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Performing Invisible Labour

A performance inquiry into the paradox of invisibility/visibility as experienced by domestic workers in South Africa

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University of Witwatersrand
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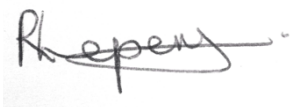
Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is a result of my original work and investigation. Where otherwise stated, sources used are acknowledged and referenced in-text and in the reference list.

I declare that the thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.



…….

Refiloe Ayn Lepere

20/03/2021

……

Date

For:

Bo Mme BaBerrario (HBBO) who made this possible.
My mother; Tankisang Phindi Innocentia Lepere.
My mother's mother; Monyane Cecelia Gaeshoe (Holmes)
&
My late grandmother; Kuki Elizabeth Lepere

"They were women then
My mama's generation
Husky of voice stout of
Step
With fists as well as
Hands
How they battered down
Doors
And ironed
Starched white
Shirts
How they led
Armies
Headragged generals
Across mined
Fields
Booby-trapped
Ditches
To discover books
Desks
A place for us
How they knew what we
MUST know
Without knowing a page
Of it
Themselves." --- Alice Walker (1983)

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We are not born with the words we end up writing on the papers we write. We borrow, we learn, and acquire new words all the time. I want to acknowledge all the writers of books, speakers of poems, actresses of words, for being generous with their texts. I learnt new words in the process of writing this thesis. I learnt to not be afraid of my own words.

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Abstract

Performing Invisible Labour: A performance inquiry into the invisibility/visibility paradox as experienced by domestic workers in South Africa

Performance is a slippery term. It articulates an artform as well as latent invisible forms of knowledge. This thesis uses performance as a method of research, exploring how the 'other' or the invisible black person comes to be seen, but also how they come to see themselves as their own material for knowledge. The study focuses on how performance is a valid mode of knowledge production by building a bridge between performance and theory in relation to domestic workers, black feminist aesthetics, personal narratives and the practice of theatremaking. It attempts to draw a connection between labour, performances of everyday work, and the imagination, andto show that performance as research is a radicalising process of knowing. I use it as a way to offer a way of reading domestic workers as knowledge creators and meaning makers of their world. By triangulating everyday performances and presentations of theatre as knowledge-making I discuss three plays I have created: (1) Between Sisters is a way of looking at the relational role of domestic worker and the counter-role of madam and how these two have been represented in various forms of art and literature; (2) Dipina Tsa Monyanyako was created with a group of domestic workers where performance was employed as a strategy for collecting data. The process of theatremaking is analysed for what an ethical performance as research exploration could look like; (3) Postcards: Bodily Preserves, is a reflective production. Here I look at the process of how as an artist I engaged in a kind of embodied non-objective research, analysing the findings through performance. In these three plays performance is used to interpret, name phenomena and frame strategies used to elicit stories, as well as to perform and rework those stories. It is a way of engaging in research that attends to critical moments that emerge in creative action (rehearsals, writing and performance) and how these can be understood as embodied data.

The contribution to knowledge in this exploration of three processes/plays is that, through reflection, performance as embodied knowledge can inform a black feminist theatre-making aesthetic. I argue that theatre is a serious political platform, critical in activating communities. I emphasise that black women's theatre aesthetic practices reveal the 'radicalness' of lived experiences, and is a model for rehearsing black identity in spaces of the black community.

Keywords: Black feminist aesthetic, Performance as research, Performance, Theatremaking, Invisibility, Domestic worker

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Introduction

Introduction: Theory in the flesh

> *"A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives — our skin colour, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings - all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience" (Moraga, C. and Anzaldua 1981, p.23)*

My mother taught us; my sister, brother and I, how to bake from a young age. All three of us can make cakes, scones and jam tartlets from memory without having to read the instructions or ingredients. If you wake any of us up anywhere in the world, we can reproduce the recipe; the measurements aren't always clear, but the product is just as my mom would like it. The texture and feel of the cakes are similar. When I started the research, I was fascinated with the idea that in our everyday lives we find ways to theorise, even in things as seemingly simple as a recipe passed from one person to the other, through bodily performance. Years ago, a childhood friend asked for the recipe for the jam tartlets. I wrote it out for her. However, she complained that it wasn't my mother's tarts. This left me thinking it must be that the recipe was not only theory, but also, a practice. A recipe is praxis. "A form of inquiry that is anti-essentialist, that successfully merges the theoretical and the practical, and that promotes a self-reflective and interactive model of an inquiry," (Heldke 1988, p.15). A recipe is a description and collection of instructions towards making or replicating a method of preparing food. Recipes are also an embodied praxis; they not only carry both theory and clear instructions on method, but this constitutes a bodily practice.

The metaphor of recipe carries a couple of themes that this thesis explores. A recipe is theory, a story, a way of making sense of the world, and a history and hands-on understanding of work. Recipes are ways that women have been able to write themselves into history. I have worked with a group of domestic workers for three years, creating plays and performances. This thesis is about performance as a knowledge-making process. Thinking about the thesis as a recipe; allows for me to image the performance as a method, and it allows for black women to write themselves into theory. It is about thinking of a method of creating. It is about three plays, created for the thesis, all different in aesthetic and process, and how through the plays we can understand: What is the nature of lived experiences? How can the performance(s) of these experiences bring better understanding when thinking about the black woman domestic worker? More importantly, what is the lineage of black

women theorising about their lives? This thesis is interested in how performance offers another way of reading the lives of domestic workers. In the time we live in, love and care have become commodified forms of work (Gottfried, 2018). This thesis aims to explore how performance as research as a method allows for the emergence of the identities of a domestic worker - black, worker woman. What is it that we get to understand when the identities are embodied and are explored through performance? As Sylvia Winter (1989) suggests, through performance we are able to see the black female worker as the site for the intersection of humanness as it relates to blackness. This thesis is about performance as a research method that can help us make an argument for a theatre aesthetic rooted in performance as a questioning method, and in performance as data collection, presentation method, and most importantly, as an organizing tool. The research aims to look at how performance as a research method can be used to question, to collect data and present data on the experiences of domestic workers.

Moreover, a recipe articulates embodied practice. At the centre of a recipe is a body that created the work, the other bodies who can replicate it and the activities surrounding a recipe. In creating theatre with domestic workers, it becomes a meeting place of the theory and expression of black women's lives. But also how our bodies in space and time engage with each other, and what knowledge is created from bodies in action. This study is interested in the aesthetic practices of black women's theatre and what it reveals about black women's lived experiences. The title of this introduction is drawn from a chapter in the edited volume, This Bridge Called My Back - Writings by Radical Women of Color, by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (1981). The editors in their opening chapter make a case that black people, in particular black women's experiences of the work through their bodies can and should offer us information on how things should be. They speak to the idea that the body knows and remembers and it can create theories, "born out of necessity" (1981 p.25). They argue that the body also makes sense of the world in its own way. That reason is shaped by how the body experiences the world.

I am aware of the pitfalls of performance of research. Though heralded as making visible other ways of knowing, I am keenly aware that it cannot make all things visible. In On Being Human as Praxis, Sylvia Wynter's (2014) articulates clearly that there are certain ways of being, thinking and practice that create colonial ways of knowing. This colonial way of thinking, being and practice is rooted in cartesian form of knowledge-

making that precludes the mind as the all-knowing avenue. She further explains that there must be a way, a possible form that allows for understanding differently. This understanding or knowing for this paper is rooted in the idea that individual bodies are the producers of knowledge (Wynter 1989.) For instance, there has been little to no research on how the bodies of black women and men are produced within a settler context and what kinds of narratives and knowledge we can glean from them. We know that the historical knowledge of black bodies is embodied; it is an oral and performative knowledge (King 2019). Performance allows for visibility; it allows for those embodied knowledges to be acknowledged as such. At the same time, performance can also hide – make invisible – things that women want to preserve for themselves. Performance can therefore be a tool of resistance; a space that allows for interpretive work of meaning-making and consciousness building. Central to this argument is that by reading the embodied acts, artistic and everyday performance can counter the dominant discourse that regularly dehumanises the domestic worker. It can also provide meaningful, inter-subjective learning experiences for all involved. Theatremaking as a process of research is, therefore, an intersection of art, activism and social relevance. In this thesis, embodiment is seen as a site of generative and creative potentiality. Theatre is both a creative and critical activity that not only centres feelings and experiences but also reveals historical and contemporary complexities for conscientisation and critiquing social disparities and for self-exploration. The research problematizes ideas of archive, artefact and storage. It stands on the claim of decolonising and expanding our understanding of knowledge that includes human's capacity for creating dignity. Knowledge is social, emotional, shared and relational. Black women exist in a dramaturgy that functions as a relationship that is "inherently political." Canadian feminist writer Katherine McKittrick (2015) writes about how black performances over the years have been created to rebel against white supremacy. In her essay, looking at theorist and playwright, Sylvia Wynter's Black Metamorphosis, she suggests that blackness requires a performance aesthetic that rejects linear trajectory. She uses jazz as an entry point and further looks at other performances; storytelling and theatre as inventive spaces that enunciate "the revolutionary demand for happiness" (McKittrick 2015, p.85). Similarly, this thesis works toward an aesthetic that embraces black women's creative genius. It also suggests the kinds of ethical considerations which arise from the process of creating from lived experiences.

Lastly and more crucially for performance as research, recipes articulate an archival practice. Recipes are normally written, and they are present for posterity, to be passed down from one generation to another. When thinking about research and academic narrative, the ability for a study to be archived and repeatable is vital. However, what the recipe metaphor also offers me is the proposition that the archive lies in bodies. The body becomes text/s. Therefore, this study is written as a reflective performance; with the texts, scripts, and moments of storytelling imagining a way of archiving research that is performance based. As theatre-maker, the narrative required in academic texts is a challenge, because experiential forms of performances and interaction are not clear narratives that can translate easily into what an academic text requires. The lives and performances of the everyday are also not explicit texts that are translatable on to paper. The challenge in writing this has been how can an academic narrative capture and reflect, effectively, words, songs, groans, cries, absences and silences? How can a creator, writer, director, facilitator translate all the visceral explorations into a coherent write-up? This is a challenge. Performance activist, Kumar (2014) suggests that creating and doing artistic work is a form of writing in the flesh. Performance as research therefore demands an active archive, an energetic remembrance of life and the possibility of the present. What this study adds to the performance as research knowledge collective is the reflexivity of performance, i.e. the ability to acknowledge and shift action. Here I seek to advocate for the use of play scripts as a presentation of research and data, where the playscript is viewed as a form of performance that is not just about the product, but also about the process itself. The playscript offers the writer/researcher space to not only reflect on the work but to centre the process of creating or being in the work. Therefore, the data for this research is the plays. I have centred the scripts from the plays as both artefacts and academic narrative.

The contribution to knowledge in this exploration of three processes/plays is that, through reflection on performance as embodied knowledge, this thesis can contribute to a practice of black feminist theatremaking. I argue that theatre is a serious political platform, critical in activating communities. I emphasise that black women's aesthetic practices in performance reveal the 'radicalness' of their lived experiences. The plays are examples of black feminist theatre representing black female roles/identities, in situations that reflect black existence. The black feminist theatremaking aesthetic is a model for rehearsing black identity in spaces of the black community. This thesis

documents and engages the struggles, goals, triumphs, stories, and legacies of black women as domestic workers and how they reimagine themselves through the lens of performance. This is a process of creating research and theatre work from lived experiences; of re-interpreting, re-storying, and reimagining together with others. Through roles of everyday (ness), participants come to share understandings and create intersections of commonalities, thereby cultivating spaces of reciprocity where research can be about forming community.

Positionality of the researcher

I am trained as a theatre-maker, director and a drama Therapist. To this end the use of drama is both a tool for aesthetic purposes and political. I am drawn to drama therapy as a method that uses drama as a tool for healing. I have learnt to move beyond the transcripts and precepts of demanding healing outcomes from performances. My affinity with drama as tool has therefore evolved to engage the role that drama/theatremaking practice. What this research does, is to assert a political and ideological utility of theatremaking as both an idea and material space. The performance as research allows for one to move beyond drama therapy confines. Here theatre is both a space for making and creating. There is a clear investment in the creative practice, in the black woman's body and in the ways that black women's body become the material for both current and archival knowledge.

I situate my work in a moment. A moment of where one comes to fully include women as radical subjects. This means I am deliberate and clear on the choice of theorists; writers included in the paper. I am of that "wild idea that animates [these] chapters that black women are radical subjects who tirelessly imagined other ways to live and never failed to consider how the world might be otherwise." (Hartman 2019: 8)

The breakdown of the paper

The thesis is organised into PARTS. The reason for the PARTS; is to think of the chapters as individual performance texts. They work as a script, a manual and analysis (a recipe of sorts). Especially since the thesis is arguing for performance as a research method, by which I mean performance as a means to collect data, to analyse data and

to present the data. Here I advocate for the use of the playscript as a tool for research presentation. In this study the playscript is viewed as a form of data and presentation of that data. This is important for this research as the process for creating performance is not just about product, but also about the process itself. The playscript offers a writer/researcher space to not only reflect on the work but to centre the process of creating or being in the work. In support of critical reflexivity, the process demands the writer to be transparent about their context and agenda (Bourdieu, 2004). The scripts allows for one to develop an understanding of practice as a collaborative conversation, with communities. Each of these PARTS shows varying degrees of performativity in order to reimagine how performance as a form of knowledge production may be presented in academic writing. Some, of course, will be more theoretical than others and some more performative than others.

PART I

Labour: Black Women, Creative Work and the Invisibility Paradox introduces the motivation the framework behind the study, the existing assumptions that underpin it and the current discourses and contestations that currently guide the study.
On Method and Ways of Knowing lays out the methodological assumptions of the study. Here I argue that that knowledge production is embodied and is a site of negotiation and renegotiation.

PART II

Between Sisters: Role and Counter Roles
In this section, I analyse how artists have cast the historical figure of the domestic worker. At the same time, a theoretical analysis of the play Between Sisters is offered. I use the artworks of Zanele Muholi – Massa and Mina(h) (2008) and Sindiwe Magona's short story collection, Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night (1991). As creators they represent domestic workers and attempt to research and problematise how the role is articulated. The section will analyse how the works highlight the dramaturgy of the role. It will draw parallels to the process of creating the play Between Sisters, which also required thinking about the role in performative ways, and in particular how particular spatial and locational performances - together with elements of scripting, costuming practices - speak back to lived experience and

embodied existence. This, in turn, problematizes how we learn to attach meanings to the role of the domestic worker.

Between Sisters, here I have placed the script of the adapted play.

Playmaking as an Ethic of Care and Anger

This section reflects on Dipina tsa Monyanyako and looks at the process of creating Dipina tsa Monyanyako. This will include an analysis of the rehearsal playmaking space, which is a very dynamic encounter that creates different experiences for a facilitator/researcher. I reflect on the efficacy of some actions. This section of the study will analyse Process Recordings to draw out performative texts from the series of encounters from playmaking sessions with the domestic workers and reimagine and re-perform responses to actual conversations.

PART III

Performances of Edible Bodies

This section of the study is an auto-ethnographic reflective space where I analyse the two plays written to reflect on the process of creating theatre and what stories were gleaned from the women. Creating the play as a response combined not only my personal reflection but also visceral responses of stories that were never told.

The Script: Postcards: Bodily Preserves

Postscript

Story Circles a Strategy of Knowing

This final chapter ties together and summarises the arguments advanced in the preceding chapters. In this section, I make a case for the dramaturgy of black feminist theatre that seeks to highlight the significance of black women coming together to orally share and perform their lives. I argue for a method of coming to know, of strategies that are used to share knowledge and how performance offers possibilities for other forms of embodied possibilities.

PART I

Labour: Black Women, Creative Work and Invisibility Paradox

> *"Manual: of or pertaining to the hand or hands, done or performed with the hands. Now especially of (physical) labour, an occupation, etc., as opposed to mental, theoretical. Manual as distinguished from the mind and the intellectual. Manual: as of a weapon, tool, implement, etc.; that is used or worked with the hand or hands. Actually, in one's hands, not merely prospective. (Manual: short for manual exercises, i.e., physical labour, and not the exercise of reason or imagination.) A tool or an object, within one's grasp, not speculative, not a proposal for black female genius. The use of the body as tool or instrument… as in property handled by another. Also, to be possessed. To be handled as if owned, annexed, branded, invaded, ingested, not autonomous. Manual: to be wielded by another, to be wielded on a whim; to be wielded as an exercise of another's will, to be severed from one's own will or motives or desires. Manual: as opposed to mental, as in not an exercise of rational faculties. As opposed to the formation of critical reflections; as opposed to contemplation of the self or the world. A method of operating or working. A function. Short for manual exercise. Short for manual tool."(Hartman, 2019, p.112)*

In Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments, Saidiya Hartman (2019) proposes that black women are the holders of embodied knowledge. In this book, she goes to great lengths to describe the homes, spaces and the various forms of work and labour that women engage in. The book is written in narrative, poetic form that centres women's voices as workers, highlighting, in particular, women's refusals to work. She emphasises women as creative labourers – as the makers of art, music and sonic riot. They are also the ones who do collective affective labour. Affective labour is the work that is done to produce feelings of ease and well-being in another person (Hardt 2007). The book pieces together the histories of women living in New York and Philadelphia and positions these women's lives as radical texts. Meaning the art they created and their everyday lives can and should be subjects of study that offer the world what it would mean to practice of freedom. The chapter titled Manual for General Housework critiques the many written academic texts that have failed to recognise the work of women as radical practice. She engages with the ordinariness of work, and the simultaneous extra-ordinary feat demanded in the academic space of having to be seen as 'rational', as 'genius', as 'severed from one's motive'. The third-person

narration reveals the contempt that traditional research has for the first-person narrative, and comments on how black women are also knowledge producers.

The Manual for General Housework offers this thesis a sort of matrix or blueprint of what I would like this thesis to do. One is to be a sort of metaphorical manual, a case for creative research. And a case for acknowledging and recognising black domestic workers' paid work and their unpaid reproductive and affective labour. In particular, my study explores how this is can be articulated and researched through theatre. Finally, it is to acknowledge that both creative/theatre work and domestic work are not just personal services but what Marxist feminists have been saying, i.e. that it is the work that produces and reproduces labour-power (Anderson, 2010 and Hardt, 2007). In a world that values humans according to their capital contribution, theatre and domestic work offers different ways of thinking about the relations between value, labour, and bodily performance.

Invisible labour

Labour and work are critical words for this thesis. Writer, playwright, Sindiwe Magona in her book, Living, Loving, and Lying Awake at Night (1991), she reveals for us that black women can reimagine misguided narratives of black womanhood. The book radicalises the role of the domestic worker and explains that black women have the agency to shape their worlds on their terms. The collection focuses on a community of women who are domestic workers. The first half of the book is a collection of monologue-like stories of domestic workers told in the first person, with the second part being a collection of short stories that hint at domestic work as a backdrop. The stories reveal how the women create communities amidst bad jobs, failed marriages and family life, depression, illness and sometimes despair. Born in South Africa and a former domestic worker herself, Magona follows the tradition of women testimonies, written into the canon of history via autobiographical fiction. This contributes to "a rich though neglected tradition of women writing history from below" (Lewis 2017, p.8). The writing of women's realities into fiction is not unique to Magona. Nigerian novelist, Buchi Emechete (1974) excavates her own life to create tour de force novels on motherhood and immigration. South African and Batswana writer Bessie Head reveals what is critical in most women writings in South Africa, which is the real-ness of the stories, and of creating a creative account from facts. The

truth of real stories in fiction allows for one to think about a mode of creating from reality. By exploring the interior lives of women, these writers reveal to us the enactments of private theatres, and of solo struggles that implicate the greater society. By centering the image of black women through the work of performance, they resurrect black women to the main stage.

