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'Giving birth to my breath': an an exploration of self-revelatory performance in facilitating a process of confronting and transforming a negative self-concept of afrikaner identity = 'Ek gee geboorte aan my asem': die gebruik van self-onthullingsteater om die negatiewe self-begrip van afrikaneridentiteit te konfronteer en transformeer

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[1] Please note that I have opted to use the referencing system of the American Psychological Association (APA, 6TH ed.), consistently throughout this research report.

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Die navorsingsprojek word opgedra aan my geliefde ma Alta, my saliger pa Louis (1962-2006), en my begaafde broer Henry-James. Dankie vir die volgehoue ondersteuning en liefde. Jul verstaan en uitleef van menswees was die inspirasie vir die navorsingsprojek, en is die dryfkrag wat my op die pad van genesing lei.

“Look man, there is nothing you can do about tomorrow, it comes as it must. All you can do something about is yesterday. But the problem with yesterday is that it never stays down. You’ve got to keep stamping on it” – André P. Brink (2001).

“Die dag gaan aanbreek wanneer ons, hierdie huidige geslag, gehaat gaan word deur ons afstammelinge omdat ons hulle geboortereg verkwansel het, in die myne gesteek het. Omdat daar deur ons toedoen ’n regmatige geboortereg ontsê word aan ons medeburgers, hier vandag. Noem dit die sondes van die voorvaders … Noem dit *karma* as u so verkies. Dis all side same side” – Breyten Breytenbach (1973/2015).

"Trauma is the way into the self, and the way out. To be free, to come to terms with our lives, we have to have a direct experience of ourselves as we really are, warts and all” – Mark Epstein (2013).

SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The First Noble Truth of Buddism instils lessons about *dukkha*[2] - generally translated as "suffering" in English and "lyding" in Afrikaans. According to Mark Epstein (2013) the literal meaning is "hard to face" and encapsulates the Buddha's philosophy about the human predicament – that life is filled with suffering and pain. But as scholars (Rahula, 1959; Epstein, 2013) have argued, the deeper philosophical meaning does not only include death, sickness, physical pain and despair but also ideas such as "imperfection", "impermanence", and "emptiness". Indeed, Epstein (p. 12) states that just being alive and living on earth brings suffering because of how insignificant we feel and how impermanent we are and that everyday life is in essence traumatic:

> Because everyday life is so challenging, there is a great need to pretend. Our most intimate feelings get shunted to the side, relegated to our dreams. We all want to be normal. Life, even normal life, is arduous, demanding, and ultimately threatening. We all have to deal with it, and none of us really knows how. We are all traumatized by life, by its

[2] In Sanskrit the word is spelled as *duhkha.* For ease of reference I have opted to use the Pali spelling of *dukkha* as it is used by Walpola Rahula in *What the Buddha Taught* (1959).

> unpredictability, its randomness, its lack of regard for our feelings and the losses it brings. Each in our own way, we suffer. (p. 17)

I first encountered the word *dukkha* in 2015 whilst in the process of a small performance-as-research project that revealed the hidden trauma at the heart of my own story. There were intolerable feelings inside of me, an emotional pain I had felt for most of my life that I did not really understand, as it was not related to trauma in the traditional sense of the word; as being confronted by an actual or threatened death or serious injury, as it is defined by the *Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders* (5th ed.; DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). I had no words to describe what it felt like, except to say that it was uncomfortable – deeply uncomfortable feelings of self that resonated with the everyday "imperfection" and "emptiness" lodged in the teachings of *dukkha*. These feelings caused an existential and personal anxiety in my everyday life that became a constant reminder of the uncomfortable and empty self.

Stolorow (2007) uses the term "developmental trauma", which occurs when emotional pain cannot find a relational home in which it can be held. According to Stolorow this results in the experience of trauma. Trauma is therefore the experience of "unbearable affect" (p. 21). Within this context, "relational home" refers to "a holding context in which painful affect can live and become integrated" (p. 21). The prefix of *dukkha*, "duh" literally translates to badness and difficulty whilst the suffix "kha" is a hole at the centre of a wheel. There was a bad hole inside of my self, a bad hole that prohibited the "wheel" from turning. Eventually, through that initial creative process, I realized that the

developmental trauma that prevented my psychological wheel from turning smoothly – the *dukkha* I was faced with – was the "duh" in my self-concept of my identity as an Afrikaner. And because the Buddha (Rahula, 1959) teaches that there is no escape from the pains and sorrows of life I realized that there was no escaping, what I termed my feelings of estrangement or negative self-concept of my identity as an Afrikaner, and that I had no choice but to find a relational home for my emotional pain as I tried to move through it. Because as Epstein (2013) writes: "The only way out is *through"* (p. 18).

Ever since childhood, the only way I remember dealing with grief, pain or trauma, was through drama. Drama and theatre had always been a natural container within which I could entrust the overwhelming emotions I felt. It therefore seemed only natural that when confronted with a painfully negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity I would turn to the safety of drama and theatre to contain the trauma, as I moved into the self to confront myself as I truly am - a necessity for training drama therapists- and that drama and the safety of theatre would eventually help my psyche release the *trauma of being* when the time came. At least that was what my body believed to be true, and what the methodology of Performance-as-Research (PAR[3]) in conjunction with the method of self-revelatory performance theorised would be possible. Undertaking this research became a project of immense trust – trust in the power of gaining

[3] The acronym PAR, denoting Performance as Research, is commonly used by researchers and scholars who practice research within this methodology. For ease of reference I have opted to use the term in this study when referring to the methodology and theoretical orientation of this study.

knowledge through performance as an embodied approach to research, trust in the theories of Reneé Emunah, and above all, trust in the healing possibilities and transformative power of theatre and performance – the very essence of drama therapy.

The overarching aim of this section is to provide an overview of this journey of trust and how it has culminated in a PAR study. In the following paragraphs, I will firstly attempt to introduce the project and identify the problem that I deemed necessary to investigate through drama. Secondly, I will present the rationale followed by the significance and the purpose of the study. Thirdly, I will briefly present an overview of the methodology and research design and highlight how I intend to disseminate my findings. Finally, I will present an outline of the sections that will follow.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The word "Afrikaander", today known as "Afrikaner", was first used to describe Cape-born Dutch settlers by Hendrik Biebouw in 1707 when he famously proclaimed: "Ik ben een Afrikaander" (I am an Afrikaner). However, the term quickly came to represent Cape-born Afrikaans-speaking colonists who no longer saw themselves as Dutch, German or French in the *volksmond* (Giliomee, 2009). According to Theunissen (2015) the concept "Afrikaner'" was appropriated by the *Nasionale Party* (NP) to appeal to the impoverished and disenfranchised white people after the South African War (Anglo-Boer War) and used to establish a social identity firmly based on culture and race - both

elements that guide intergroup behaviour (Hubbert, Gudykunst & Guerrero, 1999).

Verwey and Quayle (2012) argue that Afrikaner Nationalism hence became the vehicle that maintained Afrikaner identity with its set of "master symbols" that according to Cloete (1992) were used to construct the fixed or rigid group identity of the Afrikaner. Post-apartheid, the stable or rigid Afrikaner identity, built upon its master symbols and rigid beliefs, has come under threat and has been contested. Today the term "Afrikaner" has become closely associated with colonialism, apartheid and stereotypes that do little to highlight the complexity and diversity of Afrikaners living in South Africa. Theunissen (2015) argues that the negative stereotypes and stigmatisation of the Afrikaner do little to help them integrate and participate fully in contemporary society increasing their need for social solidarity and dependence upon one another (Buttny, 1999) further isolating them and confirming the belief (also central to the construction of Afrikaner identity) that they are constantly under threat as a chosen people or *uitverkore volk* (Cloete).

It is my experience that most Afrikaners of my generation, born during the state of emergency (1985-1990) and post-apartheid, are confused about what and who they are as Afrikaners and I therefore agree with Blaser (2012) that Afrikaners struggle with incongruities and ambiguities that suggest the Afrikaner identity is neither stable, rigid, fixed nor homogenous, in a post-apartheid reality. I would argue that this has largely contributed to intergroup conflicts and breaks amongst the Afrikaner community – causing nostalgia amongst some who are desperately clinging to the Nationalist Afrikaner identity

and recycle Nationalist master symbols as well as apartheid ideology. Whilst others, such as myself, have consciously made efforts to discard visible aspects of Afrikaner identity including stereotypes, our history and our culture, overt racism and have renounced the importance of the Afrikaans language as a whole, essentially disowning my Afrikaner heritage, as I, and others of my generation, battle to accept the past and exist in the present.

Rössler and Schulz (2014) agree that many who perceive themselves as 'Afrikaners' have fallen silent in the face of negative public opinion and disown any associations with an apartheid past in attempts to avoid stigmatisation. Furthermore, Reid and Anderson (2010) found that the Afrikaner identity has become subject to derisive ethnic slurs that actively contribute to social exclusions and inequality and can contribute to a loss of self-esteem, negative emotions, and feelings of responsibility for one's failure to meet society's standards. I agree with Van den Berg (2011) that this is largely due to the development of a single or dominant narrative that developed post-apartheid, and that clearly identifies victims and perpetrators in terms of race. This has forced the white Afrikaner to confront the traumatic past from the position of the perpetrator. Van den Berg argues that this perpetrator position has contributed to the development of *identiteitstrauma* (identity trauma). This trauma of *being* implies a connection or relation to the psychological development of the self and this is what sparked my interest as a training drama therapist in using therapeutic theatre to explore the extent of this identity trauma, using my body and my psyche as the instrument and the subject.

It must be clearly stated that I did not set out on this research journey relying solely on the assumption and research of others who have pointed to a collective trauma amongst Afrikaners, but was led to this investigation through my own phenomenological[4] experience. I must admit that it was so deeply hidden within my unconscious that I – before 2015 – would have argued against the notion of a collective trauma existing amongst Afrikaners as suggested by Van den Berg (2011) and Brophy (2006) who states: "The explosion of the mythology behind Afrikaner nationalism has brought the Afrikaner national identity to a serious crisis" (p. 111).

I unknowingly stumbled upon my own feelings of trauma whilst undertaking a smaller PAR project that initially sought to investigate in what ways creative art processes could be used to merge the 'Western' and 'African' constructs of my identity through a process of individuation that would allow me to become a more authentic drama therapist. What the creative process and the presentation of my research illuminated to me however was that I was asking the wrong question because how could one possibly merge different parts of your identity if one had no idea what those parts were? And I had no idea what my identity as an Afrikaans-speaking African born in 1990 was. What the process very clearly brought to consciousness was the immense and intense feelings of trauma.

[4] According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2013) phenomenology is defined as "the study of phenomena". Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view.

During that creative process I used words like: *"Vasgevang, stil, versmoor, wurggreep, ingesluk, stom, verdrink, wegkruip, donker, baba, fetus, vas, vlak asem, verlore, gestroop, geen asem, snak na asem…"* [5]in reference to the art I created that represented parts of self. I became aware of the force with which I was trying to simultaneously steer towards researching identity whilst strongly resisting and opposing researching my identity as an Afrikaner, or Afrikaner identity at all. I became aware of physical responses I had in relation to the project - my body trembling, shortness of breath, sleeplessness and marked anxiety. The creative process also brought to mind one specific traumatic memory that I had completely forgotten about - my first encounter with our history of apartheid when I was 15 years old. I remembered how I had read a book called *Country of my Skull* by famous Afrikaans writer and poet, Antjie Krog, (1998) that documented the atrocities of apartheid as revealed during the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1996. I remembered how I felt physically ill and nauseous whilst reading what Afrikaners, *my* people, had done to other human beings. I remembered how angry and confused I felt as a young teenager and how ashamed I became of who I was and where I came from. It was incomprehensible to me that the very people who loved and nurtured me were capable of inflicting so much pain onto others.

[5] In English these words can be translated as: "Stuck, silent, strangle, stranglehold, drowning, hide, darkness, baby, foetus, caught, shallow breathing, lost, robbed, breathless, gasping for air".

Malchiodi (2008) notes that trauma often takes us back to feelings of helplessness, confusion and shame and will result in intrusive painful memories. In reflecting on my experiences during that PAR project I considered Malchiodi's definition of trauma as an experience that creates a lasting, substantial psychological impact and is clearly marked by hyper-arousal, re-experiencing and avoidance. All of these, symptoms I had consciously been struggling with during the creative process. Modern research in neuroscience has now proved that the "emotional brain" or the limbic system carries implicit memories that are sensory and emotional and that responses to these memories are learnt by the body – hence the term "the body remembers" (Malchiodi, p. 4). Implicit memories have no language and are sensed through experience. According to Malchiodi our bodies become the implicit containers of memories and traumatic experiences and it became clear to me during that process that my body had contained traumatic experiences of self for too long and that the self was wounded.

During that process I found that I, as a white Afrikaans-speaking female born in 1990, had been struggling to come to terms with my ancestors' role as perpetrators of oppression and that I had been unwilling and unable to accept my Afrikaner identity because of the shame and guilt I had internalised and associated with being Afrikaans. My unwillingness to identify with Afrikaner culture and my rejection of my Afrikaner identity, and the collective "loss" of power and identity of power that the collective of Afrikaners suffered post-apartheid has been described as psychologically traumatising by scholars (Van den Berg, 2011; Theunissen, 2015; Kotzé & Griessel, 2012). My own experience confirmed to me that I was also caught in this *identiteitskrisis*. I found that using

creative arts processes helped make unconscious feelings of anxiety, guilt, and shame about myself as an Afrikaner conscious, and this lead me to believe that I had a negative self-concept of my Afrikaner identity that needed to be confronted and transformed through drama and theatre.

The overarching aim of this research was to demonstrate how the drama therapeutic form of self-revelatory performance with its various methods aimed at extracting and performing personal (conscious and unconscious) narratives can be used to facilitate a therapeutic process that results in the positive transformation of the self-concept of Afrikaner identity.

1.3 RATIONALE

Recent research on Afrikaner identity within several different fields has found that it has become contested and disputed post-apartheid, and highlights the need for Afrikaners to renegotiate and reconstruct their identity (Van den Berg, 2011; Theunissen, 2015; Willemse, 2013). I argue in agreement with Kotzé and Griessel (2012) that this contested Afrikaner identity was psychologically forged by traumatic events that influenced the development of the ego and of complexes in the groups' psyche - stretching from the arrival of the British at the end of the 18th century to the *Groot Trek* (Great Trek) in 1838, the Transvaal War of Independence (1880-1881), the South African War (1899-1902) and eventually apartheid – that caused dysfunctions in the development of Afrikaner identity that can only be repaired through the reconstruction of that identity. According to Kotzé and Griessel the subsequent traumas of massacres and wars have not been processed adequately and this has left the collective identity "insecure,

non-trusting, fearful and vulnerable" (p. 8). From a Jungian or analytic psychological point of view they find that the "early wounding" needs to be healed if positive reconstruction of identity is to occur, and therefore the wounds need to be made conscious as well as the complexes we as a people hold, so that there can be a withdrawal of projections and the successful integration of the Shadow can take place. I agree with Kotzé and Griessel that healing can only occur if we confront the trauma, with its associated shame and guilt, that has rendered many Afrikaners silent and unable to reconstruct their identities and reclaim their *menswees* (humanity).

Within a social psychology frame, I accept the definition of identity as a form of social representation that mediates the relationship between the individual and the social world (Chryssochoou, 2003). The function of identity is to inscribe the person in the social environment, to communicate people's positions and to establish relationships with others that are crucial for mental wellbeing (Chryssochoou). This process of reconstructing the self, defined as a stable identity or sense of *being* and *belonging* by Jones (2008), is crucial to drama therapists as it is central to the therapeutic process. Tudor and Tudor (1994) identify the need to engage with identity, as it is a key issue concerning how the therapist's own assumptions about human nature influence their beliefs, notions and responses to a client. Smail (1998) argues that therapy has for too long viewed the clients' identity devoid of the philosophical, political, social and cultural factors within which they live. This creates isolation between the individual and the context in which they live. Seeing the self in this way is said to fail to engage with social and political factors such as poverty and exclusion that

can be seen to be the root "cause" of many clients coming to therapy in the first place. On another level Orkibi (2010) also warns against role ambiguity in the work environment because self-doubt about professional identity can lead to low self-esteem causing defensive attitudes, and power imbalances in the therapy space. I would argue that it is therefore of the utmost importance that drama therapists in South Africa form a secure perception of who they are and how their identities are influenced by the culture they hail from, as it will inform their identities as practitioners and influence the therapeutic relationship between therapist and client. It is my belief that confronting my own identity and sharing my own story through art will give me insight into how I might help clients reconstruct their own identities through a sharing or telling of their narrative in the drama therapy space.

Mayor (2012) calls on all drama therapists to critically engage their racial identities as it has been a subject largely ignored by the drama therapy community, and Jones (2008) states that because identity is so interwoven with who we are as people it can be therapeutic to play with identity in drama therapy through the active methods drama therapy employs. Investigating identity is also crucial in the development of empathy. Partington (2009) highlights the importance of the therapist's own woundedness in enabling empathic responses and writes that "the wounded healer's own personal experience opens up the possibility of deep empathic understanding and connection" (p. 28). However, for this to be effective what is critical is for the therapist to have worked through their woundedness: "The task of empathic understanding demands a high degree

of sensitivity by people who are secure enough in their own identity to move into another's world without being overwhelmed by it" (p. 28).

In addition to this, I believe, as a performer and training drama therapist, in the power of narratives to assist in the healing process and agree with Barkan (2000) that the very problem with reconstructing identity in South Africa has been the denial or lack of recognition that one's own narrative (*my storie*) is a basic identity need. And so Afrikaners, like many other cultural groups in this country, suffer from what Mkhize (2004) terms "voicelessness" because they have not yet been able to tell their complex stories, and so constructing a new identity has become an impossible task. Furthermore Barkan writes that contemporary Afrikaners have developed the need to "purge their own history of guilt and legitimize their current position" (p. 321) as the generations born post-apartheid, like myself, are carrying the sins of our fathers and mothers within us and the narrative of the past has become our current narrative. But it is this very simplified narrative that speaks to a distant collective and has left no room for individual narratives.

At the heart of this research is the wish for myself and all other Afrikaners and South Africans to find a way to tell our stories and reconstruct our identities in such a way that we can achieve a positive sense of self and increase the legitimacy of our cultural identity whilst therapeutically confronting the trauma of the past that has left me feeling like my mere existence has become a symbol of all that is deemed wrong with the world. In Afrikaans we talk about restoring *menswees*, which literally translates as restoring humanness. This is my wish for

all South Africans but because of the limitations of this research project I only focussed on my own in-group, and my own experience of being Afrikaans post-apartheid.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

When I embarked on this journey it was my intention to test the drama therapy method of self-revelatory performance within our complex and uniquely South African context. To my knowledge no documented cases of self-revelatory performance exist within the South African context. Furthermore, I could find no evidence of self-revelatory performances that have been constructed in an attempt to grapple with the contested Afrikaner identity or any recorded research on the effectiveness of the method within the performative frame of drama therapy in South Africa. This study would therefore add to methodological knowledge in the field and would also make a theoretical contribution to the study of Afrikaner identity.

Finally, on a practical level, if the method of self-revelatory performance could prove effective in confronting and transforming a negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity, it might be used and tested in practice by other practitioners who are confronted by clients who struggle with their cultural identities or by researchers who are investigating identity within the South African context.

1.5 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The intent of this PAR study was to explore how the drama therapy method of self-revelatory performance could facilitate a process of confronting and transforming a negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following the purpose of the study, my research questions were:

1. In what ways can self-revelatory performance as a method of drama therapy be used to facilitate a process of confronting or 'working through' the negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity?
2. In what ways can self-revelatory performance of Afrikaner identity contribute to a positive transformation ('moving through') of the self-concept?

These questions formed the basis upon which this research is built. However, upon reflection during the writing of this report another core question arose after self-reflection and analysis of the process that revealed the presence of a deep relationship between collective trauma and the formation of my identity as an Afrikaner and the impact of collective trauma on the methodology of self-revelatory performance. The third question I therefore also attempted to answer during the writing of this report was:

3. In what ways is the current methodology of self-revelatory performance effective in addressing collective trauma in our South African context?

1.7 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In the next section I will provide a brief outline of the methodology and design that was employed in this study. I will elaborate on this section in Chapter three.

1.7.1 Methodological approach

Within the *qualitative* tradition I approached my PAR project from the philosophical schools of phenomenology and hermeneutics – phenomenology being "the study of human experience and the way in which things are perceived as they appear to consciousness" (Langdridge 2007, p. 10) and hermeneutics being "a theory or method of interpretation" (Shaw 2010, p. 177). These philosophical traditions shaped my choice of research paradigm and the lens through which I examined self-revelatory performance in relation to my own Afrikaner identity, as I attempted to understand the meaning of human experience (phenomenology) and paid close attention to the self-reflexivity and interpretative activity involved in the analytic process (hermeneutics). The strengths of using this lens was the value it places on the experiential account and that it allows for self-reflexivity as it acknowledges dual interpretative processes and acknowledges that people's experiences of shared reality are different.

