale Cooper is in the TV-series *Twin Peaks*. The Little Girl in Red Coat appears to tease him. She whispers in his ear that he's just a bad person who wants to be famous and to make a spectacle out of other people's misery (Image 3.23).

After the Little Girl in Red Coat has gone away, I started to talk about the comical and horrible situations in which other people have misread and misjudged me as a Nazi sympathizer throughout my life due to appearing as a tall blonde male. I also talked about my own prejudices.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ This part can be found the introduction chapter.

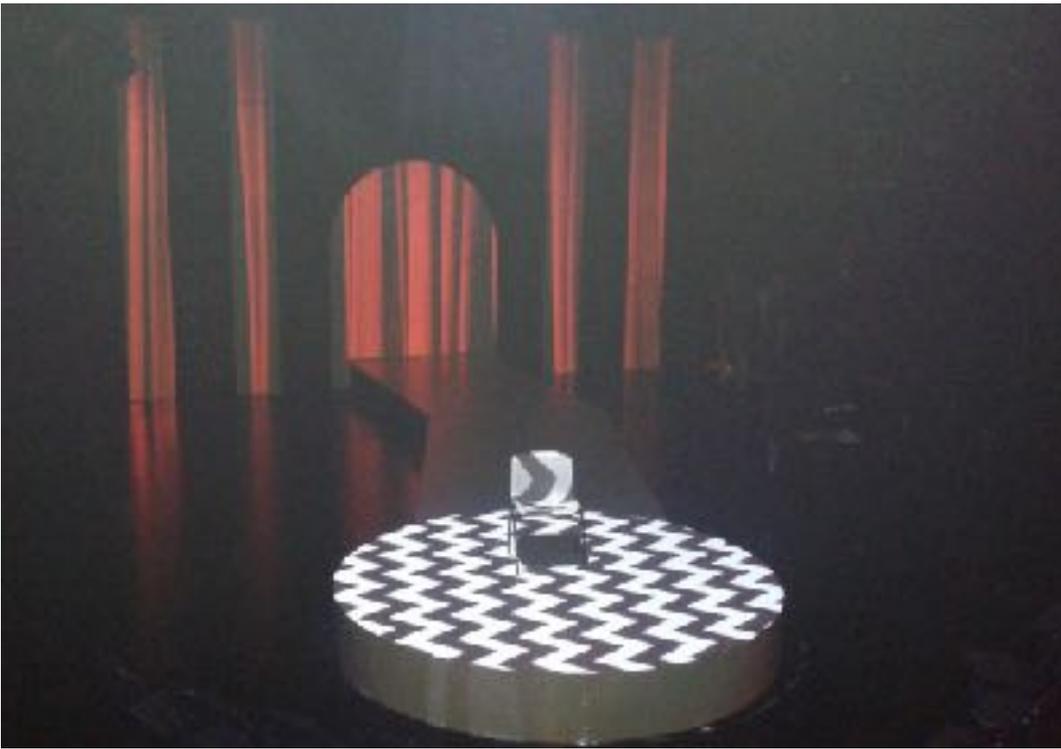


Image 3.22. Projections from the Twin Peaks' styled last scene © Vili Nissinen 2015)



Image 3.23. The Little Girl teases Vili. © Neonilla Narjus 2015)

I'm leaving the stage. A Dark Lady appears and starts to play a gloomy version of **John Lennon's** *Imagine*. The Little Girl in Red Coat comes back to stage, but this time she has a baseball bat and a machine gun with her. During the

song, one by one she brutally assaults and kills everyone on the stage. After her act of violence, she tells that she would be a perfect mass murderer due to her mental illness. Media stigmatizes all mentally ill people as murderous lunatics (Image 3.24.).

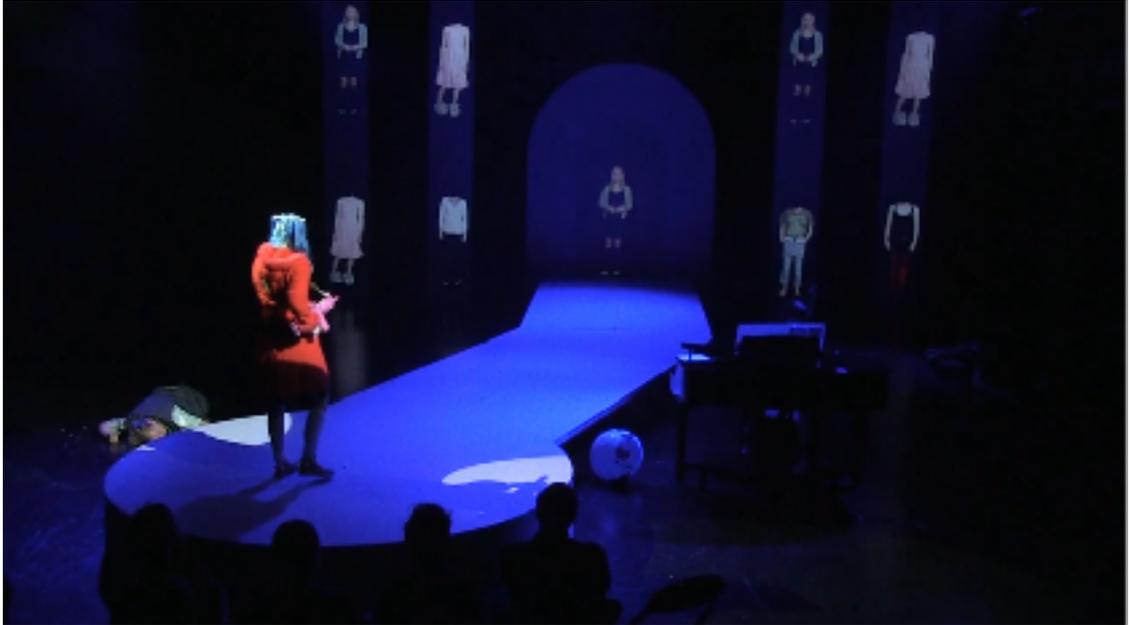


Image 3.24. The Little Girl after her violent crimes. © Neonilla Narjus 2015.

Wrap-Up

The documentary approach was a natural choice for me to create *Vihapuhentelmä*. It made possible to use my own artistic philosophy as a guideline for the performance. Make a political commentary using documentary and personal material. Educate people while “entertaining” them. Documentary theatre also gave a way to bring different voices and point on stage, building the conversation (if it is even possible!). Letting the audience decide what to believe and accept.

My affinity and love to “the silly entertainment” and popular culture lead me to use without a shame freakshow/cabaret framework for the whole performance, using also different approaches to performing: personal monologues, lecturing, stand-up comedy, musical theatre. This was done in the tradition of classical Berlin Cabaret.

After describing the process, performance and mapping the piece and myself into the art field, it was time to dwell on the hate speech issue--trying to figure out what it is and what kind of a performance it could be.

4. WHAT IS HATE SPEECH AND HOW IT WORKS AS A PERFORMANCE?

“Hate speech is a violent performance: like any other violence, it causes fear, anxious, sorrow and losing one’s exuberance. It is an act of power, shoring up one’s imaginary superiority and making the life of the other troublesome”.

- Johanna Vehkoo⁶⁰

This chapter offers a theoretical view to the issue of hate speech. I will describe hate speech in the historical context and give an overview of the atmosphere of the political discussion Finland was having throughout summer 2015 when I was working on my artistic thesis. In this chapter, I will try to theorize hate speech as a performance. For me, hate speech performs through language and power relations. The performer places his target on a subordinate position with relation to the himself. I will also offer a model of hate speech performance: who the typical performer is, who the audience is, and what the dramaturgy of hate speech is. This chapter mostly concentrates on the Hate Speech that occurs on the internet. I will also say couple words about fake media and their verbal strategies.