In Living and Loving and Lying Awake at Night, Magona (1991) carries the reader on a journey of a woman who flees her husband's village to get to Johannesburg to work for her children; a loner who finds community amongst women who have similar work struggles. It carries three distinct attributes that are important for the framing of this research. One, the book is autobiographical fiction; it allows the women to theorise their lives in monologue-like narration. The autobiography and monologues express the aesthetic forms this research is also grappling with. Two, the women play lead roles in each of their stories. They are the protagonist, even when the story looks at more significant communal issues. Magona (1991), also focuses on the status of women in society and how work (decent work) is essential for building dignity, and for the collective work of the social. She also comments on the role of the individual in the community and greater society, making central that the interior lives the women are articulating are essential for sociality. These choices are crucial for the thesis as they help create a framework for how to think about feminist theory and aesthetics, and in particular for interventions that centre black women. Thirdly, Magona (1991) consciously takes sides with the woman. She sets up a stage, the small room of a domestic worker named Atini. She sets characters into motion and reveals the wonders of ordinary, plain everyday women who work, create friendships, hate their work, desire more, have marriages, children and funerals. All the performances that may not be typical theatre but are wondrous everyday performance, of how they hold up their worlds, are presented as both fiction and truth. In her writing, she makes deliberate choices regarding who to write about and who to include that makes her writing political, though she vehemently denied being political. She focused on “the insistence that women have suffered systematic social injustice" (Magona 1991, p.vi). The collection of short stories becomes a space for her to engage in the story of diversity and difference capturing how that which belonged together, was put asunder. She interrupts village life with its stillness and highlights the violence that is meted by coloniality and aptly describes her own disruption of being pulled away from her people to live the life of a worker, alone. She doubly disrupts the consistently

masculine reading of city life as violent and picturesque, by locating herself in the frame of narratives of self-rule. She situates herself in a community of women and uses her imagination to make up histories that amalgamate the real and the fictional. Advocating, advising, teaching, learning together with the women, Magona offers a beautiful entry on how to read women and their everyday and theorise in more practical ways about being a black woman. She, like black activist Angela Davis in her book Blues Legacies and Black Feminism (1998), finds articulations that are alternative to the mainstream way of theorising about life, and black women's lives in particular. Davis and Magona consciously use performative art forms to examine worlds troubled by racism, violence, alienation and mental disturbances. Through the performances, monologues (Magona 1991), and songs (Davis 1998), they show how women come to terms with these problems and become more socially conscious and integrated. This bringing of black women to visibility is an especially productive way to think about the problem of the domestic worker. It may be said in broader society makes, the domestic worker is made to disappear: to hide her in our homes, to hide her by speaking on her behalf in our commentary, to merely forget about her. In other words, a magic trick. The magic of theatre is to bring her (back) to visibility.

Non-objective bystander

Arising from all of this is the discussion of the importance of 'personal experience' as a form of 'knowledge validation' within the tradition of Black feminism and why I see 'experience' as an essential methodological argument for performance as research method. I engage with my personal experiences of creating performances, of being in performance. These particular articulations are located in a Black feminist epistemology that emphasises my methodological engagement with performance. Black Feminism focuses on black women's experience in an unjust society. What we come to understand as Black Feminism comes into being through a series of 'waves' connected to women's emancipations. The one concern that unifies much of feminist literature is that the contributions and experiences of women throughout history have been largely undervalued (Hill Collins, 1990). The main objective for using Black women's experiences as a framework is to recognise and acknowledge how systems of oppression have worked to suppress the thinking and creative ideas of black women both inside and outside of academic institutions (Hill Collins 1990). The

emphasis on race in this thesis is significant because in South Africa race is a "major structuring component of power relations' (Brooks and Hébert 2006, p.298).

Utilising personal experience could be seen as an ill-conceived epistemological method. When writing about performance as a way of knowing, Patrick E. Johnson (2003) articulates that his process of performance based on auto-ethnography (a systematic use performance for data collection, analysis, and interpretation about self and social phenomena involving self) is at times a questionable method of representation. This is because the research only represents the experience of the individual researcher and assumes that their experience can be universal in explaining a more significant phenomenon. This, he suggests, implicates the researcher in the process of 'fictional reality' assuming that the researcher is performing a task to serve the research and that this performance is not necessarily an everyday occurrence (Johnson 2003). I use this critique of the researcher centering themselves in the study because Johnson is engaged in a similar performance research paradigm as my study. As a researcher-artist, I am faced with a difficult ethical dilemma of (re)presenting the process of my study and the findings in ways that not only essentialise the stories of domestic workers, and expose master narratives and counter-narratives, but also need to address the re-production of exploitative narratives. The critique liberates the study from assumptions that "the participants or objects of study are fixed" (Johnson 2003, p. 8) therefore malleable to being studied. The critique pushes me to the personal, or to reflections, thoughts, and impressions alongside an analysis of the literature which are key for this study. 'Personal experience' as a form of 'knowledge validation' is important within the tradition of Black feminism and is therefore why I see 'experience' as an important methodological argument for performance as a research method.

The core research question of the thesis is:

How can performance help us understand the experiences of black domestic workers in South Africa?

Other questions that this research is trying to think through are:

1. How can we better understand everyday and work experience of the domestic worker as performance?

2. How do we articulate the domestic worker's place in our society using their bodies as creative agents for purposes other than work?
3. What possible theatre aesthetic comes from this experiential knowledge; - featuring bodies rarely found in theatrical productions and giving voice to stories that may otherwise be lost?

The framing of the study is from a black feminist perspective. Black Feminism places black women at the centre of analysis and recognises the intersectionality of race, class, gender and sexuality (Gqola 2001a). A black feminist perspective provides a way to study black women's lives within their own historical context and therefore asserts these experiences as valid. Furthermore, the use of black feminism distinguishes black women as distinct from black men and white women with whom they are almost always conflated. In this section, I situate the Black woman as a subject, and as a producer of knowledge through performance by locating her in feminist theory, the tradition of black consciousness theatre and autobiographical fictions. I articulate how black women, as knowledge producers, have found ways of representing and writing themselves into history. This is in part a critique of both Black theatre and feminist theatre and how both marginalise black female voices; the former by prioritising black men, the latter by privileging white women's interests.

South African Theatre and Collective Labour

If we look into the history of South African theatre, art, and representation, we can see that there has been a clear interest and focus in attempting to elucidate labour issues using theatre or art. During the time when theatre productions were segregated, black (mostly township based) theatre and white (government-funded 'professional') theatre both integrated issues of labour. On both sides of the divide, theatre was used to address a growing internal objection to government and employers (in black theatre) or to objections against imported artists working in South Africa because they were seen to be taking jobs from local white performers (Steadman 1998). Theatre has always existed in South Africa; there is no precise moment of it coming into being. However, in the 1970's, with the rise of black consciousness, came a clear differentiation of 'Black Theatre' and 'theatre done by blacks'. This distinction (similar to the distinction between black feminist theatre and women's theatre) came from the need to politicise theatre. According to theatre scholar, Robert Kavanagh, the black

consciousness movement created the definitions to distinguish Black Theatre from theatre created in collaboration with whites, and whose primary audience was mainly white (Kavanagh 1981). Both theatres were created in the townships, and both were political in content. Black Theatre makers, however, articulated that their work remained faithful to the ideology of Black Consciousness and placed this philosophy at the centre of the aesthetic. People's Experimental Theatre Company was where theatre-makers refused inter-racial collaboration. They argued that inter-racial creations and companies failed to tap into the black experience and political reality (Penfold 2013). Black theatre was where the message of defiance, pride and reclamation became the medium of articulating experiences of black people (Penfold 2013). This type of theatre was thought of as a weapon and refused to compromise with the established theatrical techniques. This Black Consciousness theatre was created in a workshop environment, or what became the definition of South African Workshopped Theatre. The characteristics of a workshop play, according to Yvette Hutchison (2011) are:

- A play made by a group of people as opposed to it being written by one playwright in isolation;
- The play reflects daily lives.
- The play draws on traditional oral forms and combines various performance forms such as music, narrative and dance within the context of a single performance;
- It has more to do with a socio-political subject.

The measure of a successful piece was its ability to reflect the lives of the people watching it, and not only to reflect, but also to examine. Theatre like of other art forms was used to make a political comment about the state of South Africa and also help other people identify themselves as artists or identify for themselves their role in the protest and liberation movement. A theatrical aesthetic was created in this era, one of them being Proemdra, a combination of prose, poetry and drama. This was a form of literature that combined these three forms of art. It was a social and political rejection of formal literary concepts where these modes were separated (Zander 1999). Proemdra and black theatre situates Black Consciousness not only as a movement of ideas but also of aesthesis. The examples of the various black theatre creations speak to the concept of black aesthetics. American artist and theorist, Addison Gayle (1970), in his edited volume, Black Aesthetic maps out how the term grew from the erasure

of black art by established white organisations. Similarly, in South African art, black aesthetic rises from the struggle for recognition of black works to be taken seriously. Gayle (1970 p.44) writes: "black aesthetic is a call for a set of rules by which black literature and art [are] to be judged and evaluated [in their terms]". Gayle asserts that artistic production carries specific manifestos about black radical subjectivity. Black aesthetic suggests theatre and other forms of art are intentional in their ideology to take the side of blackness. They challenge the status quo and more critical to "strive for self-determination, self-definition, and embraces blackness in a world where blackness is undesirable" (Mokoena 2017, p. 120).Theatre-maker and writer, Zakes Mda, explains that his creations of the theatre and of literature are rooted in the everyday. "[It] draws from the traditional African aesthetic where art could not be separated from life… the artist as a social commentator," (Mda 1983, p.296). Here, Mda argues that theatre must respond to the political climate of its day.

On the other side of the world, playwright Amiri Baraka (1964) asserts a theatrical manifesto for The Revolutionary Theatre. He asserts that Revolutionary Theatre must teach [white people] their deaths (Baraka 1964). What he means is by this is that theatre must do more than just reveal the plight of the black people. It must also do something to the audience – it must make them feel a violence of sorts. The manifesto is conceptualising radical theatre for black people. His articulation demands that the audience participate, i.e. be attacked. It is what he calls theatre of assault. The aesthetics of such, which is similar to the black consciousness theatre of South Africa, is the theatre of breaking open the lives of blacks to make the audience uncomfortable. It is a form of agitprop (agitation and propaganda), seeking to objectify the black subject so that their lives are like a weapon wielded on the white world.

On the other hand, feminist theatre demands equal rights with men, agitating specifically on four primary issues: equal pay, equal education, equal opportunity, as well as free contraception and abortion on demand. Feminist theatre also uses of agitprop techniques as a form of protest theatre. Here the women make themselves the objects to be seen and weaponised to fight dominant social and cultural systems of representation. Black feminist theatre is the meeting place of the theory and expression of black women's lives. The presence of black women in theatre is minimal and in most areas non-existent. The historical oppressive and exploitative nature of apartheid was such that black women were systematically left out of the processes of

artmaking and production. While black consciousness centres black male experiences and the feminist aesthetic focusses on white females' creation, a black feminist aesthetic is a space where the image of the black female is, as mentioned before, centre-stage.

Black feminism, theatre and the aesthetic

Feminism in theatre, like feminism in society, has been controversial. There is no universal agreement between theatre feminists who want to work within the system and those who want to destroy and build anew. To illustrate the complexity of feminism, a brief overview of feminism is essential here. The first wave of feminism occurs in the 19th and 20th century culminating in women receiving the right to vote – 'Women's suffrage.' This was a significant victory, which also included changes for women in accessing higher education, workplace and shifts in healthcare (Ferguson, Hennessy, and Nagel, 2004). Second-wave feminism demanded that women see their personal lives as political; highlighting the injustices of wages and sexual reproduction rights. This version of feminism focussed on issues of equality (Ferguson, Hennessy, and Nagel, 2004). These feminists highlight the gendered struggle of women within the labour market and the workplace. The intersection of Marxism and feminism is useful in understanding women's dissatisfaction with their experiences being confined to the home; void of political and economic clout. Marxist feminists understand that domestic work is not just about women being homemakers, but the work done by women in the house is for a social function. For the longest time before the feminist articulations the work in the house such as cleaning the house, raising children, and entertaining families are seen as an act of love, an expression of a fundamental role, (Kramarae 1988). The argument from the Marxist feminist was that the work of mothering and taking care of the house should be recognised as productive work that is done to maintain men, and therefore subsidises capitalist exploitation (Maynard and Purvis 2013). Therefore, domestic reproductive work must be recognised as equal to productive labour done by men. What this debate reveals, is the economic and social function of household work and its relation to women's oppression, (Ferguson 2016).

Black women's experiences with work and family during oppression have a different encounter with what freedom means (Davis 1981). Black women experienced not just

racism, but sexism and other forms of oppression. Black postcolonial feminists, however, take the argument further and suggests that the traditional and Marxist feminism analysis is silent on the experiences of black women and questions the universalisation of the oppressed woman (Hill Collins, 1990). They argue that women, black and white, are divided in the working arena. Specifically, black women do not have a separate experience of work since they already work outside the home (Davis 1981, hooks 2000). While white middle-class women, who desire "freedom from housework" (Nilliasca 2011) have separate experiences of work. The reason that black women have a double duty; as a labourer outside the home and as a career of the home. This experience even extends to black women carrying out domestic labour in the homes of white women.

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) suggests that one of the significant problems with traditional feminism is the tendency to isolate race or gender. In her work she employs an intersectional lens that sheds light on the injustice done to black women. Black radical feminists' reason that due to the legacy of colonialism and slavery, women have always been divided along race and class lines. "Middle- and upper-class White women benefited from the continual subjugation of Black women as domestic workers," (Nilliasca 2010 p.383). Intersectionality mainly accounts for the collision of various identities; and how these exist and shape the analysis of social experience. Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality allows for us to understanding how intersecting oppressions such as race and gender are more complex when they are a lived experience in the lived of black women. For example, the domestic worker in South Africa finds herself in this kind of collision, a "three-fold oppression: as blacks; as women; and as workers who largely form a reserve army of labour" (Mohutsioa-Makhudu, 1989: 141). hooks (2000) reasons that some radical feminists are more sensitive to class and race issues since this is their direct social experience. The biggest critique of the debate is that intersectionality deals with structural societal issues at an individual level. The critics say the individual identity level offers nothing to fix or dismantle an unjust system. It only highlights the injustices, and it is identity focused. Critics suggest that the intersectional understanding of self is inadequate because it is does not allow for movement and does not capture the full might of the human condition.

Black feminism is then a declaration of solidarity with black women across varying, social, class and geographical locations. Black feminists use autobiographical narratives and personal experiences of black women to validate black woman worldview (hooks 1990, Hill Collins 1990, Reynolds 2004, Lorde 2007).

Nkiru Nzengwu (1995) contends that the current understandings of gender tend to be predominantly from the west and reflect "the binary opposition underlying western epistemology in which women are defined in opposition to men" (Nzengwu 1995 p.560). She problematizes the universalising posture of western feminism in assuming that the categories "men" and "women" (and by implication, the oppression of women by men" apply to all contexts and cultures. Similarly, theorist Oyeronke Oyewumi's also seeks to challenge the idea of a universal gender categorisation - as imposed by the west on the rest of the world, she argues particularly from the context of the Yoruba (Oyewumi, 1997). She critiques how scholars have overlooked "indigenous categories and experiences" when conducting research (Oyewumi, 2016 p.2). In her book**, What Gender is Motherhood? Changing Yoruba ideals of Power, Procreation and Identity in the Age of Modernity,** she argues that her "objective is to document the indigenous epistemology that has been shunted aside as the new gender-saturated colonial epistemology gains ever-deeper resonance in the culture" (Oyewumi, 2016 p.2). The demise, according to Molara Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) in Re-Creating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformation, offers the term Stiwanism. She suggests that this could be more than one way of describing feminist in an African context). Stiwa stands for: "Social Transformation Including Women in Africa" (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994:229). The term speaks to the "inclusion of African women in the contemporary social and political transformation of Africa," (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994 p.230). Stiwanism aims to free feminists in Africa from accusations of being imitators of Western feminism.

In continuation of other black feminisms; South African theologian, Madipoane Masenya, coins the term Bosadi Approach. This is a biblical interpretation on how to define women and their erasure in theological writings. The term is not a clear breakaway from feminism but an articulation of the role of mosadi as an analysis tool. According to Masenya (1997: 442**) "mosadi** (woman) is a female African - who is conscious of the corporeal mentality of Africans and also respecting it, can stand on her own, affirming her full humanity as a being created in God's image. As an

independent person, she may choose to be involved with a male partner in a marriage relationship though that does not entail that she loses her humanness and independence to her male partner. If she does not choose to be in a marriage relationship, she must be at liberty to remain single" (1997 p.440). Though she has a particular focus on defining woman within church relations, the term offers an analytic tool for African women to read (and write) themselves into existing scholarly works. Mosadi approach shows the various black feminisms that are plural and not concerned with only one way of seeing and reading the world. As a theologian, she starts by suggesting reading the bible in a manner that centres the African woman. She notes the invisibility of black women even in black-liberation theology. She decries male theorists for failing to take the predicament of black women seriously and challenge the "all male Biblical scholarship" (Masenya 1997 p.441). She argues that as humans, we produce space (texts) that makes meaning. These texts are socially produced and carried we as humans make theology what it is (Masenya 1997, p.442). This is important for this these as she opens up space for the women to write themselves into whatever industry they exist in. As a South African theatre-maker, it is important to make a deliberate choice on what it means to be Mosadi in creating work and to also ground the work in an "Africanness". Re-imaginations of feminist theory for black women brings with it the promise of showcasing new knowledge and theatre practice. It allows for one to imagine a black feminist practice that rethinks women's place and location in South African history.

In her book, Black Feminist Performance Aesthetics, Lynette Goddard (2007) tackles the issue that not all black women are feminist. She notes that this makes defining what black feminist theatre complex. "Black women's relations to feminism vary in different cultures and differences between black women, such as age, class or sexual preference undoubtedly influence their feminist sensibilities and performance practices" (Goddard 2007 p. 39). This complexity is reified by already exiting representations of black women in the industries and choices made by black women. Practitioners are then tasked to with either playing to stereotypes or finding and creating alternative representation. A black feminist performance aesthetic is therefore art-from that attempts to perceive black women differently in their complexity. Anderson (2008) writes that black feminist theatre entails work that foregrounds the lives of black women. For Anderson (2008), however, there is a need to distinguish between women's theatre and feminist theatre clearly. Anderson speaks

against homogenising theatre works by female playwrights as automatically feminist in general. This same distinction is required when it comes to black women's work. She writes that there are differences between black women and the political motivations that might drive some practitioners and not others (Anderson 2008). Goodman writes that "women's theatre" is a generic term while "feminist theatre" is a political one (1993, p.31). This distinction is important to emphasise the difference between experience and politics, suggesting that "women's common experience is not necessarily sufficient grounds for assumption of political unification or action" (Goodman 1993, p.31). Therefore, black feminist work is work that actively engages in a consciousness-raising critique of systems of class, gender, race and sexual oppression. This allows for a distinction to be made between black women's theatre and black feminist theatre. Principles of the Black Feminist Aesthetic (Downes 2004):

1. Black women are the main-central characters
2. The work explores the interior lives of black women
3. Setting is an interior, a home, a room, a bedroom.
4. Finally, the work brings the theatricality of the play to light; how the characters use the space to mark themselves.
5. The plays are not linear; they don't follow

For black workers who were part of union organisations, it became increasingly important to not only relate to each other as workers, on immediate problems of work, campaigns and strategies but also to incorporate plays, musical groups and choirs to engage in their worker struggle (Kotze 1987). In the 1970s, the worker and trade union struggle became more forceful in speaking against repression from the apartheid government, and the voices of political activists were increasingly being silenced. Theatre, therefore, in this environment became an essential way of giving voice and articulating complaints. The theatre space was a space to engage in protests that were banned. Theatre in South Africa is not alien to unions and worker issues. It became part and parcel of collaborative efforts of artists, workers and community groups.