The methodological approach of PAR falls under the larger umbrella of art-based research (ABR). I have chosen this methodology because as Prior (2013) argues the arts have for too long borrowed research methodologies from social sciences and science that fail to recognise the value of creative and artistic knowledge that is profoundly significant and crucially important in the fields of

applied arts and arts therapies. According to Prior ABR explores artistic process and through art new differentiations on the levels of "intuition, perception, emotion, embodied and craft-based knowledge and intellect" (p. x) are excavated. The epistemological roots of ABR are simply to use artistic enquiry to research what art does (McNiff, 2013a). I therefore attempted to gain understanding into what self-revelatory performance as a method of drama therapy could do by undergoing a process of self-revelatory art making – creating and performing a self-revelatory piece of theatre.

1.7.2 Research Design

The research process can be divided into three phases or stages: The first phase involved the process of creating the self-revelatory performance and systematically and descriptively documenting the drama therapeutic process I was undertaking, alternating between the roles of the *client* that is exploring or 'working through' personal material and the training *drama therapist* that was directing the performance.

The second phase involved the performance of the self-revelatory piece in front of a selected audience - this is always the case in therapeutic theatre because the witnessing of the actual performance is meant to be therapeutic to the performer (Snow, 2009). Post-performance I then documented the process of performing descriptively from the perspective of the *performer* and *client*, before stepping into the role of *researcher* and *drama therapist* to reflect on the process in a reflective journal.

Thirdly, the data generated through embodiment and other methods used in self-revelatory performance, as well as the descriptive journal entries from both phases, and the reflective diary entries from both phases, were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 2004) and the results are discussed in Section Four.

1.7.2.1 Data generation methods

The first phase of creation and rehearsal took place over a period of 12 weeks. Within the performance as research methodology and the self-revelatory frame the following methods were used to capture the data generated during the process.

1. *Descriptive journal* – As a participant the journal was used for descriptive note taking and free association, documenting the personal responses, conscious and unconscious material that arose and any stories or narratives that came to consciousness during the process of creation.
2. *Director journal* – As I was simultaneously the client and the drama therapist who acts as the director of the self-revelatory performance, I used this journal to write down and plan any thoughts or feelings and plans towards the structural and aesthetic elements of the performance. It was also used to document and plan the creative drama therapeutic process undertaken during rehearsals.
3. *Reflective journal* – The reflective journal is where I reflected as a researcher and drama therapist on what was captured in the descriptive and director journal. The reflective journal is where I

critically engaged with my subject position as research instrument and reflected critically on how the process was unfolding.

1.7.2.2. Data analysis

The data captured in these journals were then analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). I chose this data analysis instrument as it aims to make analytic interpretations about experiences and about the person as the 'experiencer' (Shaw 2010, p. 179) and relies on descriptive and reflective accounts of experiences to make certain interpretations and finally identify themes. Both the descriptive and reflective accounts documented during the creative process in phase 1 and documented after the performance in phase 2 were analysed using IPA and interpretations of shifts or changes in themes from the first phase to the second phase were analysed and interpreted and are compared and documented in this research report. Self-reflexivity played an important and crucial part in the collection and analysis of the data. The main weakness of this approach is that the findings are not generalizable.

1.7.3 Participants and setting

I was the only research participant in this study but I relied on the help of two auxiliary actors in my performance, which is typical of the self-revelatory performance (Emunah, 2015). I will elaborate and reflect in-depth on the complexities of inviting other performers into the research space as non-participants in the research in Section Four.

The aim of this research was to explore the extent of my own negative self-concept towards my cultural identity and to test the effectiveness of self-revelatory performance in confronting and transforming this negative self-concept as a training drama therapist. Therefore, the responses of the invited audience fell outside the scope of this research and were not recorded or analysed. They were therefore not active participants in the research and I will elaborate more on the therapeutic role of the audience in self-revelatory performance in section four. The performance was held at the Nunnery theatre at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg on the 16th of March 2016.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

My application (protocol number: H16/03/17) to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for non-medical autobiographical research that did not involve any other human participants was successful. In my application I stated that I was fully aware of the psychological and emotion risks involved in the undertaking of autobiographical research of this nature and signed a consent form stating that I did not hold the university responsible for any psychological strain or emotional stress caused during the undertaking of this research as these responses were valuable research data that informed my findings. To minimise the possible risk or harm to self, I frequently engaged in personal psychotherapy and engaged in constant supervision with my supervisor. I also had ritualised reflection with the two performers who assisted and participated in the process with me after each rehearsal.

1.9 DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS

It is important to disseminate the findings of the study since I want to contribute to the field of drama therapy and assist South African drama therapists in treating clients within our complex and unique context that differs significantly from the American psychiatric settings within which self-revelatory performance has primarily been researched. One way of doing this would be to create platforms for sharing my research findings through workshops, and research seminars.

1.10 OUTLINE OF SECTIONS

The following is an outline of sections that will follow section one:

Section Two: In this section I situate this study within a PAR framework and review existing literature on self-revelatory performance.

Section Three: In this section I offer a theoretical discussion of the research paradigm, design and methods chosen.

Section Four: In this section the results of the study are presented and a discussion of the process, recommendations and implications for future practice and research.

Section Five: In this section I offer conclusions and closing remarks.

1.11 SUMMARY

In this section the overarching aim was to introduce the research. I presented the background to the study, identified the problem in need of investigation and provided the rationale for doing this study. I identified the significance of the

study and provided a brief overview of the research design, methodology, data generation and analysis methods. I proceeded to discuss the ethical considerations and how I intend to disseminate the findings of this research to other drama therapists working in the South African context.

In the next section I will review existing literature on the theoretical framework of PAR, literature on the performative frame of drama therapy and specifically the method of self-revelatory performance. Finally, I will comment on the significance of my study based on the literature reviewed.

SECTION TWO

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will outline the theoretical framework and foregrounded literature that underpinned this PAR study. I will firstly articulate the methodology that highlights the importance of gaining knowledge through performance as an embodied approach to research. I will then review literature on self-revelatory performance and therapeutic theatre as an approach to drama therapy. Furthermore I will attempt to delve into the complexities of recent social and critical psychological research on the concept of identity with an emphasis on ethnic or racial identity, and how these affect the development of self-concept. Finally I will discuss relevant existing theoretical and empirical research about Afrikaner identity post-apartheid, and collective trauma that influenced my research project.

2.2. ART-BASED RESEARCH

"Art is a way of knowing, problem-solving, healing and transformation that we marginalize if we do not embrace it as a vehicle of research" (McNiff 2013a, p. xiii). In the book *Art as Research: Opportunities and Challenges* (2013) McNiff challenges professionals who advocate for the arts as primary ways of knowing and who use the arts to serve society in their daily practice, to believe in the process of art-making as a valid vehicle of research that can investigate and explain complex and intractable human problems. This, he writes, is the biggest opportunity and

challenge facing art-based research today (p. 3). As stated in Section One, PAR falls under the umbrella of art-based research.

McNiff (2013b, p. 3) defines art-based research as "the use of artistic expression by researchers as a primary mode of enquiry" and I have deliberately chosen to conduct my research using artistic expression as the primary mode of enquiry because I am strongly in agreement with McNiff that professionals practicing within the field of arts in therapy and who profess to its healing powers in practice have traditionally and paradoxically relied on methods from other disciplines, most notably psychology, to research art therapy, exposing what I would argue to be deep rooted feelings of inferiority within our field. Art should not take on a secondary role in research because we are trying to gain approval from the scientific community for as McNiff states: "everything about these artistic enquiries is empirical and our attempts to understand the material and psychological aspects of art experiences involve researchers in relating to things other than themselves, even when studies never go beyond individual enquiry" (p. 6). I would like to believe that most drama therapists practice within the field because they believe in the unique ways of knowing and communicating through art that both adds to and distinguishes it from traditional scientific research. Why do we trust art as a primary mode of healing, yet we struggle to trust art as a primary mode of research?

This, according to McNiff (2013b) and Allen (2012) is perhaps one of the most pressing challenges facing art-based research today – how to help practitioners-researchers trust their craft as a primary mode of research? The prevailing urge to rely on other methods used in the social sciences to conduct

research within the art therapies and other fields of the applied arts are still too common even though art-based research has gained considerable attention and support over the past decade (McNiff, 2013; Allen, 2012). These internalized feelings of inferiority within art-based professions are not new or recent and plagued, I believe, some of the greatest researchers throughout time. Carl Jung, famously known as the founder of analytical psychology, is a prime example of this. It is widely accepted within art-based research that his *Liber Novus, The Red Book* (2009) is one of the best modern examples of art-based research. However, Jung never published or showed it publicly during his lifetime and even had it locked away in a safe deposit box after his death in 1961 for fear of being deemed mad by the scientific community according to McNiff and Allen. Jung moved beyond science to engage and understand the depths of the unconscious and what he termed the "wealth of the soul" (Jung cited by Allen, 2012) through art-making, movement, song and poetry in his clinical work and used these methods of art-based enquiry in *The Red Book*, but clearly felt that revealing this would affect his reputation as a scientist (McNiff, 2013b; Kossak, 2012). Allen (2012) argues that Jung's contributions paved the way for the development of a way of working in the art therapies that combines art and writing that leads to the deepest kind of enquiry.

> The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life – in them everything essential was decided. It all began then; the later details are only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first it swamped me. It was the *prima material* for a lifetime's work. (Jung 1965, p. 199)

Freud too engaged in art-based enquiry within a therapeutic context with his *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1913) and before him Flournoy, Myers and Casalent used creative process such as acting out myths to explore the unconscious in 1869 (Watkins cited by Kossak, 2012). In fact, whilst Freud was experimenting with and analysing dreams in Vienna, Jacob Moreno was also experimenting with acts of embodiment and drama that ultimately contributed to role theory and resulted in the methods of psychodrama, and sociodrama (Blatner, 2007). According to Kossak art-based enquiry is nothing new in the field of psychology and he writes that it is concerning that it is still marginalized in the name of "evidence-based" research. Indeed Kossak is right as the literature on art-based research has only within the past two decades increased, although it is still surprisingly limited given the long lineage of art-based enquiry in psychology, as illustrated above. The first example and use of personal artistic expression in arts therapy literature was only published in 1989 when Shaun McNiff published his seminal work *Depth Psychology of Art*.

This study aims to contribute to the growing body of art-based research as I engaged in direct experimentation with the performative method of self-revelatory performance with the hope of gaining insight and understanding of the healing effects of performance that would broaden and strengthen my practice as a drama therapist. I specifically wanted to engage in self-research, as I believe that no therapist should ask their clients to go where they have not travelled themselves, and engage with experiences that they have not experienced themselves. This belief is at the core of art-based research and echoed by McNiff (2013b) when he writes: "…how can I ask someone to do something that I am not willing to do myself? How

can we know something and develop expertise with it unless we experience it in the most comprehensive way" (p. 6)?

As it is a growing and ever-evolving method of research there are certain challenges facing art-based researchers, that have been illuminated by the existing literature, and that I have tried to respond to in this study. Perhaps the most pressing issue involves "self-research" that fundamentally involves an intimate and personal process. These types of autobiographical research have often been labelled self-indulgent or self-absorbed, which is why research in health, education and psychology has steered away from personal and subjective knowledge and relied on scientific methods that arguably increase objectivity. The argument made by art-based scholars in response to the idea of "self-absorption" is that the researching community has for too long failed to value and appreciate how personal enquiry can be of value to others and transcend introspection (McNiff, 2013b; Allen, 2012; Kossak, 2012). Jung himself responded to the idea of personal enquiry being dismissed as "self-indulgence" when he insisted that the nature of images and symbols were autonomous and universal (Jung, 2009). This too is what we believe as creative arts therapists – that images, symbols, artistic material, are both personal and universal or "intimately related to but separate from the people who make them" (McNiff, 2013b, p. 7).

2.3 PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH

The notion of practitioner-researcher emerged in response to a shift in modern thinking that broke away from the Descartian notion of "I think, therefore I am" as Kershaw and Nicholson (2011) write. According to Kershaw and Nicholson, the

mind-body split proposed by Renaissance philosophers increased the conflict between head and heart, mind and body. Post-modernist thinking attempted to disrupt this binary between thought and practice and bring about a paradigm shift that allowed the practitioner-researcher to emerge. In keeping with this paradigm shift I framed my study within a PAR theoretical framework as defined by Kershaw and Nicholson as the "pursued hybrid enquiries combining creative doing with reflexive being" (2011, p. 64). Following the philosophy of this theoretical orientation, my study relies on the assumption that it is through practice or embodied process that a deepened understanding can be experienced, and through the reflective component, following the experiential process, that insight can be gained that can again influence the practice. Indeed I have found that "performance as research indicates the uses of practical creative processes as research methods (and methodologies) in their own right", as stated by Kershaw and Nicholson (p. 64).

In his seminal work, 'Performance studies: Interventions and Radical Research' (2002), Dwight Conquergood captures the essence of PAR stating that: "Dominant epistemologies that link knowing with seeing are not attuned to meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context" (p. 146). This kind of knowing privileges experience, believing that embodied knowledge requires deep listening and involvement with its subject on a thinking, feeling and intuitive level in order to reach a point where borders are crossed and new knowledge and truths emerge (Conquergood). Spry (2011) echoes this in her research where she demonstrates how self-reflexivity through various methods including embodiment and the writing and performing of self can be used as a way

of research and learning that combines identity, the body, writing and performing, and that creates a fuller and more complex understanding of human activity. According to Spry "self", "other" and "culture" are all present in our bodies and by looking at one's own body, one can process one's own experiences. By being aware of the body in its skin, implications, cultural performance and embodiment of privilege and oppression, the researcher and the audience is challenged to start a process of ownership of the many implications of their self and how those implications impact the culture around them. Both the embodied work of Conquergood (2002) and Spry (2011) informed my choice to conduct my research using performance.

Furthermore, Augusto Boal's (1979) use of drama and theatre encompasses a stripping away of mere verbal language, rather making use of the body as a means of engaging in dialogue about people's lives, feelings, experiences and oppression. He invited his participants to create still images using their bodies around themes that are relevant and personal to them. Boal believed the creation and use of body images holds the potential to break through cultural and language barriers, allowing for commonalities to be realized and differences to be understood. Indeed, it is through this engagement with the body that one can enter into a multi-level dialogue of expression, witnessing and involvement. Thus, through the embodied process the researchers' body could be involved in processes of practice and reflection, gaining a richer insight into what is transpiring on a conscious and unconscious level. Laban added to this notion with his belief that movement of the body can act as a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious and bring unconscious material to consciousness (Thornton, 1996). His theories have

informed the practice of drama therapists and the Sesame approach to drama and movement.

As drama educator Richard Courtney (cited by Jones, 1996) states: 'when an individual is involved in drama, knowledge is gained primarily by and through the body in action…in the here and now'. Extending on this notion, Mia Perry and Carmen Medina (2011) look at performance pedagogy with a specific focus on the body as a site of experience, learning and becoming. They highlight that it is through bodily engagement and interactions through drama that we can re-evaluate our relationships towards ourselves as well as our interactions with others. The power of using drama as an agent of transformation exists in its capacity to involve oneself in a holistic and embodied way. Therefore, in keeping with this approach, the documentation process was also arts-based as Ackroyd and O'Toole (2010) recommend: "A form of reportage that maintains all the dimensions of the original interaction or observation can perhaps provide a valuable holding form" (p. 4).

However, I am mindful that PAR and self-research is a process of complex research where the researcher plays a subjective role. Robert Romanyshyn (2010) argues that one should explicitly acknowledge the subjective role of the researcher and attempt to make the unconscious more conscious. He reminds us that "we are called to build as best as we can an epistemology that is ethical, reflexive, therapeutic, responsible, and perhaps even redemptive, a way of knowing that allows soul to recall what mind would forget, regard what it would ignore, and care for what it would neglect" (Romanyshyn, 2010 p. 39). With this research I have attempted to allow my soul to recall and bring to consciousness the wounds that I,

as an Afrikaner, had neglected to acknowledge and explore as a training therapist and researcher, through the method of self-revelatory performance as developed by drama therapist and theorist Renée Emunah.

2.4 SELF-REVELATORY PERFORMANCE

Self-revelatory performance can be defined as "a form in which a performer originates a theatre piece drawn from current life issues in need of healing" (Emunah 2015, p. 71). Emunah draws two very clear distinctions between self-revelatory performance and autobiographical theatre. The first is that the self-revelatory performance has a "conscious aim of healing" or transforming the dramatized personal life material. Secondly, the performer is focused on dealing with current life issues or dilemmas on stage that are informed by the past whereas autobiographical theatre most often resolves around experiences from the past (p. 72). Zehavi (cited by Emunah) however, argues that autobiographical theatre pieces can be therapeutic and offer healing. In response Emunah agrees that autobiographical theatre can be therapeutic as the ability to voice one's story, to be witnessed and achieve mastery over the creative process, can have healing effects, but contends that these are 'side-effects' of the autobiographical performance whilst the self-revelatory performance is intentionally focused on healing as the client 'works through' the challenges or struggles.

According to Emunah (2015, p. 74) the healing in the self-revelatory performance results precisely because of what she terms "working through" the material. Some degree of healing takes place simply by being witnessed and listened to but mostly Emunah believes the 'conscious effort to contend with the

material, dive into it, untangle the issues and better comprehend their origins and implications' leads to psychological self-examination and ownership of our own interplay with the forces that shape us. Only then can there be psychological development of the self or transformation which can be defined as a "letting go, taking hold of, coming to terms with, confronting, embracing, shifting, admitting, committing, forgiving, inviting, renewing, revolting, revisiting, or recreating" (Emunah 2015, p 74). Autobiographical theatre performances that have been directed by drama therapists have often been termed 'autobiographical therapeutic theatre' (Sajnani, 2013) or 'therapeutic autobiographical performance' (Zehavi cited by Emunah, p. 72). For the purpose of my research I have chosen to investigate the method of self-revelatory performance as described by Emunah (2015) to facilitate a process of healing and will continue to consciously refer to my chosen method of performance as self-revelatory, although I do believe there is a need to consolidate the terms we use in drama therapy to refer to processes and performances that are aimed at healing as they all fall within the broader performative frame of drama therapy also called 'therapeutic theatre' (Emunah, 1994; Emunah & Johnson, 1983; Snow, 2009).

There are many approaches in drama therapy that make use of the performative frame that integrates different psychological theories and dramatic methods to create drama therapy that takes place within the special time and space of the creation of a performance, which eventually has an audience and post-performance review (Snow 2009). Bailey (2009) states that theatre has always been accepted as a therapeutic agent since Aristotle, in the first treatise on theatre called *Poetics,* described it as an agent of catharsis that results in a purging of negative

emotions. Drama therapy as praxis is commonly divided into two fundamental forms that are either process–oriented or performance-based (Snow 2009). Performance-based performances have been shown to be therapeutic and many drama therapists including Emunah and Johnson (1983), Landy (1993), Snow (2009), Mitchell (1992; 1998) and Bailey (2009) have written on the therapeutic effects of performance in drama therapy.

Emunah (2015) articulates that self-revelatory performances, like most approaches within the performative frame, can be used to address a variety of issues including identity, self-concept, self-esteem and self-image. Emunah and Johnson (1983) found that the performance frame indeed succeeded in positive shifts in psychiatric patients' self-image. Emunah has written extensively on the value of performance with various client groups stating that performance transforms notions about theatre and about therapy and that the therapeutic impact of performance is different from, and often greater than process-oriented drama therapy (1994). The performative frame of drama therapy has however been criticised for being "brief" therapy that cannot be expected to induce long-term structural changes and that it can only point clients in the right direction (Snow, 2009). Contrary to this Mehl-Madronna (1997) has argued in agreement with Emunah (1994) that short intensive work can produce more effective therapeutic work and it has been quantitatively demonstrated that for some clients the peak of therapeutic effectiveness during the year is when theatrical productions are produced at a psychiatric hospital in Montreal, Canada (D' Amico et al., cited by Snow, 2009).

According to Snow (2009) the intention of the performance is to act as a vehicle for therapy that helps in the reconstruction of the self-image through the process of creating and performing the dramatic performance. Snow emphasizes that everyone who enters into the performative frame of drama therapy risks enquiry into their self-concept and states that performative work is risky to undertake with groups that have been highly stigmatized and marginalized by their societies. “But in this very risk is also the potential for positive transformation of the self-concept” (p. 127), he writes.

Amorim and Calvacante (cited by Snow 2009, p. 128) found in their process of developing a puppet show to be performed by young adults with developmental disabilities, that the performance and the process of creating the performance gave the clients opportunities to deconstruct the current disabling constructions and to reconstruct new and more powerful identities. It therefore becomes evident that self-revelatory performance should hypothetically be able to facilitate a process of positive transformation of the self-concept of Afrikaner identity.

Most recently Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) have illustrated how self-revelatory performance can successfully be used to mitigate the impact of trauma. Their research was largely based on their use of self-revelatory performance over a period of three decades in the graduate Drama Therapy Program at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS). Their findings explain why they use this method with training drama therapists at CIIS.