The text is based on the original version of the seventh scene of *Vihapuhenyntelmä*, an Educational TV-program. Since this is a thesis paper, I have given extended the theoretical approach compared to what we had in the performance. In the footnotes, I have placed comments to open and clarify the issues the scene was referring.

Scene 7: The Educational TV-program

(The atmosphere is extremely awkward. The two well-dressed hosts are interviewing two kids who do not know how to behave on TV.)

Uncle-Vili: What adults have you been talking to you about the difference at school and at home?

⁶⁰ Voima 9/2017. Tie ulos normihuorittelusta. 12-13.



Image 4.1. Educational TV-programme. © Neonilla Narjus.

Kaisla: Once I was on a playground and I was playing with these dark-skinned kids. It was the first time ever I saw that kind of humans. And when they left the playground, I said to them ‘Bye bye monkeys!’. Mommy did not like that.

Aunt-Kirsti: Have you been talking about these issues with your friends?

Liisi: We have not.

Uncle-Vili: Kaisla, do not kick the stage! It makes such an ugly sound! Have your friends given you any nasty nicknames or bullied you?

Liisi: I was once called four-eyes.⁶¹

Aunt-Kirsti: That must not have felt nice.

⁶¹ The opening lines of the scene are based on stories I received at Facebook, when asking how little kids have faced people with different ethnic background and how parents have talked with their child about these issues.

Kaisla: I once called my dad gay-daddy.

Uncle-Vili: How did your dad react to that?

Kaisla: He organized a march so that no one would never ever be called gay-daddy.⁶²

Aunt-Kirsti: Well, we have been talking a little bit about difference, racism and hate speech with kids here. And now we will tell you what the hate speech really is.

Uncle-Vili: Hatred and hate speech has become a vital and normal part of Finnish everyday life. It is happening everywhere: home, gardens, in the coffee rooms of workplaces and especially on internet discussion forums. Mostly the reason for the hatred is religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation or appearance⁶³. It is very trendy to hate those who have succeeded in their life, like Cheek.

Aunt-Kirsti: Unfortunately very often the target is a person in a weaker position with an immigration background, substance abuse problems or a person down and out suffering from social exclusion. And it does not limit only for hating each other, but people also hate themselves because they feel that they do not fit in the roles society and media gives them. And people are reflecting these negative emotions on each other on the streets or on the internet. The triumph of hatred goes on. Luckily, people are also marching on the streets in the name of love and dreams⁶⁴.

⁶² The Hetero-Pride event was part of one of the earlier scenes already. The actual rally was organized 21.9.2013. The main organizer's child had called him Homoisi (gay-daddy) and it provided the inspiration for the Hetero-Pride.

⁶³ Researcher Matti Näsi at Helsingin uutiset 11.4.2015.

⁶⁴ The True Finn representative Olli Immonen posted 24.07.2015 an infamous post on his Facebook-page: "I'm dreaming of a strong, brave nation that will defeat this nightmare called multiculturalism - -" (mtv3.fi). The post was highly criticized due to its close connection to Anders Behring Breivik's manifesto for his massacre done four years earlier. Social media woke up and couple days later, 28.07 an anti-racists "Meillä on unelma/We Have a Dream" demonstration was held in Helsinki. It gathered about 15000 people to show that we Finns don't fight against multiculturalism. (hs.fi) After the performances of Hate Speech Play, the Soldiers of Odin appeared to the streets on October 2015.

Uncle-Vili: Have you ever been angry? What did you do then?

Liisi: My brother pulled my hair and I yelled coarsely at him.

Uncle-Vili: So kind of an angry reaction took over you. At this point it is good to make a difference between angry speech and hate speech. Angry speech is often a single outburst of sudden anger usually directed to the person next to you.⁶⁵ According to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, hate speech is "an expression which spreads, incites, promotes or justifies racial hatred, xenophobia, anti semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin"⁶⁶. And usually expressing hate speech provides sick pleasure for the speaker.

Aunt-Kirsti: Hey! Let's play a little game called "Three things about..." and let's see what will happen. A Greek!

Uncle-Vili: Indolence, economic depression, Antiquity! A Finnish Swede!

Kaisla: Beautiful, blonde, happy! Timo Soini!

Liisi: Piggy, sweating, tummy! A Kebab restaurant!

Aunt-Kirsti: Body hair, rolling meat, family business! A Finnish Romani folk!

Uncle-Vili: Knife, horses, peeing on the velvet skirt! A True Finn!

Aunt-Kirsti: Adult baby, missing puberty, incapable of sexual intercourse...

⁶⁵ Researcher Pentti Raittila from Tampere University separates hate speech as juridically unlawful and punishable hate speech and milder hate speech, such as bad behavior and aggressive use of language. Tamperelainen 24-25.5.2015.

⁶⁶ Weber, 2009, 3.

*(Awkward silence.)*⁶⁷

Uncle-Vili: During the game, we saw how easily we lean on the stereotypes about different people. Is it good or bad that we have these stereotypes?

Lecture about hate speech

(The program transforms into a lecture. The performers drop their characters.)

Hate speech as a historic and European phenomena is all but a new issue. Researcher **Reeta Pöyhtäri** from Tampere University writes that as long as the human race has been able to speak and tell a difference between our own and other groups, a human has been capable of producing hate speech towards rivals or enemies. Hate speech and disliking difference can be understood as endogenous qualities. Some of the most horrific examples of hate speech towards ethnic groups are the Third Reich's anti-Semitic propaganda presenting Jewish people as animal-like parasites, a debauched and a greedy race which kills children and enslaves the Aryan race. A more fresh example comes from the early 1990's. The Ruanda State supported radio channel *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* helped creating a supporting atmosphere for the Tutsi-genocide. Channel's programmes encouraged straightforward Hutus to kill Tutsi-men and rape-murder Tutsi-women. A different example of historic hate speech is rewriting history.⁶⁸ For example, in the Soviet Russia, the state dossiers and documents were modified when a person received disgrace from the Communist Party. The person was "*unpersoned*"⁶⁹ and vanished from all the official documents.

According to Hannah Arendt, the roots of the modern hate speech and racism can be found already from the 19th century with the rise of the European nation-states. Racism was built in part of imperialist ideology. Back then, ideas of race were considered incorrect and probably dangerous. But by

⁶⁷ The idea to bring this improv/warm-up game on stage came from my thesis workshops. On the third workshop held in 16.4 and the theme was "Rhetorics and internet". The idea is that participants are standing in a circle and one participant gives a word to another and him must tell the first three things coming his mind about that thing without any censorship. Very soon we figured how horrible game it was. How it was based on stereotypes and I decided to take the game as part of the final piece to show. The words for the game was produced by improving.

⁶⁸ Pöyhtäri 2013, 27-28.

⁶⁹ I'm borrowing the term "un-personing" from George Orwell's 1984.

the turn of the 20th century, racism received authority as it would have been one of the greatest achievement form the Western world.⁷⁰

Also, the rise of the bourgeoisie and the criticisms towards the aristocracy built fertile ground for racism. Nationalism and nihilism were easier to accept for the riff raff (as Hannah Arendt describes the lower-class people). The populist leaders, who would rise from the lower class usually, offered easy solutions, attitudes, and opinions stripped from “the pretending” and hypocrisy, what is so typical for the bourgeoisie.⁷¹

The contemporary hate speech discussion is attached to the criticism of immigration, multiculturalism, and Islam. The terror attacks in Norway 2011 brought hate speech to the Finnish coffee tables, but the phenomena have been there for much longer. For example, our colonizers Russia and Sweden have traditionally been targets of Finnish contempt. Also, our ethnic minorities Finnish Romani and Sami people have got their part of this racist game. For example, Sami people have been mocked publicly with insulting stereotypes and presented as an inferior race⁷². The Sami issue reveals the fact that Finnish Government has not yet ratified the ILO-169 agreement promising equal rights to the native people that the majority population takes for granted.