Currently, workers are not as vigorously involved in the creation of theatrical work. However, labour issues are still crucial for theatre-makers. Most recently after the Marikana Massacre that occurred in the platinum mines in the North West in 2012, books were written about the massacre. Films such as Miners Shot Down (Desai, 2014) were made. Fine art and photographic exhibitions, such as Women of Marikana

(Moeremang 2015), were put up to highlight the lives of the community and the impact of the deaths on the mine and the community. Plays, like Marikana the Musical, Man in the Green Blanket and many more (Sekhabi 2013,) were performed to speak to the conditions of work of the miners, and the exploitative nature of the labour industry. From protest theatre to struggle songs; the arts have been vital in South Africa to highlight the voices of those who are oppressed. Trumpeter and historical activist, the late Hugh Masekela (2001), has sung about migrant labour, while singers and songwriters such as Caiphus Semenya (1996) and playwrights Matsemela Manaka (1984) have focused firmly on miners and their families. In these cases, the art form expresses the inequalities in these mainstream worker economies. These economies of miners, construction and metal workers are the ones recognised by law as mainstream, and they are also male-dominated. There has been a neglect of black female workers. The female-dominated working economies have not been as clearly articulated in art forms. What this research attempts to do is nothing new. Fine artists such as Zanele Muholi (2008) and Mary Sibande (2009) have created visual art to engage with the role of the domestic worker. What this work does is analyse the role of the domestic worker and its artistic implications, looking at how performing stories about self can elucidate varying experiences and make an argument for embodied knowledge production as research methods. It is from this perspective that the thesis will explore what stories are told in performance about the black domestic worker.

The 'Madam-Maid' contract has been explored in academic writing (Cock 1980, 2011; Ally 2009). It has also been looked at in the satirical comic strip that later became a TV show Madam and Eve. However, the comic does not speak to the invisibility of the work of the maid named Eve. The strip is informed by whiteness in its biases and embraces the stereotype of the maid being untrustworthy, in her cunningness, unwavering loyalty to the white family, and constant ability to give the madam a headache. The comic strip distorts the relations to favour the employer, rather than retell the relations from the maid's view. In Madam and Eve, we see how representations of black women in mainstream narratives issue from the "dominant racial, gender and class ideologies" (Brooks and Hébert 2006, p.299). The figure of the domestic worker is where worker, politics and blackness meet. As a role, she is a political device that is real and at the same time projected onto many other black women across generations.

Why domestic workers?

The South African urban landscape is coloured by women dressed in starched pastel colours of pink, yellow, blue and green. These women are domestic workers; they are an integral facet of the South African landscape. For many of us, they have become an intimate reality of our families as they have raised most of us both as mothers and workers. According to Statistics South Africa, a large portion of the South African workforce – more than 1 million people – is made up of domestic workers. With a total population of about 52 million people in South Africa, a million domestic workers is a lot (Stats SA 2012). For many black women, domestic work is still the go-to source of employment. It is the largest industry in the country and the largest employer of black women, followed by retail. In the 1980s "roughly 89 per cent of domestic servants in South Africa were black, and of these, about 88 per cent were women" (Cock 1989, p. 63). Over the years, this number has grown to 90 percent, according to the International Labour Organisation (2012). Since the domestic workforce is mostly black, the exploitative nature of the work itself becomes racially marked and significant. 'The conditions of [domestic] work are the least protected within one of the most regimented labour forces in the world,' writes Cock (1989, p.63). This intersecting or conflated position of oppressed worker and black woman is of interest to me as a creator and artist. As a director and writer, I have a strong feeling that black women's experiences not only matter, but also are inherently political. When women are suppressed, it makes one wonder how much of their creativity and the capacity to create is also repressed. This becomes interesting for me.

Jacklyn Cock' seminal Maids and Madams (1980) articulated to the world the plight of black women in South Africa. When Shireen Ally (2009) submitted her book From Servants to Workers, it was a key to thinking about how to organise the precarious, in this labour space. For many other researchers, the maid-domestic worker has been a crucial space for feminist articulation and engagement with the class problem that domestic workers pose for scholars. For me, on the other hand, it has been in the realm of being in the role, akin to wearing and living in the skin of another. The engagement with black women who are domestic workers has driven this research to ask more than just about experiences of work, but also about the potential to create, and what meaning one attaches to these kinds of creations. What are the interior lives of the

domestic worker that have not been seen? What similarities and differences are there to other workers and black women's struggles?

The Invisibility Paradox: Performance and Domestic Workers

> "I am an invisible man… I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fibre and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible; understand, simply because people refuse to see me" (Ellison, 1965, p.7)

In the novel Invisible Man, Ellison (1965) speaks to the experience of invisibility and hyper-visibility. Ellsion explains how the experience of invisibility is a key aspect of being black in a white-dominated world. Frantz Fanon (1967) writes that invisibility is about power; blindness that all people have even the black person to the concept of universalized white normality. Ellison reflects on the significance of the experience of not being seen. The narrator, a black man, describes himself as invisible because others refuse to see him (Ellison, 1995, p.7). Being invisible represents a physical state in which someone is visibly being excluded. Counselling psychologist, Anderson Franklin (1999) defines invisibility as a syndrome. A process that occurs when a person feels that they live in a "racialized or depersonalized context in which who they are as a genuine person, including their individual talents and unique abilities, is overshadowed by stereotyped attitudes and prejudice that others hold about them." (Franklin 1999 p.118). In this regard, invisibility is the incorporation into an individual's personal perception the ways they are constructed by others. It is a feeling that, only one's skin colour is relevant, and all ideas and stereotypes attached to it are brought to the fore. Invisibility has a lot to do with powerlessness. It is important to highlight that the conceptualization of invisibility is limited and doesn't include the experiences of black women. It is very interesting that both writers only look at the experience from the male point of view. Franklin (1999) only studies black male and their experiences and reaction to the concept. Ellison's protagonist can only speak to his limited world of being male.

One cannot discuss invisibility without simultaneously discussing visibility. Without visibility, invisibility holds no meaning. This binary is very important to the thesis because it is here that invisibility takes on discourse of being a paradox. What do we mean about invisibility/visibility? The black man often finds himself trapped in a position of invisibility/visibility. On the one hand he struggles to be recognized as being a distinct human; on the other, they endure highly visible stereotypes based on

assumptions of behaviour that threaten their well-being. (Franklin 1999). An invisible man gains his invisibility by means of what other people's visible conceptions of him and, he eventually comes to incorporate his invisibility into his own identity as a crucial component thereof. The paradox is crucial and transformative. It is both an opportunity to be empowered and disempowered; an imposed negotiation of transforming what is deemed valuable. It is also a reconfiguration of meanings of being to the world. For Franklin (1999) the solution is for the black man to find reliance on his community for recognition and validation. He correctly notes that this maybe adequate, but not sufficient, given the persistence of "individual, institutional, and cultural racism directed at people of African descent" (Franklin, 1999, p.762). The process of such stereotyping racism is hyper visibility of black people on one end, and on the other end invisibility. While the world easily renders black people invisible, the black body comes into view, however, when conceptions of sexual-subjection or social disparities are discussed. That is, when Black women's bodies are on display to be ridiculed, or when socio-political agendas use Black women experiences as scapegoats. The ways Black women's bodies are viewed as spectacles in the general public and especially in sex industries, or the leisure and pleasure for men, is rooted in racialized gendered intersections of power, privilege, and oppression (as noted by Shaw, 1999). There is an experience that black people have to deal with, a kind of dichotomy. One is the reality that the world easily renders them invisible. hooks writes that "whites" 'compelled [blacks] to assume the mantle of invisibility, to erase all traces of their subjectivity during the years of slavery and the long years of racial apartheid, so they could be "better and less threatening" servants (1992 p.340). She writes:

> [E]ffective strategy of white supremacist terror and dehumanisation during slavery centred on white control of black gaze. Black slaves and later black servants…would be brutally punished for looking at, or appearing to observe, the whites they were serving, as only a subject can observe, or see… These looking relations were reinforced as whites cultivated the practice of denying the subjectivity of blacks, of relegating them to the realm of invisible… [White people] can live as though black people are invisible and can imagine that they are also invisible to blacks. Some white people may even imagine there is no representation of whiteness in black imagination. (hooks, 1992 p.340)

hooks, in referencing Dyer's (1988) ideas, says that whites "do not imagine that the way whiteness makes its presence felt in black life is, more often, as a terrorizing imposition, a power that wounds, hurts, and tortures" (hooks, 1992 p.341). The fact that South Africa's political economy is a racial capitalist mode of production means that one cannot hope to rid this system of its class exploitative relations without

getting rid of the dialectic of black inferiority and white superiority inherent in the dominant mode of production. The class underpinnings of the black world outlook give it an immediacy surpassing any Afrocentric concerns with place consciousness. (Nakasa p.24) .In various writings on the experience of being a different race, writers have advocated for the need to be seen, the need to be visible. There is a need for diverse voices, cultures and beliefs to be represented in the public; to be people first, and to be recognized as human beings and not to be made into an exotic fetish or to be pathologised, (Hook, 2009; Fanon, 1967). Cock (2011, p.132), says that invisibility is a central feature of racism and she quotes Ellison saying: "I'm invisible simply because people refuse to see me" Cock (2011, p.132) also argues that sexism makes domestic workers invisible, as their work is often trivialised and dismissed as "women's work."

The work of the domestic worker is considered invisible labour because they are required not to be seen. They are required to be invisible, hidden in the homes of their employers. They are also required to not engage in conversation with the employers and guests of the employers. They are seen only as workers in the household, on the one hand, but at the very same time, are incongruously called upon to be also more than workers, but rather part of the family (Dilata 2012). How domestic workers are treated deeply affects and isolates them from other workers. Ally (2009) writes that domestic workers in post-apartheid South Africa are invisible, in the sense that employers expertly manage them - they are denied not only in their ability to be present, but in that, their personhood is denied. They are usually hidden behind closed doors that make them physically invisible, while their needs are ignored, and their voices are unheard. Many employers choose to frame their domestic worker's constant presence and unwavering dedication to their family, children, and belongings as a matter of intimacy and connection. This is typically expressed with the statement "she's part of the family." This claim to kinship, drenched with affection, serves different functions. One, it takes the exploitation of labour out of the equation. Two it erases the worker's own family making them invisible in light of the new family that the domestic has to take care of. And three, it makes the work contract between the employer and the employee seem organic and natural which enforces the exploitative nature of the work. In reality, domestic workers are highly exploited – long working hours with very little pay. The domestics are also stuck in the informal and invisible labour force, which include farmworkers and rural workers. Recently

there has been an attempt to organise the domestic workers into unions. The government has also set up sectoral determinations to underscore minimum wages for domestic workers. However, due to the intimate work in households and their invisibility behind closed doors, the enforcement of the laws is difficult. They have remained 'invisible' – unable to make decisions about their own pay and rights because of being hidden. Since domestic workers are the same people who historically have performed invisible, unappreciated work, the implication is that their lives become invisible too. The majority of the women work in one home, and live there, or divide their work weeks between a few different homes. Silence about the conditions of the domestics' labour in public discourse, in turn, suppresses their stories from dominant narratives. Domestic workers are kept away from their own families, as they have to live at work, most of the time without their children or loved one. They work to maintain and uphold the white family's household economy. Historically, domestic workers were the exclusive privilege of white South Africans. In recent times, more and more black people are also making use of the domestic worker. However, instead of the relationship between 'Madam-Maid' improving it has carried on in the same way. "In apartheid South Africa, the domestic worker, (as well as the gardener) embodied the exploitation that the apartheid state was built on in many white homes," (Cock 2011, p.132). However is this a paradox. Being hyper-visible while at the same time the nature of her work is hidden, is fascinating for this thesis. The role of the domestic worker is easily visible: she is recognisable, clearly adorned in specialised clothes (the uniform), but at the same time, we know nothing about her struggles. She does not disappear. She is ever-present in the nostalgia of the employer for domination, while she also haunts the margins of the working classes. The paradox keeps me in check in order to resist assuming that invisibility is also a fixed silence. The dual nature of the role asserts that even in the invisibility, there is a performance that can be read, and understood as a declarative silence (Hawkins-Owen 2018). Thus, I am interested in the struggle of the domestic worker as it speaks directly to the economy and community, and everyday practices of black women in South Africa.

What I am actually thinking through in this work is how black women's work may be reconsidered as always already intellectual valued work and a radical practice that can be made visible. As Saidya Hartman () writes in Wayward lives, making visible

the in Visibility is linked to value, so to intervene in the visibility/invisibility of the domestic worker is to transform the order of value, and to bring to view the everyday.

Summary of section

In this section, the study has looked at the framework of black feminism and black theatre, thereby locating the research in a lineage of women writers, black theatre makers and the aesthetics of black feminist theatre. This echoes McKittrick's (2016) offer of a black aesthetic that is rooted in everyday lives, or what Mignolo & Vázquez (2013) call a decolonial aesthesis. The study rearticulates its contribution to knowledge, which is a practice of black feminist theatremaking, revealing the radicalness of lived experiences. The black feminist theatremaking aesthetic is a model for rehearsing black identity in spaces of the black community, thus situating research in the body. Finally, a note on invisibility and visibility paradox is dealt with in order to articulate the impossibility of having to exist as black, woman, domestic worker.

On Method and Ways of Knowing

"An invitation to write and read from the flesh, in order to turn our gaze towards questioning the structures of knowledge production in the Western academy" (Kumar, 2014, p. 5)

There is something enchanting in performance; a body in motion, the act of doing. It leaves the observer and doer enthralled. Performance as act, and the subjective nature of performance, poses unique challenges for this thesis. To attempt to unravel these challenges, this thesis will do two things: engage in a theoretical write-up on the possibilities that performance allows, then explore what a performance methodology that centres black women's experiences might look like. The study is located in the performance as research area, as well as performance as a process or laboratory for engaging communities on their own issues. The plays are an example of a form of subversive black, feminist theatre representing black female roles/identities, in situations that reflect black existence.

Speculative nature of performance and research

Research is understood as an original investigation undertaken to gain knowledge and understanding. According to Dancy (1985), knowledge is justified, true, belief. Thus, knowledge is linked to individual experience and what that individual explains as belief. In this definition, Dancy (1985) argues that knowledge is intricately linked to the body, and that bodily experience constitutes evidence. "Knowledge is not something out of our world or divided by inner life; it represents a close relationship between body (with its perceptions, sensations and reactions) and material world" (Pentassuglia, 2017, p. 3). In his paper Philosophy in the Flesh, Nick Rowe writes that "the structure of our thinking, reasoning, and understanding of the world, is shaped bodily." (2000 p.13). He draws his line of thought from Lakoff and Johnson (1999) who a year earlier argue that "reason is embodied" (p. 2) We all engage in research as an exercise to find something out. Traditional research requires that knowledge is created and communicated in words. However, recent research in psychology and the theorists I have mentioned show that inputs to knowledge production range from bodily perceptions, emotions, reason, memory and language to words (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, Eerland, Guadalupe, & Zwann 2011). When engaged in the process of knowledge-making or ways of knowing, it is interesting to note how information and

awareness of the world are created, referenced and made valid. Barrett and Bolt (2007) argue that knowledge is derived from doing and using one's senses. This process of doing and using of senses is most present in creative arts research. The authors argue that using the arts to problematise social issues is a means to develop new insights into practice and theory.

The two main Western academic approaches to research are the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Quantitative methodologies embrace the scientific method, which assumes that the world consists of universal social facts (Leavy, 2009). Quantitative researchers believe that "a knowable reality exists independently of the research process and this reality consists of a knowable 'truth' which can be discovered, measured, and controlled via the objective means employed by neutral researchers" (Leavy, 2009, p. 5). Here reality is stable, observable and can be measured; knowledge is obtained using the scientific method, which is objective and measurable. Qualitative research focuses on interpretation, to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to their settings. Qualitative research attempts to understand the unique interactions in a particular situation (Leavy, 2009). In this research, meaning-making is key. It is how people make sense of the world they live in and the experiences they have undergone.

Performance is a process of engaging in forms of interpretation, speculation or risk-taking. The creative force and focus inform the possibility of uncovering and presenting a novel and new product. Speculation informs conventional research, where the potential for discovering new knowledge is also praised. This study explores performance as a theatremaking and research activity. In both instances, it shows up as process, product, and discourse. When one thinks of performance as research, it is the conflation of two doing activities: doing – performance and doing – research. As artists and creators, we are usually engaged in the process of doing background inquiries on the work we want to create, asking questions, observing human behaviour and analysing techniques and information to serve the production. In the book Practice as Research in the Arts, Nelson (2013) writes on the materiality of knowledge which is based in experiential practice. "I know how to ride a bicycle, but I cannot say how I balance because I have no method … to know how to ride a bicycle is to ride it" (Nelson 2013, p. 25). This idea of doing captures the materiality of

knowing and that knowledge sits in the body. In our pursuit to create knowledge by being in the body, it is therefore vital to not be overly consumed with how exact or close it is to traditional research. Barone (2013) advocates for an arts-based method of research to be acknowledged and included as a valid mode of qualitative method of research. Using the ideas of Nelson (2013) on knowing, and its materiality in experience, this study takes the stance of Springgay, Irwin and Kind (2005) which is that arts-based research methods "need to be understood as methodologies in their own right, not just as extensions of qualitative research" (2005, p. 898). In this way, performance and other arts-based methodologies can discover their own course of action and meaning. This is not to overly argue the novelty of the method, but to allow for this type of research to unfold in conversation with the existing criteria. Performance as qualitative research invokes the phenomenological, i.e. the subjective experience, perception, knowledge, projection of the individual participants. This could easily be dance, or non-verbal expressions like a smile, scowl etc., which are already elements of qualitative research.

Given this stance, I posit that performance research can contribute to a knowledge-based on its understanding of itself as a form of knowledge, locating as central and fundamental the process of doing or making. In traditional performance and theatre production, great significance is placed on the product of performance and the artmaking process. It is, therefore, my position that performance as an activity of the body, can be grounds for knowledge-production, especially regarding the limitations of words and language in the expression of being human. We are all aware that life experiences at times exceed the limitations of the written word (Turner, 1975) because these experiences are lived (embodied) and performed. Moore and Yamamoto (1988, p. 88), researchers in dance and movement, write:

> The body knowledge we have regarding the meaning of movement is based on generalisations drawn from our own embodied experiences. Our body knowledge becomes the guidebook we use to organise the world beyond words, to judge actions, and to gauge our reactions to the movements of others.

Performance as a research method also focuses on meaning-making that the body makes. It encompasses the activities of artistic and analytical (observable) truth. In the qualitative research sphere, process-led research is an accepted methodology in medicine, and engineering, known as action research (McNiff, 2013.) Action research

is concerned with participatory experiments as opposed to pre-defined laboratory work.

The methodological challenge that is raised is regarding the efficacy of theatre as a tool for analysis. It allows for the research to question more than the traditional Cartesian modes of knowing by offering a space for reading the body as knowledge maker. We are invited to acknowledge that the body knows more than what traditional research asserts, as articulated by Brah (1999, p. 5):

> Knowing is not so much about the assemblage of existing knowledge as it is about recognising our constitution as 'ourselves' within the fragments that we process as knowledge; 'hailing' and being 'hailed' within the discourses that produce us and the narratives we spin; directing our socially, culturally, psychically, and spiritually marked focus of attention upon that which we appropriate as "data" or "evidence".

Brah suggests that we acquire and enact knowledge through experience. Life experiences, at times, exceed the limitations of categorical language in the written, verbal form. Performance links sociology, performative arts and cultural studies (Saldana, 2008, p. 177). As a method of research, it has roots in qualitative inquiry and theatre. It can be thought to have an allegiance with social science in general, and anthropology in particular. For this thesis, I am interested in varying definitions of performance. One thinks of performance as a democratic tool that requires a collective creation, thereby enlarging the experiences that are presented. It validates each voice, each story and multiple experiences. In this kind of storytelling, one is able to re-construct identities, answer questions about who we are and what we believe. Performance as research does not only focus on collecting data but also on recording, analysing or interpreting data through performance. Performance, therefore, becomes a tool for creating data; it is generative (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2013). This method is suited for this study as it is an action-based research method that uses simultaneous dramaturgy, "where the performer collects stories as data, shares their own story mixes with others oral storytelling" (Saldana, 2008, p. 178). The experience of creating a play as research is like the process of riding a bicycle. One learns the aspects and nuances of the research through the experience of creating. I learnt the literature through the ride. Particular moments, encounters, concepts and creations in the play can be engaged with using literature.