> The primary source of good clinical work is the self… A depth of self-examination, which can be a painstaking, painful and emotional process, supports a student-clinician's ability and comfort level in helping clients enter deeper emotional terrain. Many aspiring psychotherapists and creative arts therapists come to the healing profession partly as a result of their own experiences with suffering and healing, exemplifying the notion of the wounded healer. (p. 95)

Jung (in Storr, 1983) delves deeply into the clinician's own woundedness and emphasizes that it can either hinder the therapeutic relationship or enhance it if the healer is consciously engaged with his own wounds. During my training I had to work in many different clinical spaces with white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans who were all, in their own way (some more consciously than others), struggling with their identities as Afrikaners and South Africans. Their struggles resonated deeply with me and as a student-clinician I had an obligation to myself, my clients and my profession to heal my own wounding so as to not obstruct my capacity as a clinician. I am in agreement with Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) that it has accelerated my self-discovery and resulted in deep healing that will ultimately deepen my clinical work and my ability to empathize with clients as I assist them to enter into deeper emotional terrain.

For this reason, and based on the successes Emunah and her colleagues have had with the method of self-revelatory performance in relation to work with the self, identity and trauma, I was drawn to the method for my own research. As I will argue in the next section on Afrikaner identity, I believe that there is an intergenerational

and collective trauma that is strongly linked to our historical legacy of oppression that has been passed on to myself, and other Afrikaners of my generation. Research on the healing effects of self-revelatory performances on clinician-students, who performed collective traumas or intergenerational trauma, have shown that self-revelatory performances are able to assist in personal healing, healing a sense of communal shame, strengthening a will to stand against oppression, clarifying a relationship to internalized oppression, leading to forgiveness, and can deepen a sense of pride and belonging to a cultural or ancestral heritage (Emunah, Raucher & Ramirez-Hernandez, 2014).

Finally, it is important to highlight that my understanding of self-revelatory performance is limited to research conducted in the west, particularly in the United States and Canada. To my knowledge no documented cases of self-revelatory performances exist in the South African, or broader African, context. Furthermore, I could find no evidence of self-revelatory performances that have been constructed in an attempt to grapple with the contested Afrikaner identity. My research on the use of self-revelatory performance to facilitate a therapeutic process that grapples with Afrikaner identity is therefore the first study of its kind within the South African context and this has severely impacted the results. I elaborate more on this in Section Four.

2.5 IDENTITY

In recent years there has been a growing interest in the concept of identity within the humanities and social sciences with traditional conceptions being critically challenged and contested. In philosophy, Hall (1996) states, there has been a

critical engagement with the self-sustaining subject at the centre of a post-Cartesian world. Psychoanalytically influenced feminist and cultural studies have questioned the concept of subjectivity and the unconscious processes of formation and postmodern theorists have championed the view that identity is fluid, contingent and socially constructed (Butler, 1990; Huddy, 2001; Hall, 1996).

Howard (2000) suggests this renewed interest in the concept of identity is in part because of shifts and changes in contemporary society. According to Howard identity was historically assigned rather than selected.

> In current times, however, the concept of identity carries the full weight of the need for a sense of who one is, together with an often overwhelming pace of change in surrounding social contexts – changes in the groups and networks in which people and their identities are embedded and in the societal structures and practices in which those networks are themselves embedded. (p. 367-368)

Whatever the reason for this discursive explosion across various disciplines, it is clear that identity and its formation and change is impacted by the social contexts and societal structures within which it exist. Based on this assumption I agree with Chryssochoou's (2003) definition of identity, which states that the function of identity is to inscribe the person in his social environment, to communicate people's positions and to establish relationships with others that are crucial for mental wellbeing. Given the focus of this research project I have chosen a social psychological theoretical frame for my conceptualisation of identity and I will

briefly attempt to review literature on the concept of identity from the perspective of social identity theory (SIT) because of its emphasis on ethnic and racial identities and its intersections with political psychology. Indeed, I would argue, it would be an impossible task to grapple with Afrikaner identity as an ethnic and racial social identity, without acknowledging that it is also a contested political identity that has motivated political behaviour in the past and present. Therefore, a discussion on identity would be incomplete without acknowledging the conjunction between the psychological and the political – something contemporary social theorists insist SIT has great potential in doing. Although SIT theorists have traditionally avoided the political sphere because of their wariness to examine the sources of social identity in a real world complicated by history and culture (Huddy, 2001). It must however be emphasised that my narrow focus on ethnic, racial and political identities should not be understood to imply that I do not acknowledge the complexities and intersections between multiple identities based on social position including gender, class, sexuality and age and its possible impact on the development of the self (Howard, 2000). This research is not aimed at researching and problematizing identity in all its complexities. The focus of this research has been to investigate a method of performance, Self-Revelatory performance, which aims to bring about psychological healing when a current life issue is performed. The connection to identity is that as the researcher undertaking a process of autobiographical research, the current life issue I was confronted with, was my own negative self-concept of my own ethnic, racial and politicized identity as an Afrikaner living in a post-apartheid South Africa. That is why I am focussing this brief theoretical discussion on the conceptualization of ethnic, racial and political identity from a social psychological perspective.

Social identity theory (SIT) was first developed by Tajfel (1981) and Tajfel and Turner (1979). An in-depth discussion on SIT falls outside the scope of this research. However, its core assumption is that identities are made up of various cognitive schemas (abstract and organized packages of information) (Howard, 2000). These include self-schemas that include the knowledge about one's self and the characteristics, preferences, goals and behaviour patterns we associate with ourselves. It also includes group schemas, which include the information about social positions such as gender, race or class, because these social positions have a direct impact on our sense of self. Therefore, Howard (2000) states that group schemas play a major part in processes of identification. SIT focuses on the interaction between self-schemas and group schemas. The central assumption is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions: social, defined by membership in various social groups, and personal; the attributes that distinguishes an individual from others. Traditionally, these social and personal identities were seen to be on opposite ends of a spectrum or continuum. However, I accept Deaux's (1993) argument that there is an interplay between them and that they cannot easily be separated as they constantly impact and interact with each other.

2.5.1 Ethnic identity

One such social identity associated with membership to a social group is called ethnic identity. There is no clear consensus amongst scholars on the definition of ethnic identity. The lack of clear definitions, is in fact, identified as a major problem in social identity research by Phinney (1990) who reviewed more than 70 social psychological studies on ethnic identity. Nonetheless, it is typically

viewed as the psychological relationship a group member has with their own ethnic group –including the attitudes about one's own ethnicity and the psychological impact of being part of minority or stigmatized ethnic groups in a diverse society (Phinney, 1990). According to Phinney researching ethnic identity is crucially important to the field of psychology as her analysis suggests one's attitude towards one's ethnicity is central to psychological functioning. This seems to be of even greater importance in societies where certain ethnic groups are poorly represented and/or stigmatized or discriminated against (Phinney, 1990). Critically, its been illustrated that one's degree and quality of involvement with one's own culture and heritage, as well as, the ways of responding to and dealing with other out-groups or dominant groups' disparaging views of one's ethnic group has varying degrees of impact on psychological well-being (Weinreich, 1988; Phinney, 1990). However, because of different conceptualizations, definitions and measures, the study of ethnic identity and its psychological impact has been difficult and findings have been inconsistent and impossible to compare across studies (Phinney, 1990). With this in mind, however, the role of ethnic identity on the self-concept has been investigated with prominent questions being whether strong identification with an ethnic group can promote positive self-concept and if negative attitudes can cause negative self-concept or lower one's self-concept and self-esteem. Here too the results have been mixed but several studies have found a correlation between ethnic identity and self-concept (Paul & Fisher, 1980; Tzuriel & Klein, 1977, Phinney, 1991). In another review on the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem, Phinney (1991), asserts that a strong ethnic identity was related to high self-esteem. Social theorists tend to use the word "self-

esteem" and "self-concept" interchangeably. But for clarity one's self-concept is seen as a reflection of one's perceptions about self, and how one appears to others. For consistency throughout this report I use Ross's definition (1992, p. 3) that clearly and simply clarifies it as "the concept a person has of him or herself".

Contemporary studies on ethnic identity cast ethnicity as fluid and ethnic boundaries as continually changing with Espiritu (1994) stating that ethnic identification is dynamic and a more complex process than what has previously been thought. Again, this research does not aim to research ethnic identity and acknowledges the complexities of ethnic identity and the fact that people can have multiple ethnic identities. Yet, what I have tried to illustrate through the Self-Revelatory approach, is that one's attitudes towards your ethnic group or groups, can impact self-concept and therefore affects psychological functioning.

2.5.1 Racial identity

Where ethnic identity (or identities) are impacted by culture, country, traditions, learned behaviours and customs specific to different ethnic groups, racial categorization was historically determined by biological features – most prominently skin colour. However, for the purpose of this report I agree with Twenge and Crocker (2002) that the term *race* should refer to social identities into which people have categorized themselves and are categorized by others. The term *race* thus reflects social constructions rather than assumed biological differences among identity groups (Phinney, 1996; Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Again, however, research on racial identities have been termed problematic as in many cases there has been no clear differentiation between ethnic and racial

identities because historically it was assumed that individuals only belonged to a single racial or ethnic category. Today we know that most people hail from multiracial backgrounds, and with the concept of race being contested, research on racial identity have been complicated. Again, an in-depth discussion on race and its contestations falls outside the scope of this research.

Yet, despite the difficulties Howard (2000), in her review of ethnic and racial identities, found evidence again suggesting varying relationships between racial identities and self-concept or self-esteem. In their meta-analyses of studies on the relationship between race and self-esteem, Twenge and Crocker (2002) found mixed results where in some cases the discrimination of racial minority groups did not necessarily result in low self-esteem contradicting SIT assumptions. The focus of these studies were, however, limited to African American black participants and white Americans. The researchers highlight the complexities of race and that a racial identity's relationship to self-esteem is greatly impacted by whether that racial group has minority status, experiences stigma, the historical identity, and culture of the racial category.

Four distinct theoretical perspectives have been put forward to explain the impact of race on psychological functioning. An in-depth discussion of these falls outside the cope of this research but broadly speaking these theories can be classified as: internalization of stigma, stigma as self-protection, positive racial identity, and cultural differences in the self-concept (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Each one of these theories have been thoroughly researched with mixed results. The one that is important to my research is "cultural differences in the self-

concept" as it directly relates to the self-concept. Here cultural differences are broadly categorized under "individualism" (cultures and individuals who endorse independence, personal goals, personal uniqueness and personal control) and "collectivism" (cultures and individuals who endorse group membership and obligations toward the group instead of the individual self). Individualism and collectivism becomes important to the development of the self as they hold different views of the self (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). In most European and North American cultural contexts individualism is associated with higher self-esteem where collectivist cultures have been associated with lower self-esteem (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto & Norasakkunit, 1997). This theoretical perspective highlights the connection between culture and psychological functioning. And according to Twenge and Crocker several findings of their meta-analyses were consistent with the view that self-esteem in racial minority groups is a function of cultural differences in the self-concept.

Historically, the essentialist, reductionist, biologically derived and hierarchical categorizations of people based on narrow notions of race have had broad social and political repercussions. In South Africa alone it led to a political system of apartheid and colonialism that led to the oppression of millions of non-white South Africans. It would be an impossible task to investigate racial identity without entering the realm of identity politics. And although there have been positive shifts in this direction by contemporary social psychological researchers Huddy (2001) argues that it is not nearly enough and that more should be done to problematize the intersections of SIT and political identities and its associated power relationships.

Research in political psychology have started incorporating the notion of identity and have found that identity, specifically ethnic and racial identities, mediate the political consequences of national identity (Huddy, 2001). In some instances ethnic and racial identities have been found to undercut national unity and promote intolerance and intergroup antipathies and can result in a diminished sense of patriotism or national identity (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin & Pratto, 1997). Gibson and Gouws (1999) found that strong racial and ethnic identities among South Africans increased their perceived need for group solidarity, which resulted in greater antipathy toward out-groups, increased the perception that such groups pose a threat and promoted intolerance. These findings support the importance of subjective group membership in shaping political attitudes and behaviour. This is consistent with SIT because it suggests that membership in a salient minority results in in-group identity and out-group antipathy but importantly Huddy (2001) emphasises that underlying the group membership was the existence of a strong, internalized subjective ethnic or racial identity. And hence only applied to members of those groups who identified strongly with their ethnic or racial group.

Ultimately I agree with Huddy (2001) that social psychology needs to increasingly situate itself within the real world of politics. In many ways this argument is echoed by Hook (2005) who critiques critical social psychology for having largely ignored postcolonial theory. For as he argues the politics of Fanon (1986) and Biko (1978) speak to the identity traumas caused by the political systems that perpetuated colonial thought, racism, discrimination and displacement. Hook states that although these core postcolonial texts focused on

the political, it was powerfully psychological in nature as it clearly illuminated the powerful interplay between political and psychological (Hook, 2005). A thorough examination of postcolonial theory falls outside the scope of this research, but it is important to state that this research acknowledges and agrees with Huddy and Hook's calls to continually integrate and investigate the impact and interplay of the political and psychological spheres.

In conclusion: There is little agreement on most matters relating to identity and its vast complexities. However, there is no denying that there is a relationship between identities, whether they be ethnic, racial or political, and psychological functioning, which supports the assumption I made at the outset of this research that my negative views and attitudes about what is commonly perceived as Afrikaner identity with its politics, history, cultural rituals and symbols, have had a impact on my psychological functioning.

2.6 THE CONSTRUCTED AFRIKANER IDENTITY

Modernist theories on national identity assert that nations are actively constructed and do not just "exist" as essentialists have argued. From a modernists' perspective the nation-building project constructs communities into which people are socialized (Louw, 2004). Gellner (1983) contends that nation states were the natural result of capitalist industrialisation. And that these nationalist states are effective in organising people into "large, centrally educated, culturally homogenous groups" (p. 35). After Afrikaner nationalists won the 1948 election they set about constructing a national nation-building campaign to start "Afrikanerizing" South Africa and build a modernist state. Louw writes that this

nation-building process was however, different to others as it did not strive to organise South Africans into a single culturally homogenous group (as the British had done) but attempted to create a "Euro-African state" dominated by the minority Afrikaner nation and surrounded by black homelands. They never fully succeeded in creating these "independent" states but they were successful in constructing an Afrikaner national group with a powerful sense of possessing an autonomous identity (Louw, 2004). However, this was a double-edged sword according to Louw as this identity was so attached to nationhood and political power that it collapsed when it was separated from state and political power in 1994.

A postmodern view of Afrikaner identity would stress the power relationships within which this identity emerged and grew. After the Boer War the identity of Afrikaners were constructed to be in direct opposition with the colonial British. It was an identity built upon resentment, trauma and Afrikaner impoverishment that was to be mobilized by Afrikaner nationalist politicians to encourage anti-imperial nationalism (Louw, 2004). When they regained political power in the 1950's the Afrikaners constructed an "assertive" Afrikaner nationalist subject position and paradoxically also inserted "insecurity" into their constructed national identity which would continually promote the construction of a state that is in direct opposition to the British, and I would argue that it was ultimately this insecurity that led to the creation of a militarized state when the Afrikaner nation was seen to be under threat in the 1960's and 1970's due to international pressures responding to the oppression of the non-white South African majority (Louw, 2004). In keeping with postmodernists' predictions, the end of this militarized state in 1994 and its Afrikaner nation-building project led to "significant trauma and

identity dislocation" (Louw, p. 51). This is supported by research on Afrikaner identity post-1994.

Some research on the collective Afrikaner identity post-apartheid has been conducted in various fields since 1994. Scholars have continually been arguing for the need to reconstruct Afrikaner identity within the new democratic South Africa for various social, political, and psychological reasons. As stated earlier, a stable identity or sense of *being* and *belonging* by Jones (2007), is crucial as it is central to the therapeutic process. According to Ross the self-concept impacts and ultimately influences how one perceives oneself and how one thinks and feels about oneself. Snow (2009) argues that an understanding of a client's damaged self-concept is of great importance as it directly impacts the self-esteem. According to Snow a client with a negative self-concept will likely feel bad about themselves and this could result in a low self-esteem. This, he states, is primarily what happens to members of a highly stigmatized group, as I argue Afrikaners are, post-apartheid.

In their study on the perceived threat to Afrikaner ethnic identity Korf and Malan (2002) interviewed an urban sample of white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans to investigate their perceptions of their collective and individual self-esteem and found that they experienced a threat to their ethnic identity on two levels: firstly they felt threatened as a group and were concerned that they would not continue to exist as a 'distinctive group' post-apartheid, and secondly they were concerned that group membership would no longer contribute to positive self-esteem reflecting their predominant negative experiences as Afrikaners after 1994. According to Korf and Malan these findings were influenced by a perception of other

groups' negative evaluations of their ethnic group and their own negative perceptions and attitudes toward political change and the instability of the post-apartheid political system. Respondents who felt that Afrikaners would not continue as a distinctive group in society had a more positive attitude towards socio-political changes, were more politically liberal, but did not have strong ethnic identification and shared a negative collective self-esteem. This is in agreement with Theunissens' (2015) findings that the 'disowning' of Afrikaner identity out of fear of stigmatization has led to a loss of self-esteem and negative emotions. These studies are relevant to my research as they theoretically and empirically underpin my own experiences as an Afrikaner and indicate that my negative feelings of being Afrikaans are shared amongst others in my group. These scholars also agree with with Steyn (2009) that there is a need to reconstruct Afrikaner identity, or a sense of selfhood, as Afrikaners are struggling to find their place in the 'new' South Africa. Steyn found that certain ethnic anxieties exist within the Afrikaner community because of this struggle. Central to this struggle has been anxieties about the loss of status of Afrikaans - the language central to Afrikaner identity. I have chosen to elaborate more on the relationship between Afrikaans and Afrikaner identity as I actively undertook this research in both Afrikaans and English, because of the strong relationship the *volkstaal* had with the constructed Afrikaner identity and the prominent role it played in South African politics.

Louw (2004) has argued that the promotion of a codified language is essential to creating and building a nation state and that it simultaneously becomes a crucial administrative tool for bureaucratically holding a state together – the container within which a national identity can be built. Afrikaans, with its humble

beginnings as a *kombuistaal* (kitchen language), was to become such a tool during apartheid South Africa, when the Afrikaner nationalist party actively ran nation-building projects aimed at promoting Afrikaans as a legal/bureaucratic language, firmly establishing a relationship between political power, identity and language. Yet, in our post-apartheid context Afrikaans was not only dropped as the language of state administration, but also came to be stigmatized and marginalized as a language associated with the oppressor.

In many ways Afrikaans has always been a contested and marginalized language associated with political oppression – first emerging as the language of the oppressed *boerevolk* before becoming the language of the oppressor – and all within one century. After the Boer War (1899-1902) the British abolished the speaking of Afrikaans in schools in an attempt to curb Afrikaner nationalism. Afrikaners, feeling oppressed by the British, undertook a political struggle against cultural imperialism, in a fight over their right to have their children be educated in Afrikaans (Louw, 2004). Then during the late 1940's until 1990 the language of the oppressed became the language of the oppressor when the National Party (NP) started systematically building a nationalist state funded by the Afrikaner elite that saw Afrikaans being promoted as a national language although Afrikaners were in essence only a minority of the population. Afrikaans became a political mechanism that could separate white Afrikaners from all other ethnic groups and eventually this struggle for what Cronje, (1945) terms an Afrikaner "national space" gave birth to apartheid. The attempts of the NP to promote Afrikaans successfully led to its enhanced status and its increased use among non-Afrikaners according to Louw.

But after the collapse of the apartheid government in 1994, a degree of state hostility has been directed at the language.

According to Louw (2004) Afrikaans literacy is no longer an asset in the post-apartheid South Africa and he argues that Afrikaans has become a handicap in interactions with certain sections of the post-1994 political elite – culminating in a form of socioeconomic pressure against the use of Afrikaans. It must be noted that this pressure exists for other indigenous languages. But a discussion on these falls outside the scope of this research. Furthermore, in multilingual environments such as South Africa, languages occupy positions in a status hierarchy. In 1994 English again acquired the highest status as the language of state administration and with a shift of political power certain indigenous languages such as Xhosa and Zulu improved in status, becoming a preferred second language to many South Africans who steer away from Afrikaans that had lost status as a language (Louw, 2004). Afrikaans has become a language so interlinked with a political system of oppression that I had found myself actively avoiding it in certain spaces – specifically the university space- out of fear of the political connotations. A deeply entrenched fear was that people and fellow students would pass certain political judgements on me if I would reveal myself to be Afrikaans. Therefore, part of the healing journey of this autobiographical research was to deliberately return to Afrikaner identity and to Afrikaans. For as Howard (2000) rightly states, people actively produce identity through language. Language carries the construction, negotiation and communication of identity. Adam and Giliomee (cited by Delport & Olivier, 2003) emphasise the link between language and ethnicity and comments on

how effective a tool it was in developing a group consciousness and mobilising the Afrikaner in the first half of the 20th century.