What “immigration critical” Finns do is pervert the statistics and read them as the Devil reads the Bible to find supportive material for self-interest agenda. In July 2015, True Finn representative from Hollola **Jari Ronkainen** argued on *Etelä Suomen Sanomat* that immigrants receives greater amounts of the social benefits than the Finnish families or pensioners. He pleads on sources and statistic he had found from the fake media web-pages. His arguments were turned over by a local social worker stating, that immigrants receive as many social benefits as the major population, actually a

⁷⁰ Arendt 2013, 222

⁷¹ Arendt 2013, 383, 388, 406

⁷² Pöyhtäri 2013, 29, 33-34.

bit less.⁷³ Common sense is not statistical. Ignorance is Strength, to not question facts is a Virtue⁷⁴.

Linguistic, Symbolic and Narrative Injury

Let's concentrate for a moment on hate speech itself on a theoretical level: it is a fals, illocutionary act;, a performance, stating someone is something with the purpose of hurting the target. The Slovenian philosopher Slavoy Zizek talks about symbolic violence and how it is working through language: hateful language simplifies the target violently as a single feature containing our expectations and visions of the object. To understand how this performative works in real life, I'm taking an example from **Tony Kushner's** essential Reagan era AIDS-crisis play *Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approach* (1991). In the play, a character named **Roy Cohn** (based on the real-life slimy lawyer) is getting an AIDS-diagnosis from his physician and he turns the discussion into a model example performative discussed in this chapter:

Roy Cohn: Your problem, Henry, is that you are hung up on words, on labels: "gay", "homosexual", "lesbian." You think they tell you who a person sleeps with, but they don't tell you that. Like all labels, they refer to one thing and one thing only: Where does a person so identified fit in the food chain? In the pecking order. Not ideology or sexual taste, but something much simpler: clout. Who owes me favors. Not who I fuck or who fucks me, but who will pick up the phone when I call. To someone who doesn't understand this, homosexual is what I am because I sleep with men, but this is wrong. Homosexuals are not men who sleep with other men. Homosexuals are men who, in 15 years of trying, can't get a pissant anti-discrimination bill through City Council. They are men who know nobody, and who nobody knows. Now, Henry, does that sound like me? (---) This is not sophistry, and this is not hypocrisy. This is reality. I have sex with men, but unlike

73 Ess.fi

74 "Ignorance is Strength" is the third Big Brother slogan from George Orwell's book *1984*. The other two are: War is Peace and Freedom is Slavery. "Unquestionable is a Virtue" is my adding to represent the blind belief in lie-based hate propaganda news web pages, popular in immigration critic circles, such as mv-lehti.fi, and lack of media critical thinking.

nearly every other man of which this is true, I bring the guy I'm screwing to Washington, and President Reagan smiles at us and shakes his hand, because what I am is defined entirely by who I am. Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man who fucks around with guys.⁷⁵

In this example, the word “homosexual” is carries messages about homosexual men being weak, without any power in the society, on the bottom of the food chain, when the word “heterosexual” is depicted as the power position . The whole idea of “what I am is defined entirely by who I am” is interesting. It is like a dark reverse of the hate performative. Roy is turning his own weak position to a better one by expressing his position from the more positive side: “Roy Cohn is not a homosexual. Roy Cohn is a heterosexual man who fucks around with guys,” Highlighting the idea of the superiority of straight men, Roy sticks with the hegemonic masculinity strategy. I will talk more about hegemonic masculinity later in this chapter.

So, hate speech can be seen performing through the power relations: gained or taken. For example, a person in higher economic status mocking all the poor as a bunch of lazy shit who just want to abuse the welfare system. Or a native English speaker, who thinks he doesn't have to understand the stupid not-native speaker. Someone is taking over the role of “the better one”.

Since we are moving on the linguistic level, I should bring in the classic feminist philosopher Judith ”Gender is a Performance” Butler. She writes about hate speech as a linguistic injury in her book *Excitable speech* (1997): “*To be called a name is one of the first forms of linguistic injury that one learns*⁷⁶”. As stated in the chapter 5, making differences between “us and those others” is an endogenous quality of human being. Weapons make visible damage; hate speech, invisible. Calling hate speech a “linguistic injury” is spot on. And not only certain words, expressions, and representations makes the linguistic injury, but the way they are performed and the aim behind them⁷⁷, if

⁷⁵ Kushner 2011, 51-52.

⁷⁶ Butler 1997, 2.

⁷⁷ Butler 1997, 2.

I understand correctly her point under the dense forest kind of a word swamp. Butler borrow these ideas from **Mari Matsuda's** book "*Words that Wound*" (1993) and draws idea that is close to Zizek's of hate speech as performative:

“Hate speech is understood not only to act upon its listener but to contribute to the social constitution of the one addressed. The listener is understood to occupy a social position or to have become synonymous with that position, and social positions themselves are understood to be situated in a static and hierarchical relation to one another. It oppresses one in a subordinate status.”⁷⁸

This comes to close to the Roy Cohn-example.

Also for Butler, the linguistic injury works on the symbolic level, like in the case described in the conclusion chapter, in which president Trump mocked the disabled journalist with “jerking his arms around and holding his right hand at an angle”. Here the linguistic injury works on a symbolic level, in the same way, that a burning cross works. **Jane Ward**, in her fantastic and entertaining book *Not Gay - Sex Between Straight White Men* (2015), rises Zizek's opinion about horrifying Abu Ghraib humiliation photos:

“When I saw the well-known photo of a naked prisoner with a black hood covering his head, electric cables attached to his limbs, standing on a chair in a ridiculous theatrical pose, my first reaction was that this was a shot of some latest performance art show in Lower Manhattan. The very positions and coumesst of the prisoners suggest a theatrical staging, a kind of tableau vivant, which cannot but bring to our mind the whole scope of American performance art and "theatre of cruelty," the photos of Mapplethorpe, the weird scenes in David Lynch's films...”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Butler 1997, 18.

⁷⁹ Zizek 2012, 199.

For Žižek, these photos bring in the perverted side of the US popular culture with all the humiliating anal-centric initiation rituals in the US Army and fraternities, with the difference that taking part in these initiation rituals is volunteer. The idea is to be part of the group, to get in. Žižek argues, that point of these Abu Ghraib rituals is not about being included, but getting excluded--an extreme way of showing the power statuses.⁸⁰ Though Ward criticizes Žižek's opinion seeing the situation only as "false free choices" (before that she has argued much about the sexual fluidity and intimacy between straight white males), she states that performative humiliation is a part of white American masculinity, rather than an unusual deviation.⁸¹

Another feminist, queer- and post-colonialist researcher **Sara Ahmed** approaches the issue through emotions. In her article *Affective Economies* (2004), Ahmed talks about how we humans reflect learned attitudes and expectations to other people, how one emotion leads to another. For example, she uses an extract from the Aryan Nations Website to show how they are justifying their racism and hatred by stating it is love towards the country, not hate.

A straight white male feels someone is threatening his almighty position and expresses his fear through hatred. Or as love, like Ahmed points when she referred to neo-Nazi propaganda:

"It is not hate that makes the average white man look upon a mixed race couple with a scowl on his face and loathing in his heart. It is not hate that makes the white housewife throw down the daily newspaper in repulsion and anger after reading of yet another child molester or rapist sentenced by corrupt courts to a couple of short years in prison or on parole. It is not hate that makes the white workingman curse about the latest boatload of aliens dumped on our shores to be given job preference over the white citizen who built this land. It is not hate that brings rage into the heart of a white Christian farmer when he reads of billions loaned or given away as "aid" to foreigners when he

⁸⁰ Žižek 2012, 199-200

⁸¹ Ward, 2015, 167.

can't get the smallest break from an unmerciful government to save his failing farm. No, it's not hate. It is love. ”⁸²

Like Butler, Zizek, and Matsuda, Ahmed talks how different expressions can alienate and give lower positions to people not belonging the core group. Like in the example text: average white man, white housewife and white Christian farmer vs a mixed-race couple, jewspaper, boatloads of aliens. But instead of language, she talks about hate speech as a narrative injury. Ahmed states that hate is economic because it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement⁸³.