This research adds to knowledge of the genre of performance as research regarding how to design a method of research; for instance, how personal (auto-ethnographic) recollections can be a research component. The research also offers a critical method for examining plays and stage constructions of blackness, particularly black women, as created by black women. This method of research is performance as research. Performance is used in a myriad of ways to articulate latent and invisible forms of knowledge. Performance as research is a radicalising process of knowing; this thesis attempts to offer another way of reading domestic workers as knowledge creators and meaning makers of their world.

This thesis focuses on how performance is a valid mode of knowledge production by looking at the lives of domestic workers. It is an attempt to build a bridge between performance and theory on domestic workers, personal narratives and the practice of theatremaking. By triangulating everyday performances and presentations of theatre as knowledge-making, I discuss three plays I have created. The first is a way of looking at the relational role of domestic worker and their madams and how these have been represented. The second was created with a group of domestic workers, and here performance is employed as a strategy for collecting data and exploring ethics in theatre practice. The third is a reflective production which is then analysed. In the third play, I look at the process of creating, or how as an artist I engaged in a kind of embodied non-objective research, analysing the findings through performance. Through these plays, performance is used to interpret and name phenomena, and frame strategies used to elicit stories, perform them and rework them.

Normally performance and theatre studies place great significance on the product of performance and the artmaking process. Consequently, we understand that not all performance production is a form of knowledge. Black feminist theory places my work within the conversation of how we create new knowledge on blackness. The two theories, together with performance as research, allows me to connect my personal experience as a black woman theatre director whose work has political and social significance. I am able to combine academic practices and research with practical experiences of performance and everyday dramaturgy, creating a theatrical experience that remains 'true' to the participants and audiences.

What is performance?

Performance is a term that has come to mean many things to various people in different industries, from a measure of employee deliverables to the full functioning of a vehicle or capacity for speed. These various meanings can make the word mean any and everything. It is, therefore, important for this project to delineate the limits and possibilities of the term performance. Whether as Richard Schechner's notion of "twice-behaved behaviour," (1991) or Judith Butler's concept of performativity (1990), or what Rebecca Schneider (2001) calls the "explicit body performance", performance can be constituted of several things. Is performance drama, theatre, theory, performance art, research or all of the above?

Performance is used as an organising idea (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) for this study. It is a way of thinking about the world and ordering the world. What we know is that human practices are performed. What I am attempting to do is to emphasise that from a theoretical point of view, performance is an encompassing concept. Thus, traditional everyday acts are transformed into socially, culturally revolutionary acts. I want to keep the art form at the centre. The focus will be to turn performance towards theatrical presentation and also theoretical imagination. Performance is a continuum. For this thesis, the various iterations of performance we are interested in are:

- Performance as artmaking
- Performance as action (performativity)
- Performance as theory and as research

The terms are linked to how I have come to engage with performance – as research, as life experiences, and as work. With all these possible meanings of the term, performance can be thought of as elusive, abstract and vague, what Schechner (1991, p. 198) describes as a snake in the grass: "where the tail of this snake is pointing that is not where it's going".

Performance as artmaking

A performance as art is an event. It can be bound to a theatrical act or social act or productive act. When Schechner (1991) asserts that performance is twice behaved, he suggests that in performance, bodies do the behaviour twice. They do the behaviour as normal every day. But also do the behaviour or act as performer, which requires a

form of thought in order to articulate the act. Reality in this insistence is doubled up. Double-ness of performance is also experienced when meaning is made from the behaviour. What is acted out in an artmaking moment can influence how the similar behaviour is re-imagined in the everyday.

Performance as artmaking has a number of properties, one of which is that it is ephemeral. Performance – as a trope, as practice, and now as an interdisciplinary field of study – is everywhere. In more recent times the concept 'performance' has received an interdisciplinary constellation through the elaboration of theories in social sciences and performance studies. The interdisciplinary field borrows from theatre anthropology, sociology, art history, and cultural studies. It examines a broad range of performances on and off the stage, live and recorded, including performance art, storytelling, celebrations, political speeches, concerts, protests, street happenings, and everyday encounters.

***What is performativity*?**

Performativity brings our discussion into the realm of everyday life. As reflected in the famous Shakespeare quote of: "All the world is a stage" (1963, Act II Scene VII). Sociologist Erving Goffman (1975, p. xi) defines the performance of self in everyday life as "the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents herself or her activity to others". Norman Denzin (2003 p. x) takes the concept further and states that "we inhabit a performance-based, dramaturgical culture", meaning that everyday actions can be viewed as a performance.

> "Jacques: All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players;
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being seven ages." (Shakespeare 1963, Act II Scene VII)

From the onset of thinking about performativity, it should be said that performance and performativity are not interchangeable terms. Butler (1990) helps by making the distinction between performance as understood on stage and performativity as a social activity. Performativity is the doing, the action (Austin, 1975). Performance is what was done. However, the difference between the two terms has vanished (Conquergood, 1998). Everyday performances are a sort of rehearsal process that

consists of the repetition and revision of previous rehearsals (activities). Theatre in traditional form, like everyday life, is produced by repetitions. In their article, The Work of Performativity: Staging Social Justice at the University of Southern California, Donna Houston and Laura Pulido (2002) take performativity out of the abstract realm and put it back into the everyday lives of workers in particular. The article explores how workers at the University of Southern California created performing communities to resist against low wages and other worker struggles. Performativity in this frame has a dialectical function. It connected creative work of theatre making and political work of protest. The work that the collective did was to make the everyday work itself a performance and a protest. The authors write: "Although the trope of performativity has provided a necessary corrective to formulaic notions of identity and resistance, we also feel that there is an urgent need to reconnect performativity to historical materialism and collective social action" (Houston & Pulido 2002, p. 402). In this form, performativity links work and everyday practices. This thinking is important for this research as the connection between labour, everyday work and imagination is novel. The connection allows for the contribution this thesis seeks to make, that knowledge production is also the speciality of the everyday life of women and the imaginative creations of women. By this I mean what documentary theatre playwright, actress, Anna Deveare Smith (2000) means when she says that it is insufficient for artists to "study" issues and ideas like traditional academics – she insists that artists need to "become the material" (Smith, 2000, p. 96). The everyday forms of performativity and the materiality of knowledge foregrounds women's narratives of their own experiences and fills a gap in our understanding of their experiences.

The paradox of performance

The enigma of "to or not to be" posed by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, haunts performance. In this iteration or questioning, performance is questioned for its apparent existence and non-existence. In representation performances signify; 'as not real,' 'as a joke'. This postures a pretence of sorts. Relating to the earlier discussion on paradox of invisibility and visibility, it is interesting to note how as society we also posit stereotypes, 'as performance', 'as not real,' as 'just a joke'. Performance in then not only slippery but also paradoxical. As it makes visible what would have be not made public it also shades and hides in the assumptions of not being real. This is a dilemma

as it then questions ideas of knowledge. We imagine knowledge as truth and real. Therefore to position performance in this idea of not 'real life' is a complex experiment. The research does not offer clear answers. However, it does unearth more questions to argue for performance as knowledge production. The paradoxical nature of performance allows for the existence of the research, to make visible and to engage in silences on other aspects.

What is Performance as Research for this thesis?

Performance as research is simultaneously a site for conversation, "a discursive method, and a communicative format that produces knowledge" (Denzin, 2003, p. 27). The first part of any research is data collection. In Part I of this research study, I created a play, Between Sisters, to ask a question. This turned out to be a number of questions, all of which informed the proposal and the research. In Part II, I created a performance process with the group of women who are domestic workers to elicit stories, create stories and reflect on the stories. The theatre process was more story-making and not necessarily a theatre production in the traditional Euro-American sense, i.e. long rehearsals, scripting, memorising of lines and presentation to a paying audience for entertainment. We used performance techniques and processes to analyse, sift, and work through the data. This included an embodied and imaginative engagement. In this way, I imagined a process of embodying the material (stories, videos, and audio) as a way to understand the performances witnessed. This choice is in contrast to orthodox research processes that focus on the processes of the mind.

There are several arts-based research innovations that merit our attention as they involve dramatic improvisation, performance, and other dramatic processes as primary qualitative approaches to inquiry. These include a/r/tography (Springay et al., 2008), an arts-based research framework that encourages researchers to acknowledge their separated but interrelated roles as artists, researchers, and teachers. In this process, the researcher-artist allows for questions to arise and shape the research, rather than entering the process with a set of clear question and claims to knowledge. A/r/tography incorporates the process of artmaking with the intention of influencing teaching practice. The process challenges "the desire for one final stable or fixed meaning" (Irwin et al., 2018, p. 50). This means that the emphasis is more on

the process as praxis/methodology, focussing on "artistic inquiry and becoming" (Boulton, Grauer, & Irwin, 2017, p. 200).

In Performative Inquiry, Fels (2012) suggests that the researcher and audience of research consider the senses, presences, absences, that can be embodied in any artform. Through the performance (or what the author names as the encounter) new understanding is awakened. The emphasis is on performance which should give new knowledge to the artist and audience. Fels (2012) involves activities such as role-play, improvisation, and tableau. Belliveau (2008, p. 24 state that such an approach "provid[es] opportunities for participants to actively embody, reflect on, and make connections between their experiences, relationships, and everyday encounters".

Duo-ethnography is a methodology where researchers use their life histories to show and reveal multiple understandings of a social phenomenon (Sawyer and Norris 2012). Ethnodrama is the "written transformation and adaptation of ethnographic research data (e.g., interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, statistics) into a dramatic playscript" (Mienczakowski, 2001; Saldana, 2008, p. 283). Ethnotheatre is the performance of an ethnocratic playscript (Saldana, 2008). Performance auto/ethnography (Denzin, 2003) is the personalisation process of taking lives into performance. In Playbuilding, as Research Norris (2011) uses drama-based processes with theatre groups as focus groups. In this context, the drama is a "collective creation" and there is no division between the researcher and participants. The cast (referred to as the informants in traditional qualitative research) provide the initial data, out of which a performance emerges via a drama-based process of analysis and dissemination (Leavy, 2009, p. 142).

Types of Performances in Performance as Research

Through all these different research methods what is common is that theatre is a good way of analysing data and communicating the data. In the various methods, theatre is used to translate and communicate in an embodied and emotive way what would ordinarily become written research only. With all these different methods there are different ways of performing the data.

The most common has been non-theatrical performances. One of the on-going debates with performance researchers has been how performativity and theatricality may have taken a backseat (Mienczakowski 2001). The non-theatrical includes a performance that does not adhere to the conventions of traditional theatre. At times the performance does away with the set, or costume. In Denzin (2003) and Saldana (2008) - performances that were based on Turner and Schechner's notions of ethnodrama - the focus was on script. The script is made up of interview responses from the participants. The interviews are performed as a reading by researchers or actresses. The aim of the performances was to translate the data to reach larger audiences. The non-theatricality of the performances has left many researchers unhappy. This has led to other forms of ethnodramas. An example of a non-theatrical performances that tries to be as close to theatre as possible is Anna Deveare Smith's work of Documentary Theatre (Smith 2008). In her plays, she collects stories in interview form and performs the interviews as monologues. What makes her work theatrically appealing is her use of costumes and her ability to embody each and every one of the interviewees. Her focus is more on the content, which is aimed at addressing a specific social phenomenon; for example, Rodney King's murder, riots in Brooklyn etc.

Another form of performance that translates research data into performance is Theatre for Development (Chinyowa 2012) and Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 1974). In both of these genres of performance, theatre is a form of staging knowledge that has been collected from participants or a community. In Theatre for Development the aim is to educate and empower the audience of the staged data to make changes or shifts in their lives. In Theatre of the Oppressed the aim is to activate the audience into action. The data is not only performed but the audience makes an input to the data and shapes it for the next staging. Similar to non-theatrical performances of ethnodrama these two genres of theatre don't use many conventions of traditional theatre. The performances can occur anywhere outside a theatre building, there is no set script, the content is scripted and improvised, costumes and set are used minimally, etc. The focus is on content, or the message that provides commentary on society.

Professional/ Fictional performance can also be a type research performance. This includes performances that have a form of theatricality, while they are performed in professional or in community spaces. The main focus in these performances is a

staging of the performance that is based on research findings, but the performance is made fictional. In South Africa the convention of community and protest theatre is based on this. It is theatre created from stories of the community and is fictionalised for an audience (Hutchison 2018b). The researcher together with the participants are also performers and producers. The participants share their stories and they create a fictional performance that reveals their discoveries and knowledge. For this research this has become what I call Story Circles.

Story Circles as Method

Story Circles is a group storytelling method. According to Snowden (2000), it is a research method that allows for a group of research participants to share their stories in a non-intrusive manner. It is used in both research and community building strategies (Michna 2009). Kaufman (2007) writes that the story circle can be used to learn about a community's stories. It is a structured process where individuals tell stories to the group. Each individual has a limited time to tell. For Snowden, the storytelling is more organic than the process of asking individuals questions. The method of interviews only accessed superficial knowledge, while stories went in deeper. Participants not only shared their cognitive knowledge but they recreated an experience for both listener and teller. This then accessed the way people learn naturally through experiences. He also argues that is also a non-invasive way to communicate values and complex tacit knowledge (Snowden 2000).

I first encountered the idea of Story Circles in 2011 in New York and Cape Town, when I became a part of a community engagement filmmaking project, Kino Kadre, led by Euguene Paramoer. He explained that the circle is concerned with the making of stories outside formalised industry models. The circle places strong emphasis on skills sharing and is situated in the context of community participation (Paramoer, 2012, personal communication). The circle is a space where people can come as they are, to lend an ear to hear or share a story that will make them laugh, cry, and cheer in real life. In this context the story circle was a tool of resistance. It can be used by women to document their struggles, goals, triumphs, stories, and engage the legacy of black women and how they reimagine themselves through the lens of performance.

The Story Circles reminds me that one is creating within a tradition and lineage of women creatives. The plays created are building on that lineage. As one person shares a story it is passed from one human to another, from one generation to the next. Here we bear witness to each other and also to the ordering of knowledge, providing distilled wisdom of each age for those who follow us (Gersie & King, 1990). Story circles are not new but, used intentionally, they are a way of creating community. Black feminist aesthetics has community focus as a tenet (Anderson, 2008). In that regard it is a rupture from the model of the individual director or visionary that is seen in traditional theatre. I am suggesting that the concept of story circles is a black feminist theatre aesthetic because it is a meeting place of theory and the expression of black women's lives. The presence of black women in theatre has been minimal and, in most places, non-existent. The historically oppressive and exploitative nature of apartheid was such that black women were systematically left out of the processes of artmaking and production. Historically, black consciousness theatre centred black male experiences (Penfold, 2017) and feminist theatre focused on white females' creations (Goodman, 1993). In a black feminist aesthetic, the image of the black female takes centre-stage (Anderson, 2008). The circle is therefore a rare space for black women to share, collaborate, reimagine the possibilities and teach one another. Story circles as a black feminist theatre aesthetic entails work that foregrounds the lives of black women (Anderson, 2008). The story can be told through different art forms whether this be acting, moving, or painting; the story is there. If we tell our own story we give the recipient knowledge and they can then share in our story. It evolves as the next person shares it. Gersie and King (1993, p. XX) explore the "structures of myths and cross-cultural stories" in their method of artmaking. The use of appropriate stories helps the "individuals clarify and work through particular dilemmas" (Landy, 1994, p. 56).

Diakhaté and Eyoh (2017) refer to theatre in Africa as a mixture of the sacred and the ordinary and thus has always been an integral part of the functioning of African society. Everyday events give rise to theatrical expressions where song and dance and "verbal parody" are used to express, communicate and interpret events. The importance of creating and sharing our stories lies in the fact that stories are timeless and convey the vast wealth of the psyche. They provoke thinking, are meaning makers, and teach and inspire us to new ways of being (Campbell, 1988 cited in, Beglau, 2012). The way I am seeing theatremaking as theatre is in the word "making."

This refers to the process whereby we take the experience from our inner world, give it form, and make it accessible to those in our outer world (Busika, 2015; King, 1993). This gives us a voice, and theatremaking then becomes a unique statement of how we truly think and feel and describes aspects of who we are as well as what we are. It requires imagination which all human beings have even if they are detached from it. As a theatremaking process, it is adaptive in finding ways to engage the imagination metaphorically. We use stories to create stories. The story circle process consistently points out the ways in which it relates back to the where the group wants to go. The story circle is the group creating their own stories. In South Africa, we have a long history of storytelling. "The oral narrative compromises of: Iintsomi (Xhosa), the Inganekwana (Zulu), the Tsomo (Sotho) and Dinaane (Tswana)" (Busika, 2014, p.23). Storymaking is adaptive in finding the way to engage the imagination metaphorically. In story circles one would use stories to collect more stories to hint at more stories. It is a rooted in the long tradition of Iintsomi. Where a collaborative space is created, a teller or performer would start with: "Kwasuka sukela Ngentsomi, or Yathi Iintsomi" (Busika 2014, p.23). Here the performer, by verbal narrative, gesture, mime, dance-song and chant will rhythmically start to build up the world of Iintsomi and draw all listeners into sharing that world with her. Apart from the inherent tradition, it is the community gathered around the teller who are her chief resource; i.e. they are her fellow artists (Morris, 1989).

Story Circles as a process embraces the paradox of possible and impossible. The story is told, and a discussion takes places based off interruption. The stories articulate thought and they give people a chance to speak about something without necessarily having to commit themselves to a clear or explicit opinion. The circle process uses imagery and reflection. It is a process of creative interpretation. The basic structure of designing a story circle is:

1. A story is told,
2. Another story is told that participant's feel it relates to the one already told.
3. The story can be fictional, personal or someone else's story.
4. Song is used to bridge between stories – to allow participants to think of their own stories or get excited about telling a story.
5. Then one story is selected to be acted. The story is chosen by the group. It is one they feel will relate to where they currently are.

6. Many of these stories used are traditional stories from around the world that would have many viewpoints and can be interpreted differently.
7. Story circles allow for many and varied stories to be told. This encourages the participants to speak up with no fear of judgment.

The use of story in research or creating a play allows for subjective views and experiences to be seen. The story through narration and enactment elevates voices that would not necessarily be heard. Through fictional stories and real ones, women in particular are able to narrate their subjective interpretations of their journeys. In academia, narratives are "often dismissed as invalid sources of academic knowledge," (Magubane 2004, p.2). But by using stories in collecting data one "challenges neutral objective social science which tends to reproduce 'black' and 'female' as devoid of reason and therefore substandard and subhuman" (Kihato 2007, p.94) "Spontaneity and creativity will help people deal with resistance, discover new possibilities and develop adequate solutions through the creation of new roles and transformation of old roles" (Lipman 2003, p.8). Stories help to broaden the roles and perception of the storymaker. On the other hand one can argue that if the story told does not resonate with the audience, is the goal achieved? This may be something to look into further, however one would hope the leader has the tools and or resources to guide the process. So much of the work relies on an improvisational approach which is ultimately informed by all approaches. In the act of recall and telling, stories create and confirm a process. The act of storymaking heals and embraces the contradictions.

In this study, Story Circle was a process that included performance inquiry, playbuilding and ethnodrama. I created performance processes to ask a question (Fels [2012] – performance inquiry), to collect data (Norris [2017] – playbuilding as research), and to analyse, sift, and work through embodied data, as well as to present the data in a performance mode (Saldana [2008] – ethnodrama).