Attempting to reconstruct my negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity forced me to confront the complexities of my relationship with Afrikaans as a language. For not only is it the language of the architects of apartheid, but also the language of those Afrikaners who actively took a stand against apartheid including some of my most loved writers, scholars and poets such as Breyten Breytenbach, who actively employed the Afrikaans language as a struggle tool against apartheid. These ambivalent feelings toward Afrikaans was echoed by other white female Afrikaans-speaking students in a study conducted on university campuses post-apartheid. Delport and Olivier (2003) set out to determine what white Afrikaans-speaking female students felt about their Afrikaner identity. They note that white Afrikaans-speaking students find themselves in a peculiar position of being in a world where the role of women are changing, while also being confronted with changes that are specifically challenging their previously assumed roles and identities in South Africa. They found that some of the participants in their study had developed negative attitudes toward their Afrikaner identity because of particular stigmas attached to Afrikaans as a language. Below is an extract from a student during a recorded focus group interview:

> …people are still today inclined to attach Afrikaans, the language, to apartheid and in many cases they actually look down on you… which to me is unfair; the thing is just, we are seen as the oppressors of the past … (p. 183)

The female students reported feeling stigmatised, experiencing feelings of inferiority, feeling embarrassed and although not all their respondents reported negative attitudes about Afrikaner identity, all of them agreed that they felt excluded and marginalized on university campuses because of transitions from Afrikaans model C schools to English university campuses (Delport & Olivier, 2003). They concluded that many female students had doubts about their cultural identity, felt mistreated or treated unfairly, felt stigmatised and at a disadvantage by being labelled as Afrikaners in a post-apartheid South Africa – amounting to what the researchers labelled "identity confusion that may be an indication of an identity crisis" (p. 188). Again, the researchers expressed concern about the impact of this on self-image and emotional well-being citing Gouws et al. (2000) who warns that:

> … adolescents who are not able to make decisions about their social roles, may experience identity diffusion. This may then lead to anxiety, apathy, feelings of incompetence and eventually result in a negative identity. (Delport & Olivier, 2003, p. 188)

In this section I have briefly tried to unpack some prominent research about Afrikaner identity post-apartheid to illustrate the intra-psychic and interpersonal identity struggles facing Afrikaners post-apartheid. An in-depth discussion and analysis of Afrikaner identity falls outside the scope of this research. In the next subsection I will now attempt to discuss trauma with a specific emphasis on collective trauma and how drama therapists have theoretically and practically responded to trauma work.

2.7 TRAUMA AND COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

In Section Four I offer a detailed description of my journey to discovering that my performance not only dealt with identity but also with trauma- specifically collective trauma. However, research supports my experience of trauma. Taking a post-Jungian perspective of Afrikaner cultural identity Griessel and Kotzé (2012) argue that there are still many unresolved traumas and conflicts in the collective unconscious of the Afrikaner that need to be unpacked and healed if we are to move towards reconstructing our cultural identity. There is not enough room in this research report to fully elaborate on the multitude of research that has been conducted on trauma and collective trauma. For the purpose of this research I have focused on drama therapy research on trauma and collective trauma.

Since the 1980's drama therapy has been engaged in the treatment of both individual and collective trauma (Sajnani & Johnson, 2014). It made sense given that trauma was always understood to be held in the body with stress being identified as something that affects major parts of the body (Seyle, 1965) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) being called a psychosomatic illness since the terms' inception (Sajnani & Johnson). Wilheim Reich (1972/1945) emphasized that the body was the location of traumatic memories and his work formed the basis for the body therapy movement, which again supported the development of the creative arts therapies. According to Sajnani and Johnson his work was ground breaking at the time but is now rarely cited because it was highly cathartic and embodied and relied heavily on physical touch. In recent years researchers have focused on neurological studies in trying to understand the body's response to trauma, with Penfield's (1978) discoveries of the functions of the two hemispheres of the brain's

cortex that impacted traumatic stress studies, and the discovery of the role of neuro-hormones in PTSD by Mason et al. (1994). The discovery in 2004 of mirror neurons by Rizzolatti and Craighero, inspired and laid the foundation for the neuro-scientific theory of mind (Goldstein & Winner, 2010-2011), and with these discoveries in neuroscience and genetics the emphasis shifted from emotion to cognition in trauma treatment (Sajnani & Johnson, p. 13).

Drama therapy has utilised different paradigms to support its trauma work, according to Johnson (2009). The *psychodramatic frame*, derived from the psychoanalytic frame, is specifically used by Anne Bannister (1997), Tian Dayton (1997) and Kellerman and Hudgins (2000) in their treatment of trauma. Other drama therapists rely on what Johnson and Sajnani (2014) term the *creative/expressive paradigm* that focuses on free expression of thoughts and feelings in an imaginative context. Within this paradigm David Read Johnson (2010) and his colleagues have treated Vietnam veterans and Robert Landy (2010), Haen and Weber (2009) and Ann Cattanach (1992) have treated children who have been victims of abuse. Drama therapist Mooli Lahad (1992) and his colleagues are to my knowledge the only drama therapists who have ventured into the *cognitive-behavioural frame* in trauma treatment, incorporating cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with bibliotherapy methods (Lahad, Farhi, Leykin & Kaplansky, 2010). Drama therapists are yet to explore how neuroscience can impact their work but Frydman and McLellan (2014) have argued for a neuroscientific approach to drama therapy.

Of great interest to my research was the work of drama therapists who have utilized the *sociocultural paradigm* to address and work with trauma experienced by

collectives, marginalized and exploited groups. According to Sajnani and Johnson (2014) many of these approaches have been inspired by the work of Augusto Boal. In addition to Emunah (1994; 2015) and her colleagues (Emunah, Raucher & Ramirez-Hernandez 2014) who have used this paradigm in my chosen method of self-revelatory performance, Armand Volkas devised a method called *Healing the Wounds of History* (2014). His work was of particular interest to me as he attempts drama therapy with cultures who have faced traumatic events and are reacting to them from the perspective of the victim and also the perpetrator (Volkas 2014).

According to Kellerman (cited by Volkas, 2014) collective trauma is a psychological state shared by any group of people and can affect an entire society. Danieli (cited by Volkas) found that the trans-generational transmission of trauma is a phenomenon that can have a continued destructive impact on a collective even centuries after the original events, and Volkas (2014) reiterates that historical trauma can have negative effects on cultural and national identity and self-esteem because humans are tribal and have a need to associate with the tribe to which they belong. When their intergroup pride is destroyed or disrupted by humiliation, trauma, defeat or any other negative events it leads to internalized oppression and impacts the way individuals in the group view or value their culture or their tribe. Ultimately it destroys the pride of association (Volkas, 2014).

> The impact of collective trauma is carried in our psyches in the form of images, stories, sense memories, spoken and unspoken messages transmitted by parents, teachers, and the media. Ultimately this process evolves into a collective narrative. This narrative is absorbed unconsciously

> through a process akin to osmosis and has an impact on the cultural and national identity of the individual and the group (p. 46).

I have chosen the method of self-revelatory performance as it has specifically been used and tested on training drama therapists and offers a specific and new model of working through traumatic memories. As Sajnani & Johnson (2014) note, many of these performances have addressed past or present intergenerational, cultural and historic trauma and the model therefore offers principles of trauma treatment that include a framework for exploration (the aesthetic container), social support to combat the experience of isolation, modulated exposure to support desensitization, and mindful experiencing of somatic states.

In the next section I will briefly outline my philosophical stance and my methodological choices and explain how they informed this study. I will then elaborate on my research design and how I generated data in this study.

SECTION THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Section Two I reviewed the literature on art-based research and the theoretical frame within this methodological paradigm – performance as research (PAR) – that I have chosen as the means to investigate the central research questions. In this section I will outline the philosophical stance that underpins this theoretical frame and the methodological choices that informed my study. Lastly I will elaborate on my research design and data generation.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In Section Two I argued that the art-based research of pioneering psychologists such as Freud (1913) and Jung (2009) indicate that in fact, art-based research should not be viewed as separate to research in the social sciences as social scientists had found ways of integrating art as research into their practice and research in the past. Therefore, I have attempted to integrate the methodological paradigm of art-based research with paradigms traditionally associated with social sciences. I would argue that this hybrid-methodology makes sense in drama therapy research given the hybrid nature of the profession itself.

When conducting research one must have a paradigm as a lens to support the assumptions the researcher makes about reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Much has been written about differing paradigms, and contesting and competing paradigms, that inform research in social science. The four main paradigms that

influence the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions in social science are: Positivism, constructivism, pragmatism and critical paradigms (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Guba and Lincoln the choice of paradigm determines the choice of research design and methodology used in gathering and analysing research data.

My study subscribes to a transformative research paradigm. This paradigm assumes that there are multiple realities out there (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and that these realities are constructed by various societal factors including economic, social, political and cultural contexts and values. According to Mertens (2005) one can only know these realities as a researcher through an interactive relationship with the participants. Since I was the only participant in this research and the researcher, this paradigm aligns with my research design and process of creating a performance about my reality and experiences of Afrikaner culture in a post-apartheid South Africa. I am the only person who can fully know and understand my experience of reality, yet I am aware and acknowledge that my experiences and realities are different from those of someone else, particularly other Afrikaners. Within this paradigm I acknowledge that as a people we still have different and multiple realities and my research did not attempt to speak on behalf of all Afrikaners living in South Africa. From the perspective of this paradigm I believe we all construct our own social realities.

Furthermore, the transformative paradigm values indigenous knowledge systems and the construction of new knowledge (Mertens, 2009). According to Mertens it encourages the use of various methods to generate data. This lens

compliments the use of various arts-based methods to both conduct the research and to gather and analyse the data. As a training drama therapist and artist I subscribe to the ideals of art-based research and performance-as-research and I believe that art can be used to bring about healing and change in a culture such as mine that has been victimized and has victimized other groups causing collective trauma. Because this lens also values indigenous knowledge it seemed appropriate because of the emphasis on my culture and its influence on the construction of my reality and experiences. Using the method of self-revelatory performance within the performative frame of drama therapy I could incorporate, explore, express and question the values, morals, traditions and messages that have been passed down to me that impacted the development of my self-concept and the relationship with my cultural identity. An important part of indigenous knowledge is language, as it is a vehicle that transmits indigenous knowledge systems. The emphasis the transformative paradigm places on indigenous knowledge therefore supports my attempt at multi-lingual research and my choice to write and perform my self-revelatory performance in my home language – Afrikaans. My choice to use primarily English in reporting my findings in this report is to simplify the process of examination and to make this report accessible to South African and other researchers, drama therapists or interested individuals who are not proficient in Afrikaans.

3.2.1. Qualitative Approach

My performance-as-research was situated within a qualitative approach to research. This, because qualitative researchers investigate events, situations, experiences, and seek to better understand the phenomena under study (Creswell,

2009). Qualitative research seemed appropriate for this study as it has an interpretive nature. According to McFarlane (2000) the interpretive researcher is tasked with interpreting and understanding the perceptions that people create of themselves and their realities and how these perceptions influence behaviour. I deemed this approach appropriate as I was directly involved in testing how a self-revelatory performance could alter and transform the perceptions I had created about my culture and myself.

As noted in section one the qualitative approach is influenced by the philosophical schools of phenomenology and hermeneutics – phenomenology being "the study of human experience and the way in which things are perceived as they appear to consciousness" (Langdridge, 2007, p. 10) and hermeneutics being "a theory or method of interpretation" (Shaw, 2010, p. 177). The qualitative approach values interpretation and allows for self-reflexivity as it acknowledges dual interpretative processes and that people's experiences of shared reality are different, therefore aligning with my chosen transformative paradigm.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodologically this research followed a PAR design. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) a research design is, simply put, the plan that maps out how the research problem will be investigated and illustrates which routes the researcher will take on their journey. Research design is influenced by the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigms informing the research, the context in which the research will be carried out, and the data gathering and analysis tools the researcher will employ (Mayaba, 2012).

The research process was divided into three phases or stages: The first phase involved the process of creating the self-revelatory performance and systematically and descriptively documenting the drama therapeutic process I was undertaking, alternating between the roles of the *client* that is exploring or 'working through' personal material and the training *drama therapist* that was directing the performance.

The second phase involved the performance of the self-revelatory piece in front of a selected audience - this is always the case in therapeutic theatre because the nature of the performance is meant to be therapeutic to the performer (Snow, 2009). Post-performance I then documented the process of performing descriptively from the perspective of the *performer* and *client*, before stepping into the role of *researcher* and *drama therapist* to reflect on the process in a reflective diary.

Thirdly, the data generated through embodiment and other methods used in self-revelatory performance as well as the descriptive journal entries from both phases and the reflective diary entries from both phases were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, 2004) and the results are discussed in Section Four.

3.3.1 Data Gathering

In her research on the usefulness of journals in post-graduate drama studies, Alexandra Sutherland (2011) found that journaling promoted the development of

self-reflexivity in students as journals became "a site for praxis and emerging reflexivity" (p. 119) that is key in the formation of identity as Rosenwald and Ochberg (cited by Sutherland, 2011) state:

How individuals recount their histories – what they emphasise and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience – all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned. (p. 112)

According to Taylor (1996) the ability to constantly engage in action and reflection are of great importance in the process of artistic meaning making as the process honours the power of the lived artistic experience. Taylor emphasises that reflective writing practices such as journaling have a long history in artistic practice as they offer a way for the artist "to penetrate the character of his reflective practice and to understand how artistic processes informed his work" (1996, p. 42). In art-based research McNiff (2013b) also vouches for the use of artistic methods or creative methods to document the research. Because I was attempting creative research that relied heavily on my ability to reflect and interpret, I chose journaling as a suitable way to document my experience and the process, as I believe it complements the theoretical frame of PAR and allows for reflection in action to occur.

As the research was autobiographical it became complex because I had to occupy different roles – that of the researcher, the director/drama therapist and the client. I therefore chose to keep three separate journals to help clarify these roles and to allow me to step in and out of different roles, to reflect from *within* and *on*

these different roles I was holding. Schön (1983) writes that the reflective conversation can only occur when one is reflecting *in* action and *on* action. This is when practice turns into research. The descriptive journal was primarily used to reflect from the point of view of the client that reflects on the experience from within the therapeutic and creative process. The director journal was used to plan and reflect on the choices I made as a drama therapist during the creation and rehearsal of the self-revelatory performance whilst the reflective journal belonged to the role of the researcher or what is typically called the "participant-observer" in social science (Sutherland, 2011). From this position I could reflect on what had been captured in the other two journals that captured my reflections from within the process and use the third journal to reflect *on* the action in my role as researcher. The outline of each journal as provided in Section One follows:

Descriptive journal – As a participant the journal was used for descriptive note taking and free association, documenting the personal responses, conscious and unconscious material that arose and any stories or narratives that came to consciousness during the process of creation.

Director journal – As I was simultaneously the client and the drama therapist that acts as the director of the self-revelatory performance, I used this journal to write down and plan any thoughts or feelings and plans towards the structural and aesthetic elements of the performance. It was also used to document and plan the creative drama therapeutic process undertaken during rehearsals.

Reflective journal – The reflective diary is where I reflected as a researcher and drama therapist on what was captured in the descriptive and director journal. The

reflective diary is where I critically engaged with my subject position as research instrument and reflected critically on how the process was unfolding.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

According to Jonathan Smith (2004) one of the founding pioneers of Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), the method can be described as having three broad elements that represent: its epistemological position, the guidelines for conducting research, and a description of a corpus of empirical research.

Theoretically, it aims to explore the lived experience of research participants and how they make sense of their personal experiences (Smith, 2004). Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) state that it's phenomenological because it concerns itself with the participants' perceptions of objects or events and recognises the role of the analyst in making sense of that personal experience, which aligns it with the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics making it a suitable choice or method of interpretation or analysis within my chosen research paradigm. According to Smith (2004) the aim of IPA within psychology is in-depth qualitative analysis. The analysis or characteristic feature relies on the use of *idiographic*, *induction* and *interrogation*. In my analysis of my journals I have tried to analyse the content systematically relying on each of these elements, which I will briefly discuss.

- **Idiographic**

  According to Smith (2004) the case or cases of each participant is examined closely until a detailed analysis is achieved. Once this is done the themes that emerge are identified. Importantly, IPA's are usually conducted with small

samples of 5 to 10. However, Smith has argued that it is possible to conduct an IPA analysis on a single case stating that "such work is important in clearly marking a place for the significant contribution of the case in its own right, which has been sorely neglected in psychology" (p. 42). This is what I have attempted to achieve with my research. I am in agreement with Smith that the examination of one case can be valuable as it gives more depth and insight into the particular persons' response to a specific situation – in this case- my own response to the method of self-revelatory performance and its effect on my perceptions of self in relation to cultural identity. Importantly, Warnock (1987) argues that examining one case in all its detail and particularities also takes us closer to the universal as we are better positioned to now reflect on how others might deal with a particular situation. This is crucial for me as a researcher and training drama therapist as I attempt to introduce this method of working to clients. Smith (2004) echoes this sentiment adding that the very detail of an individual brings us closer to understanding significant aspects of our shared humanity.

- **Induction**

IPA researchers focus primarily on the use of inductive reasoning where observations are used to identify patterns and make broader generalisations (Smith, 2004). Smith specifically highlights how IPA researchers need to be flexible in their methods to allow material to arise and notes how personal diaries are valuable sources for inductive reasoning specifically in relation to identity research. That is why I have opted for the use of diaries to generate the data for analysis.

- **Interrogation**

Smith (2004) has argued that the key aim of IPA is to contribute to psychology through interrogation and illuminating existing research. The analysis therefore does not stand in isolation but should always be discussed in relation to psychological literature. The results of my analysis are therefore discussed in Section Four, and question the existing literature on the method of self-revelatory performance.

In closing it must be explicitly stated that IPA relies only on what is already there in the case journals to make an analysis and does not "read into" the passage as Smith (2004) argues the psychoanalytic tradition might do. According to him there are epistemological differences between IPA and psychoanalytic interpretations and IPA readings operate closer to the text and should clearly indicate when they are moving into a more speculative description. IPA draws more from the fields of health and social psychology and functions within the cognitive domain of meaning making rather than the psychoanalytic domain (Smith). In keeping with this I have approached my definition of identity and self-concept from the socio-psychological school of thought and have tried to align my analysis and reflections with the levels of *meaning* that are embedded in the texts.

SECTION FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The overarching aim of this section is to offer an in-depth analysis and critical discussion of the research findings of this PAR study as both the practitioner-researcher and participant. However, this would be impossible without first inviting the reader into the creative world of creation and performance by explicating the creative research process that ultimately gave birth to these findings. Therefore, I will attempt to offer the reader insight into the creative research process from inception to performance with an emphasis on the challenges of performing trauma. Once I have contextualized the creative world within which the research took place I will attempt to articulate the findings of this research.

I have divided the findings into two subsections. The first subsection will offer a discussion on the intra-psychic experience in relation to the tested methodology and the second subsection will offer a discussion of the interpersonal findings in relation to the methodology of self-revelatory performance as a method of drama therapy. It is important to note that although I have created these subsections to better organise and explain the complexities of what I found and experienced on an intra-psychic and interpersonal level, it must be clearly stated that both these processes happened simultaneously and are intricately related to one another. Critique on the research process and recommendations for future research are discussed from the perspective of the

researcher and the training drama therapist who in future will practice using this method of drama therapy in a South African context.

4.2 KOMPOS: PERFORMING IDENTITY AND TRAUMA

> *Daarom moet ek my Afrikaanswees gaan opgrawe daar onder die vloerplanke en dit ook op die komposhoop gaan gooi sodat die verotting kan ontbind en weer bind in ander vorme. Want dit is al wat ek kan doen in 'n poging om te verstaan en my bestaan te aanvaar, en met my kruppelkopgewete te leef, en nie net te oorleef nie*[6] *.*

In Afrikaans the word "kompos" refers to compost. Compost comes into existence when a heap of organic waste is left to rot and eventually as time passes, the decomposition process starts and the organic matter is broken down and literally changes form as worms and other fungi feast on the rotten materials. It sounds disgusting but it is also an amazing process of transformation. Because through this process of death something new comes into being – compost - that is so rich in nutrients that it is used as a soil conditioner and a fertilizer to benefit the land so that something new can grow forth from the land.

During the creative process the image of compost became a powerful metaphor and symbol that could contain the complexities of my relationship with Afrikaner identity. As the process progressed I realised that I had left all my

[6] To give the reader insight into the world of the performance I have opted to insert parts of the script that I performed in this section and have opted to present these in italics to ease recognition.

negative parts of self, all my negative associations and negative emotions in a "heap" somewhere inside myself and that it had in fact started to rot. Much like the process the organic matter goes through, I was also disgusted by these parts of myself, my cultural identity and the collective past of my people and I didn't want to deal with it, I didn't want to accept it. But what I realised during the process and the performance was that ironically, healing, could only come from returning to that "heap of self" and allowing the decomposition to happen. I needed to accept the presence of the heap and I needed to allow a conscious process of "decomposition" in order for transformation to happen. What I realised when I allowed myself to return to that heap and to be confronted by the decomposition, was that there was more than just an identity crisis *(identiteitskrisis*) and a negative self-concept – there was a trauma that needed to be confronted. I was essentially not only performing identity but I was venturing into performing trauma as well.

> *Much like my mother I used to love Afrikaans but now I have come to hate it and everything it represents. The "taal", the culture, the racist whites and their religion. I hate everything about it. There have been times when I have sat in my bathtub and desperately tried to wash away my whiteness. I would scrub and scrub and scrub until blood would come oozing out. I wish I could run into the ocean and wash the Afrikaner out of me. I could not bear the curse of being Afrikaans anymore. I had to find a way to kill it, and that is why I murdered her*.