Slavoy Zizek shares Ahmed's idea of one emotion leading to another, such as that fear leads to anger, which comes out as hatred. For him, lingual and physical violence are products of society, cultural capital, and media. These have created certain stereotypes of different human groups. Hatred is directed at these stereotypes, not towards single members of a certain group. This he calls for a social violence: keeping up the forced subordinations alive. Not only the media and the society causes hatred. Zizek says that hate speech can also rise from unwanted features in oneself, that is on display or present in another person. I will go more deeply into Zizek's ideas in next chapter.⁸⁴

For one nasty performative, there are three names: symbolic, linguistic and narrative violence/injury. In this section, I've been writing mostly about spoken hatred, but I will now give more example of how hate speaks works. With linguistic and narrative injuries, very often the written hate speech consists of sentences that hide the viewpoint of the writer/speaker. This is characteristic especially for the fake media. The fake "news articles" don't tell who said the opinion stated in the article. It gives an impression, that presented things are fact, says Language researcher **Elina Vitikka**.⁸⁵

⁸² Ahmed 2004, 117.

⁸³ Ahmed 2004, 119.

⁸⁴ Zizek 2012, 80-81, 85, 104-5.

⁸⁵ Helsingin Sanomat 30.1.2015. Vihapuhe väittää vailla epäilyä. Tiede B10

The Dramaturgy, the Performers and the Audience of Hate Speech

"All human evil comes from a single cause, man's inability to sit still in a room".

- Blaise Pascal

The 17th Century French philosopher **Blaise Pascal** already knew something essential of the 21st Century man. Boredom drives people into stupid actions. If I think of the typical hate speech situation, and it would be a movie, it would go something like this: our hero today is an unemployed man and in a risk of getting excluded from the society. The drowsiness and sitting alone at home all days drives him into the internet to dismantle his rage and frustration. Online the false scary visions about immigrants and multiculturalism, written by like-minded people concretize in his head. The internet offers him a "safe playground" to preach his fantasies about the Western downfall caused by multiculturalism. **Pentti Raittila** from Tampere University states that the emergence of the internet hate speech can be partly explained by the nature of the internet, which enables the creation of the like-minded communities that stir each other up. Partly, this can be explained by anonymity. Anonymously, it is easy to repeatedly fire off things that people would not normally say in face-to-face situations. The web also allows the use of inconsiderate language.⁸⁶ It is like the small cabin in the train, where I used sit with my colleagues: a cosy, safe space where one can release their inner demons.

I see the internet in a relationship to a Totalitarian state without a dictator: It offers an easy way to kill one's moral selfhood and shut down one's conscience. While it wipes out individuality, it also destroys the ability to be entrepreneurial. The end result is an army of faceless marionette kind of Pavlov's dogs.⁸⁷ **Søren Kierkegaard** once wrote, that the mass makes the individual completely crippled and irresponsible or at least weakens his or her responsibility.

⁸⁶ Tamperelainen 24-25.5.2015. Kaikki typerä käytös ei ole vihapuhetta.

⁸⁷ I'm borrowing the idea of totalitarianism from Hannah Arendt's book "Totalitarismin synty" 2016, 518-19, 522.

300 years after Pascal Hannah Arendt followed the trial of **Adolf Eichmann** in Jerusalem and wrote her famous book about the banality of evil based on what she witnessed there. Arendt's idea is that those ordinary people, valuing self-interest and conformity over the welfare of others can do horrible things (in the case of Eichmann, making the Holocaust organization working properly and effectively) without feeling it is evil or morally wrong because their actions are normalized by the society they are residing:

“For when I speak of the banality of evil, I do so only on the strictly factual level, pointing to a phenomenon which stared one in the face at the trial. Eichmann was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III 'to prove a villain.' Except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all [...] He merely, to put the matter colloquially, never realized what he was doing [...] It was sheer thoughtlessness--something by no means identical with stupidity--that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period. And if this is 'banal' and even funny, if with the best will in the world one cannot extract any diabolical or demonic profundity from Eichmann, this is still far from calling it commonplace [...] That such remoteness from reality and such thoughtlessness can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together which, perhaps, are inherent in man--that was, in fact, the lesson one could learn in Jerusalem.”⁸⁸

Thanks to the certain parties in our parliament, anti-immigration rhetorics are normalized in Finnish discussion culture. Very often, the typical “hate performer” is a normal middle-class family man who doesn't see anything wrong in his actions. Senior researcher **Tuija Saresma**, from the University of Jyväskylä, depicts hate speech activity as a counter-attack of a privileged white heterosexual man, a defense reaction to world's change and the elimination of his privileges. These “hater” figures settle into the tradition of equality discourse: women need protection from the people of other cultures,

⁸⁸ Arendt 2016, 361-63.

but at the same time these men want to put women on the leash - albeit with violence.⁸⁹ These men are the victims of toxic aspects of hegemonic masculinity.

The idea of hegemonic masculinity comes from **R.W. Connell's** social study from the 1995. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practise which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or taken as guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. To work properly , it needs a cultural ideal and institutional power. It is a “currently accepted” strategy of being a male. It also requires cultural dominance such as dominance of heterosexual men and subordination of homosexual men.⁹⁰

The times are changing, but these characters can't or don't want to change, so they stick with idea that some things/values have to stay as they have always been. They don't want women, gays or immigrants to shake their narrow worldview and fragile masculine identity. They want to form a safe ground from the horrible changing postmodern world and its fears, close the borders in a way how the villagers in **M. Night Shyamalan's** movie *The Village* (2004) want to form a utopia: an authentic and closed world where innocence can be protected from the rotting effect of the modern world⁹¹.

Writer-musician **Gary Lachman** offered me a passage to think of these “hate performers” as kind of norm-violating transgressive Don Quixote's suffering from certain people who (according to their words) trying to limit their freedom of speech (aka hate propaganda.) As Lachman writes: such imaginary Mrs Grundy's⁹² are, in fact, necessary for a philosophy of “transgression”. They are the windmills against which such radical behaviour tilts. It needs them to rebel against; without them, it collapses; its “acts of liberation” deflate to mere personal predilections; its “transgressions” indicate

⁸⁹ Voima 9/2017. Tie ulos normihuorittelusta. 12-13.

⁹⁰ Connell 2015, 77-78.

⁹¹ Zizek 2012, 34-35.

⁹² The Mrs Grundy aka the Patronizing Puritan and how the Finnish hate discussion goes is explained in the previous chapter.

little more than that the people engaging in them have a taste for such things.⁹³

The hate performers, or haters, can be put in two categories:

- *The Trolls*: anonymous people with intentions of mischief and jeering. Part of the internet culture. Some of them might have ideological backgrounds, such as extreme right wing and racism.⁹⁴
- *The haters*: A phenomenon rose aside with fake media. Usually middle-aged and older men, sometimes also women, who reads and believes everything fake media says without any critics. Their worldview is often racist and misogynist. Some of them perform with their own names at the internet discussion. ⁹⁵

So the performer, either an intentional or just a mischievous joker, in the case of hate speech is the verbalizer of the hate text. The audience can be the like-minded people sharing the ideology behind racist attitudes. They share the “communal” visceral response of hate. “Together we hate, and this hate is what makes us together!”⁹⁶ The audience can also be the target of the hateful opening herself⁹⁷.

Here I would love to play with the idea that hate speech can be seen as a “communal performance” in a setting of community/socially engaged art: the borders between the performer and the audience get blurred. The performance is something that is born through the communal process, kind of an ongoing performance in which the performer can also be his own audience at the same time he is also the performer, a sort of Nietzschean über-mensch. In the community art perspective, the performance itself would be the whole process done and lived together. ⁹⁸

⁹³ Lachman 2014, 20.