Between Sisters was created as a performance inquiry about domestic workers in South Africa. "Performative inquiry does not provide a method nor steps to follow, but rather offers researchers and educators a way of inquiring into what matters as we engage in drama or theatre activities" (Fels 2012, p.51). Between Sisters is an exploration of two sisters who are domestic workers and their relationship with their madam. The play is inspired by Jean Genet's The Maids (1954), and Xoliswa Dilata's

master's dissertation Between 'Sisters': A Study of the Employment Relationship Between African Domestic Workers and African Employers in the Townships of Soweto (Dilata 2010) on the relationship between black madams and their black employees. The play brings into focus the masks we wear in daily life and the roles we play that define us without capturing our true selves. In the play, the two sisters imagine themselves out of the life of being domestic workers. They act out possibilities. In acting these out, they realise there is no way out of their current state but to kill their employer. The reason is that once they kill their employer, they will inherit everything she has. They plot a plan to kill her, but it doesn't come together. They end up fighting and blaming each other and finally, considering ending it all.

I then facilitated a collective storytelling and playbuilding (Norris 2017) process with a community of domestic workers who shared historical legacies and current experiences of work. In our work we created stories and theatre that was significant for the domestic workers, this culminated in a play/show Dipina tsa Monyanyako. The play building process included a number of facilitated sessions that brought about the collectively created play (Norris, 2017). There was a desire to direct the topics of the plays, but these soon changed to what the group wanted.

Dipina tsa Monyanyako is an improvised performance that is made up of episodic stories looking at parenting close by and parenting from afar in relation to social ills such as drugs, and love affairs and the failure of the church. The play is performed by BoMme ba Berrario (Helping Hands Berrario: HBBO). It opens with a song; "iyelele siyenzanje na;" [we do things this way]. The song introduces the group of performers. Then a praise poet takes the introduction further to clearly state to the audience why the performance is important, who they are and what the performance will entail. A song links the introduction to the first story. In the first story, about the Raboroko Family, the two daughters of the family refuse to seek out work or go to school. Their mother works as a seamstress in the city; the father is an IT worker at the Post Office. The first daughter drops out of high school and soon after the second one follows. They sit all day on their phones and create cons to swindle the grandma of her money. This is linked by a song, and a brief monologue as to why the stories are so personal. The narrator role is shared amongst BoMama. The second story is about the Mosweu Family, which is made up of the grandparents who live with the children in the North West province, South Africa while the mother lives in Johannesburg as a domestic

worker with a new lover. Their story is about how the mother has seemingly forgotten her responsibilities towards the children and her parents, and the influence of the city and a new boyfriend on her being. The third story is about the Tiza Family, which represents all women who are accomplished but struggle with finding love.

Finally, I workshopped and wrote a reflexive play, Postcards: Bodily Preserve, reflecting on my experiences with the domestic workers. The play reveals visceral knowledge, or what I was left with. This was an embodied and imaginative engagement. I created a process of embodying the stories as a way to understand the performances witnessed. This choice is in contrast to orthodox research processes that focus on the processes of the mind. As discussed already, documentary theatre playwright , Anna Deveare Smith (2000) says that it is insufficient for artists to "study" issues and ideas like traditional academics, but instead, need to "become the material" (Smith 2000, p. 96). This idea of 'embodying' speaks to what this research attempts to do: "To study [as an artist], you enter into a situation with your whole being, you listen and then begin to move around inside it with your imagination. You can study every situation you are in. You can learn to read life while life is happening" (Bogart, 2001, p. 2).

Postcards: Bodily Preserves is an episodic play that explores how trauma and stories are stored in our bodies. In the play, a woman called Maleeto is introduced to women she finds as body parts in her lover's house. She questions the reliability of witnessing their trauma, their experiences and the faithfulness of narrative. She, together with the women, embody the stories because that is what trauma demands. The recollection of stories/trauma does not happen in the clear, linear way in which we are used to thinking about memory. Sometimes, happenings can be a blink in reality. The play is about how we store memories, and in particular, how we preserve records in our bodies because there is something in them that defies understanding, but yet our desire to want to grasp the conspicuous, the feverish. The play comes from a space of being trapped in this body of human, woman, and noting all the postcards, letters, notes that life has left. Performed by Faith Busika and Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza, choreographed by Lerato Sekhibane, it draws heavily from orality, storytelling, rituals, and celebrations. The performance examines how bodily behaviours are repeatable and embodied activities, and how these bodily encounters change due to context, space, gender or politics. The play is about unforgettable female characters. It

brings to life a series of harrowing stories that weave together each character's friends, family, lovers, and therapists into an explosive narrative that uncovers the darkest corners of humanity — and shatters our notions about trauma. The play was presented in a gallery rather than a theatre.

Sumary of section

Story Circle is offered as a method for performance as research. In this section I critically examine examples of performance as research methods that have used theatre for the purposes of data analysis or translation. Story Circles is then explained as a method employed in the process of collecting data. The plays are used as examples of the Story Circle method. The following chapters will explore how the circles were created and how they were used.

PART II

Between Sisters: Role and Counter Roles

(*A version of this chapter has been submitted to be published in an edited volume. The citation reads*:
Lepere, R., (2021) 'Between Sisters: A case for Black Feminist Theatre-making Aesthetic' in *Arts, Development and Democracy in Contemporary South Africa* Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (Mistra): Johannesburg)

> *"We smile and tell him or her something that satisfies the white person because, knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing. […] The theory behind our tactics. The white man is always trying to know into somebody else's business. All right, I'll set something outside the door of my mind for him to play with and handle. He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind. I'll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll say my say and sing my song." (Hurston 1935, p. 5)*

The above quote by anthropologist and novelist Zora Neale Hurston captures so much more of what is hidden from a researcher, not only for the white researcher but, at times, the black one too. In the line: "I'll say my say and sing my song," Hurston encapsulates the other way that black subjects make hidden knowledge public knowledge – by performing. More specifically, in creating and performing. By singing she is saying it is out of the reach of the researcher.

In this section I reflect on the process of creating the play Between Sisters. It was created early on in the research journey. It was used to unpack some theoretical understandings of the history of domestic worker employment in South Africa, as well as the role of the domestic worker, and what it represents. I also wanted to unpack the challenges present in staging this kind of role, from costuming to scripting. I wanted to explore the performative nature of the role of domestic worker – exploring historical literature and artistic representations of the maid in South Africa's iconography. I draw on a number of sources to help me think through that role, and to think through my own research process, including academic texts, performance and artistic texts, and novels. I engage in a discussion of how as a facilitator and director, these roles helped me make sense of the domestic worker as a role in the world and a role on stage.

Between Sisters

In 2016 Between Sisters was staged at the Wits Theatre, the Olive Tree Theatre in Alexandra Township and then at the Hexagon Theatre in Pietermaritzburg in 2017

(Figure 1). I went into the rehearsal with questions and treated the process more as a research lab. The various performances of the play were a way of thinking through what the research process is and what it would become. The first iteration of the play was created before my submission of the proposal for this research. In the write-up for the proposal, I did not reflect on the play, however doing the play helped me to read and understand the literature for the proposal.

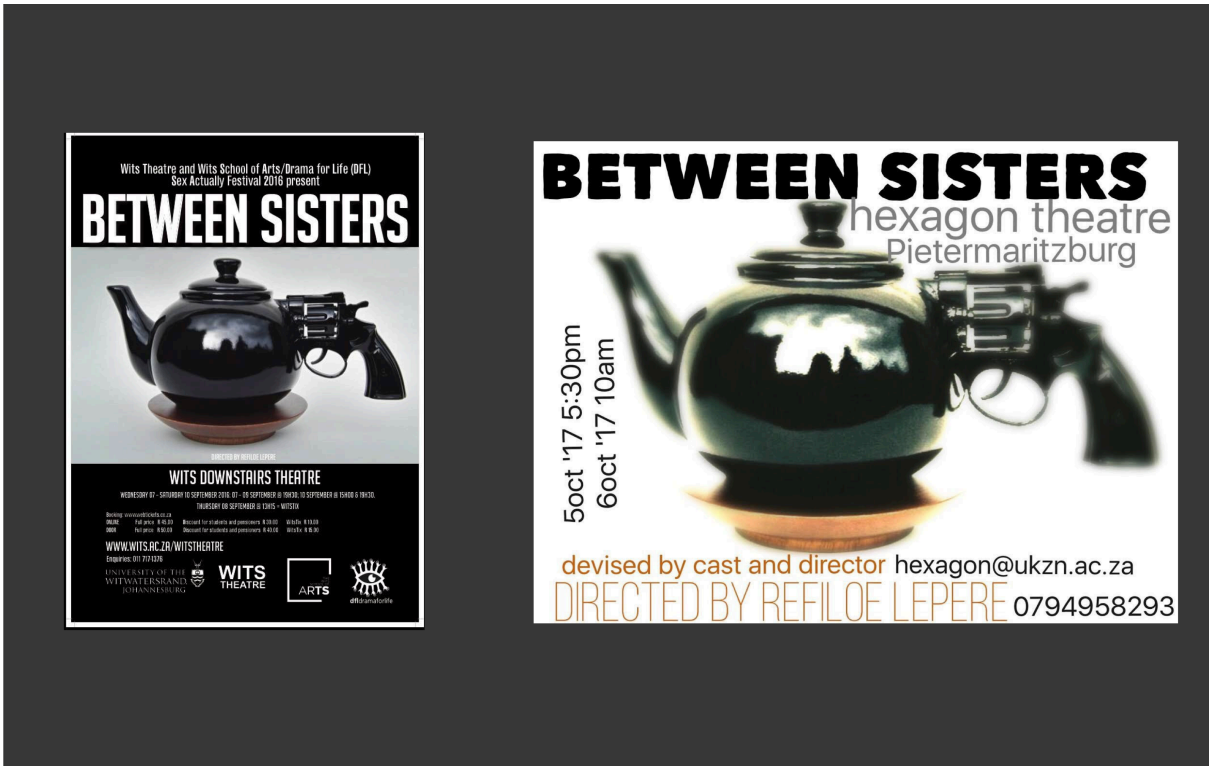

Figure 1: Two posters of Between Sisters. Left poster for the show staged at Wits Theatre, Johannesburg. Right poster for Hexagon Theatre, Pietermaritzburg

I had a number of questions which I shared with potential cast and crew:

1. How else can we stage the story of the domestic worker beyond the stereotype?
2. As a collective of black women, what does the role of the domestic worker mean to us?
3. How are we choosing to represent the domestic worker: are we deviating from the stereotypical trope of the maid or do we challenge it?
4. How do bodies come to know what they perform on stage?
5. What is the difference between role and character?
6. How can performing a character help one better understands a real-life role?
7. What are the everyday performances that are known to actresses that can help them in creating or preparing for a character?

8. Are we creating roles, or characters?

The questions, for me, were speaking to the tensions and contradictions surrounding the social and political dynamics of the intimate relationships between domestic workers, ourselves as black women and employers. They also explore how the role of domestic worker is primed to a performance inquiry. The role has both a theatrical and representational history. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1975) uses the term dramaturgy to communicate the idea that life is like a never-ending play in which people are actresses. In his book; The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, he suggests that the world is a stage, that people use their surroundings when 'staging' performance of their personae. In this regard, the role is also a sociological function. Using dramaturgy of the everyday Goffman (1975) suggests that in our everyday lives we perform front-of-stage acts, which is what people know and see. But there are also backstage acts, which are only seen in the privacy of homes, or just private acts. This concept vividly captures the role of domestic work which is a clear front of stage act that we all know and see fully visible and costumed in certain ways and even scripted. However, the role is also unknown to us; we don't know the women in those costumes. Their work is staged in hidden homes, back stages of sorts. Their private lives remain a mystery to their employer, and us the general public. The black woman often finds herself trapped in a position of invisibility/visibility. On the one hand she struggles to be 'seen', on the other she is subject to highly visible stereotypes (Franklin, 1999). The process of such stereotyping racism is hyper visibility of black people on the one hand, and invisibility on the other hand. While the world easily renders black people invisible, the black body comes into view, however, when conceptions of sexual-subjection or social disparities are discussed. For example, when black women's bodies are on display to be ridiculed, or when socio-political agendas use black women's experiences as scapegoats. The ways black women's bodies are viewed as spectacles. This paradox of being both invisible and hyper-visible can be equated to Jared Sexton's declaration on social death (2016). Sexton's social death is revealed in the availability of black women as a spectacle, meaning that in the paradoxical moment of hyper-visibility they are not visible for redemptive purposes but rather for the ability for the representation to garner the spectacular. An example of this kind social death is Sara Baartman (Gqola, 2010). Baartman was a South Africa woman who was taken to London and Paris. Her large buttocks made her an object of exhibition. She was taken to London to be a domestic worker and to be exhibited in the streets

and circuses. As a black woman domestic, she was invisible. She was not known and her work as a domestic worker was unseen. But then in public culture, by virtue of her blackness, she was catapulted into hypervisibility. In the history books, she would have died an unknown Khoi South African woman, but the archive remembers her not as a normal Khoi woman but as a violated body. As Saidiya Hartman (2008) writes, the archive is "a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise on gonorrhoea, a few lines about a whore's life, an asterisk in the grand narrative of history," (2008, p. 2). Occupying this paradoxical role, the black woman's and specifically the domestic worker's role is about the paradoxical occupation of being invisible and hyper visible. It is about how others have written about the role and rarely about the women who occupy the role.

The dilemma that invisibility / visibility paradox poses for this thesis is the question of performance. In order for a role to overcome the awkward realm of invisibility, it requires a performance that redeems it. A sort-of fetching from the back to put front of stage. When one moves from invisibility to visibility to hypervisibility there is an assumption that the performance is not genuine or inauthentic. The conversation on hypervisibility easily becomes about what or who is authentic or not authentic in their performance. So when performning the role of domestic worker, the same obsession is brought to the fore. What is an authentic performance of a domestic worker? Between Sisters took up the question and engaged it.

> Between Sisters is about authenticity. It is also about much, much more. It's about women who brought us up, who cared for us, who built the nation. It's about real work. The work that domestic workers do, make every other work possible. If they don't go to work, employers can't go to their jobs. It's about the vulnerability of their lives in the face of that job. It's about centering black women's experience. (Lepere 2016 – director's note)

The play goes further in looking at the counter-role of domestic worker which is the madam (employer role). If there is a question on authentic domestic worker then it also applies to what an authentic madam role is. In the play the actresses tried out all the roles. They attempted to play all the roles in their varying forms to answer what could be an authentic performance. In directing Between Sisters, I wanted to really engage with the roles that are haunted by the legacy of slavery, bonded labour and working-class black women. The play questions the idea of what an authentic

performance of a role is. It also moved us, cast and crew, to re-imagine our expectations on the representation of domestic workers in our lives. In the play we try to look at the workers in our world. Who are these women? What ingenious work have they done? What ambitions do they have?

Role vs. character

At the beginning of creating the play there was an obsession with authenticity. This idea was rooted in the ideas of Goffman (1975) regarding performances of daily life and the assumption that these everyday roles define or capture our true selves. Therefore, if one can clarify the true everyday performances, these can be transcribed onto stage. The link to authenticity was not a claim to say that there is only one way of being, but to question what is it that we understand about an authentic performance. Is it based on our thinking about the role? And performance? In this process I then assumed that there are clear roles of madams and maids. Like the role of king or queen, there is a clear understanding on how the role should be played (Landy, 1993; Goffman, 1975). The term 'role' suggests a character or function. It is about presentation (Fox, 1987; Landy, 1993. I also admitted that roles are complex patterns of behaviour that humans assume. In theatre and stage, the role is the utterances, the gestures, and parts of what make up a character. A character is the hollow creation that an actress takes on or enters.

Role is derived from the theatrical and also from the literary, philosophical, and social-sciences definitions. The use of role in this thesis is complex, as it is rooted in theatre and the dramatic, in the representation and presentational. The difference between representation and presentational is linked to the audience. In representing, the audience is ignored, and the actress is engaged in a process of standing in for the character. In presentational performance, the actress is engaged in a performance that includes the audience. The actress is aware that they reveal and are showing something to the audience. Role is also about a clear and predictable utterance that both actresses and later an audience can easily identify. A role resonates with ideas of presentational, as it is about human behaviour that is identifiable and can be understood as a performance. Here sociologists come into play and assist me in defining that it is a set of behaviour or practices that are rooted in social interactions and these may be stereotypical in how we think of people but are easily identifiable

to the onlooker/audience (Goffman, 1975; Landy, 1993; Mead, 1934). Role as a sociological concept gives a framework to the performative nature of life. The suggestion is that through the many roles we take on we are performing as humans. Adopting a role does not mean it is fully known but one is in the constant flux of getting to know the part through various interactions with others. In essence a role is a collective creation by the role player and role watchers. Cooley (1922) argues that as people we are mirrors to one another. People reflect back to each other the images that are projected. Thus, we come to know ourselves by internalizing the images others offer. This sociological argument is extended by Mead (1934) who theorises that the term 'role' suggests that self is not only seeing a mirror of themselves. Self also observes other social roles around the self. These outsides are observable and integral, and the internalization brings about a development that Mead terms "role taking" (Mead, 1934, p. 134). This implies that roles are communal in nature, they are about give-and-take, and do not operate in isolation. The roles are integrated, and each role is dependent on the others.

What is important for this thesis is that role, role-taking and relational role-making is steeped in performance. Whether the role is embodied in the theatre or is an identity assumed by a social participant/s, the point is, there is an enactment. As a drama therapy process it creates a space where action can take place. It assumes that there is a relation between action and playing a role. The action is further aligned to a purpose, which can be healing and lead to a better understanding of the world. The attractiveness of role theory/method to healing is in its use of predictable and patterned social behaviours. Humans find comfort in certainty and the role method offers a safe space for exploring the known in a fictional manner. The dramatic experiences of the role method offer people a way of taking on a role in a fiction setting, which is separate from reality.

Another important value of role theory is the knowledge that all roles are valid. They may be different and unusual to the performer, but they are recognised and permitted to exist. In their existence they are also fluid and can flow from one form to another. Role method also helps one readily see and identify the contradictions of the various social identities that one plays out. It highlights that the self, as we think we know it, is an enigma. The role of the domestic worker at face-value appears easily accessible. The iconography is easily identifiable, we know what it looks like. In her article; 'Ooh,

eh eh…Just One Small Cap is Enough!' Servants, Detergents, and their Prosthetic Significance, Shireen Ally (2013) argues that the iconography of maid-madam have historically kept the labouring hands black and the colonial masters white even in representations. She further writes how the black maid in South Africa is understood in very performative terms. The role of the domestic is a marked one. A clear presentation of race, class and gender. In South Africa domestic workers are marked as black women (Ally, 2013; Baderoon, 2011a; Cock, 1980). There is an interchangeable identity of the term 'domestic worker' and 'black woman' (Baderoon, 2011a). She goes further to explain that even in linguistic terms, in South Africa, the domestic worker is referred to as 'girl' and this naming is only seen in relation to black woman. The historical link to this is very significant. During apartheid black adult men and women were referred to as 'boy' and 'girl'. This was because black people were viewed as infantile and not deserving of respect or proper titles well into adulthood. Thus, the role of the domestic worker not only carries worker metaphors, it also carries clear racial and gender traits.

Most of us know someone who was or is a domestic worker, and many of us have someone now who is working to 'help' us. Because the role is so in our faces, and we have a daily interaction with it, we all think we know or assume to have permission to act it out. At face value it appears easily accessible. When casting and performing the role for a theatre or film production, it seems like one of those roles that would be easy to cast. In most cases it is obvious to cast a black woman. This is the case in most representations (performances) of domestic workers in film, television and theatre – whether black or white writers/directors the characters are similar or the same. The maid role is performed in stereotypical ways: primarily, buttocks protruding, at the receiving end of jokes, and constantly in gossip mode. This is seen in recent representation in the daily telenovela The Queen, on Mzansi Magic. In this show the role of the maid, named Petronella, is one that is stereotypical to South Africa's representation of the domestic. She is nosy and constantly the comic relief; even in the most heart-wrenching scenes, her presence is a joke. These representations bothered and still bother me. Therefore, I've asked if the role of a Queen is a universally understood role and if we are all aware of its shape, contours, limits and breadth. Is then the role of the domestic worker similar? Is it always a clear stagnant performance of humour, protruding buttocks and pastel overall?