The attempted representation of trauma in the theatre is as old as the theatre itself as Duggan (2007) reminds us that the ancient Greeks were primarily concerned with the representation and resolution of trauma on stage. Although I acknowledge the existence of considerable scholarly debate on the representation of trauma on stage – with some scholars arguing that trauma can never be represented on stage because it is greater than the symbolic (Phelan, 1997) – an in-depth discussion about the arguments for and against, fall outside the scope of this research. For as Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) state: the representation or depiction of trauma is not the focal point of therapeutic theatre or the self-revelatory performance. However, after my experience, I agree with Duggan that we as humans have access to images, action and language to represent traumatic memories. As a training drama therapist who has performed trauma, I have found that images, movement and language can act as a container for the client and help them work through the traumatic experiences in the present. Ultimately helping the traumatized client stay in the present through performance is the aim of therapeutic theatre as the central effect of trauma is an inability to be in the present moment (Harnden, 2014). This is in agreement with drama therapist and trauma researcher, David Reed Johnsons' argument (2010) that the performance of traumatic experiences in drama therapy should focus on the person on stage in the present, and how that person is coming to grips with the lingering effects of trauma endured in the past.

However, for me the process of grappling with and working through the effects of trauma started long before I made it on stage during my performance.

When I set out on this research journey I knew that I was plagued by a negative self-concept of my cultural identity, brought on by the rigid identity created for and by Afrikaners, and of course the traumatic past that shattered my sense of self. I knew that I wanted to test how a performance-based method of drama therapy could facilitate a process of performing the various complex parts of self that all represent parts of, and struggles I have had with cultural identity. When I started scripting the text it very quickly became evident to me that intimately entangled in my struggles with self-concept and identity were feelings of trauma. This was the first self-revelation in the process. Emunah and her colleagues (2014) write that in drama therapy loss of self and shattered identity is part of the psychological phenomena associated with trauma. And that the self-revelatory performance gives the opportunity for the therapist to create scene work for the client in which the observing ego can recognize and relate to the parts of self which have been in hiding and ultimately reclaim them.

This process of observing the parts of self had crucially already started for me during the writing process. There was a certain feeling of agency that came from externalizing the trauma and creating and shaping the narrative of each part of self – ultimately voicing my truth – something many Afrikaners have not felt appropriate or possible post-apartheid. However, as I started rehearsing on my own during the first two weeks of the 12 week process I noticed that at first disclosing the trauma to myself, and knowing that I would have to inevitably share it with others, became a daunting task. There were underlying feelings of shame associated with admitting that I felt traumatized by my experience of being an Afrikaner in post-apartheid South Africa. Growing up in a post-

apartheid South Africa, it has rarely been acceptable to admit in public spaces or on public platforms that white, specifically Afrikaans-speaking, South Africans struggle with shame and residual guilt, without being ridiculed and dismissed. Even disclosing that I was an Afrikaner became nearly impossible to me out of fear of being stigmatized. Afrikaans became a language I spoke at home and cultural practices became something I felt obliged to be ashamed of. Disclosing these deeply uncomfortable feelings to anyone (even myself) created trepidation and fear within me. I had to struggle through a process of avoidance and denial. This is not uncommon of trauma as Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) write: "There may be an inclination to avoid, deny, or minimize the trauma" (p. 97). But eventually I realised that to remain silent and to disown or to avoid calling my experience traumatic, even though that is how I experienced it, would be counter-therapeutic and would ultimately derail the process of healing. It would have reaffirmed the negative self-esteem I battled and the feelings of worthlessness and "lesser-importance" associated with my cultural identity.

So the rehearsal process became crucial in overcoming the first psychological hurdle, which was to break the silence and to admit to the feelings of shame and trauma that plagued me. Reading and saying the words of the text out loud over and over again helped me become comfortable with the narrative, and as I repeatedly spoke to myself, the more I allowed myself to feel what I was feeling without judging it, I had a sense that I began to untangle myself from a web of anxiety and shame. The feelings of relief became overwhelming. And being able to start rehearsing in front of the two auxiliary actors participating in

my performance and disclosing experiences to them became exhilarating. And finally continually inviting my supervisor into the space to witness rehearsals helped me prepare myself for the self-disclosure I would have to face in front of my audience during my performance. Finally through a process of externalizing the trauma I could feel a psychological shift in me as the benefits of self-disclosure started outweighing my inclination to remain silent and the impulse to share my story, my truth, became overwhelming.

The extract from the performed text that follows, contains many symbols and metaphors associated with my experience of Afrikaner identity and my experience of growing up in a white Afrikaner community:

> **LIBTART:** *It was the first time that the circus had come to those parts and I had never seen or heard of it until the blacks told me about it. I wanted to go with all my heart. I sat in that room day in and day out, the stench of rotting shit in my nostrils, and the magical music of the circus in my ears (circus music playing in the background). I begged her to let me go (voer weer 'n gesprek met die denkbeeldige ma). Moeder, asseblief? Almal gaan daar wees. Laat my asseblief toe om te gaan. Dit is nie, dit is nie duiwelse dinge nie, ek sweer moeder. Ek is nie van die duiwel besete nie. Nee, die swart kinders gaan nie daar wees nie, ek belowe. Hulle het my nie getoor nie, ek sweer. Mamma, asseblief…*
>
> **STEM:** *Het sy jou ten einde laaste toegelaat om te gaan?*
>
> ***LIBTART:*** *No. The only place I was allowed to go was to church. To ask forgiveness for my sins.*

(Weer hoor mens in die agtergrond die dominee wat preek: "Eer jou vader en jou moeder dat jou dae verleng mag word in die land wat die Here jou God aan jou gee." En dan sing die koor weer:

"Moet my tog nie in u toorn bly straf nie, Here,

en my langer in u gramskap tugtig nie.

U pyle het my getref,

u hand lê swaar op my…)

Entrenched in this extract are the traumatic feelings of being trapped, being held captive both physically and psychologically from the world beyond what is familiar. Most notably my references to the circus represent yearning to experience the world beyond the confines of the physical, emotional and intellectual boundaries associated with the Afrikaner Nationalist identity, symbolised by the image or metaphors of the church and religion. It illustrates how I decided to deal with the second challenge I faced in the process leading up to my performance. How to dramatically convey or perform my experiences of trauma and identity? I relied heavily on drama therapy methods such as story and metaphor, directly addressing the audience, embodying parts of self and developing an internal nurturing character, to hold the intra-psychic content and it helped create the necessary aesthetic distance I needed to combat possible re-traumatization or dissociation (Jones, 2007; Emunah 1994, 2015). Emunah (1994) explains that there is a thin line between dramatic enactment and real life, and that one needs to skilfully facilitate and use distanced representations of a traumatic past through drama, with the added help of adequate preparation, to avoid either the re-traumatization evoked by somatic sensations and memory

(Emunah, Raucher & Ramirez-Hernandez 2014) or the activation of dissociative defence mechanisms that result in symptoms of numbness and withdrawal.

I felt that it was crucial for my therapeutic process to avoid a detailed rendition of my literal traumatic history and that I needed the safety of story and metaphor to capture my inner world, but like Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) write, it is important to still give your witnesses adequate background and understanding of the experience. Given that I had only invited friends and family with similar experiences and backgrounds I felt it was less important, but I tried to use story and metaphor to create a cohesive representation and story that followed a linear structure and added a strong narrative, in order to make it easy to condense and encapsulate parts of the story, specifically background information. My performance was not about rehashing the past and the complex history of our country and the focus was more on the impact it had on my inner world and the development of my identity as an Afrikaner and a South African. I wanted to use story, metaphor, ritual, and role to express my feelings of grief, rage, sorrow, shame and guilt that had been suppressed and denied for too long and had led to the development of a negative self-concept of my cultural identity.

To aid in this process it is customary to add auxiliary actors to the performance to assist in the representation of certain parts of the story, to embody parts of the self that the actor or performer needs to engage with and to offer support. I discuss the intra-psychic and interpersonal usefulness of both

auxiliary performers and drama therapy methods as part of the methodology in the subsections that follow.

The central aim of the self-revelatory performance as a method created by Emunah (1994; 2014; 2015) is to help clients "work through" a current issue and "move through" it. The central question I had investigated during this research project was in what ways this methodology could assist one in "working through" and "moving through" the negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity. As the project unfolded a new question around trauma came to the fore and asked how this methodology is successful in facilitating a process of "working through" and "moving through" trauma. At the time, I had not yet realized that I was specifically dealing with collective trauma, and this was only revealed to me after I had performed and started reflecting, analysing my journals, and writing this research report. This is important, as it greatly impacted my results and propelled me to not only focus on the intra-psychic effects of the method, but also the interpersonal effects, as I have come to realise through this process that it was not only my experience of trauma but a shared experience of trauma that was depicted on stage. I had thus not only tested the intra-psychic effects of the methodology, but also the interpersonal effects within a South African context. In the following subsections I will now attempt to share how the method of self-revelatory performance managed to assist in "working through" and "moving through" the intra-psychic content and how it fell short as a method in adequately addressing traumatic content that is collectively and interpersonally constructed in our South African context.

4.3. PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE: INTRAPSYCHIC BENEFITS

When one looks at the methodology of the self-revelatory performance it follows a specific structure. There is a process of developing and rehearsing the piece, followed by the performance itself, and the aftermath of the performance. Through my analysis of this structure I identified four crucial ingredients embedded in this structure that makes this methodology therapeutic and effective in addressing identity issues and related feelings of trauma. These crucial ingredients are very simply the process itself, the performance itself, the drama therapy methods used during process and performance, and transformation.

These four crucial ingredients facilitated a process of "working through" and "moving through" both on an intra-psychic level and on an interpersonal level with varying degrees of success. The overarching aim of this subsection will be to unpack the effectiveness of these four ingredients in facilitating an intra-psychic process of "working through" and "moving through" a negative self-concept brought on by the collective trauma in the Afrikaner psyche. I will attempt to do this by discussing each ingredient in relation to my intra-psychic process as they manifested during the process, the performance and post-performance.

4.3.1 Developing the Piece: Process, process, process

The process leading up to the performance included scripting, rehearsing, revising and refining the piece of theatre I wanted to perform. According to Emunah (2015) the performance showcases the strength and vulnerability that

have emerged during the process beforehand, and allows the performer to show themselves "in-process" to the audience. But this can only successfully happen if the performer has warmed themselves up both physically and emotionally to this experience and meeting of self and audience.

The process of preparation was of integral importance in my process and was in many ways also self-revelatory as new insight, awareness, meaning and feeling came to the fore even before the performance itself. One such important instance of insight came after a rehearsal in which I had invited my supervisor into the space to witness. I had scripted the role of the mother as the matriarch of the family. But she also represented the collective Afrikaner group – a group that is not often empathised with, and that is associated with racism, discrimination and apartheid. The mother role came to represent the part of self that I had not been able to accept or integrate and I found it very difficult to embody this role. The extract below is from my journal and gives insight into how the process before the performance can result in new insights.

> *Today was a break-through. I rehearsed with Warren [my supervisor] and I finally was able to empathise with the mother [character]. Up until today I have struggled to play this part and I have avoided allowing myself to connect with the character. But tonight Warren forced me to stay in the character, to rehearse her part over and over again until I finally broke down and started crying. It wasn't a big cry or an ugly cry but there were tears. Real tears. For the first time. It was so necessary. I have found the mother repulsive, as she does represent the part of self that I have hated, that I have*

avoided and that I have spent many years trying to avoid. But when confronted with her tonight something inside of me shifted because I stayed in the chaos of the character just long enough for unconscious material to emerge. Finally I kind of got her. And I felt her pain and fears. This was a crucial part of healing for me because I also wrote this character to be a representation of the collective Afrikaner identity, the captured Afrikaner identity, the horrific and atrocious part of Afrikaner history, but tonight I was truly able to 'tap' into not only that but also the pain and the fears that I think were lying underneath this identity in the collective psyche. I managed to experience this and it evoked empathy. The very thing I had struggled with. I feel a great sense of relief. And freedom. Like something heavy has been lifted off my shoulders and I am free to walk upright.

What I believe transpired in this rehearsal was a process of acceptance. Through embodying the despised parts of self I was forced to put myself in the shoes of the hated perpetrator and to experience what they experience. In the process I was able to find empathy for the role and what it represents and I was able to accept it for what it was without wanting to change it. For the first time during the rehearsal process I was able to humanize this part of self, to mourn what it represented and to accept it as it was. Reflecting on this rehearsal as a drama therapist I would argue that it became clear to me that the process of developing and rehearsing was a crucial part of the methodology that could enhance self-revelation that heals the psychological wounds.

Overall, the process of creation and taking action gave me a sense of agency and control. I was in charge of my own narrative – constructing and changing it as I wanted to. I felt like I was taking control of my life, my emotional well-being and the dominant narratives that had shaped my sense of self. Throughout my journal I noted that I felt the process helped me feel "relief" or a sense of being able to "breathe". As a client the feeling of agency had a powerful healing effect because so much of the development of my identity, and the fears lingering in the collective unconscious of the Afrikaner, had been characterized by feelings of losing control, or not being in control. Being able to step in and out of role and to step into the shoes of both the client and the therapist-director helped me feel in control of the process of creation but also in control of my intra-psychic process. I could adjust and change and engage with the material in different ways and I could decide when to stop or when to continue moving inwards. Being able to control every aspect of the performance from scripting to deciding on aesthetics and music, lighting, who to invite and costume details, all contributed to the feelings of agency the process afforded me.

Finally, as a training drama therapist and practitioner-researcher I believe that engaging in the process of creation and rehearsing is vital to the methodology in mitigating the effects of trauma, as the continued and repeated exposure to the trauma acts to desensitize and reduce traumatic symptoms (Johnson, 2009).

4.3.2. Performing

I am in agreement with Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) that the moment of performance holds the most healing power. In my experience the moments of performance were most significant in that it lead to a profound new and deepened level of self-understanding and self-acceptance. In my reflective journal post-performance I recounted the following moment on stage:

> *The most profound part of the performance tonight was the moment I started crying. Not because I started crying, but because of where in the performance I started crying. During rehearsal I had often found enacting certain parts of the performance more difficult than others and would have strong emotional responses. I came to expect that those parts would be difficult. But when I was on stage during that final scene in the role of the daughter that truly represented the dominant part of myself that hates and despises my identity as an Afrikaner, I broke down and cried when the character admitted that she was tired and exhausted and that she couldn't bear the weight of self-hate anymore. It was the ultimate self-revelatory moment for me because I had always been proudest of this part of me – the liberal. This is the part I thought was "okay", the part that didn't need healing – but then in that moment I realised that I was crying because all along I thought this was the "healthy" part but that in actual fact this was the part that needed the most healing. This part of me was the part that was causing the re-traumatization as it was unforgiving and relentless and so full of hate. It was the part of me that could not accept any other parts or acknowledge the humanity of my people and their fears. When I broke down during those final moments I had an*

authentic and vulnerable "meeting" with that part of self and it was almost as if that part of self finally accepted the other "bad" parts and could forgive them. Yes, that's exactly what it was. A moment of forgiveness. I forgave myself.

What I am recounting in this extract is a powerful moment of self-revelation that had not occurred to me during the process of creation but during the performance itself. From this extract I would argue it is clear that the performance lead to a deepened level of understanding and healing because I had focussed on different expressions of grief and rage during the process but it never occurred to me that what I would finally have to *do* to heal or transform my negative self-concept of my Afrikaner identity would be to forgive – not other Afrikaners for what they had done – but myself. Because in the act of forgiveness I acknowledge that I cannot change or erase the past, but that I could finally accept it and live with it, and myself. The acceptance of self in that moment on stage was profoundly healing and the realisation that I needed to forgive myself as the final act of "working through" the trauma and "moving through" it indicates to me as a therapist and director the client's ability to develop and find an internal nurturing character – a way within the self to heal the self.

What transpired in the moment of performance was a reconnection and reintegration of self. During the moment of performance there was a stepping into and connection with feelings I had dissociated from. It really felt like I had "found" myself and gained an increased capacity to feel and express emotion. As a training drama therapist and practitioner-researcher, I would argue that the

act of performing was crucial to the methodology, in mitigating the effects of trauma, as it directly addresses dissociation and feelings of loss of self that I and many other clients, who have suffered trauma, struggle with. Choosing to perform in Afrikaans, the language associated with contested Afrikaner identity as discussed in section two, was particularly liberating and being able to give voice to my innermost thoughts and feelings in a language I had disavowed out of fear of its associations, was a liberating and exilarating experience. I was reclaiming Afrikaans as *my* language, *my* mother tongue, a language I have loved in spite of its negative connotations. To me it has always been more than just the language of apartheid, and speaking it in front of an audience, was my way of confronting this uncomfortable reality and working through the fears and anxities it evoked. Ultimately speaking in my mother tongue activated a intrapsychic process of integration and acceptance.

4.3.3. Process and performance: Using drama therapy methods

As stated earlier I relied heavily on drama therapy methods during the process of creating and rehearsing my performance, but also within the actual performance itself. These methods are methods prescribed by Emunah (2015) to assist the performer of the self-revelatory performance in "working through" the material and provide aesthetic distance (Landy, 1983) that is crucial for healing (Emunah, 2015). I will briefly name and explain the therapeutic benefits I experienced in using each of these methods.

- **Embodying parts of self**

When scripting my performance I decided to tell my story from the perspective of different parts of self with each part becoming a character in their own right. Emunah (2015) states that the performer need not embody each part themselves but could call on auxiliary characters when the performer wanted to engage or confront that part of self. That is what I did in my performance. Using this method not only during the performance but also during the process of creation was of great help in providing structure and form to the chaotic and fragmented story I wanted to tell. Johnson (2010) argues that traumatic experiences are almost impossible to tell in a linear way because trauma involves that which is incomplete or missing and chaotic. But being confronted with the chaotic, fragmented pieces of one's own story can be overwhelming and using this method in identifying key moments and important parts of self that needed to be worked with helped provide necessary structure – it helped me shape and create something real and tangible out of the chaotic feelings I was experiencing.

In addition to this I felt a great sense of mastery because I was able to create something that made sense out of the chaos and because I was finally able to identify and name parts of self that needed to be confronted. This process was in itself self-revelatory. Breaking down the self into smaller parts or components gave me clarity – it helped me understand the complexity of self and the situation and ultimately helped me understand and accept the parts that were there and transform or change the parts that needed to for healing to happen. This transformation was greatly assisted by the use of auxiliary actors because their interpretation and interaction in these roles kept those roles dynamic and because they sometimes responded and interacted with me in a way that was

different to what I wanted or expected it gave me great insight into what was needed to help me move through the trauma and heal. I reflected on one such instance in my journal:

> *Chris' character was supposed to be the judgemental one. I specifically created that role and wanted him seated in the audience because I wanted him to be the "voice" of the audience that I expected to judge, to not understand. I essentially wanted to cast him and all of them in that judgemental role. But after tonight's rehearsal we realised how much that role had changed. Chris' interpretation of that role was one of empathetic witness and listener and I realised that maybe that part of self hadn't been the judgemental part all along. It frustrated me. I even got upset with him for not playing the part right. Somehow throughout this journey – that part became witness to the pain and the chaos and was silently supportive and understanding. Not at all how I planned or imagined it would be."*

My experience of this method is supported by Emunah (2015): "Generally the performer ultimately reaches for understanding, acceptance, validation, re-configuration, transformation, or mastery of the various parts of his/her psyche" (p. 75).

- **Dramatic ritual**

Emunah (2015) notes that a healing ritual can be almost anything that represents healing to the performer. It is often associated with altars, photographs, items, or anything that is symbolic to the performer. I incorporated items of worth that I had inherited and that have been passed on from

generation to generation in our family in my performance. I incorporated Afrikaans music that I had grown up with and that represented rituals of healing, and I incorporated a traditional washing ritual, that to me was symbolic of my culture, my heritage and the healing that is associated with returning "home" to the place and the culture and the rituals that I had run away from in shame. This is in accordance with the integration of ritual in drama therapy practice as outlined by Jones (2007) . He states that material from rituals that have featured in the client's life that are experienced as problematic can be brought into the drama therapy space for the client to work with. Bringing these symbolic representations and dramatic representations of rituals associated with my cultural identity into the performance was an important part of honouring and accepting who I am and where I came from. In many ways the ritualization of culture created a safe base and a sense of containment from which I could explore and work through my material, which made it therapeutic because establishing a safe base and containment is one of the trauma principles outlined by Herman (1997).

- **Story and metaphor**

Emunah (2015) does not list the use of story or metaphor as one of the methods for "working through" in the self-revelatory performance but I experienced the use of story and metaphor as an extremely helpful way of creating the aesthetic distance I needed to create. In drama therapy drama therapists typically use story filled with symbol and metaphor to help clients engage with highly problematic material. Jones (2007) explains that it is a way for the client to encounter the unconscious material, to navigate inner conflict and give

expression to it in way that is psychologically safe. This because as Dekker (1996) reminds us – symbolic imagery can act as a container or a holding vessel for the psychic content that is accessible to the client and that which is still deeply unconscious by acting like a bridge. I experienced that using story, symbol and metaphor in telling my story offered the necessary containment and distance that I needed to safely engage with it in ways that weren't overwhelming or retraumatizing.