⁹⁴ Voima 9/2017. Tie ulos normihuorittelusta. 12-13.

⁹⁵ Voima 9/2017. Tie ulos normihuorittelusta. 12-13.

⁹⁶ Ahmed 2004, 118.

⁹⁷ Women /and presumed as females are more likely to receive hate speech, especially online. Voima 9/2017. Tie ulos normihuorittelusta. 12-13.

⁹⁸ Kantonen 2005, 49.

On Topical Finnish Discussion

The language used in the current Finnish political scene is usually grim. In Helsinki University's RAGE: Hate Speech and Populist Othering In Europe: Through the race, age, gender looking glass-research seminar, the head of Institute of Migration **Tuomas Martikainen** stated that the open discussion of their religion, immigrant Muslims have made it possible for Finnish politicians to make politics based on their own religious beliefs⁹⁹. The rude and inconsiderate comments from the True Finn representatives have opened a way for the representatives from the big Finnish political parties to be immigration and multiculturalism critical. I had an interesting discussion with an immigrant during the summer about hate speech and aspects of racism. For him, there are three kinds of racist people: 1. Per se racists: "If you are working here, you took our jobs. If not, you are just grossly exploiting our social benefit system". For these people whatever the immigrant does, it is always wrong. 2. A normal preconceived person, who possibly has never met for example an immigrant. His opinions/views can be changed. 3. A person faced with injustice towards him/her or a close person from an immigrant and that's why they turned into racists.

Let's see how a typical Finnish hate speech discussion works with these people. (On the video, there is a Quentin Tarantino/western style Mexican standoff happening between Immigration Critic, Mrs. Grundy, and a Muslim immigrant) (Image 4.2).



Image 4.2.
Tarantino-
style
movies
posters
made
for the scene.

⁹⁹ Martikainen 27.04.2015.

”The Immigration critic criticized the asylum-seeking Muslim for ‘robbing our women and jobs, and afterward living cozy with taxpayers’ money’. Mrs. Grundy, the Patronizing Puritan, is criticized because of intolerance towards Immigration criticism and the restriction of freedom of expression. The Muslim criticizes Immigration Critics because of racism, and Mrs. Grundy, based on the fact that she is not silent and veiled like a woman should be. Mrs. Grundy criticizes the Immigration critic because he doesn't want to help refugees and is intolerant. Muslims are blamed for stoning women and the gays. These characters shout loudly to each other. In their rhetoric though, there are big differences: some of them speak based on facts, others by a gut feeling, others base their argument on how things have always been. For some of them commenting is more allowed.”

The media has a center part of creating prejudices and changing the attitudes towards different groups. Let's check an example from a historical documentary made by YLE, the Finnish Broadcasting Company with the taxpayers money:

"The Neo-nazi and occultist **Pekka Siitoin's** summer party at Vehmaa gathers a large number of black-dressing, gloomy young people every summer. The party held in green Western Finland celebrates blood, death, and vengeance. Hands go up in the sky in a trance. Party-goers' costumes vary with the inclusion of sadomasochistic spike collars, upside-down crosses, and piercings. The Horror Gallery includes little vampires and happy little witches, the Wiccans. In addition, this feast with Satan is complemented by the Nazis. And partying in perfect harmony with these devil worshippers are conscientious objectors, larpers, vegetarians, hipsters and other wildlife activists!"¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ This text is almost straight from the infamous YLE's Documentary MOT: Saatanalliset Sävelet (Satanic Rhymes, 2001) about Satan Worshipping and the Tuska Heavy Metal Festival. The Pekka Siitoin content is added. The original text talks about Tuska-festival.

This late product of the 1990's Finland's fear of the Satan Worshipping-phenomena is a model example how the prejudices and negative allusions towards certain groups (in this example larpers, Wiccans, vegetarians and conscientious objectors) are verified by the media authorities--in this case, YLE. For a person, without proper media literacy, it is too easy to stick with these prejudices and spread them around, especially when the authority like YLE spreads them. Also very often the fake media tries to perform as the proper media by using the same kind of fonts, colors, and layouts as the proper media.

For a while, we have been opening hate speech and its problems. There is one more question left to rise: *What do I need to tolerate if I demand tolerance?* The word "tolerate" is itself problematic, since it includes the idea of enduring. The UNESCO definition for tolerance states that tolerance is:

"respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience, and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace¹⁰¹". (Performers go into the roles again.)

Aunt-Kirsti: Let's try the immigration critical rhetorics in use: You present wonderful things as a horrible and the other way around. For example: This thing is a beauty in all it's purifying and well-organized glory. What is it? (Silence. No answers.)¹⁰²

Holocaust. (Another awkward silence.)

¹⁰¹ UNESCO, 1995, 71.

¹⁰² During the workshops, we played with this idea of presenting horrible thing as good and nice things as bad. This line here is from the workshops.

Uncle-Vili: We could compare the hate speech happening on the internet as hiding oneself in a closet. Being anonymous on the internet is like being invisible in a closet. From the closet, it is very easy to yell all kinds of insults. No one will know who the person behind the attitudes is. We have a closet here for anonymous hate speech, so does someone want to go in and try? Well, it is not compulsory if none want...¹⁰³

Kirsti-täti: Traditionally we have ended our show with a song. Not to break the good tradition, we shall sing also today. Let's sing a song "*Everyone's A Little Bit Racist*".

¹⁰³ Pentti Raittila: The origin of internet hate speech is on the nature of the internet. It enables the born of like-minded communities. Partly the reason is anonymity. Behind a pseudonym, one can say things he would never say face to face. Also, a low threshold allows all kinds of tones bloom there. Tampere 24-25.5.2015. In the final version of the performance, I had to cut this audience participation part away.

5. REQUIEM FOR HATE SPEECH

Times are changing. People are not calling me a Nazi on the streets anymore. Now, more Nazis attack me as I oppose them. I would rather Nazis hating me, than people calling me one. Finally, Finland had the courage (or too much pressure) to shut down the Neo-Nazi movement Nordic Resistance Movement at the end of 2017. Also, the trial against **Ilja Janitskin**, the founder of MV-lehti has finally started. These are just small steps towards non-hateful society, but even baby steps are better than nothing. Maybe next thing we could try is old Finnish tradition, and sing all the Neo-Nazis and racists into a swamp?

In this last chapter I will give a conclusion for this thesis, but first I write a bit what was going on in Finland while I write this text.

Pathfinder

“But there was one performance this year that stunned me. - - - Not because it was good; there was nothing good about it. But it was effective and it did its job. It made its intended audience laugh, and show their teeth. It was that moment when the person asking to sit in the most respected seat in our country imitated a disabled reporter. - - - And this instinct to humiliate, when it’s modeled by someone in the public platform, by someone powerful, it filters down into everybody’s life, because it kinda gives permission for other people to do the same thing. Disrespect invites disrespect, violence incites violence. And when the powerful use their position to bully others we all lose.”

- Meryl Streep’s Golden Globes Speech.¹⁰⁴

After finishing the run of artistic part of thesis *Vihapuhenyttelmä* in August 2015, I was tired. I was supposed to rest a couple of weeks before starting to write this thesis paper. Then, in mid-September, *the smoldering* hate speech gunpowder keg exploded. It’s actually fun, that I am using a word like “smoldering” here to give the right mood for the text. Using “sticky words,” as Sara Ahmed describes then, is a common form of action in the immigration-

¹⁰⁴ Published in The New York Times 8.1.2017

critical rhetorics. Sticky words create associations between words and concepts tnta mobilize fear: for example, using words such as “flood” and “overwhelming” while talking about the arriving asylum seekers, or rate them as “genuine and bogus asylum seekers”.¹⁰⁵ Here I am using the same weapon against them.