Photographer, Zanele Muholi (2008), in her work titled Massa and Mina (h), takes on the role of the domestic worker. She wears a pink starched dress. She embodies the role. She enrol(e)s herself as a domestic worker. Here she draws on her memory of her mother, who worked as a domestic worker. In an interview with Gabeba Baderoon (2014), Muholi reveals that Massa and Mina (h) was a personal tribute to highlight the personal intimacy between the madam and the worker. She shares that: "It was always curious to me that two women would share parts of their personal lives and struggles despite the years of apartheid that kept one woman in the perpetual role of servant and the other in the life-long role of Madam" (Muholi, quoted in Baderoon 2014, p. 10). The work of Muholi offers another way of representing the role of domestic worker. She adorns herself in the outfit of worker and immediately she is recognisable as a domestic. Muholi goes further and challenges the role in as far as intimacy and precarity are relatable. She also creates an uncomfortable fantasy of intimacy, one that many are not sure about. In her thesis, Bronner (2016) analyses this exhibition, but skirts around the possibility of a sexual attraction between the women; Madam and Maid. Muholi, also plays on the accepted stereotype that domestic workers could be asexual. The known mammy role is one who cannot seduce the master away from the mistress. In Muholi's performance, she is seduced by the madam (Massa). She attempts to make the role not asexual, but more importantly, homosexual. Muholi explores and pushes the boundaries of our own assumptions on how the role can be viewed. The critique of her work has come from her assumption of love for Massa.

Performance artist Mary Sibande engages with her own history and the role of domestic worker. She engages the fantastical character of Sophie, her alter-ego-version-of-her-grandmother. She took a persona of a domestic worker only visible within the constraints of the working environment and made it into an elaborate hyper-visible persona using costumes (Ally, 2014). In 2013 Sibande's exhibition Long Live the Dead Queen was seen all over Johannesburg city; the image of Sophie was wrapped on sides of buildings. Sibande's Sophie is recognisable as a maid in her uniform, but at the same time re-imagined and made hyper-visible in her elaborate maid-cum-Victorian dress. Here Sibande engages with the costumes and how it identifies the mannequin. The performance of Sophie is one of a queen. She dresses in the maid-Victorian costume that makes her seem like a queen.

In Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night, writer Sindiwe Magona (1991) challenges our understanding of what is precarious in the lives of domestic workers. The black women represented in the book speak to and about the notion of life, their work, hopefulness and hopelessness, but also what it would mean to resist their conditions of work, how to resist, thrive and work against their domineering condition? The book offers not simply a theoretical positioning, but the specialty of the role of the everyday person. The women visit Atini in her back room situated at her employers' home. They share stories of their workplaces, their dreams of leaving their employment, and relations with employers and other workers. The stories reveal complex and contradictory characters who are enrolled as domestic workers. Those who have given in to their fate of repetitive work and those who are more – doctors stuck in the daily reality. Magona writes the short stories in monologue form. The women's voices are clear and articulate. She moves away from the typical novel author voice. She gives the women and writing a performative edge. We get to know the women through their speech idiosyncrasies. The monologues offer the possibility that loss or failure does not mean life is over or resistance is no longer viable, but that another opportunity to mount an attack is possible.

Through the making of this play I was challenged to re-think and re-imagine what the role of the domestic worker is. In the imagination of many South Africans she is the woman in a starched dress, ready to serve – emotionally and physically – without hesitation.

The title and the script

In looking for a title for the play; I came across Xoliswa Dilata's Master's (2010) thesis titled Between 'Sisters': A Study of the Employment Relationship between African Domestic Workers and African Employers in the Townships of Soweto. The research was based on the relationship between black madams and their black employees. She argues that the relations between black madams and their maids is as tumultuous as the relations between white madams and their maids. Dilata (2010) looks into the dynamics of domestic work in Soweto. Like many studies of domestic workers in South Africa she found that the most exploited group within the sector was live-in domestic workers. This is because the live-in 'helpers' had no knock-off times and were under-compensated. There were also reports that employers refused to pay more

for extra work done. What was particularly interesting about the analysis was the hypothesis of the black madams who acted decisively as white madams. They, the black employers, reasoned that the black workers were used to the abuse from whites; they took the abuse and rarely complained; therefore, they must be willing to receive the same from black employers. Here the scripting process and acting the role required a specific way of writing the role/character. What does the scripting process look like regarding the everyday occurrences of the domestic worker?

In creating the play, we collected stories of domestic workers. These constituted a diverse set of voices: domestics we knew, their friends, children and employers. This was done in an effort to make the role - a domestic worker in relation to city life, labour, immigration and employee-employer relations - more dynamic and well rounded. We also collected stories from books we read, personal stories we knew, we heard etc. The aim of the collection of stories was to elucidate who the women were beyond their work. In workshopping the play, we incorporated the voices, experiences and stories of contemporary domestic workers in South Africa. The play took us on a journey of the women in our lives: our mothers, our sisters, our cousins, our friends, ourselves. The objective was that a narrative would emerge that navigates the intersecting fault-lines of the personal in labour relations and how power is assumed and performed. Between Sisters is about two sisters who are maids and their relationship with their black madam. It was inspired and adapted from Jean Genet's (1954) The Maids. The two sisters engage in role-playing, by planning the murder of their boss. The adaptation adds a twist to the French version. It is set in South Africa, and the responses and conversations are based on black madam and black maids interactions. In both versions, the sisters role play what it means to the helper and the boss. The difference is that in Between Sisters, their motives are made clear. The Madam is drawn into needing the maids for money, comfort and love. The one sister plays the boss, Ausi Khensane, and the other plays Bontle. In assuming the different roles, they express their own love/hate relationship for each other (as sisters), and the not-so-subtle humiliations involved in domestic labour that the madam metes out. Genet's version of The Maids (1954) is a one-act play inspired by a real-life case from 1933, where two sisters, employed as maids, brutally murdered their employer's wife and daughter (Als, 2014).

The beginning of the play, in Between Sisters, is the enactment, where the audience doesn't know that they are role-playing. When the phone rings the illusion is broken. From the onset the domestic worker experience is one of vileness. They start off with a role-play of the maid-madam relation. The audience at the time is not aware that the woman playing the madam is also a maid. The two women are sisters. In the dialogue the sister playing the maid, speaks back to the madam in the way she does on a regular basis. She also appeals to madam's guise to be kinder and more generous.

BONTLE:	Oreng? [What are you saying?] You think you can talk to me like that? Maid. Telling me about boundaries? Borders? Frontiers? Do you think you know more than me? You think you can teach me?
FLO:	Wa pona ngwaneso [You see me so clearly]
BONTLE:	Hahahaha! Bona! You think it is easy to be a madam? You think it's comfortable, to get people to work for you. Fall into line. To take instructions. You look at me and compare yourself. Think I am here because I like it. No, my darling. I have had to work really hard. While you were not going to school, I was. I was learning to be a madam. Now you
FLO:	You think I wanted this?
BONTLE:	You want to tell me about borders? You should not have jumped your high school fences. Ran away from school. Then you wouldn't be here. Working for me. Boundaries; are things you should have had. To not wind up being a maid. don't dare try to teach me English my darling
FLO:	Enough! Areye! [let's go!]
BONTLE:	Eng? [What?] So quick? I was getting into her. (Lepere, 2016)

The madam also offers the audience an insight into the madam's thinking, assuming that the maids love, and have no other option but to love, her. She also articulates a kind of suffering she has to go through because of the unconditional love from the maids. Which is a sort of suffering.

Language

The sisters are named Bontle and Flo. Bontle meaning beautiful and Flo is short for Florence. Names in the domestic work environment are a particularly sore site. The Madam in the play pronounces Bontle, as Bonclare. A whitewashing of sorts. Flo uses her English name, Florence, rather than her African name. This choice to use these English white-washed names was deliberate to speak to the long tradition of misnaming domestic workers: "Many woman's names were never used in the contact zones of South African kitchens." (Jansen, 2011, p. 103). In Living Loving and Lying Awake at Night Sindiwe Magona (1991) makes the characters of Atini and the other

maids comment on the employers' whim of changing their names. Atini is hired by Mrs Reed who wilfully distorts her name calling her Tiny. The name 'Tiny' is particularly humiliating, as Atini is a large woman, a fat person who cannot even pretend she isn't fat. Atini is aware of the humiliation and degradation of her situation and tries to preserve herself from it as best she can (Magona, 1991). Ausi Khensani is named Ausi as a pun. Ausi is Sesotho term for sister. Mostly it is used to refer to an elder sister. It is used socially to infer respect for a woman who is older (not as old as one's mother). We grew up calling the women who helped our mothers with domestic chores (the nannies and washers) Ausi. The name Ausi in urban language is equal to domestic worker.

Language is the main medium which we humans use to interact with each other, and this is a basic understanding of what language is. It is the medium that makes it possible for us to write this thesis and for others to read and understand its meaning. The interesting thing is how language creates meaning. Language operates as a representational system, which includes signs and symbols (Hall, 1997, p. 1). The following quote is a good way of describing language and its importance overall. Stuart Hall writes that language is a shared cultural 'space' in which the production of meaning through language i.e. representation, takes place (Hall, 1997, p. 10).

The sisters speak Sesotho to each other but speak English to Madam and when they are in role play. The reason for this is to highlight the performativity of the relations with the madam. It is also commentary on how madam has easily fallen into the role of 'Master'. Language plays the role of delineating roles, of class, age, and particularities of a character in performance. Through language you can tell a character's background, age, culture and sometimes race. By making madam speak English throughout the play except for one instance when she speaks to herself, I was highlighting how black madams have just slipped easily into the role of madam, as set out by the colonial masters. In the instance she speaks Sesotho to herself, she complains about not having money to bail out her lover, and her general money woes. She goes further on to reveal how she dislikes the two sisters and their inability to help and how they waste. The monologue was drawn from many employers who have petty complains about their domestic workers. While she speaks Bontle walks in and overhears. This moment makes her vulnerable and at the same time reveals her true character. She is also playing a role for the public. Her use of English is also a

performance. The performance of the master using the master's language is also explored in other works. In her novel, *The Madams,* Zukiswa Wanner (2006) explores the racial reverse of the madam–maid relationship. Her setting is also the domestic space, where the main character, Thandi, a black woman, hires a white maid as a social experiment. The role of the maid is questioned in this instance to gauge if it can be easily used a generalisation and as cross-race performance. Wanner (2006) also questions national identity formations in the terrain of everyday life. In *The Madams*, the role of madam is similar. Wanner's work is used as it helps to illustrate how black women's performances and subjectivities in the home are constructed. (Dlamini, 2018). The performance highlights that black madams aren't reimaging the role of being the mistress/master of their spaces but merely slip into the old, colonial mistress/master performances.

The staging

It is essential to read the house; as a political space. For the domestic worker, it is both a workplace and home. It is also the stage where performances of making take place. Where domesticity and motherhood are judged. The ability for a woman to make money and be industrious (Magadla 2017) is played out in this setting. Domestic work is mainly the work of mothering. While other workers; would experience domesticity at home. For domestic workers, the home and the place of work is a sort of continuum. They work in homes, and when at home they engage in unpaid labour. In the play, Flo expresses to the sister the complexity of unpaid labour as a desire to create and maintain the family. But also, the unpaid labour being the core of one's work.



Figure 2: Elements of the set design of Wits Theatre. The big bed is central

The play is set in a house, in the bedroom. Within this space, the two sisters muse about their room and their desire for their own living space. A dwelling where they can think and dream for themselves. The dream allows for creating a domestic space. The setting of a bedroom is significant as a site of rest, of reprieve and time away from the world. The interior environment correlates with black feminist theatre aesthetic of action taking place indoors. As young working female domestics their desire for their own homes and space is tangible in light of the luxurious bedroom.

The first set designed for the play staged at Wit Theatre, had a big bed in the middle of the stage (Figure 5). The choice to place the full bed, was to juxtaposition the desire for own room, that is not manifesting and the big bed, that takes up a full stage. This is to highlight how the employer's life, fills up the worker's life as well. Their imagination and desire. The bedroom is in direct contrast to the worker's room, which also a kitchen, living area and much more. In apartheid, the maids' room, also known as the servant's quarters, has remained in many houses in suburban and white neighbourhoods. Rebecca Ginsburg's *At Home with Apartheid: The Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg* (2011) looks at racialized spatial geographies of apartheid South Africa. She examines these spatial boundaries; how the cartographies

of white homes were created to monitor the domestic worker, to keep her inside and at the same time as an outsider. She explores how the racist state prescribed how homes are set out and therefore control how black women working experience the home; from rural homestead to backyard dwellings in the city. In the book, Ginsburg (2011) explores the domestic's room. A bedroom used as both bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom. She highlights how women found ways to recover the small humiliating space by interior designing with personal possessions such as calendars; bedding. The domestics' backyard rooms aesthetics house also the temporal existence of migrants; their dreams and possibilities of work, other homes. The backrooms allowed black women to shift the balance of power in their domestic arrangements (Ginsburg, 2011).

In the second set design, the bedroom was a ground plan, on the ground.

> "A bedroom. The set design is a ground plan of a bedroom. The ground plan has all the labels of an elegant bedroom that wants to give off the air of luxury. KING SIZE BED, FRENCH WINDOWS, CURTAINS, DOORS – door to the kitchen, door to other rooms, door to the bathroom, CHANDELIER made from a teapot and cups and saucers, HEADBOARD, PEDASTALS, CLOSET, CLOTHES -- SHOES, FURS, DRESSES etc. COUCH, BIG MIRROR but does not quite capture it. On stage left is a big PORTRAIT FRAME. Empty. Used by the actresses to suggest Madam." (Lepere, 2016)

This design worked better for travelling but also for illustrating how the relations of Madam and Maid conform to pre-existing plans, those between white madams and black maids. The plans also fill up the stage floor and makes use of empty framing and a chandelier that is a teapot. The empty framing and ground plan reveal also how the worker's evaluate their desire to embody the employer role. The question each other and suggests that there should be a method of re-imagining the roles.
In the play, the characters occupy the bedroom of the madam, this is a marker of how their time is consumed by work. They talk about their shared living space. The room. While one loves it the other despises it. By setting the play in a bedroom, it speaks to a space where time is slowed down for the purposes of role-playing and dreaming.

BONTLE:	The cupboard that takes too much space! You really need to get a space saver boxes. You must watch those shows, what do they call them; small spaces big design? You --
FLO:	Ausi!
BONTLE:	Ok tell me this? How do you get your hands smelling like that? I mean you always have them in water.
FLO:	Bontle! Matsoho aka ents'eng? [What's wrong with my hands?]

BONTLE: They smell from cleaning the toilets. They smell of the kitchen sink. I've told you; wear gloves! You need to come into the salon for a mani or something! The truth is, I can't stand your touching me. Hurry up!
FLO: Jwale oya gole ngwaneso! [my sister, you are going far!]
BONTLE: (*shocked astonishment)* what's that you said?
FLO: Stop nonsense, Bontle! Limits, boundaries.
BONTLE: Bontle!?
FLO: Even for Ausi Khensani, there are stops?
BONTLE: Stops! Never… I pay you. You don't think you will lose your job. Don't talk back. *(to self)* this is why I prefer hiring older women. They know their place. Not you, you do nothing all day. Demand better pay and talk back. Sitting around watching my TV on my couch, then you tell me about stops.
FLO: Borders.
BONTLE: Borders? (Lepere 2016)

Historically, South Africa is a country of borders and frontiers. Flo breaks their enactment to chastise her sister, even though they are in role. There are boundaries, borders, to where the playing can happen. The above excerpt is clearly stated. In South Africa the borders of the house and the geography of the madam's house is one such border. For domestic worker it is both a workplace and home. It also the stage where performances of making take place. The borders are clear; this is the employer's space at the same time the borders are blurred. Because it home and work. The play does not prescribe, at most it leaves question on what it means to be black female worker, and black woman employer. It reveals the exploitative nature of the relations but also how unpaid labour of women is also empowering.

Gestures and the making of character

> "Bontle walks in dressed in a slip. She stops at the portrait frame and poses as if it was a picture of herself. She then surveys the room, checking herself in the mirror. Touching the luxurious items, shoes, dresses, coats. She then picks a coat, wears it. She does a sequence of actions that look like Madams. Ausi Khensani walks in undisturbed by Bontle, she is wearing the same coat that Bontle is dancing with. She joins her as a mirror, making similar gestures. They make the movements simultaneously.
>
> Flo walks in at the DOOR to kitchen wearing her domestic worker outfit. Watching from the door she mimics the two, trying but failing. When music fades, Flo, slips out very quickly, Ausi Khensani walks to the frame, poses as if it was a picture of herself. She exits through door to the other bedrooms like she was getting ready for a big day. Bontle is left on top of the bed, pining with the coat." (Lepere, 2016)

In this scene the actresses mime and mimic each other's actions. The making of the scene is such that the actions become so synchronised that the actresses mime. The

reason for the mime is to comment on how gesture is learnt. How some actions we think are innate are actually copied and repeatable. The maids miming the gestures is also a comment on their desire for upward mobility, or the idea that 'if you act like it, you can become it'. The gestures are peculiar and present an image of the characters playing roles and acting out their desires. The making of the scene is such that the actions become so synchronised, that the actresses mime. The reason for the mime is to comment on how gesture is learned: how some actions we think are innate are actually copied and repeatable. The sisters miming the gestures is also a comment on their desire for different roles, or the idea that 'if you act like it, you can become it'. Presenting the black women characters varying possibilities is a comment on constructions of blackness.

As a black woman theatre-maker, the theme of class among black women is interesting. This theme directly speaks to my standpoint of black, woman, and worker. Labour is a key term here, where black woman's making of both reproductive and creative labour are ways of self-definition, as mentioned. The characters in their drama and conflict vacillate between seeking liberation from within themselves and also from an external racist and sexist society. The differentiation of the black madam and the black worker both reveal black feminist roles. Ausi Khensani represents the new concepts of feminism, relegated to empowerment and upward mobility. Through the representation of the sisters, we are provided with glimpses of how as workers they represents black women's paid and unpaid labour, as their roles intersect in race, class and gender (Hill Collins, 1990)

Role, costuming and recognisability

The choice of costuming functions to create meaning. Costumes help to either; subvert or play into the stereotypes. They also draw on the audience's ability to make links to other representations; that are outside the play. In classical Greek drama, the role was determined by costume, which is the essence of character (Harrop & Epstein, 1982). The dress objectified a particular behavioural or psychic quality (see Figure 3 and Figure 4).The maid's outfit, writes Baderoon (2014, p. XX), works "the way Clark Kent's costume turns him into Superman". It transforms the woman into a domestic worker. "A uniform does two kinds of work – it signals that the woman is capable of and ready to do domestic labour, but also that she has fully entered the persona of a

domestic worker" (Baderoon, 2014, p. XX). The uniform simultaneously erases and heightens visibility – it allows women to disappear into a subservient identity. She argues that women who are domestic workers have to remove things that could make them individual. The most important component of this removal of individuality is the overall dress combined with an apron and a headscarf. These three items have come to denote 'domestic worker' in South Africa. So, when creating a costume, we debated how Mary Sibande chose the look and feel of the iconic dress with all three items at the same time pushing the envelope on presentation. We wondered what about her work deviated from the legacies of apartheid.



Figure 3: Costuming – Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza (Flo) and April Chabedi (Bontle)



Figure 4: Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza (Flo) and Dimakatso Motholo (Bontle)

According to art historian Ntombela's research, the "maid's uniform" is disliked because of its associations. "It is not the uniform itself that degrades domestic workers, but it publicises their position, which has been constructed as low in the social order" (Ntombela, 2012, p. 132) The uniform of a domestic worker functions as a prescription into a role. Ginsburg (2011) argues that it is in some way in place of the inability of the employer to control the "otherness" and potential "waywardness" of the body and psyche of this so-called interloper (who is often of a different "race", class, language and geographical origin) into the closed family circle. The emphasis on containment, invisibility, hygiene and neatness for a servant are arguably only surface symptoms of a greater unease for the employer about the potential for and the ability of this person to step out of her place (Bronner, 2016; Ginsburg, 2011).