- **Integrating an internal nurturing character**

According to Emunah (2015) healing in self-revelatory performances are often associated with self-nurturance in which the performer responds to or cares for a hurt or neglected part of himself. I did not create an internal nurturing character from the outset because I did not know at that time that it would emerge as something I needed or would need to "work through" the material. And indeed, as I have discussed earlier, there were two moments or parts of the performance that I believe resulted in the spontaneous emergance of an internal nurturing figure. The first instance was connected to my experience of inner witnessing or the creation of the inner spectator (discussed in the next subsection) during the performance and the second instance was the realisation that an act of forgiveness was needed to finally "move through" the material.

The clear emergence of an act of forgiveness as a necessary part of healing or transforming my negative self-esteem of my cultural identity was perhaps not a character in the traditional sense that was embodied by anyone on stage, but in my mind "forgiveness" was the representation of internal nurturing

that was needed to heal. In another sense I also believe the "judgemental part of self" that was played by an auxilliary actor later developed into an internal nurturing character as I briefly explained earlier. I wanted the all-seeing witnessing and questioning part of self to be jdugemental, but somehow that never materialised and instead that character became the empathetic witness (ironically seated in the audience) that the audience never did. I elaborate more on the audience during the next subsection. However, it became clear that what I lacked in relational support from my audience seemed to spontaneously emerge as internal support when I needed it, highlighting the healthy and strong parts of self that are present within (Emunah, 1994). Acknowledging these healthy parts of self can be a crucial part of healing for clients, like myself, who struggle with low self-esteem or or a negative self-concept (Emunah).

4.3.4. Process, Performance and Post-performance: Transformation

At the beginning of this research journey I made an assumption that the transformation of my negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity would only be transformed after the performance had occurred – in the aftermath of the process and performance. Indeed, the process of transformation culminated and came into fruition after the process and the performance had been completed, however, it did not start only after the performance. What I have found is that the continued process of transformation throughout the process and the performance was vital in mitigating the effects of trauma and transforming a negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity – making it a vital ingredient to the methodology. In fact, I will argue that without transformation the methodology will fail to affect psychological change. But before I elaborate on this argument

and how transformation manifested during the process, performance and post-performance, it is important to first clarify and define "transformation" within drama therapy.

> An individual should not be seen as a character in a play, but an improvisation … an active constructing of experience that is taking place all the time, a becoming, not a being. (Johnson, cited by Jones, 2007, p. 120)

Embedded within the very fibres of drama therapy are nine core therapeutic processes that facilitate the process of "becoming" that David Read Johnson refers to in the quote above (Jones 2007). One of these core processes is "transformation" and it is defined by Jones as: "the changes in state which the client experiences through the enactments in drama therapy. These changes in state are therapeutic" (p. 120). Central to this definition is the experience of the client and I would argue therefore "transformation" only exists when it is felt or experienced by the client. Jones (2007) explains that transformation occurs when lived experiences and ways of being are brought into contact with dramatic ways of perceiving and dealing with experiences, for within this process of connection and integration lies the transformation of the lived experience. Transformation is therefore the ability to have what is "real" be transformed by a different dramatic reality.

The process of being involved in making drama, the potential creative satisfaction of enactment, can be transformative. In part this is due to a transformation of identity – the artist in the client is foregrounded within drama

therapy. The creation of dramatic products, the involvement in dramatic process, can bring together a combination of thinking, feeling and creativity. This combination has a transformative potential as the different aspects of a client's way of apprehending and responding to themselves and the world – thought, emotions, creativity – are brought together (Jones 2007, p. 125). Johnson (cited by Jones, p. 120) states that the therapist can assist the client in attaining or reaching the felt experience of transformation by helping the client move through the following transformative stages in drama therapy.

The stages are:

- Expressing the material
- Confronting and remembering unhelpful or unresolved issues

  Working with them.

And Johnson offers the following interpretation of these stages:

- Owning the experience(s)
- Actively engaging with them in dramatic form
- Resolving and integrating the material.

When measuring these stages against the method of self-revelatory performance and Emunah's (2015) assertion that a self-revelatory performance can result in transformation it becomes clear how all of these stages are – however not clearly defined or linear - built into the method. I, at various stages during the process of creation and during the performance expressed the material that I had identified as problematic, confronted it through the dramatic

form of drama and managed to "work through" the material as Emunah (2015) would say. In fact, I would argue that Jones' definition of transformation as changes in state of feeling through enactment should continually occur during the process of self-revelatory perfromance in order for a client to successfully work through and move through the material. Because embedded in Emunah's (2015) own definition of "working through" and "moving through" are shifts or changes in feeling. This is no different from what Jones deems "transformation" and because the very act of working through and moving through are central to the methodology, one could argue that transformation is essentially necessary for the method of self-revelatory performance to succeed as a method of healing.

Did I actively engage with the material drawn from my own lived experience through the dramatic medium that is drama? Yes. Was I able to experience as the client, a change and offered a different perspective to the negative one I had towards my cultural identity because of the experiences I had in the dramatic reality afforded by drama and performance? Yes. Was I able to respond differently, not only to the world, but to myself, because of the self-revelatory performance? Yes. Within the safety of the dramatic medium I found new ways of being, thinking and relating to myself. This, according to Jones (2007) is transformation.

Through the experience I gained:

- A deepened understanding of self;
- Experienced increased self-acceptance and compassion;
- Experienced an increased sense of mastery or control;
- Found a new perspective on my trauma;

- And engaged with my feelings of trauma in a healthy way.

Emunah and her colleagues (2014) describe similar experiences noted by students in their research on self-revelatory performance. And all of these elements assisted in the transformation of my negative self-concept of Afrikaner identity because it helped me relate in a different way to my Afrikaner identity. I no longer despise it, avoid it, feel haunted or shackled by it. Instead, I have accepted its existence and the connotations that it holds. I know that I cannot change it but I no longer feel trapped by it. As Volkas (2014) reminds us, the most powerful way to ultimately overcome trauma is to accept that it won't disappear and that you will always have a relationship with it:

> Through the acceptance that the trauma will never disappear and that one has a permanent relationship with it, the inheritor can be liberated from a tortured denial or rejection of its existence. Embracing the legacy allows the constrained and unexpressed emotional energy to begin to untangle. (p. 47)

I have psychologically examined the self and I take ownership for the parts of self that contributed to my traumatic experiences and acknowledge and accept the forces outside of self that contributed to the development of my negative self-concept. According to Emunah (2015) successfully working through the material is when there is a conscious effort to contend with the material, to dive into it and untangle the issues to better understand their origins and implications. The method of self-revelatory performance was successful in

assisting me as a client-performer in “working through” the personal material I chose to work with.

Furthermore, Emunah (2015, p. 74) talks about “moving through” the material once one has “worked through” it as the final step of transformation, and defines this “moving through” as “letting go of, taking hold of, coming to terms with, confronting, embracing, shifting, admitting, committing, forgiving, inviting, renewing, revolting, revisiting or recreating”. I was able to engage in the act of confronting, shifting and ultimately forgiving myself and my cultural group through the methodology. I can therefore state that the method of self-revelatory performance was successful in helping me mitigate the effects of trauma and transform the negative self-concept I had of my cultural identity as an Afrikaner. However, it must be stated that the process of “moving through” did not happen immediately and my negative self-concept was not transformed instantaneously after the performance. It is not clear to say exactly when the process of transformation was completed or if it can ever be completed, but in my experience post-performance reflection was essential in helping me, as the client, consciously grapple and accept what changes had occurred. As a practitioner-researcher I have come to believe that the process post-performance is just as important as the process before the performance. I will elaborate more on this in the next subsection where I discuss the relational factors crucial to the methodology if one is dealing with trauma.

> Self-revelatory performances are never static depictions of real life occurances; they necessarily involve psychological grappling with complex

material; a therapeutic working through of the issues; and dynamic movement, progression, or transformation. (Emunah, Raucher & Ramirez-Hernandez, 2014, p. 96)

4.4. PROCESS, PERFORMANCE AND BEYOND: INTERPERSONAL EFFECTS

Emunah, Raucher and Ramirez-Hernandez (2014) write that the method of self-revelatory performance has, embedded within it, relational healing factors that offer communal and dyadic support, opportunities for creativity and the involvement of community as witnesses to people's stories that help expand their sense of identity and belonging. However, what I experienced as a client-performer was that this was true to some extent but not completely. In my experience within our South African context, the two relational factors I identified within the methodology that support healing – communal support and collective witnessing – were not completely successful in mitigating the collective trauma I was dealing with. What I found was that there existed a complex relationship between these relational factors embedded in the methodology and the socio-cultural context within which I tested the methodology.

In this subsection I will attempt to briefly discuss this complex relationship between these relational factors of healing and my experience as the client-performer performing collective trauma in a South African context. I will illustrate how both relational factors as they currently function within the methodology were more or less effective in mitigating the shared collective trauma amongst myself and my audience but not completely. My experience of

"communal support" and "collective witnessing" as they currently function within the methodology, highlighted an important element that was missing from the post-performance experience. I call this element – "feedback and affirmation". And although Emunah (1994) briefly touches on post-performance reflection, I argue that the process post-performance and any forms of reflection with the audience, have not been clearly defined or received adequate attention as an important part of the methodology. I will illustrate that, within our South African context, it is necessary to clearly outline the therapeutic process post-performance and integrate "feedback and affirmation" into the methodology. In closing I will offer a possible post-performance structure for South African researchers and drama therapists as we continue to test the methodology with South African clients.

4.4.1 Communal Support

Scholars have established many trauma treatment principles. Herman (1997) found that it is important to have relational and societal support when mitigating the impact of trauma. In my experience some of the elements in the methodology, the use of auxiliary actors during the process and performance, offered relational support and formed a safe and contained base from which I could explore my material.

According to Adam Blatner (2007) the auxiliary is a psychodramatic technique where the primary client whose material is being worked with, chooses another client to play a role of a prominent person in the primary client's life. Auxiliaries are typically used in self-revelatory performances. The

idea is to have fellow classmates or actors support the performer through the process of rehearsals and during the performance by taking on roles of prominent people or parts of self to allow the performer to interact with roles/characters/parts of self. In my performance I worked with two auxiliary actors who, during rehearsals and the performance, stepped into roles that represented parts of me, that I needed to engage with. I noted in my journal that it felt like my auxiliary actors – Chris and Nicolette – were both as invested in the process as I was and that we shared an experience together. I felt they were part of the creation process and offered support, motivation, feedback and affirmation throughout the process. The technique of the auxiliary therefore facilitated the creation of a group that worked in process together (much like any other group would in drama therapy) and facilitated feelings of communal support.

In addition to this, the support I received from my department, my supervisor and my peers (training drama therapists) was crucial in creating a safe base and communal support. Being able to invite my supervisor into the space as a director helped create a similar relationship to that which exists between client and therapist and I was able to draw strength and courage from this relationship. I cannot emphasise how important these supportive relationships were during the process. There is a great deal of social stigma attached to Afrikaner identity and being able to find societal or communal support for this project amidst the stigma helped create a contained environment from where I could explore. The communal support offered by

auxiliary actors and drama therapy community members was the first step in mitigating the impact of trauma (Herman, 1997).

In their research, Emunah and her colleaugues (2014) found that an overwhelming percentage of their students felt the most communal support came from being actively witnessed by the audience. However, I did not have this same experience. As stated above, the support I received from the academic community and the relationship that developed through the use of auxiliary actors were most successful in creating a sense of communal support for me as researcher, training therapist and client-performer. Witnessing is commonly assumed to contribute to the healing process and can definitely contribute to feelings of communal support under certain circumstances. My research, however, illuminated the complexities of witnessing in communities that have experienced collective trauma and highlighted how in my particular context, given the audience I had invited, and the content I was grappling with, witnessing, on its own, might not have been enough to create feelings of support for the client-performer, and another element post-performance was needed to enhance and consolidate feelings of communal support. I discuss my experience and the complexities of witnessing in the following sub-section.

4.4.2. Collective Witnessing

From the early beginnings of this research process, finding additional ways of containing and creating psychological safety, was of the utmost importance. I knew, that if I was going to undertake this process and perform my trauma, I would need to feel contained. All of my choices about setting, time and audience

were influenced by this need to create psychological safety – primarily through dramatherapeutic distance. I therefore chose to perform in a traditional theatre space – a space I felt offered enough distance from my everyday existence. It added to the theatricality of the performance and acted as a constant reminder that it was and would still be, a performance. I wanted the performance to feel like a traditional play and I do believe that using the theatre helped me step into the role of the performer and I was able to perform my material in a psychologically safe and contained way.

Furthermore, I took great care and time to plan whom would be invited into the space. From the outset I knew I wanted to invite only close friends and family who would be able to relate and who would be able to witness with empathy and not judge or critique the performance or the content. I chose to invite friends who were all white, Afrikaans-speaking South Africans of my generation. I have always had a complicated relationship with family and the only family member I invited to my performance was my brother who flew from Cape Town to witness the performance. I thought that by inviting only like-minded friends the levels of empathetic witnessing would be enhanced.

The act of witnessing has been well researched in drama therapy. In fact, the act of being witnessed is listed as one of the nine core therapeutic processes in drama therapy by Jones (2007). He lists various therapeutic benefits to being witnessed. They are:

- Creating safety;

- Enhancing boundaries of in and out of role;
- Increases focus or concentration; and
- Heightens the theatricality of the piece (p. 102).

In drama therapy the act of witnessing does not necessarily involve an audience. In most process driven approaches the client is witnessed by other group members, the therapist, and they also becomes witness to themselves (Jones, 2007). As the method of self-revelatory performance includes both process and performance I was exposed to all the different forms of witnessing during the research process. During the process of rehearsals I was witnessed by my auxiliary actors and by my supervisor who stepped in to witness and to guide and direct as the drama therapist would do in therapy. As the client-performer I felt a sense of safety during rehearsals and I felt vaildated, heard and seen. Indeed, Jones is correct in saying that being witnessed not only enhances safety but also helped set boundaries of stepping into and out of role. During the process I experienced a sense of support and comfort, camaraderie, and great sense of relief in sharing the burden of my story with an audience that I knew understood it and who were able to hold it and respect it and respond *empathetically* to it. I also found that rehearsing in front of others from the start of the process during rehearsals, helped prepare me for the inevitable act of being witnessed by a broader audience and lessened the anxiety associated with being witnessed by others.

However, this overwhelming positive experience was in stark contrast to my experience of having the invited audience witness me during the

performance itself. This was a peculiar experience because from the outset, as stated above, I took great care in planning and defining the role of the audience. To me the audience was invited not only to witness but to become a part of the performance. I asked everyone to take off their shoes before entering the theatre and asked them to walk through compost to their seats. This was my way of inviting them in and asking them to be a part of the healing process. The compost they had to walk through was my way of welcoming them into the space, and into my inner world. Very literally they were walking into my internal landscape and were asked to stay there for the duration of the performance. But it was also part of the dramatic rituals that I wanted the audience to be a part of. During the last scene I had thrown myself onto the heap of compost and invited the audience members to help cover me in compost. After this, as the performance ended inside the theatre, I wanted them to wash their hands and feet and witness me also cleansing myself with water. This was the conclusion of my dramatic healing ritual. I needed to be covered in the dirt and immerse myself in it before washing it off and cleansing myself as a way of ending the process. For my audience, I hoped the washing ritual would indicate the end of their role or responsibility of being in, and partaking in my journey and that literally and figuratively they could wash the process off.

Upon reflection in the months since the performance as I was analysing my experience, I have tried to understand the resistance I experienced from my audience both during the performance and afterwards. There was an unwillingness to partake in the ritual I discuss above and after the performance had ended there was never any real conversations about what had transpired. To

this day, hardly any of the audience members have discussed the performance with me. Why did I experience high levels of resistance from my audience during the performance and a diminished sense of safety to that I experienced during the process of creation? Why did the act of being witnessed, that Emunah and her colleagues (2014) emphasise as being crucial to the healing process, not provide the necessary feelings of containment, safety and release that I expected it to?

Because audience participation or responses fell outside the scope of this research I cannot make any assumptions on the part of the audience. I can only reflect and speculate from the perspective of the client-performer and the training drama therapist. What I believed might have impacted my experience of the act of collective witnessing, was influenced by both the dramatic ritual and the collective trauma my performance addressed. Further research would be required to determine exactly what transpired for the audience that night. I can only speculate and hypothesize that the collective dimension of the trauma extended beyond the stage and into the audience and their societal context, which is no different from mine, and that perhaps because they had not gone through a process preparing for what they were essentially participating in, they were not fully prepared and were not distanced enough from the content. Emunah and her colleagues (2014) acknowledge that trauma can often have a collective dimension extending into broader societal contexts and that it can then be more challenging for both performer and audience. Emunah (2015) writes that when dealing with collective trauma it is possible that the audience

may “on a subtle level feel burdened by the performer’s issues and burdens” (p. 78).

Perhaps the dramatic ritual I had created and wanted them to participate in, to assist in *my* healing process, did not offer enough psychological distance for the audience. Perhaps, because I was dealing with collective trauma, they shouldn’t have been invited to participate. The act of asking the audience to participate essentially broke the fourth wall. And perhaps when we are dealing with performances of collective trauma that affect not only the performer but also the audience, we need the fourth wall to provide psychological distance for both performer and audience.

Therefore, the safety Jones (2007) associates with being witnessed only exists under certain circumstances. And within our South African context we, as drama therapists and researchers, have a responsibility to further investigate what is needed during therapeutic performance to create safety through witnessing. As the client-performer the feelings of containment and safety I experienced during the performance came largely from the form of drama and embodiment itself, and not from the act of witnessing. I was left with a deep sense of loneliness and lack of support brought on by my invited audience’s lack of engagement, lack of acknowledgement and lack of feedback and affirmation. To avoid future clients’ feeling the same post-performance, I propose that in our context a post-performance process of feedback and affirmation be incorporated into the methodology. I elaborate on this more in the next sub-section.

Ultimately, however, a self-revelatory performance is intended to heal the client-performer not the audience. But this begs the question as Cohen-Cruz (cited by Sutherland, 2014, p. 210) puts it: "What does hearing a personal story ask of the witness?" There is room in future to research and investigate ways in which the audience can be properly prepared for the performance and their specific role within the methodology of the self-revelatory performance. I believe, specifically in South Africa, the importance of the selection process and audience preparation before the performance cannot be ignored. Within our context the performance of a self-revelatory performance raises questions of ethics and responsibility.

I agree with Alexandra Sutherland when she explains that our political post-apartheid notions of justice and healing are closely linked to story-telling and witnessing testimonies that bring visibility and hold the acknowledgement of trauma. But this can only be successful when there is a connection between teller and witness as Laub (cited by Sutherland, 2014) reminds us: "…for the testimonial process to take place there needs to be a bonding, the intimate and total presence of another – in the position of one who hears. Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude" (p. 211). I would argue that the self-revelatory performance is a form of testimonial theatre that as Farber (2008) writes, places accountability with the audience, and that moves the theatrical encounter into a political space of responsibility and ethics. The aim of this research was not to investigate what the implications of witnessing a self-revelatory performance might be, but if we are to successfully use the method in South Africa we cannot ignore the ethical complexity of telling stories and

sharing testimonies in vulnerable and conflicted communities. As Sutherland reminds us: "…the assumption that hearing and telling painful stories is helpful, can be perilous within the complexities of race and memory in South Africa and our diverse relationship to the horrors of our past" (p. 211).

Future research needs to be conducted to investigate if inviting a more diverse audience might enhance the feelings of communal support for the client-performer, if we need to to create rituals that offer psychological distance for the audience, and other ways in which we might be able to expand on and build on the existing method to better equip audience members for collective trauma performed, and thus to protect the client-performer from feelings of isolation and rejection.

Yet, as stated at the beginning, my experience of being witnessed was complex and being witnessed by an audience is not the only form of witnessing. Witnessing comprises of two active states as Heymann-Krenge (2006) reminds us and although there was a level of safety and support that I did not feel or experience from being witnessed by an audience, I did feel a great sense of strength and courage to act from within. Here is an extract from my journal, post-performance. I have translated it for the purposes of this research paper.

> *It felt like they [the audience] were trying to drain every last bit of courage and energy and strength from my body and pull it down a big black hole with them. It felt like they were screaming in their heads: "Shut up! Shut up! Just shut up!". I was very aware of their eyes on my body, watching my every*

move, hating everything I was saying, doing, being. It felt like they were embarrassed by me. And angry with me. I could almost hear them saying: "Why did you have to go and do this? We are all fine. We were all doing fine." Everytime I became aware of this interaction between myself and the audience I could feel my concentration waning and my confidence slipping. I felt my chest close and it felt like I could get a panic attack at any moment. But there was this strange force inside of me. It's difficult to explain. Maybe energy is a better word. There was this magical energy that kept me going. It felt like I was simultaneously on stage and off stage. I imagined myself floating somewhere above the stage and just looking down at me, myself, performing. It felt like I had dissociated in a way but I was still very present in my body but I was also very aware of myself outside of my body just watching my body move on stage. It was surreal and almost spiritual. I felt this energy inside of me, connected to that part of self outside of me. This energy was driving me forward, forcing me to act, to play, to speak my truth no matter the consequences. I felt myself being pulled between the energy coming from the audience trying to stifle my voice and this energy coming from inside of me and above me that was giving me a voice – pushing me forward, giving me courage to be. As the performance progressed I became more and more aware of this energy in me and less and less concerned with the audience. And I started feeling my chest open up and I could breathe.