But back to the story. The new migration period began. The globalization of farming together with capitalistic system turns groceries into commodities, not as fundamental rights as they should be. When all the products ended up to trade instead of the locals, the people moves towards jobs, usually in sweatshops producing other products for us westerns.¹⁰⁶ Not only better living, but also crises and climate change moves people. The Syrian crisis brought a continuous flow of asylum seekers to the Europe and Finland throughout fall 2015. Temporary tent villages rose to shelter the new arrivals. New reception centers were popping all over the country on short notice.

At the same time, a violent, racist street patrol group called **Soldiers of Odin** (SoO) was formed to guard Finnish civilians against “the violent foreign threat”. The whole idea of these squads was scary and absurd. Mostly it was these patrol groups that caused violence and fear in ordinary Finns. SoO reminded me of the late Weimar-era’s Nazi-patrols and mostly Anthony Burgess’ classic novel *Clockwork Orange* (1962), in which the state adopts violent street hooligans into their own system and make them a vital part of the police forces. The reality that we had these patrols is as perverse as it is in the novel.

There were arson attacks by Molotov cocktails¹⁰⁷ towards the reception centers. Fake media, such as MV-lehti, was spreading lies and hatred on internet. I was anxious and overwhelmed by all the hatred. Working as a part-time train-conductor at the VR-Group’s local traffic didn’t help the situation. I stayed silent while my coworkers cited and spread the MV-lehti propaganda. I

¹⁰⁵ Ahmed 2004, 122.

¹⁰⁶ Zizek 2017, 45-6, 95.

¹⁰⁷ A crude, simple incendiary bomb made from a glass bottle, either filled with an flammable liquid such as petroleum and supplied with a rag for a fuse that is lit just before being hurled, or filled with such a mix of flammable liquids that it ignites itself when it is smashed and its contents are exposed to air. Name were used by Finns during Winter War. (Source: www.sanakirja.org)

didn't have the power and bravery to publicly reject their distorted opinions until that Christmas.

Interior is a generic 1980's styled Finnish kitchen. Time is the Boxing day. A table is full of traditional Finnish Christmas foods: ham, salads, potatoes, fish. Me, granddad, mom and little sister are sitting around the table. Again grandfather starts his harangue: "Erkki told me, that all the asylum seekers are arriving with the newest cell phones and a huge bunch of money. No asylum seekers should have a mobile phone or money!" I had been listening the stories already for a couple days. I try to explain, that there are also rich and educated people arriving because ISIS is bombing the big cities of Syria now. Of course, the ones with better economy are the first ones to arrive. They have money to escape.

He interrupts me: "Masa had read the news that..."

"Was it MV-lehti or a proper one?", I asked, and didn't get an answer. The same racist shit storm that has continued from the eve of Christmas Eve goes on. My mom and sister are silent and they smile awkwardly.

Finally, I had enough and I answered with a jab¹⁰⁸: "What about the evacuees from the Karelia! They didn't come here voluntarily. The Soviet Russia took their homelands after the Winter war! The asylum seekers come here for the same reason: they don't have a homeland anymore!"

The rest is silence. Mom smiles with a little bit of satisfaction on her lips, but stays quiet. I receive no word from my granddad during the rest of the holidays. Usually, when I'm leaving, he says: "hopefully I'll see you next summer at our summer cabin". This time he says nothing. In the small kitchen, I could raise my voice. I finally managed to conquer my frustration and I realized that I have to continue writing about hate speech. Otherwise, the "bad guys" would win and the charm of the Black Sun would take us all.

Finally, I had the will to start writing the thesis. First I wrote about the process. It was quite therapeutic: I went through my diaries and discussed with my team about their experiences. With the art philosophy and mapping part, I was struggling. If I learned something while studying at LAPS, it was hating performance art. I was trying to figure out who and what I am as an

¹⁰⁸ In boxing: A quick, straight punch thrown with the lead hand from the guard position.

artist. I found some passages fitting for Hate Speech plays framework, but that was what I was like three years ago. What and who I am as an artist now is a different being. That is still something to figure out. The curse of being in an eternal in-between position.

Then my "favorite" part of the writing: the theory. I'm not Judith Butler or anything alike. I'm too funny and/or dumb to produce "inept and jargon-laden" academic text like hers. I wanna write and read academic texts that even a layperson can understand and relate without losing their mind, not just produce jargon wrapped in obscurity.¹⁰⁹

I had facts about what hate speech is, but I was lacking the personal aspect how to dwell on this problem. Then, suddenly January 2017 I happened to read an article about **Meryl Streep's** Golden Globes speech (quoted at the beginning of this introduction). How she comments newly elected president of United States **Donald Trump's** action and calls it a performance. Streep refers to an incident happened in November 2015:

"In South Carolina, Mr. Trump described Mr. Kovalski as a "nice reporter" before mocking his comments about the article in The Post. "Now the poor guy, you ought to see this guy," Mr. Trump said, before jerking his arms around and holding his right hand at an angle. " 'Ah, I don't know what I said! I don't remember!' --- Mr. Kovalski, who covered Mr. Trump extensively while he was a reporter at The Daily News, has arthrogryposis, which limits the functioning of his joints."¹¹⁰

What a performance indeed. And it gave me my topic: Hate speech as a performance. One of my main argument is that power relations are a vital part of performing hatred and hate speech: in this Trump case, a privileged healthy man shows his own pre-eminence by mocking a disabled man. I don't want to dwell deeper into this significant performance and Donald Trump, as it would be worthy of its own thesis. But I have to mention that this ongoing Trump-show is in line what is going on all over the Globe: the rise of conservatism,

¹⁰⁹ In 1999 Butler was awarded with the first prize in the annual Bad Writing Contest established by the journal *Philosophy and Literature*. Cathy Birkenstein: *We Got the Wrong Gal: Rethinking the "Bad" Academic Writing of Judith Butler* in *College English* Vol. 72, No. 3 (January 2010), p. 269

¹¹⁰ Maggie Habermann, NOV. 26, 2015, The New York Times

and people getting more primitive attitudes. **Oswald Spengler** would describe this era as the Decline of the West. For Spengler the 19th Century was the beginning of the end of the Western civilization. He gave 200-300 years for it to live before it's ending. Are we now at the end of this cycle? Are we all doomed? Thanks to Trump, the Doomsday Clock has not been this close to midnight since 1953!

But bad doesn't come without something good. This new wave of conservatism has offered us some good laughs also. As the world famous and much-adored Drag Queen **RuPaul** would say it: "The Category is - Conservative Camp". In 2013, film director **Bruce LaBruce** updated Susan Sontag's classic essay with the brand new categories, such as "conservative camp":

"For what are Sarah Palin, --- (and) Donald Trump --- other than conservative camp icons enacting a kind of reactionary burlesque on the American political stage? Wholly without substance, their views exaggerated and extremely stylized, and evincing a carefully contrived posture of "compassionate conservatism", they function merely as a crude spectacle that mocks the unwashed masses by pretending to be one of them while simultaneously offering them policies that are directly antithetical to their authentic needs. Conservative camp has always been around --- but it has now become an entire genre, thoroughly entrenched and consumed by the American public."¹¹¹

Even Adolf Hitler knew that if you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed. Here, in the "world's most Yankee orientated country", Finland we have a conservative president who tries to be the president for the whole nation by giving an exclusive paternal interview for the most notorious yellow paper in Finland. He even used to call himself "the workers' president" though his elections campaigns were funded mainly by big corporate leaders, not the workers, nor the common people. Big lies repeated all the time. More conservative camp characters offers our parliament. We

¹¹¹ LaBruce 2013

have the True Finn-politicians with all their wonderful little flaws, such as being drunk on the parliament and groping female colleagues, and of course our own Sarah Palin, Päivi Räsänen, the ex-leader of the Christian-democratic (tea)party who wants to ban everything fun. A new add-on for this group is the Sequin populists, as the researcher **Laura Parkkinen** calls conservative young beautiful blonde female politicians, such as the True Finn presidential candidate **Laura Huhtasaari**: a creationist teacher and a Trump fan, whose biggest foreign policy merit has been taking part in the same National Prayer Breakfast as Trump in 2017.