As a black woman theatre director of theatre, the theme of black women as radical complex characters is important. It is a currency that uncovers a unique positionality. At the heart of *Between Sisters* is the process of grappling with how roles that are inherited from a colonial and racist past can be reimagined on stage. Allowing the role to transcend its clear markers of invisibility, silent and hidden. Performance helps us understand the tensions and contradictions surrounding the social and political.

Between Sisters highlights gender politics, black female labour, and the struggle for creativity.

BETWEEN SISTERS[1]

(2nd place in HSS Award 2018)
Devised[2] by
Cast and Refiloe Lepere

Performed
Wits Theatre, Johannesburg - 2016
Director - Refiloe Lepere
Bontle – Dimakatso Motholo
Flo – Mammatli Thakuli-Nzuza
Madam (Ausi Khensani) – Reneilwe Matshitisho
Designers – Sinenhlanhla Zwane and Natalie Paneng

Hexagon Theatre, Pietermaritzburg - 2017
Directed – Refiloe Lepere
Bontle – April Lesego Chabedi
Flo – Mammatli Thakuli-Nzuza
Madam (Ausi Khensani) – Reneilwe Matshitisho
Designers – Nthabeleng Masudubele and Zinhle Gule

[1] Inspired by Xoliswa Dilata (2010) "Between 'sisters' : A study of the employment relationship between African domestic workers and African employers in the townships of Soweto." MA Thesis.

[2] Adapted from Jean Genet (1954) "The Maids" New York: Grove Press.

Synopsis
Between Sisters is a play about how two sisters who are domestic workers try out the role of being Madam. They imagine themselves out of the life of being workers. They try out the clothes of the madam, her gestures, her life and words.

The sisters explore how the role of madam and maid is real and close as the one between sisters. They somehow lose themselves in the role and decide the only way out of their misery is to kill the employer. Because once they kill their employer, they will inherit everything she has. However, the plans are thwarted, and they must reimagine another world.

Characters
AUSI[3] KHENSANI – 32-year-old businesswoman. Runs a nail salon, that acts as a front for a criminal syndicate for her boyfriend. She is a ruthless woman who does not want to be poor again. She does little in the world and desires only the finer things in life.

FLO – 32-year old domestic worker. She is upset and bitter. She is tired of being a domestic worker and wants to become a madam at any cost possible. She does not know how, nor does she have a plan to leave her current work. Her only intention is to take the place of her present madam: become the head of the house, run her business and marry her boyfriend. She believes her many years in the job afford her the obsession to become Ausi Khensani.

BONTLE – 19-year-old domestic worker. Sister to Flo. Just finished high school. Doesn't have enough money to study. Doesn't have enough experience in any other job. Brought to the house to make a bit of money so she can go to school and become something else. Very impressionable and desiring more than the domestic worker life. She is not as overt about her hate for Ausi Khensani.

Notes for reading

- Stage directions - italics or (round brackets)
- Translations in [square brackets]

[3] Ausi is a Sesotho term for sister. It is mostly used to refer to an older female sibling. It is also used socially to confer respect on a woman younger or of the same age - not as old as one's mother - someone's female siblings. The term is equally used to refer to women employed to help with varied domestic chores: the nannies and washers . Ausi in the urban language is equal to the domestic worker.

OPENING

A bedroom. The set design is a ground plan of a bedroom. The ground plan[4] has all the labels of an elegant, elaborate bedroom that wants to give off the air of luxury. The ground plan can be created in the air, or on the floor.
The labels read: KING SIZE BED, FRENCH WINDOWS, CURTAINS, DOORS – door to the kitchen, door to other rooms, entrance to the bathroom, CHANDELIER made from a teapot and cups and saucers, HEADBOARD, PEDASTALS, CLOSET, CLOTHES -- SHOES, FURS, DRESSES etc. COUCH, BIG MIRROR but does not quite capture it. On stage left is a big PORTRAIT FRAME. Empty. Used by the actors to suggest who is madam at the moment. Items named in the play such as coat, shoes, dress and teapot and cups can be placed on the set visibly. Up to the director and set design.
MUSIC – dreamlike sound.

Bontle walks in dressed in a slip. She stops at the portrait frame and poses as if it was a picture of herself. She then surveys the room. Checking herself in the mirror. Touching the luxurious items, shoes, dresses, coats. She then picks a coat, wears it. She does a sequence of actions that look like madam's. Ausi Khensani walks in undisturbed by Bontle, she is wearing the same jacket that Bontle is dancing with. She joins her at the mirror. Makes similar gestures. And together they make the movements simultaneously.

Flo walks in at the DOOR to the kitchen. Wearing her domestic worker outfit. Watching from the door. She mimics the two, trying but failing. When the music fades, Flo, slips out very quickly. Ausi Khensani walks to the frame. Poses as if it was a picture of herself. Exits through the door to other bedrooms like she was getting ready for a big day. Bontle is left on top of the bed, pining with the coat.

SCENE 1

Acting as Ausi Khensani, Bontle is on top of the bed. Repeats earlier sequence of actions. Flo enters and stands by the side of the bed, watching Bontle's actions. She is wearing an apron. Bontle notices her and charges at her with her words.

BONTLE: BONTLE!
That apron, that bloody apron! I've told you many that apron is not allowed in the bedroom. It belongs in the kitchen. What do you think you will do with it? In here? You probably hope to seduce Abuti[5] Oupa

[4] The idea of the ground plan is to suggest that the relations of "madam and maid", have been there before – between white madams and black maids. Thus, black madams are not re-imagining the roles but have taken the ground plan and reconstituted themselves in the same relations. "The native intellectual had learnt from his masters " (Fanon 1961:45)
[5] Abuti is a Sesotho word meaning brother. It is mostly used to refer to an older male sibling. It is also used socially to confer respect on an older man - younger or of the same age as one's father or one's male siblings).

with it, right? *(laughs hysterically*) You think I can't see you? You think Oupa likes to see you working. You keep doing too much, working too hard thinking you will win him over? because you work hard? *(laughs)* You think Oupa is attracted to that. Your kitchen towel and apron. Let me tell you something Oupa is a modern man, he likes his woman lazy and soft. Not hardworking with hard scalded hands. He wants to be held in beautiful smelling arms not your smell of the kitchen, the drain.

(During this speech, FLO has been playing with her apron and observing Bontle while folding it?)

BONTLE: What are you doing? Bontle!

(FLO'S posture changes and she seethes with anger (as she holds on to the apron)while holding the apron. She attempts to leave. But is distracted by BONTLE looking at herself in the mirror, repeating the gestures of madam. (She pitters and patters over herself - what do you mean?.) Striking a pose every now and then.)

BONTLE: Bontle! Bontle!

FLO: Ausi!

BONTLE: Ausi?

(Surprised that she never left the room. Surprised by the Ausi!)

FLO: Madam?

BONTLE: Madam!

FLO: Tlohela ho bapala Bontle, hle. [Stop playing Bontle.] I have work!

BONTLE: *(more fiercely)* I don't want to ask again. Where have you been?

(Silence)

BONTLE: I asked you ---

FLO: I was preparing your tea…. Madam!

BONTLE: Good! You are getting it. Now, quickly. Take out the things that make me madam.

FLO: What things are those?

BONTLE: Oh, come on, FLO! (*Corrects herself*) BONTLE I mean. You know the things, my gowns, my clothes.

FLO: Those things make you madam?

BONTLE: You know what, layout my things.

FLO: For eng? [What for?]

BONTLE: As your madam, as your employer, I doubt I must explain myself to you!

FLO: Ausi!

BONTLE: This Ausi thing… I have told you countless of times… Madam!

FLO: Okay, Madam?

BONTLE: Now, put out my things I want to see them.

FLO: Who will put them back? You know how much work that is?

BONTLE: Why are you being so cheeky?

FLO: It's my turn to be Madam!

BONTLE: You will, of course. Stop complaining. Layout my white dress. My jewels, the gold shoes.

FLO: Gold shoes? All the jewellery?

BONTLE: Yes, gold shoes, the one you have been praying for. Saving all your measly salary to buy.

FLO: Gold shoes, me. I would look ridiculous in them

BONTLE: Enough! Yes, all the jewellery. I want to see it all. Put it all out. And yes, of course.

(FLO takes a few jewellery items, opens them, and lays them out on the bed. FLO squats looking for the shoes. Finds them underneath the bed. Notices a spot on them and spits on the gold shoes and polishes them.)

BONTLE: BONTLE! Why are you spitting on my shoes? You are disgusting! Do you think I am happy knowing that my shoes smell of your spit?

FLO: Your Shoes?

BONTLE: FLO!

FLO: I only wish for Ausi to be lovely.

BONTLE: *(Shouting)* AUSI?

FLO: O ne o re ke o bitse mang? [What do you want me to call you?/You were saying I should call you?]

BONTLE: Madam!

FLO: Nna, o mpitsa mang? [Me, what do you call me?]

BLONTLE: BONTLE!

FLO: Che, ho bakgotsi ba hao? O re nna le FLO re eng ho wena? [No, to your friends? What do you say Flo and I are to you ?]

BONTLE: Oh, come on, BONTLE! You are my helpers.

FLO: Helpers?

BONTLE: Yes, Helpers. What else?

FLO: We help you?

BONTLE: Of course, you help with the house.

FLO: Re basebetsi ausi? [we are workers]

BONTLE: Workers? That sounds terrible. Why not maids, then!? *(pause)* Exactly! No, we are not white people. We won't do that. You guys are helpers.

FLO: Workers, Madam!

BONTLE: You are becoming smart, aren't you FLO?

FLO: *(looks away to the mirror. Creates gestures of madam… speaks to Bontle from Mirror-image)* Well Madam, we just ask for respect!

BONTLE: I am respectful. Help me. Now, help me…

FLO: Oh, okay, Ausi!
(Silence)

FLO: I only want for ausi, madam to be happy, you know.

(Silence)

FLO: Because when madam is happy. The workers are so glad. The workers are paid right, on time.

BONTLE: Enough... mosebetsi! [Worker]. What, are you joining Cosatu[6]?

FLO: Ahh, madam

(Silence)

BONTLE: I want to wear my shimmering gold dress. Bring that out.

FLO: Gold for what madam?

BONTLE: I want something to remind me, I am rich. I have this beautiful house. I am going somewhere.

FLO: And Gold is the answer?

BONTLE: Gold says: I am not you.

FLO: I think Madam should be aware of herself.

BONTLE: I am aware.

[6] Cosatu is the Congress of South African Trade Unions. It is a trade union federation. For the longest time in South Africa, they were the vanguard of workers' rights.

FLO: Gold is inappropriate!

BONTLE: Says who?

FLO: You wouldn't want people to think you are celebrating Oupa being in jail.

BONTLE: Oh, you never want to see me happy. You just want me to sit and wallow. Oupa is in jail because of Oupa.

FLO: Oh really?

BONTLE: I can't cry for Oupa forever. Anyway, he is not dead. He is only in jail. He will understand that I deserve to shine.

FLO: Oh, you shine while he rots?

BONTLE: Oh you want to talk about Oupa? You want to talk about curses?

FLO: *(feigning shock)* Madam!

BONTLE: Right? …you're smiling?

FLO: I was just saying ---

BONTLE: You want to insult me for calling the police?

FLO: Madam, but it was not you!

BONTLE: That's what you want to say.

FLO: I am just saying consider the gold.

BONTLE: I am considering it. And I am sad.

FLO: As Bontle or Madam?

BONTLE: What was I supposed to do? *(Laughs)* You think I have time to worry about that right now! Really? He isn't dead. Oupa will come out. You speak of grief?

FLO: Jail, might as well be death!

BONTLE: You want to speak of jail? When…

FLO: Ho wa ha motho ke ntho e nyane… [the fall of the great is a small feat.]

BONTLE: A small feat? A call to the police? An opportunity to ascend. To own this house? A small feat?

FLO: How else must we describe what you did? A call to the police. The arrest of Oupa… it's a small feat. Now the killing…

BONTLE: Rha! Bring me the gold dress!

FLO: *(coldly)* But ausi should wear the red dress. It's a bloody beauty…

BONTLE: Ausi! Quiet! *(Severely)* Hand me the dress. *(pause)* Oh! I'm so alone in the world. I am friendless. Oupa in jail. You speak of death.

FLO: I was just--

BONTLE: Stop it and bring the dress.

(Flo brings the dress and madam, wears it.)

BONTLE: I am so unloved. Everyone has left me all alone. Oupa, now you accuse me. You never loved me. You hate me, don't you?

FLO: Hao hle medem, nna? [No, really, madam, me?]

BONTLE: Yes. You're waiting to just crush me. You are not really kind. You're waiting for the day to kill me. Smother me with the pillows.

FLO: Ke eng, e etsang hore o bue tjena? [What makes you speak like this?]

BONTLE: I see it in your eyes.

FLO: *(Mockingly)* But madam I love you!

BONTLE: (*Shifts mood*) Of course you love me. I pay you. I put a roof over your head. And I have hired both you and your sister. You must like and adore me. You must think the world of me. I do so much for you. Remember, last year, I gave you both candles for Christmas. Tell me who would do that for you? Which Boss would provide that? You have to love me. I am beautiful! I have all these things you desire.

FLO: Enough!

BONTLE: Really, BONTLE?

FLO: I was saying you don't look beautiful enough. You need to add a big necklace. That's all.

BONTLE: I don't need you to tell me I am beautiful. I am. More beautiful than you will ever be. Feela [I mean], just look at you! How big you are!

(She primps herself in front of the mirror. Sees Flo sad.)

BONTLE: Nothing! Anyway, I shall be more beautiful, more lovely. Lovelier than you'll ever be with a face and body like that. I must let you know one thing.

FLO: Eng? [What?]

BONTLE: you'll never seduce Oupa. Oupa in those mumu dresses, never. So that you know. We are planning on having a kid.

FLO: Oh!

BONTLE: Oh? …My dress! (*Flo gets the dress. And puts in on the bed)* Help me. Put it on me? You are hurting me. Stop. You are not helping me.
You smell. You smell like … like that room of yours. Your hands. They smell.

FLO: Ache Bontle! Ha se bophelo bona! Bona re hloname hakaakang? [Oh no Bontle, This is not life at all. Look at us, we are so sad.]

BONTLE: As you should be. Living in that little room the two of you? It's so dark in there. You guys should re-decorate. I mean, make it look nice. What are you doing with your money? I don't know how you survive in there.

FLO: *(Upset)* Ausi Khensani o wa itebala! [You forget yourself/ who you are!]

BONTLE: The small window, the oversized queen bed you share. The cold and damp coming in through the ceiling… You know the one thing I don't get about the room, how it is always so dark in there. No matter how sunny it is outside. How do you do that? You know sometimes I want a space to sit in the dark. Like today to cry about Oupa. You guys have the perfect space. A bit of darkness, and small space.

(Silence)

BONTLE: The cupboard that takes too much space! You really need to get a space

saver boxes. You must watch those shows, what do they call them; small spaces big design? You --

FLO: Ausi!

BONTLE: Ok tell me this? How do you get your hands smelling like that? I mean you always have them in water.

FLO: Bontle! Matsoho a ka a ents'eng? [What's wrong with my hands?]

BONTLE: They smell from cleaning the toilets. They smell of the kitchen sink. I've told you; wear gloves! You need to come into the salon for a mani or something! The truth is, I can't stand your touching me. Hurry up!

FLO: Jwale o ya hole ngwaneso! [my sister, you are going far!]

BONTLE: (*shocked)* what's that you said?

FLO: Stop the nonsense, Bontle! Limits, boundaries.

BONTLE: Bontle!?

FLO: Even for Ausi Khensani, there are stops?

BONTLE: Stops! Never… I pay you. You don't think you might lose your job. Don't talk back. *(to self)* this is why I prefer hiring older women. They know their place. Not you, you do nothing all day. Demand better pay and talk back. Sitting around watching my TV on my couch, then you tell me about stops.

FLO: Borders.

BONTLE: Borders?

FLO: Yes Stop Nonsense. Stop this nonsense —

BONTLE: O re eng? [What are you saying?] You think you can talk to me like that? Maid. Telling me about boundaries? Borders? Frontiers? Do you think you know more than me? You think you can teach me?

FLO: O mpona hantle [You see me so clearly]

BONTLE: Hahahaha! Bona! You think it is easy to be a madam? You think it's

comfortable, to get people to work for you. Fall into line. To take instructions. You look at me and compare yourself. Think I am here because I like it. No, my darling. I have had to work really hard. While you were not going to school, I was. I was learning to be a madam. Now you

FLO: You think I wanted this?

BONTLE: You want to tell me about borders? You should not have jumped your high school fences. Ran away from school. Then you wouldn't be here. Working for me. Boundaries; are things you should have had. To not wind up being a maid. don't dare try to teach me English my darling

FLO: Enough! Ha re tsamaye! [let's go!]

BONTLE: Eng? [What?] So quick? I was getting into her.

FLO: *(Angrily)* Ke itse ha re ye!

BONTLE: O ready? [Are you ready?]

FLO: *(she steps towards Bontle)* Ke ready! Ke o hloyile! Ausi ke o hloyile wena, mahlo a hao, botle ba hao! Ke o hloyile ho tswa botebong ba pelo ya ka! [I am ready. I hate you. Ausi, I hate you, your eyes, and your beauty. I hate you sincerely from the bottom of my heart.]
(Mockingly) Get my coat Bontle, Don't drink the milk Bontle. One of these days I will lock the fridge. Who do you think you are?
You don't think I don't deserve the coats? the milk, the beauty? You think that you are protected, that there is something that makes you special, unique? You think you can always do just as you please. Brag about Abuti Oupa?
Well today it stops.

BONTLE: Is this talk all about Oupa?

FLO: Oh come on, you know you want Oupa. His criminality excites you, Ha ke re?

BONTLE: Oupa...

FLO: It's over. Your little Oupa is in jail. And today you will also find your end.

BONTLE: *(acting scared)* What will you do?

FLO: What will we do? You don't believe us. You don't think we can run this house?
It doesn't require any brains. We get rid of you. And when Oupa returns; he will need all the comfort and we will be here. We will inherit everything. Now who is cleverer and lazier?

BONTLE: BONTLE, BONTLE! *(desperate)* Ema! [Wait!]

FLO: *(Approaching her)* BONTLE, BONTLE. Voetsek!

(Flo reaches out to strangle her, Bontle ducks and runs away. They run around in circles in the room. Flo wanting to strangle her. Bontle genuinely scared)

BONTLE: Ausi, I forbid you!

FLO: You forbid me? It's Ausi Khensani who is confounded. You forbid Me. Che! Bona. Ausi Khensani.

BONTLE: Get out!

FLO: Before I go, I must finish what I started. *(leaps for Bontle and advances threateningly. Starts Strangling her*)

BONTLE: (*Acting as Ausi Khensani*) Bontle. No, stop it!

Flo continues strangling her. Bontle realises the strangle is real. She tries to get out of the hold.

BONTLE: Ausi! (choking)

Sound of a phone ringing.

SCENE 2

(The phone RINGS the two actresses freeze and run around. They huddle and listen for the final ring. Flo snaps out of her rage.)

FLO: Ho fedile? [Is it over?]

BONTLE: (*coughing*) Ho Fedile. Flo o right? [It's over. Flo are you all right?]

FLO: Ho fedile? [Is it over?]

BONTLE: Eya Flo! [Yes Flo!] (*still coughing*)

FLO: O!

BONTLE: Jonna we, ke Ausi Khensani. [Oh my god, it's Ausi Khensani,] *(She starts to unfasten her dress. But struggles with her dress and her breath)* Ausi nthuse hle. Ha re a qeta. Ke wena ka dipuo tsa hao tsa mozabalazo! [Sis help me. But we didn't finish. It's you with your liberatory struggle speeches]

FLO: Nna? Mehla ena wena ha o qete ho apara. Ke o bolaye jwang o sa apara? [Me? Every day you never finish dressing. How must I kill you if you are not dressed?]

BONTLE: (*In shock!*) Ke wena ka sello sa hao, le thero... [No it's you crying and preaching!]