I believe what I am describing in this extract is what Heymann-Krenge (2006, p. 17) calls the "present inner spectator". According to Heymann-Krenge the inner spectator describes the witnessing by the client-performer herself that occurs

during the dramatic enactment and is in line with Jones' (2007) idea of the client becoming both observer and participant at the same time in drama therapy. The inner spectator thus allowed me to be actively and empathetically witnessed by myself and this was what ultimately helped me "work through" the material I needed to work through during the performance. If I had given in to the urge to stop, to stay silent, the performance would have failed and there would have been no confrontation, no transformation. The inner witness or observer or spectator that I had developed through years of training and process work in drama therapy allowed me to continue and the meeting with, and confrontation with the inner witness and the realization of its power to assist in healing was a self-revelation on its own.

> And even if the audience is empathic, the performer nonetheless leaves the theatre alone. Although we recognize the significant benefits of audience support and other relational factors in mitigating trauma, to some extent the self-rev performer needs to glean strength from the process of working on the piece and from the achievement of the final product (Emunah, Raucher & Ramirez-Hernandez. (2014, p. 99)

4.4.3 Recommended addition to the method of self-revelatory performance: Receiving feedback and affirmation from audience members post-performance

I have reflected on how both the act of being witnessed, and communal support are relational factors that are built into the method of self-revelatory that can offer support and mitigate the effects of trauma for clients. However, as my

experience clearly illustrates, the relationship between these factors and collective trauma might prove to be more complex. That is not to say that all client-performers will have the same experience I did, as I know the findings of this research are not generalisable.

However, in an attempt to test whether the method was succesful in mitigating *my* experience of collective trauma and could help me work through and move through my trauma, I found that there was something missing – something that I needed as a client-performer, that would have enhanced the healing process for me. And since the aim of undertaking this autobiographical research as a training drama therapist was to help me experience the method as a client would within our South African context, I offer the following recommendation I have identified through my research, that the post-performance process offered by Emunah (1994; 2015) is ill-defined. In none of the core texts written about the methodology of self-revelatory does Emunah clearly outline what process to follow post-performance. Because the focus of my research was on testing the efficacy of the method on myself as the client-performer, I did not realise the relational role the audience would play in helping me mitigate the effects of trauma, and hence did not structure a process post-performance where I could engage with the audience.

Instead, I was only given the space, post-performance, to reflect with my supervisor and the external examiner who witnessed the performance. I did not give my audience the space to actively reflect and engage with me in a structured way. I believed that they would have found ways outside of the performance

space to engage with me, but as discussed earlier, this did not happen, and it created feelings of isolation, doubt and dejection within me. I felt alone and unsupported by my audience post-performance. Of course, Emunah (2015) makes the argument that it is not the responsibility of the audience to care for the performing client but rather to care *with* them. However, the lived experience and strong relational component inherent to collective trauma illuminated to me how powerful the support and affirmation can be to the healing process of the client.

The strong feelings I experienced, I believe might be experienced by future clients engaging in this process, and as a training drama therapist I would recommend adding a reflective space for both audience and client-performer post-performance. To me it felt necessary that the audience acknowledge the client-performer and engage with them about the performance. Feeling like one is truly empathetically witnessed and accepted by your in-group is an important part of establishing a safe base and communal support that is necessary when mitigating the effects of trauma.

Not only do I believe it would have benefitted my therapeutic process had I received feedback and affirmation from my audience, but, I would argue that because we were dealing with a collective or shared trauma it would have possibly benefitted the audience too. Because as Volkas (2014) reminds us, it can take a few generations for a culture to metabolize and begin to integrate a painful collective experience, I believe that creating a structured and facilitated space for reflection post-performance would have perhaps given them the

opportunity to start metabolizing and integrating their own painful experiences or memories.

Snow (2009) warns us that undertaking performative work in drama therapy with groups who have been highly stigmatized and marginalized by society can be very risky, as it will take clients straight to the wounded self-concept. I believe that my invited audience, without being consciously aware of it, mirrored the very stigmatization and marginalization I have experienced. There is no guarantee that future clients won't have similar experiences with their audiences during the performance but I do believe that creating a reflective space post-performance where audience members can share their responses might mimic the group process in drama therapy and create some cohesion and communal support for the performer – it might be the final step or push they need to "move through" the material. In my experience, not having had that space, acted as a hindrance that prolonged my process of finally moving through the material.

In my future practice as a drama therapist utilising the method of self-revelatory performance I will always add a post-performance process of feedback and affirmation when dealing with groups or clients and audiences who have suffered trauma or collective trauma. This will not be a space offered for cognitive engagement or debate but rather allow the audience to feedback their feeling responses to the client-performer. I propose that this reflective space be facilitated by the drama therapist. A decision on whether it would be best to have this post-performance process directly after the performance or after some time

has passed, would need to be made by the drama therapist and the client-performer(s) and would be dependent on the specific situation. Further research should also be conducted to test the efficacy of added post-performance processes that bring the audience and the client-performer together to reflect on their shared experience of the self-revelatory performance.

Adapting the method of self-revelatory performance in our South African context, given our complex history and deep wounds of collective trauma, will be a process of trial and error undertaken by committed researchers and drama therapists who are committed to healing the wounds of history. This research is only the first step of the journey. I do not claim that my recommendation of added reflection post-performance will make the process any less difficult or a perfectly suitable "cure" for collective trauma. This recommendation will have to be tested and scrutinised. It is my hope that many other drama therapists who practise within our context will join me on this research journey and continue to test and adapt the method of self-revelatory performance with South African client groups who, like me, so desperately need ways of working through and moving through the trauma.

SECTION 5

THE CURTAIN NEVER FALLS

At the start of this research paper I explain how the First Noble Truth of Buddhism encapsulates the Buddha's philosophy that life is filled with suffering and that indeed the word *dukkha* (suffering) encapsulates the entire human predicament (Epstein, 2013, p. 196). According to the Buddha trauma is a basic fact of life. Or as Epstein puts it, trauma is:

> The bedrock of our biology - Churning, chaotic, and unpredictable, our lives are stretched across a tenuous canvas. Much of our energy goes into resisting this fragility, yet it is there nonetheless. (p. 196)

According to Epstein (2013, p. 197) the Buddha did not think trauma and the suffering associated with it needed to overwhelm his followers. Instead, he taught that trauma could be tolerable and even illuminating if it found a relational home to hold it. My life, and the lives of most people on this planet have not been much different to the life of the Buddha who also suffered early developmental or relational traumas. According to Epstein (p. 197) these relational traumas originate in painful experiences that occurred before we were able – cognitively – to know what was happening. As we grow up, Epstein argues, we are continually re-traumatized by those experiences "as we find ourselves enacting a pain we do not understand". I would argue that the collective trauma I experienced growing up in this country post-apartheid is no different from a relational trauma. A trauma that lay hidden in my memory and that created feelings of self-hate and

discontent. And like the Buddha, the only choice I had was to choose how I was going to relate to my trauma. I had to find a relational home for my suffering and I found it in drama.

I believe the method of self-revelatory performance gave me a window into myself and into my history and my pain. I was able to take ownership and possession over that window filled with its traumatic feelings and I could share that window with others who looked through the window with me. The method afforded me a frame through which I could *acknowledge* my feelings and *examine* my feelings -but most importantly because it was a performative frame - I could also move directly into those feelings, breathe life into them, *express* them, change them, ultimately *move through* them. The method of self-revelatory performance thus gave me a literal opportunity to practice the philosophy (Epstein, 2013) that the only way of mitigating the effects of trauma is to move *through* the trauma. Drama therapy and specifically the method of self-revelatory performance became a relational home where I could go, to externalise, give form, understand and work through the emotional pain and the feelings of unbearable shame, guilt and self-loathing associated with the collective trauma of being an Afrikaner in a post-apartheid South Africa. I was able to take all of the memories and feelings associated with my trauma *of being* and put it outside of the self. And through the process and ultimately the performance, I was able to work through it.

Ultimately as Emunah (2015) states, the method offers ways of working through and moving through the trauma as it creates opportunities for moments of self-revelation. Perhaps the biggest self-revelation I experienced was that in

the act of forgiving myself for feeling angry, sad, dejected, lonely, disgusted, guilty and all the other feelings associated with my experience of being a white Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaner, I could find another relational home for my trauma – myself. I always thought that "moving through" meant that I would move further away from the trauma, that it would disappear and that I would be "cleansed" or forever "healed". However, what I came to realise was that when I forgave myself, and *all* of myself, I was finally able to find a relational home to process trauma within myself. And so the process of *moving through* became a process of *moving in*. The method of self-revelatory performance offered me the temporary relational home I needed to hold the trauma until, through the process of drama therapy, I came to realise that I no longer needed the drama to hold it, but that I could, through a process of forgiveness find a way of living with my experiences, accepting it for what it is and acknowledging that it will never disappear. I changed the way I related to my *dukkha* and this in itself was a transformation.

Anti-apartheid activist and legendary Afrikaans poet, Breyten Breytenbach, wrote a poem titled "blomme vir boeddha" (flowers for Buddha). The title of this study is inspired by this poem:

(ek) asem in (ek) asem uit (ek) asem 'n alles in
en uit
en ruik die trossies mimosamane geel soos somer
en die stil stilte voor jou voorhoof soos somer in die middaguur
(ek) asem 'n somer 'n stilte en die reuk van trossies mimosamane

’n alles

in

en

uit en

in (Breytenbach cited by Roodt, 1977, p. 110)

The poem is an ode to the Buddhist philosophy. In the poem the “I” (the first person speaker) is meditating. The act of meditation is illustrated through the constant breathing. In Zen, how we breathe and utilise our breath during meditation is important. You need to be taking consistent, deep breaths, inhaling quickly, and exhaling slowly. In the poem the importance of breathing is equated with the importance of the “I” or the self. Breytenbach as the “I” eventually disappears completely into the poem as he illustrates how in Zen Buddhism the following happens:

> When we are no longer identified with the idea of ourselves, the entire relationship between subject and object, knower and known, undergoes a sudden and revolutionary change. It becomes a real relationship, a mutuality in which the subject creates the object just as much as the object creates the subject. The knower no longer feels himself to be independent of the known; the experiencer no longer feels himself to stand apart from the experience (Watts cited by Roodt, 1977, p. 120).

What this poem represents to me is the psychological act of integration. And I liken the act of breathing to the necessity of psychological integration. Without breathing, we cannot live. And through this process of creating a self-revelatory

performance and performing it, I have found that transformation was psychological integration. I am finally able to *live* with my *dukkha.*

In closing: The ability to integrate the despised parts of self that were wounded by the collective trauma I experienced, does not mean that I no longer struggle with aspects of self-doubt or that I will never again experience any struggles with my negative self-concept or with Afrikaner identity. I do not believe any form of therapy, including the method of self-revelatory performance, to be a magic wand. In life suffering never ends. It is our constant companion. But it is my hope that in future I will constantly be able to return to the relational home of drama to rework, rehearse, process and perform my suffering in evolving and changing ways. In the theatre of life, the curtain never falls.

> There need be no end to grief. While it is never static – it is not a single (or even five-stage) thing – there is no reason to believe it will disappear for good and no need to judge oneself if it does not. Grief turns over and over. It is vibrant, surprising and alive, just as we are. (Epstein 2013, p. 206)

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APPENDIX A: THE PERFORMED TEXT "KOMPOS"

Nota: Die naam Rust den Nag asook die persone is nié denkbeeldig nie, en is gebasseer op die lewe en ervaring van die outeur as Afrikaner. Hiermee gee ek ook erkenning aan bekende skrywers en dramaturge wie se werk gedien het as inspirasie en/of voorkom in die teks omdat dit 'n beduidende invloed gehad het om my bewussyn en verstaan van Afrikaneridentiteit. Hulle is Breyten Breytenbach, Pieter Fourie, Reza de Wet, en N.P. Van Wyk Louw.

Rolverdeling

Libtart/Kafferboetie: ’n Vrou in haar vroeë 20’s wat teregstaan op die moord van haar moeder. Sy verskyn ook in tonele as ’n jong tiener op die verhoog. Rol vertolk deur Leané Meiring.

Vader Gabriël: Libtart se depressiewe pa wat homself van die gesin afgesonder het, en nou in die solder woon. Rol vertolk deur Nicolette Spykermann.

Moeder Mara: Sy is die spook van die vrou wat vermoor is. Die moeder van Libtart wat nie tot rus wil kom nie. Sy spook by Libtart. Rol vertolk deur Leané Meiring.

Stem: Die regter. Die kollektiewe bewussynstroom van die gehoor. Die karakter verskyn nooit op die verhoog nie, en is in donker gehul waar hy tussen die gehoor sit. Rol vertolk deur Chris van der Walt.

Aktrise: Sy vertolk hoofsaaklik die rol van Libtart en Verteller, maar tree met tye toe tot die rol van Vader, Moeder, en Kompos. Sy verteenwoordig die selfpronkende persona maar ook die verskillende self-skerwe van identiteit en emosie wat opgesluit lê in elke karakter wat sy vertolk. Sy is ook die verteller van werklike gebeure. Rol vertolk deur Leane Meiring.

Kerkmense: Die koor. Die normevormende politieke, kulturele, sosiale en religieuse kommentators. Stemme deur Pieter Steyn, Chris van der Walt, Rochelle Northnagel.

Verhoogaanwysings

Daar hang ’n hok in die lug, agter aan die linkerkant van die verhoog, en ‘n slopemmer. Die hok verteenwoordig die solder waarbinne die vader Gabriël homself toegesluit het. Hy gebruik die slopemmer elke nou en dan, en stuur dit dan af vir Libtart om leeg te maak. Daar staan groot swart kratte op die verhoog. Die vloer van die verhoog is in helderkleurige blokke geverf wat herinner aan ’n sirkus. En daar is ’n komposhoop agter in die middel van die verhoog. Voor op die verhoog lê daar verskeie hopies klere wat op verskillende tye deur die verskillende karakters aangetrek word.

Toneel 1:

Wanneer die produksie begin moet die huisligte afgaan en die gordyn lig. Die verhoog is donker. 'n Kerkklok lui herhaaldelik. Daarna word dit stil. Niks gebeur nie. Die huisligte word weer aangeskakel.

STEM: Dit is ongewoon? Dit kan tog sekerlik nie die begin van die toneelstuk wees nie? *(Die sydeur vand die teater swaai oop en die aktrise kom ingestorm en draf tot op die verhoog.)*

STEM: *(ongeduldig)* Wat gaan nou aan?

AKTRISE: Ek is laat. (Sy stap na een van die hopies klere op die verhoog en trek dit aan. Terwyl sy dit doen verskyn die Vader Gabriël op die verhoog en klim in die hok.)

STEM: Waarom is u laat?

AKTRISE: Ek sal verkies as ons tog in hemelsnaam net kan begin, maar as u tog nou moet weet – ek was nie lus om vanaand op te tree nie.

STEM: Nou wie is jy?

AKTRISE: Ek is 'n aktrise. Nee wag, ek is dié aktrise.

STEM: Vertolk jy nou die rol van 'n aktrise?

AKTRISE: Doen ons almal nie maar nie? Ek vertolk al die rolle in die toneel. Ek is die kafferboetie- die moordenaar, die kombuiskommunis, die comrade, wat aangekla word van die moord op haar moeder Mara wat nou soos 'n kanker by haar spook. Ek is ook die einste spook van onbeskaamde rassisme, die bombefokte kafferhater en

anargis van apartheid. Boonop is ek ook met tye die vader in die solder – die slap fallus wat onttrek het en in selfbevlekkende kak kripeer. Ek is die aktrise. Ek is al dié karakters en al die kontradiksies. Ek is die draer van die Broederbond, die besorgde intelletueel, die Afrikaanse kultuurdraer, die informant, die Voortrekker wat draadtrek oor Burgerlike Samewerkingsburo's, die Afrikaan, die Afrikaner, die Boere-Afrikaner, die basterboy. En dit is waarom u vanaand gekom het. Nie om te sien hoe ek die rol van aktrise vertolk nie, maar om te sien hoe ek al die ander karakters vertolk. Die belangrikste van al dié karakters, en die een wat ek u eerste aan moet voorstel is miskien die een wat hulle noem "die kafferboetie".

STEM: Wie is sy?

AKTRISE: Spierwit. Jong verstote Afrikaner- groot geword in 'n charismatiese calvinistiese ouerhuis op die plaas Rust den Nag onder die ysterhand van Ma Mara, en die afwesige Vader Gabriël wat soos 'n doofstom melaatse buite die stadsmuur bó in die solder gaan woon het na die depressie toe Ma Mara beginne kompos maak en verkoop het om die pot aan't kook te hou. Daai kompos het Mara teen die mure uitgedryf. Sy kon nie 'n swartigheid verduur nie. Siestog. Fok. En die goed het soveel vlieë gelok.

STEM: Ons let dat u in die verlede tyd praat?

AKTRISE: Fok, ek het reeds te veel gesê. Ek moet ophou praat, dan kom vertel daai volksverraaier u self van haar sondes.Maar as U dan moet weet – al die karakters wat

U vanaand gaan ontmoet, is reeds dood. Behalwe die Libtart self. Die sondige een waarvan ek U nou vertel het.

STEM: Van watter sondes praat U?

AKTRISE: Die moord op haar ma. Dié is reeds gepleeg, maar nou moet bloed met bloed vergeld word. ‘n Oog vir ‘n oog, ‘n tand vir ‘n tand of hoe sê hulle? Die libtart van ‘n Afrikaner, dié verstoteling, staan tereg op die moord van haar ma. Foeitog. Maar luister, ek het reeds te veel gewis oor die saak. Miskien sal dit beter wees as u self met haar praat. Sy is immers hier om u vrae oor die moord op haar ma te antwoord.

STEM: Dit sal gaaf wees.

AKTRISE: Nou maar goed. Net een oomblik. (Die aktrise staan op en gaan trek ‘n ander hopie klere aan. Terwyl sy dit doen, gaan die huisligte af. En kerkstemme wat sing kan gehoor word. Hulle sing Psalm 38:

“*Moet my tog nie in u toorn bly straf nie, Here,*

en my langer in u gramskap tugtig nie.

U pyle het my getref,

u hand lê swaar op my.

Deur u toorn is daar nie meer 'n gesonde plek aan my liggaam nie,

deur my sonde is daar nie meer 'n heel plek aan my lyf nie.

Ja, my ongeregtighede het my oorweldig

soos 'n las wat vir my te swaar is.

My wonde stink en sweer,

en dít deur my eie dwaasheid.

Ek is krom en inmekaar getrek,

ek loop die hele dag en treur,

want my lyf brand van die koors

en daar is nie meer 'n gesonde plek aan my liggaam nie."

Dan kan die stem van 'n dominee wat preek gehoor word. Hy seg: In die begin het God die hemel en die aarde geskep. Die aarde was heeltemal onbewoonbaar, dit was donker op die diep waters, maar die Gees van God het oor die waters gesweef. Toe het God gesé: 'Laat daar lig wees!" En daar was lig. God het gesien die lig is goed, en Hy het die lig en die donker van mekaar geskei. God het die lig toe "dag" genoem, en die donker het Hy "nag" genoem. Dit het aand geword en dit het môre geword. Dit was die eerste dag…")

Toneel 2

Daar word op die swart rug van die teater in wit letters geprojekteer "Die Oordeelsdag".

Die aktrise, nou geklee as die karakter Libtart/Kafferboetie sit op een van die kratte.

LIBTART: The yard smelled of rotting plants, rotting scraps from the kitchen table and rotting shit – pig shit, cow shit, and even human shit. It was a filthy place rotting away in the the middle of god knows where. Yet, I found some comfort in the smell of death

and rotting shit. With it came the flies. Tens of thousands of black flies that would sit amongst the shit all day. At first I hated them and their glistening black bodies. They were filthy and I was raised to believe that somehow their filth would rub off on me. That much like a disease I would be contaminated with filth. But later I came to enjoy the sticky sweaty pitter patter of their little black hands and feet on my body, and they became my companions. My mother hated them, and I came to love them because they caused her so much anguish *(laughs devilishly).* And ultimately not a million flies could have been worse than that woman.

STEM: Die vrou is nou jou ma? Die een wat jy koelbloedig vermoor het?

LIBTART: Yes. The matriarch who gave birth to sin. The beginning and the end of all my troubles. So you see, I had to murder her. I had no other choice. I saved myself. I saved all of us. The flies weren't the very thing contaminating me. She was. And I refused to have her contaminate her other children with her fucking filth. With my bare hands I did it. I clutched both hands around her fat neck until the last bit of life drained from her eyes and her wicked body dropped to the floor *(turns towards an imaginary mother in monologue).* Nog 'n baba, moeder? Hoe kon jy? Ons is reeds verhongerd en uitgeteer in die dorre fokken godverlate verskroeide aarde. Jy moet die plaas vir hulle gee. Ons sal sterf as jy nie die plaas vir hulle gee nie. Laat staan jou donnerse hardkoppigheid, en dink aan ons toekoms.