Partly thanks to these conservative politicians, hate speech has been normalized in Finland. Researcher **Matti Näsi** from the University of Turku says that internet offers a way to attack against religion, ethnicity, sexuality or one's appearance. There are no differences if the speaker is from a big city or from the countryside. A large number of hate speakers are from outside of our society, without friends or social networks. But there are also common people who just want to advertise their opinions.¹¹² Also, researcher Tuomas Martikainen state, that anti-immigration ideology and rhetoric have been generalized all over Finland. The common idea is that immigrants come to Finland only to parasitize our system, or stealing jobs, giving an atmosphere that whatever the immigrant is doing, it is wrong.¹¹³

As a bisexual queer-person, I have to mention the hate speech minorities are producing against other minorities. In her column, **Artemis Kelosaari** rants about how hard or impossible it is to be a femme in the lesbian circles, where the fashionable attitudes and trends comes from the Victorian era's sexual theories and 1970's radical feminism¹¹⁴. It is not easy being a bisexual male either. Most of the people either don't recognize my sexuality or just questions it all the time from the "pure" perspective--it is not real, or it it just a phase; bisexuality doesn't exist. When I was single, everyone called me straight. While partnered with a man, I immediately became gay. Even calling myself bisexual publicly is risky because for many people being a

¹¹² Helsingin uutiset 11.4.2015. Syrjäytyminen näkyy vihapuheina. <http://www.helsinginuutiset.fi/artikkeli/278431-syrjaytyminen-nakyy-vihapuheina>

¹¹³ Aamulehti 9.5.2015. Maahanmuuton tutkija törmäsi vihakuplaan. Uutiset A8

¹¹⁴ Image 229. Helmikuu 2016, 12.

bisexual means just being a sexually thirsty person spreading STDs and cannot commit him/herself to a stable relationship.

Whether it is sexuality, ethnicity, religion or any other feature in you, that makes other people hating you, the question of purity is there all the time. Richard Schechner warns us about their cultural purity:

“--- there is no such thing as as cultural purity. --- Cultural purity is a dangerous fiction because it leads to policing that attempts to enforce adherence to apparent monocultures - purity is also sustained by and results in racism, jingoism, and xenophobia. The “natural” proclivity of humankind is promiscuity - which results in an always changing, if sometimes unsettling, diversity.¹¹⁵

I mentioned previously shortly the Soldiers of Odin. They stole their name from *the Ásatrú-religion*, a form of neo-paganism based on old Scandinavian and germanic mythologies, especially on Edda. It has nothing to do with the Finnish mythology and pagan traditions. Closest to *Odin* would be the Finnish god *Ukko*. At the same times, these patrols are keeping Finland “culturally pure” by culturally appropriating things from other cultures. Though a number of extreme right-wing groups are culturally appropriating the old myths, the Ásatrú-religion supports multiculturalism and gay marriages, according to their high priest **Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson**¹¹⁶. The religion doesn't want close borders and threaten civilians.

These same cultural grave robbers who wants to be the gate-keepers of cultural purity by patrolling on the streets and ranting on the internet also appeal on freedom of speech when criticized for hate speech. “Racism is not a question of opinions. It is about pushing down ones human dignity”, says **Olga Lappi**, a previous chairperson from the anti-racist RASMUS association¹¹⁷. The power of hate speech has been underestimated, and it has not been recognize as a societal problem, though it erodes the public

¹¹⁵ Schechner, 2013. 329.

¹¹⁶ Helsingin Sanomat, 15.1.2016. Soitimme Islantiin Odinin ylipapille: ”Suomen katupartiot, älkää tahriko kulttuuria, jota ette ymmärrä. <https://www.hs.fi/nyt/art-2000002880057.html>

¹¹⁷ Kirkko&Kaupunki 23.9.2015, 6

discussion and democracy¹¹⁸. On December 2017 Helsingin Sanomat wrote that Finland is one of the most discriminatory countries in Europe, based on the report by European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights¹¹⁹.

Kimmo Nuotio, the professor of Criminal Justice at Helsinki University, states that opposing racism is the part of the constitution and international commitments Finland has engaged. Due to that, police forces should show they don't accept racism and hate speech. They should prevent people from all kinds of hate crimes.¹²⁰ The Finnish legislation though does not specifically define the concept of *hate crime*. Hate crime generally refers to a person, group, somebody's property, institutions or their representatives to make an offense which motivated by prejudice or hostility towards the victim's real or perceived ethnic or national origin, religious beliefs or ideology, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or disability. The term "hate speech" used in the general language and in the public debate has become the concept of interpretation. According to Finnish Police Forces, when you look at the hate speech, the freedom of expression that is safeguarded both in the European Convention on Human Rights and in Finland's constitution must be taken into account. This means everyone has the right to express, disclose, and receive opinions, information and other messages without anyone's being prevented. This freedom of expression does not include only information or opinions that are welcomed or considered innocent, but also those that are perceived to be, for example, shocking, disturbing or unpleasant. The police have monitored the development of hate crimes in Finland through annually published inquests about hate crimes in Finland. The number of suspected hate crimes reported to the police started to rise sharply in 2015. The amount of the punishable hate speech has also increased.¹²¹

But in the end, is up to police and the judiciary how resources are used in crime prevention and judging. About only 20% of the reported offenses made by citizens lead to a pre-trial investigation, according to the Police

¹¹⁸ Voima 9/2017, 13.

¹¹⁹ Helsingin sanomat 12.12.2017

¹²⁰ Kirkko&Kaupunki 23.9.2015, 6

¹²¹ <https://www.poliisi.fi>

Bureau commissioned by the Interior Ministry every second year. The risk of getting caught doing hate speech is minimal because the police and the prosecutors have for a long time left them inadmissible. Usually, the question is about defamation or privacy that is offensive to disseminating information, illegal threats, or rampaging against a people's population. Only the last one interests police and prosecutors to some extent.¹²²

About the Show

Though *Vihapuhentäytelmä* might not have offered anything new and innovative as a performance, and there was some naiveté in it, I'm still quite happy with the final product. Of course, now, when I am watching it after three years, there are a lot things I would do differently. The documentary theatre and cabaret framework gave a fruitful platform to bring in the voices and stories of the working group, and that was the most important thing if we think of the performance as a discussion opener and a zeitgeist. The younger generations enjoyed the show more than the older ones. If I would make a new version of the performance, I would concentrate on directing and dramaturgy, or invite another dovecot for the project. As it was my first big show, I should have stuck in just doing one or two things, not everything. I had to make compromises and be on the stage a lot and that affected the rehearsal process and the end result. Being on stage and directing is not an easy combination, though I love doing both. I would not do it again soon, at least until I have gained more experience in directing. The process taught me a lot, but also left a hunger for learning and doing more.

About Hatred

The law sees hate speech as an expression which promotes and justify racial hatred, xenophobia, and other forms of hatred based on intolerance, expressed by aggressive nationalism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin. As stated earlier in this thesis, hate speech and disliking difference is an endogenous human quality:

¹²² Voima 1/2018, 8

as long as the human race has been able to speak, a man has been capable of producing hate speech towards rivals or enemies.

Approaching hate speech as a performance in a theoretical view is a new approach to the issue. When observing hate speech through the performance studies lenses, we will find a performative, stating someone is something, with a purpose of hurting the target. The symbolic violence of hate speech works through language: hateful language simplifies the target violently as a single feature containing our expectations and visions of the object. The linguistic injury, as Judith Butler puts it, can also build social constructions, and the aim of the expression is often to situate the target in a subordinate position against the speaker. The performance of hate doesn't only work on the linguistic level, but also on a non-verbal symbolic level: different gestures and visual messages, such as a burning cross, delivers the same hateful messages.

This Is the End

My aim hasn't been justify racism and hate speech with this thesis. The aim is to deconstruct this phenomena. During these days when the right-wing parties are rising all over the globe, it is important to understand how the mechanics of hatred works. After reading pages from these wise men and woman, I still feel Master Yoda's words capture hate speech perfectly: "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." In this context, the dark side means racism. Giving yourself into the personal demons and hatred:the charm of the Black Sun. No dog barks or snake bites unless they feel threatened themselves.

This thesis paper and Vihapuhentelmä are not absolute solutions, nor are they answers. I can analyze hate speech, but I can't solve the problem itself, nor the phenomenons that produce more hate speech, such as flows of asylum seekers caused by the economical neo-colonisation. We need better solutions to end that geopolitical game and to offer life worthy ways for people to survive.¹²³ It might also erase some hatred away.

In the end of *Twin Peaks: the Return*, Dale Cooper manages to escape from the Black Lodge and destroys the Evil Cooper. The only solution I can

¹²³ Zizek 2017, 95.

find to save the world is people to accept that there is a tiny bit of racism in everyone, and not embrace it, but learn to cope with it. Like we sang in Vihapuhenaäytelmä: "If we all could just admit/ That we are racist a little bit, And everyone/ Stopped being so P.C./ Maybe we could/ Live in -- harmony!". Fight against it and mute it. I personally prefer to stick with love, than poison and drown myself with all the hatred.

There is hope, if we want there to be.

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Performances

152 Hours. Director and performer: Marina Abramović. Serpentine Gallery, 2014.

Assassins. Written by Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman. Director: Jamie Lloyd. Starring: Aaron Tveit as John Wilkes Booth, Simon Lipkin as the Proprietor, Catherine Tate as Sara Jane Moore and Jamie Parker as the Balladeer/ Lee Harvey Oswald. Producer: Menier Chocolate Factory. Premier: 21.11.2014, Menier Chocolate Factory, London.

A Street Car Named Desire. Written by Tennessee Williams. Director: Benedict Andrews. Starring Gillian Anderson as Blanche, Ben Foster as Stanley and Vanessa Kirby as Stella. Producers: Young Vic, Joshua Andrews. Premiere 23.07.2014, Young Vic, London.

Cabaret. Written by John Kander, Fred Ebb and Joe Masterhoff. Director: Rufus Norris. Starring: Will Young as MC and Michelle Ryan as Sally Bowles. Producer: Bill Kenwright. Premier 08.10.2012, Savoy Theatre, London.

Eduskunta III. Director: Susanna Kuparinen. Dramaturgy: Jukka Viikilä. Dramaturgy and stage design: Akse Pettersson. Background research: Jari Hanska, Susanna Kuparinen, Olga Palo. Starring: Noora Dadu, Jari Hanska, Mitro Härkönen, Santtu Karvonen, Martina Myllylä, Matti Onnismaa, Piia Peltola, Pihla Penttinen, Robin Svartström. Premier: 26.9.2015, Ryhmäteatteri, Helsinki.

Ganesh Versus the Third Reich. Director: Bruce Gladwin. Devisors: Mark Deans, Marcia Ferguson, Bruce Gladwin, Nicki Holland, Simon Laherty, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Kate Sulan, Brian Tilley & David Woods. Producers: Back to Back Theatre, Melbourne Festival and Malthouse Theatre. Premier 2011, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne.

Green Day's American Idiot. A UK and Ireland tour. Written by Green Day and Michael Mayer. Director: Michael Mayer. Starring: Alex Nee as Johnny and Trent Saunders as St. Jimmy. Producers: Tom Hulce & Ira Pittelman, Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Premier 20.04.2010, St. James Theatre, New York.

Maaseudun tulevaisuus. Written by Leea and Klaus Klemola. Director: Leea Klemola. Starring: Klaus Klemola as Jari "Maksimi" Kuorikoski, Mari Turunen as Malviina-goat and Jukka Puotila as Jarmo "Jaska" Asserdahl. Producer: Finnish National Theatre. Premier: 26.11.2014, Finnish National Theatre, Helsinki.

The Clockwork Orange. Written by Anthony Burgess. Director: Alexandra Spencer-Jones. Starring: Martin McCreadie as Alex. Producers: Glynis Henderson Production, Soho Theatre. Premier 10.11.2012, Soho Theatre, London.

Vihapuhenäytelmä – Julma komedia. Dramaturgy and direction: Vili von Nissinen. Sound, light, videos: Lauri Sirén, Performers: Liisi Kilpelä, Kirsti Larja, Kaisla Puura and Vili von Nissinen. Performers on videos: Salvador Alogo, Henri Jokinen, Arttu Kurttila, Eero Tiilikainen. Producer: Theater Academy. Premier: 20.08.2015, Theatre Academy, Helsinki.

Filmography

American Horror Story: Freak Show. Created by: Ryan Murphy and Brad Falchuk. Starring: Jessica Lange, Sarah Paulson and Evan Peters. Producers: Ryan Murphy Productions, Brad Falchuk Teley-Vision. 2014-2015, FX.

Cabaret. Director: Bob Fosse. Screenplay: Jay Allen. Starring: Liza Minnelli, Michael York and Joel Gray. Producer: Cy Feuer. Allied Artists, 1972.

Downfall (Der Untergang). Director: Oliver Hirschbiegel. Screenplay: Bernd Eichinger. Starring: Bruno Ganz and Alexandra Maria Lara. Producer: Bernd Eichinger. Constantine Film, 2004.

MOT: Saatanalliset Sävelet. Director: Martti Backman. 2001, YLE.

Studio Julmahuvi. Director: Jani Volanen. Written and starred: Tommi Korpela, Jukka Rasila, Janne Reinikainen, Petteri Summanen and Jani Volanen. Yle TV-1, 1998, YLE.

The Good, The Bad, The Ugly. Director: Sergio Leone. Screenplay: Age & Scarpelli, Luciano Vincenzoni and Sergio Leone. Producer: Alberto Grimaldi. Starring: Clint Eastwood, Lee Van Cleef and Eli Wallach. United Artists, 1966.

The Great Dictator. Director: Charlie Chaplin. Screenplay: Charlie Chaplin. Producer: Charles Chaplin Film Corporation. Starring: Charlie Chaplin, Paulette Goddard and Jack Oakie. United Artists, 1940.

The Producers – Springtime for Hitler. Director: Susan Stroman. Screenplay: Mel Brooks and Thomas Meehan. Producers: Mel Brooks and Jonathan Sanger. Starring: Nathan Lane, Matthew Broderick, Uma Thurman, Will Ferrell, Gary Beach and Roger Bart. Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures. 2005.

The Village. Director & Screenplay: M. Night Shyamalan. Starring: Bryce Dallas Howard, Joaquin Phoenix, Adrien Brody, William Hurt and Sigourney Weaver. Producers: Sam Mercer Scott Rudin and M. Night Shyamalan. Touchstone Pictures, Blinding Edge Pictures and Scott Rudin Productions. 2004.

Twin Peaks. Created by Mark Frost and David Lynch. Starring: Kyle MacLachlan. Producer: Lynch/Frost Productions. 1990-1991, CBS Television Distribution.

Twin Peaks: The Return. Created by Mark Frost and David Lynch. Starring: Kyle MacLachlan. Producer: Rancho Rosa Partnership Production, Lynch/Frost Productions. 2017, Showtime.

Schindler's List. Director: Steven Spielberg. Screenplay: Steven Zaillian. Producers: Steven Spielberg, Gerald R. Molen and Branko Lustig. Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment. 1993.

West Side Story. Directors: Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise. Screenplay: Ernest Lehman, Jerome Robbins and Arthur Laurents. Producer: Robert Wise. The Mirisch Corporation. 1961