STEM: Ons verstaan nie? Wat gebeur?

LIBTART: You should know that I loved my mother. Perhaps that was my curse. I loved her. But she was a stubborn old bag. You see, those were dark and trying times for the Afrikaner people. Things were changing but they weren't ready for change (die man in die hok en die spook kyk stip na die gehoor en begin sing: *Die lafaards is bang. Skiet, skiet. Die lafaards is bang, skiet die boer…)*

STEM: As ons mag vra, waarom praat u skielik Engels, en dan weer Afrikaans?

LIBTART: Oh that, yes. Much like my mother I used to love Afrikaans but now I have come to hate it and everything it represents The taal, the culture, the racist whites and their religion. I hate everything about it. There have been times when I have sat in my bathtub and desperately tried to wash away my whiteness. I would scrub and scrub and scrub until blood would come oozing out. I wish I could run into the ocean and wash the Afrikaner out of me. I could not bare the curse of being Afrikaans anymore. I had to find a way to kill it, and that is why I murdered her. Surely you must understand why I did it. My mother the breader of the taa and all its politics, became the very plague that poisoned the farm. Not them, not them.

STEM: Wie? Van wie praat jy?

LIBTART: The ones that came to live on the farm. Mother called them "kaffirs". The black plague. She blamed them for everything. It was their fault that father had become mute and convined himself to the attic. It was their fault that we were hungry and had no food. God, she even blamed them for my sins.

STEM: Van watter sondes praat jy?

LIBTART: It had been a warm summer. The hottest there had ever been. Father had stopped all attempts at farming and like a fucking coward locked himself in the attic *(die slopemmer word na benede gestuur en Libtart gryp dit, loop na die komposhoop en maak dit leeg voor sy dit weer op hys na vader Gabriel)*. There were no crops, and all the animals had died. It had been several moths since they came and built their homes on the farm. Just like the flies they drove mother crazy *(Weer begin die man in die hok en die spook sing: Die lafaards is bang. Skiet die boer, skiet die boer… Libtart in die rol van haar ma loer deur 'n denkbeeldige venster)* Here van Genade, help ons. Verlos ons van die swart pes wat ons teister, Here God, gryp asseblief in. U beproewinge raak vir my te veel O Heer. Verlos ons, verlos ons asseblief van die boosaardige kaffers. Ek kan nie, ek kan dit nie meer uitstaan nie (daar kom 'n hoesgeluid uit die hok bo in die dak. Libtart as Moeder Mara beweeg weer na die slopemmer wat afgestuur word, maak dit leeg en stuur dit op. Sy bly kyk na bo en praat dan met die vader in die dak). Gabriël, hoor jy my? Jou plaas vergaan, en wat doen jy? Niks! Jy is nie 'n man se gat werd nie.

STEM: Hy gaan nie antwoord nie, gaan hy?

LIBTART: *(Nou weer in die rol van Libtart)* No, he never did speak again. Not even when..(stop in die middel van die sin).

STEM: Nie eers toe?

LIBTART: Not even when they murdered him. Not a single sound. But you will see that for yourself soon enough. Anyway, where was I? O yes, that summer on the farm after they came. As I had done with the flies, I had befriended some of them, but she found me sitting with them one day and gave me the beating of my life. "Stay away from the kaffirs", she kept on repeating. "They will rape and murder you" (draai weer na 'n denkbeeldige ma). Wel moeder, jy was die eerste moordenaar. She locked me in my room and I was not allowed to leave the farm. It was the first time that the circus had come to those parts and I had never seen or heard of it until my new black friends told me about it. I wanted to go with all my heart. I sat in that room day in and day out, the stench of rotting shit in my nostrils, and the magical music of the circus in my ears (*circus music playing in the background*). I begged her to let me go (voer weer 'n gesprek met die denkbeeldige ma). Moeder, asseblief? Almal gaan daar wees. Laat my asseblief toe om te gaan. Dit is nie, dit is nie duiwelse dinge nie, ek sweer moeder. Ek is nie van die duiwel besete nie. Nee, die swart kinders gaan nie daar wees nie, ek belowe. Hulle het my nie getoor nie, ek sweer. Mamma, asseblief…

STEM: Het sy jou ten einde laaste toegelaat om te gaan?

LIBTART: No. The only place I was allowed to go was to church. To ask forgiveness for my sins (weer hoor mens in die agtergrond die dominee wat preek: "Eer jou vader en jou moeder dat jou dae verleng mag word in die land wat die Here jou God aan jou gee." En dan sing die koor weer:

"*Moet my tog nie in u toorn bly straf nie, Here,*

en my langer in u gramskap tugtig nie.

U pyle het my getref,

u hand lê swaar op my.

Deur u toorn is daar nie meer 'n gesonde plek aan my liggaam nie,

deur my sonde is daar nie meer 'n heel plek aan my lyf nie.

Ja, my ongeregtighede het my oorweldig

soos 'n las wat vir my te swaar is.

My wonde stink en sweer,

en dít deur my eie dwaasheid…"

It was the Sunday night. The final evening that the circus was in town. After church she shoved me back in my room and told me to go to bed. En onthou, hande bo die lakens, nê? I got in bed, but suddenly I had become angry. Angrier than I had ever been. (Die aktrise gaan le op die grond. *Weer begin die sirkusmusiek speel. Die verhoogligte doof uit terwyl die aktrise haar hande onder die denkbeeldige lakends druk en oor haar vagina beweeg in 'n suggestiewe manier. Dan kan die gehoor hoor hoe sy haar asem skerp in trek).*

TONEEL 3:

(Die aktrise trek die klere van Libtart uit en praat in haar rol as aktrise met die stem)

AKTRISE: Ek dink dit is belangrik dat U ook die moeder ontmoet, of haar spook eerder.

STEM: Praat U nou met ons weer as die aktrise?

AKTRISE: Ja.

STEM: Sy is nou 'n spook omdat sy reeds gesterf het, nie waar nie?

AKTRISE: Presies. Soos ek reeds gesê het is almal reeds dood. Die ironie van die moeder is dat sy as t' ware onsterfbaar is. Soos onkruid. Of kanker. Of kompos. Sy spook steeds by haar dogter.

STEM: Waarom dink U is dit?

AKTRISE: Vir haar is daar g'n rus nie. Geen hiernamaals of beloofde land van melk en heuning nie. Sy is haar dogter se moeder en hulle is omonwonde aan mekaar gebind met bloed. Daar is 'n ewige naelstring wat die dood nie eers kan knip nie. Sy bly leef in haar dogter en juis omdat haar dogter dit nie aan haarself kan erken nie, kan die moeder nie tot rus kom nie. Maar weer praat ek te veel. Dit sal beter wees as U self ook met haar praat.

STEM: Nou maar goed *(Die aktrise gaan na voor en trek 'n ander hopie klere aan. Terwyl sy dit doen bulder die dominee se stem in die agtergrond: In Johannes 8:1-11 praat Jesus met die Fariseërs oor die hantering van die vrou wat in owerspel betrap is. Die Fariseërs wou haar stenig volgens die Ou Testamentiese "kerklike tugmaatreëls"*

maar Hy sê vir hulle: "Laat die een van julle wat sonder sonde is die eerste klip op haar gooi…")

MOEDER MARA: Julle is seker hier om my te stenig. Wel, julle is te laat, ek is reeds doods.

STEM: Waarom sal ons U wil stenig?

MOEDER MARA: Ag toe nou, hier kan ons maar reguit praat. Ek weet dat U reeds weet dat my dogter my daarvan beskuldig het dat ek 'n opperse rassis was. Dit omdat ek die meid buite laat sit en eet het, omdat daai kroeshare my tot in my kleintoontjie laat ril het, omdat die stank van hul swart lywe my naar gemaak het, en daai skreetaal vir my barbaars was. So asof die woord "rassis" sinoniem is met "'n drek van 'n mens". En ek sê nou: Ek was nie 'n slegte mens nie. Ek was nie. Ek het gedoen wat ek gedoen het omdat ek geglo het dit was reg. My kinders grootgemaak met die Bybel in die hand soos die hemelse Vader dit wou hê. My vingers stomp gewerk om vir hulle te sorg. U weet, terwyl daai ruggraatlose jellievis sy kop soos 'n volstruis in die grond gedruk het, het ek bly veg. Vir my land, vir my taal, vir my mense, vir my grond, my voorouers se grond. Bloedgrond, wat daai hensoppers in die donnerse oorlog kom afbrand het, en ons van vooraf met ons kaal hande herbou het. En wat het ek gekry vir my opoffering? Vir my eerlikheid? Die dood? Dit was nie eens die ergste nie. Die verraad van my kind wat my só in die rug kon steek, en haar rug kon draai op haar mense, haar bloed, en vir wat? Vir wat vra ek U? Elke boontjie kry seker maar sy loontjie. Maar

weet U, dit was nie altyd so nie. Daar was ‘n tyd wat ek op haar kon leun. Wat ek op haar kon staatmaak. Voor sy so kafferbefok geword het. Daar was ‘n tyd wat sy verstaan het dat sy ‘n plig gehad het teenoor haar land, haar mense, haar taal. Maar toe gebeur daar ‘n vreeslike ding. ‘n Vreeslike ding, ‘n ongeluk. Maar sy het net geweier om te verstaan. Dit was die dag toe alles verander het.

STEM: Wanneer was dit? En wat het gebeur?

MOEDER MARA: *(skielike verward)* Is julle van die polisie? Of daai trawante van die kamstige nasionale beskermingsdienste? Want ek het klaar my sê gesê en ek het nie ‘n donnêrse ding om nog vir hulle te sê nie!

STEM: Nee ons is heeltemal onpartydig en objektief.

MARA: Dit was ’n ongeluk, ek sweer...net ’n ongeluk. (*Vryf hard en dringend met haar hande oor haar vel. Begin meganies praat asof dit ‘n voorbereide monoloog is. Draai die kratte na mekaar soos twee stoele tydens ‘n ondervraging).* Dit was ’n ongeluk speurder M-ma-kayayana. Dit was laatnag en die meid...die swart vrou het geval voor haar sinkhuis. Sy was dronk en het haar balans verloor. Sy het vermoedelik doodgebloei. Ons het wakker geword van die kakafonie van die plakkers. Hulle was soos diere speurder. Ek was bang. My man het gaan ondersoek instel. Hy het haar daar gekry en ons het haar begrawe. Daar was nie geld vir ‘n formele begrafnis nie, verstaan? Maar meneer, ek moet ook byvoeg dat ek steeds moeite gedoen het met ‘n blommetjie hier

en daar, verstaan? Hoe nou speurder? Deel van die anti-regeringsbeweging? Die AWB? Nee meneer, nee. Ek kan U belowe ons is nie. Moord. Nee, nee dit was nie moord nie!

STEM: Maar dit was moord, nie waar nie?

MOEDER MARA: (knik net haar kop)

STEM: 'n Ongeluk?

MOEDER MARA: Ja! U moet tog verstaan – dit was kort na daai swart plaag op die plaas toegesak het. Dit was 'n duistere beproewing vir my en my man. Om te sien hoe hulle net vat en verwoes. Die handvol vee het hulle een vir een afgeslag en die karkasse gelos om te vrot. Die werf het kras-suur-vrot geruik. En die vlieë, die vlieë was op my, en op my kinders. Die lande wat my ouers en hul ouers met hul eie hande bewerk het was besaai met hutte. En tussen die hutte het hulle gewemel soos swart miere. Gabriel het by die dag stiller geword. Daar was nie meer kos nie. Ons het al die meublement begin verpand. En ons het probeer onderhandel. Gepleit, en gesmeek. Toe probeer Gabriel nog een laaste maal. Hy het gegaan om met die groep barbare se oppergesag te praat. Dit was laataand. Die meid het hom uitgetart. Toe gebeur dit net. En ek was sy vrou. Ek moes hom help. Bloed. Daar was soveel bloed. Rooi, rooi bloed. Ons het die planke in ons slaapkamer gelig en die lyk daar begrawe. Die stank! Here God, help my (*die sirkusmusiek begin weer speel. Gabriel se hok word na benede gebring en hy klim uit die hok. Hy praat steeds nie 'n woord nie. Loop net na Mara. Sy hande is rooi. Hy begin in 'n baie suggestiewe manier om haar beweeg, en haar met die rooi bloed*

smeer oor haar hele liggaam. Terwyl dit gebeur praat Mara verder, asof sy getoor is). Daar was iets so magies omtrent daai nag. Daar was bloed op ons hande, maar daar was IETS in ons hande. Toe ons daai warm vlees met grond toegooi was dit 'n simbool van hoop. Hoop dat ons uiteindelik al die woede, al die pyn, die donnerse vernedering kon begrawe. Dat die seer en swaarkry saam met die vrou gesterf het. Ons was oorwinnaars. Dit was 'n euforiese oomblik. Ons het nog nooit so lewendig gevoel nie. Die bloed het deur ons are gepomp. En net daar op daai houtplankdoodsbed het ons vir die eerste keer in maande weer liefde gemaak (Sagte beligting. Die sirkusmusiek speel steeds terwyl die twee liggame om mekaar dans. Dan stop die sirkusmusiek, ligte doof uit en hoor mens die koor sing. Kort daarna net die dominee se stem: "My God, my God, waarom het u my verlaat?". Terwyl dit gebeur trek die aktrise weer Libtart se klere aan).

TONEEL 4

(Libtart loop saam met Gabriel tot by die hok, en maak die deur agter hom toe. Kyk in stilte hoe hy opgehys word voor sy begin praat.)

STEM: Jy het uitgevind van die moord?

LIBTART: Of course I did. The smell of rotting shit and rotting plant materials can't compare to the stench of rotting flesh. Its quite distinct.

STEM: And that is why you murdered your mother?

LIBTART: (laughs histerically) Have you not been paying attention? They were monsters. I was the off spring of two horrible human beings. Murderers. The smell of decomposing flesh became a constant reminder that I had become part of something rotten. I was born into something so rotten and I too, had blood on my hands. Have you never read the Bible? That whole part about sins being passed on to the second and third generations? Well, that is perhaps the only piece of truth in that whole book. I had become tainted. Cursed. And they were spreading their poison *(the sounds of a baby crying starts and continues)*.

STEM: Waar kom daai geluide vandaan? Wie se baba huil?

LIBTART: You still don't get it, do you? They spawned another baby. The night they fucked. Out of death, they created more fucking life. Horrible, cursed life. I could not allow it. I just couldn't.This child was either going to become another murderous, racist white or…or like me they would live a haunted life. Plagued by the sins of the ones before them. It's a burden, I thought, too heavy for an innocent child to bear. I could not take it. I had to make an end to it.

STEM: Kan die baba dalk ophou huil? Ons kry die punt.

LIBTART: No, no. You don't understand. The baby never stopped crying. It was crying for all of us. Father had retreated into the safety of his abyss. And mother had continued on as if nothing had happened. But everything was different. And the crying was a constant reminder of that.

STEM: Ons is nuuskierig om te weet waarom U net U ma vermoor het, en nie ook U pa nie? Dit lyk tog of albei aandadig was aan wat gebeur het.

LIBTART: I didn't have to murder him. He was already dead.

STEM: Het hy homself doodgemaak?

LIBTART: *(laughs bitterly)* If only. He was too much of a coward to do that *(the crying of the baby intensifies. Gabriel starts singing: Cowards are scared, shoot, shoot, shoot them with a gun. Shoot the boer. Shoot, shoot, shoot them with a gun. As this is happening the church choir starts singing Psalm 23: "Al gaan ek ook in 'n dal van doodskaduwee, ek sal geen onheil vrees nie; want U is met my: U stok en U staf die vertroos my…" Gabriel comes down from the cage and Libtart re-enacts the stabbing whilst reciting parts from the poem Raka by N.P. Van Wyk Louw)* Die vroue het dit eerste gewaar…; Ken hy die vuurgeheim? Het hy die vaal drade van katoen leer spin en weef; En in die kleurpot week? Het hy leer leef onder die wette wat ons oudstes sing? Die snel dier moet dood, of hy sal heers oor ons, en groot en lang pyn bring… En die woede van die swart dier kon hulle sien; aan die liggaam en die spore en die pap riet; en die skild wat geskeur was en diep ingetrap; in die koue klei… (once this is done, the crying suddenly stops, the choir stops, Gabriel lies dead on the floor).

Do you see now? Do you understand? They came for him. I couldn't bear the smell of the rotting flesh any longer so I went into their room and removed the body. I dragged

the decomposing black flesh out into the sun and threw the body onto the compost heap.

STEM: Waarom het U die lyk op die komposhoop gaan gooi? Waarom dit nie eerder ordentlik begrawe nie?

LIBTART: *(goes to the compost heap and looks at it)* You still don't fucking get it. If I had left that body there it would have been a waste. Life wasted. At least here, the rotting flesh could amount to something new. Something could grow from that fucking stench. And they saw it. They saw what had happened, and they came for him. And I, I had to join them. It was the only way to save my soul, to prove to them that I was not like my parents *(starts rubbing compost over her arms and legs)* and that this curse would end with me. And that is when I walked up to her and grabbed her by the neck and strangled every last bit of murderous rage, every last bit of racism, corruption, hate, discrimination, culture, taal, every last bit of poeslike Afrikaans-wees, from her body. Jy is die baarmoeder van onbeskaamde rassisme en barbaarsheid. En nou is ek kind van apartheid. Die kind van 'n moordenaar. Met bloed op my hande. Ek haat jou. Ek háát jou moeder *(terwyl die moortoneel afspeel)*.

STEM: En het jy toe jou ouers se liggame ook op die komposhoop gegooi?

LIBTART: No. No. They didn't deserve it. I gave them no funeral, no proper burial rites were read, no coins on their eyes to pay death with, and so I hoped they would wander through the afterlife, blind, unable to see, but instead they are still fucking wandering

around me, and its driving me mad. I am still white, I am still Afrikaans, I feel a heavier burden now then I have ever felt before, and its not fair. Its not fair. All their murderous hate and rage and anger is still in me. My mere existence is a symbol for all the hate and rage and pain brought upon others in this world, and its too heavy. Its too heavy. I don't want to feel anymore. I don't want to know. I don't want to care. Its too painful (die aktrise gooi haar hande in die lug) Wag, wag, wag. Dis ek, die aktrise. Ek kan nie langer die rol vertolk nie.

STEM: Waarom nie?

AKTRISE: Want sy haat nie regtig haar ouers nie. Sy kan nie. Sy wil hulle haat. Sy wil so graag want dit sal beteken dat sy nie ook 'n wreedaardige monster is soos wat sy glo hulle was nie. Maar sy weet hulle was nie. Miskien was dit wat sy vanaand vir U gewys het sleg, maar hulle was ook mens, en hulle was lief vir haar en sy weet dit. En dit maak haar skuldlas net soveel swaarder. My God, waarom het u my verlaat *(skeur die klere van haar lyf af terwyl die kerkklok lui. Daarna kan die dominee gehoor word wat seg: "Genade en vrede vir julle van God ons Vader, van Jesus Christus, die Here en van die Heilige Gees." Daarop antwoord die koor: "Amen".)*.

Voice Over: Dit beteken ek is steeds wit, ek is ook een van hulle. As ek hulle nie kan haat nie, is ek dus ook een van hulle. Die gif van rassisme vloei so diep in my are. In my taal, my pragtige taal. En ek wou so graag my ouers haat omdat hulle my geboortereg

verkwansel het, en ek nou onder die juk van vervreemdelik leef. Maar ek verstaan ook, en daarom haat ek myself. Want hier sit ek in Afrika en ek het gemoor om swart te wees maar ek is steeds nie ‘n Afrikaan nie. Ek gaan oorsee en dan besef ek, ek is bedrieg. Ek is ook nie Europees nie. Waar kan ek my skaar? Wie is ek? Ek is kaal – deel van ‘n bastervolk met ‘n bastertaal wat in die slagyster van die baster getrap het wat aan bewind kom. Ek het mure gebou om my Suid-Afrikaansheid te beskerm omdat ek so donners onseker is oor my identiteit. En U, jy, julle het dit ook gedoen. Ons almal doen dit. Dis ‘n haat-liefde verhouding waarbinne ons elke dag verstoot voel en elke dag seer. En ek is moeg vir die seer. Ek is moeg. Ek is moeg vir my kontradiksies. Ek is moeg vir my kombuiskommunis, my comrade, my besorgde intellektueel, my Broederbonder, my moordenaar, my rassis. Ek is gatvol dat ek alles is wat ek haat, en dat daar nie ‘n deel van my is wat ek net onvoorwaardelik kan liefhê nie. Daarom moet ek my Afrikaanswees gaan opgrawe daar onder die vloerplanke en dit ook op die komposhoop gaan gooi sodat die verotting kan ontbind en weer bind in ander vorme. Want dit is al wat ek kan doen in ‘n poging om te verstaan en my bestaan te aanvaar, en met my kruppelkopgewete te leef, en nie net te oorleef nie.

-EINDE-