FLO: O wa tseba ka tsatsi lee, re ne re le moo, *(shows with fingers*) ngwaneso. [You know today we were this close my sister.]

BONTLE: Ka eng? [With what?]

FLO: Ka ho bolaya Khensani. [With killing Khensani]

BONTLE: Kae ausi? [Where my sister?]

FLO: O batla hore eng? [What do you want to say?]

BONTLE: Ke mpa ke botsa. E ne e le rona, or wena o ne o le moo? (*shows with her fingers)* [I am just asking. Was it us, or you were this close?]

FLO: Bontle?

BONTLE E, hle. *(She gets up wearily.)* Ke sa ilo etsa tee. [Yes, hey! I am going to make some tea.]

FLO: *(Sternly)* Sheba ka fenstere*? (She stares at her Sister.)* Hela, ke itse o shebe ka fenstere. [Look out the window? Hey, I said, look out the window]

BONTLE: Tlohela ho leka ho ndominata! [Stop trying to dominate me!]

FLO: Eng! nna, kea o dominata? Ke wena ya qadileng ka ho bua ka Oupa le

kamoo ke mo batlang ka teng. O ne o batla ho nkutlwisa bohloko ka mantswe a hao ngwaneso [What! Me, dominate you? You are the one who started with all the talk about Oupa. How I want him. You just wanted to hurt me with your words.]

BONTLE: Oho hle! [oh please]

FLO: O tseba hantle hore ke ikutlwa jwang ka Oupa, empa wena o dula o ntshoma! [You know very well how I feel about Oupa but you keep digging at me]

BONTLE: Ausi, bua nnete. Bua nnete ya Modimo hore ke entse mosebetsi o motle ka ho tshwarisa Oupa. Ke re madam a batla a tshwarwa ke pelo! O mo bone Ausi Khensani a tletse dikgapha ka mahlong? [Ausi, tell the truth. Tell the truth of God, I did a brilliant job, an excellent job getting Oupa arrested. I mean, madam nearly had a heart attack. Did you see ausi Khensani teary-eyed?]

FLO: Ha ke na taba le Khensani. Ha e le ka nna, a ka shwa moloi eo. Ke re e motshware pelo eo a shwe. Nka thaba jwang feela! Le kamoreng e tshabehang eo a re dudisang ka ho yona nke ke ka hlola ke beha leoto! [I don't care about Khensani. If it had to go my way she should get that heart attack and die. I will be so happy. And that crappy room she makes us live in, I will never enter it again]

BONTLE: Nna, kea e rata kamore ya rona. [I like our room]

FLO: Wena o rata ho phehisana kgang le nna? O rata eng ka kamore eo e ditshila, e nkgang, e mpe? [You just like disagreeing with me. What do you like about the room that is dirty and smelly and ugly?]

BONTLE: O qadile! [You've started] *(walking away)*

FLO: Ha e mpe? Mpolelle hore ha e mpe hle ausi [It's not ugly? Tell me it's not ugly?]

BONTLE: Ke ne ke re feela, Ausi [I was just saying, Ausi]

FLO: Ntumelle ke bue, ke ntshe maikutlo a ka hle. O wa e bona kamore ela? E ne e le betere pele o fihla. E ne e ntekane. Mme o wa fihla, o hloka mosebetsi, yaba Khensani o kgaola moputso wa ka ho o patala. Yaba wena le yena le e tlatsa ka dintho. Cupboard eo, mmete oo, le duvet eo e ditshila. Nnete ke hore Khensani ha a o fa duvet eno hobane a o rata.

O o file yona hobane o ne a se na ntho eo a e etsang ka yona. E ditshila, e nkga baratani bohle ba hae ba mehleng. Yaba o wa e nka o ithatela ka yona, o nahana hore o motlelara, o swenka, o nahana hore o Khensani… [Allow me to say what's on my chest. Do you see that room? It was better before you came. It was enough for me. Then you arrived, needed a job, and Khensani cut my salary to pay you. Then you and her filled it with things. The cupboard, that mat, and that dirty duvet. The truth is Khensani didn't give you the duvet because she loves you. She gave you because she had no other job (she had no other purpose for it) for it. It's dirty, it smells of all her ex-lovers. Then you take it and wrap yourself in it, and think you are a model, strutting around, thinking you are Khensani in that small space.]

BONTLE: O wa hlanya ausi? Nna model? [you are crazy, me model?]

FLO: Kea o bona ngwaneso, ha o itjheba ka fenstereng. Ke sono ka wena. (*She does the gestures of Khensani*) You can't be Khensani as long as Khensani is alive. [I see you my sister, when you look at yourself using the window as a mirror. It's a shame. You can't be Khensani as long as Khensani is alive]

BONTLE: Empa, Flo [But Flo]

FLO: U reng? U re ke sehole? [What are you saying, I am a fool?]

(*Bontle goes to the window and lifts the curtain.)*

FLO: Tlohela kgaretene eo! E nkgopotsa Abuti Oupa letsatsi leo mapolesa a tlileng ho motshwara. O ne a e tshwere net so/tjena! [leave that curtain! It reminds me of Oupa the day the police came to arrest him. He held it just like that.]

BONTLE: Re tla shwa rona ba bang, Oupa hona, Oupa hwane! [we are going to die, it's Oupa this, Oupa that.]

FLO: Oh ausi, o ntlhoile? Ha ho motho ya nthatang? [Oh, sis, you hate me. No one loves me in the world.]

BONTLE: *(Mocking)* I am all alone. No Oupa!

FLO: Ausi! [Sis!]

BONTLE: Ke eng? [What?]

FLO: Wena, kea o bona. Ka wena nka be ke shwele kgale. [You, I see you. I should be long dead in your eyes.]

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani o wa re rata! [Ausi Khensani loves us]

FLO: Khensani? Khensani o wa re rata? O re rata jwalo ka ha a rata setulo se tshabehang seno kapa jwalo ka ha a rata toilet ya hae. A ka e tjhentjha hang *(snaps).* Rea mosebeletsa. Ha se lerato. Ke mang ya ka ratang ditshila.
[Khensani? Khensani loves us? She loves you like she loves this crappy chair or the way she loves her toilet. She can change all that right away (snaps). We are working for her. It's not love. Who would love filth?]

BONTLE: Flo, ha ho hobe hakaalo. [Flo, it's not that bad.]

FLO: Ha ho hobe hakaalo? O mpa o rata ho nkganyetsa. O rata ho mphephetsa. [It's not that bad? You just like to disagree with me. You like provoking me.]

BONTLE: Ha ke ne ke batla ho o phephetsa ke ne ke tla re feela: Oupa [if I really wanted to provoke you, I would just say: Oupa]

FLO: BONTLE—

BONTLE: Oupa!

FLO: Eng? [What?]

BONTLE: Oupa

FLO: BONTLE!

(Flo tries to reach for Bontle to strangle her, but she ducks and runs. They repeat similar sequence to earlier. Flo in anger wanting to kill Bontle)

BONTLE: *(out of breath lowering her voice*) O wa tseba ausi, ha ke o tshabe! [You know sis, I am not scared of you]

FLO: O se ke wa lebala hore ke mang ya moholo. [You must not forget, who is older]

BONTLE: Jwale? [Meaning?]

FLO: O reng? [What are you saying?]

BONTLE: Wena Flo, o nahana ha ke o bone? Ha o nthate ausi wa ka. O se ke wa hana. Ke a o bona. Hwane ha o ne o batla ho bolaya Khensani, hantle-ntle o ne o batla ho bolaya nna.
[You Flo, you think I don't see you? You don't love me my sister. Don't deny it. I see you. Earlier, when you wanted to kill Khensani, you were actually wanting to kill me.]

(A long silence.)

FLO: Ke phetho.

BONTLE: Hobaneng ha o ntlhoile? Ke hobane ke le motle? Kapa ke hobane ausi Khensani a nthata ho feta wena? Hobaneng ausi wa ka?
[Why do you hate me? Is it because I am pretty? Or Because Ausi Khensani loves me? Why my sister?]

FLO: Ke u rata jwang re phela bophelo bo tjee. Le nna ke batla bophelo bo betere bakeng sa hao. Bakeng sa bana ba rona. Ke nahana hore re lokela ho phela le bona, e le hore ba se kene crecheng eo ba jeswang kaofela ka kgaba e le nngwe. O bua nnete. Ha se lerato. Ke o tlisitse Gauteng ho tla ba lekgoba. Ke lerato leo?
[How do I love you when we live this life? I also want a better life for you. For our children. I think we deserve to live with them, so they don't have to go to the creche where they are all fed from one spoon. You speak the truth. This is not love. I brought you to Johannesburg, to be a slave, is that love?]

(The telephone rings. The two sisters are startled. They listen. Look at each other. Bontle answers)

BONTLE : Hallo
Oupa?
Oh, abuti Oupa! ... eya, ke BONTLE,
Abuti Oupa ... eya,
oh, abuti Oupa ba mo lokolotse? O tswile bosiung ba kajeno?
(FLO wants to hear.)
Okay.
Ho lokile ke tla jwetsa Ausi Khensani.
O tla thaba e le kannete hore Abuti Oupa o free ...

eya, Abuti Oupa....
Ku bye,
Oupa.

(She wants to hang up, but her hand trembles, and she lays the receiver on the table.)

FLO: Is he out?

BONTLE: A re ba patetse bail. [He says they let him out on bail.]

FLO: Bo mang? [Who?]
(Silence)
They are letting him out so late?

BONTLE: Oupa is a thief. His friends let him out!

FLO: Bona mosebetsi wa hao Bontle. Airtime ya hao ho letsa. Your phone call. Well done maan!
[Look at your work Bontle. Your airtime you used to call…]

BONTLE: Ausi, ausi, ema hanyane o wa ntshithabetsa…. E re ke nahane hanyane. And wena since you're so bright, what did you do ka Ausi Khensani? Did you do it? Or? We need to do it tonight!
[Sis, sis, please stop. You are overwhelming me…. I need to think a bit. Since you are bright, you should have killed Khensani earlier.]

FLO: Kajeno Bontle? [Today Bontle?]

BONTLE: E kajeno. Otherwise. Oupa o tlo tswa. Ba tla fumana hore ke rona ba bitsitseng mapolesa. Ha re mo bolaya kajeno, ba tla re ke Oupa, o ne a halefile a batla ho iphetetsa hore e be o mo tshwarisitse.
[Yes today, otherwise. Oupa is coming out. And they will find out that it is us who called the police. If we kill her today. They will think that it is Oupa in a moment of rage and revenge for getting him arrested.]

FLO: Oh ngwaneso, monahano ona o motle haholo! [Oh my sister, this plan is great. But who will kill her? She will return soon and make demands. Who will kill her? You?]

BONTLE: Nna ke tlile le leano. Wena etsa. [I came up with the plan, you must do!]

FLO: Nna! O mpona ke le mobolai? [Me! You see me as a killer?]

BONTLE: We have fused with darkness. E kae? [Where is it?] You wanted to kill me earlier?

FLO: That was acting!

BONTLE: Ha re bapale hape he! [Then let's act again]
Mamela. Ke na le dipidisi tsa boroko tseo ngaka e mphileng tsona . Hake di nwe. Di ngata haholo
[Listen, I have sleeping pills that the doctor gave a while ago. I don't drink them. They are a lot.]

FLO: Hobaneng o sa di nwe Bontle? Ke ka hona o sa robaleng bosiu. [why don't you drink the pills Bontle? That's why you sleepwalk!]

BONTLE: Ausi [Sis!]

FLO: Tswarelo! (Ntshwarele!)[Forgive me]

BONTLE: Ke tla di thuwa ke di kenye teeng ya hae. [I will crush them into her amomile tea].

FLO: Then?

BONTLE: Then you come in with your smelly hands and strangle her.

FLO: Bontle!

BONTLE: Listen, it will work.
(Footsteps Sounds from the Kitchen.)
BONTLE: Ke Ausi Khensani!

FLO: BONTLE, are you sure you can go through with it?

BONTLE: How many pills do you think we need?

FLO: I mean it's not so bad.

BONTLE: About ten? Or more? You know what, I'll put ten or more pills into her tea. Will you do it? Or should I?

FLO: Ausi ke nahana mohlomong re eme! [Perhaps we wait a little bit]

BONTLE: I have more if needs be.

FLO: If Oupa finds out…

BONTLE: Flo! You want to continue being a slave or are you ready to be a madam?
(Silence)
Now go!
(Bontle stares at Flo who exits to the Kitchen.)

SCENE THREE

(BONTLE leaves as a burst of nervous laughter from Flo. She seems to be laughing at something AUSI KHENSANI said. Khensani enters in a fur coat, with FLO behind her. She is upset.)

FLO: Ausi Khensani wasn't too cold?

KHENSANI: BONTLE!

FLO: She's preparing Ausi Khensani's tea.

KHENSANI: Ausi? …. I wish she'd hurry. I'm ashamed to even ask for tea when Oupa is all alone, without a thing, without food, without cigarettes.

FLO: But they give people in jail food.
(Silence)
Abuti Oupa won't stay there long. He is not guilty.

KHENSANI: Guilty?

FLO: I meant not guilty.

KHENSANI: What do you know?

FLO: Not guilty, ausi!

KHENSANI: Guilty or not, I am here for him. FLO,
it's at times like this that you realize how much you love someone. Have you ever loved someone? I don't think you know that feeling. It's like you feel what they feel. I don't think he's guilty either, but if he were, I'd become his collaborator. I'd follow him.

FLO: Drama e kana Madam? You know I've seen worse cases get

acquitted.

KHENSANI: Do you go to trials? You?

FLO: I watch CSI. I once saw a case.

KHENSANI: You can't compare Oupa's case to TV. It is an American show.
Actually, why am I explaining this to you?
BONTLE!
Listen, Oupa is being accused of the most idiotic thefts. I know he'll get out of it. All I mean is, as a result of this ridiculous affair, I've come to realize how- deeply attached I am to him. You know the house feels all cold and dark since he has been gone. It feels empty

FLO: He was arrested only yesterday.

KHENSANI: Your point Flo?

FLO: Did you go visit him today?

KHENSANI: I couldn't do it. I was so sad the whole day. And he wouldn't want me to suffer by going to jail too.

FLO: Go to Jail too madam?

KHENSANI: Of course, I won't go to jail. But Oupa knows I would do anything for him. But right now, I can't visit him.

FLO: You found him a lawyer?

KHENSANI: You know I have been so busy. I don't even know any lawyers. Why all these questions Flo? I have a business to run, I can't get mixed up in spending time and money on lawyers.

FLO: Oh!

KHENSANI: But if Oupa wanted it, I would ride to the ends of the world for him. I am his ride or die.

FLO: Ausi Khensani. Stop worriying so much. You must...

KHENSANI: This ausi thing!

FLO: Madam *(Silence)* Would you like to get into bed, madam and sleep a bit after your long day?

KHENSANI: I'm not tired.

FLO: Then sit on the bed.

KHENSANI: Sit on the bed? For what. I am not in mourning.

FLO: Of course, madam, I just wanted to…

KHENSANI: Stop giving me instructions

FLO: Yes, madam.

KHENSANI: Take out my things. Lay them all out.

FLO: Things madam. Is it not late?

KHENSANI: Flo! Take them all out. I want to see them. The fur coat Oupa bought me. The Rolex Watch he bought more recently. Lay them all out.

FLO: All out?

KHENSANI: Put them on the bed. I am so sad; I just want to sit amongst them.

FLO: Will you put them back?

KHENSANI: Why do I pay two of you, you and your sister. I mean the two of you can figure it out?

FLO: You will sit on the bed with them?

KHENSANI: Flo!

(Flo brings out the jewellery. Lays it all out. Places the biggest chain necklace on the bed)

FLO: This is beautiful madam. You want to put it on?

KHENSANI: Yes.

(She walks to the mirror for Flo to put the necklace on her. Flo places the necklace on her and tries to slightly choke her. Khensani, Hits her head back and gets herself out of the strangle. breathless)

Flo!

FLO: Madam, you see what you have done. You must not move when I dress you. I nearly choked you.

KHENSANI: You nearly?

FLO: Sit down and we try another scarf or something.

KHENSANI: I don't think so..

(FLO is silent and hurt)

KHENSANI: what? You are upset? I refuse to sit Flo! There are times when I am not sure what to do with you.
Flo?

You know you and your quietness, you cannot be trusted. I think you will poison me. Or kill me in my sleep. Then you're so sweet that I simply can't stand it. It crushes me. I am sorry I thought you were choking me. But I didn't mean anything of that. It's just that I'm so upset. I am worried about Oupa. You see what a state I'm in.

FLO: Perhaps, Ausi Khensani would like to do something else. Perhaps check if there is money in your accounts?

KHENSANI: Accounts? At this time of the night? With Oupa in jail? Are you mad? You must be mad.

FLO: The lining on your coat is torn. (looking at the coat on the bed) I'll fix it.

KHENSANI: I am sorry Flo.

FLO: Let me do it tonight.

KHENSANI: Ok. If you want. I think I am going to give away all my clothes to charity.

FLO: Ao hle ausi.

KHENSANI: *(She winces at Ausi)* I'm thinking of going into mourning. (*sits on the*

bed). It's only proper. With Oupa going, I should mourn our life. Don't be surprised Oupa is in prison whats there to live for? I am alone, you guys will leave me soon. ..

FLO: We'll never desert Ausi Khensani.

KHENSANI: I know you won't, FLO. You've not been too unhappy with me, have you?

FLO: Oh! Well, actually madam…

(Sits on the bed with Ausi Khensani. Khensani stares at her and she quickly gets off the bed.)

KHENSANI: I've given you food, my old clothes and dresses that I gave to you and your children.

FLO: Our children are small.

KHENSANI: Well you and Bontle, must be the talk of the neighbourhood when you wear them.

FLO: we are always wearing the overalls.

KHENSANI: When you go home you must wear them. To funerals.

FLO: Actually, madam. They are too fancy.

KHENSANI: Well at least you look like princesses... I think you guys will have more use for them than me. I'm through with nice things and all that goes with it. Goodbye Fashion Week, Durban July,

(BONTLE returns with tea.)

BONTLE: Ausi Teye ke e (Tea).

KHENSANI: When I die. You will get everything.

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani is losing herself... She must pull herself to herself

FLO: Teye Madam.

KHENSANI: Who can drink tea now? *(Gets on the bed with all her*

dresses. They look like they will smother her.) Oh My David Tlale, you know, he designed it for me. But its not worth it anymore. here... (*She gives it to Bontle)*

BONTLE: For me? *(confused)*

KHENSANI : (silence)

FLO: Ausi Khensani wow! (*To BONTLE)* Thank Ausi Khensani. You have wanted it for so long.

BONTLE: Ausi?!

FLO: Bua nnete

KHENSANI: This Ausi thing!

BONTLE & FLO: Sorry Madam

KHENSANI: FLO, What shall I give you, with a body like that? That coat.

(points to a coat FLO.)

BONTLE: Oh! The coat!

FLO: Oh! Ausi Khensani ... never ... Ausi Khensani's too kind.

KHENSANI: Its my job to make you my helpers happy. I tell people every day that I may be the best boss ever. I gave two black women jobs. Government is struggling to curb unemployment and I am doing my part. Now look. Designer wear too. This is like a bonus. You must be grateful.

FLO: Yes, we are—

BONTLE: Tea?

KHENSANI: Put the tea on the table. (*She sees the telephone.)*
Why is the phone off the hook?

BONTLE: Abuti Oupa....

KHENSANI: *(dumbfounded)* Eng? Oupa?

(BONTLE is silent.)

Bua!

FLO: Abuti Oupa o ne a letsitse. [Oupa had called]

KHENSANI: Eng? Abuti Oupa phoned?[What?]

FLO: We wanted to surprise Ausi Khensani.

KHENSANI: Oh!

Silence

KHENSANI: What did he say?

BONTLE: Well…

FLO: Nothing. That he doesn't want to be in jail.

KHENSANI: Flo! And you didn't tell me?

FLO: Well ausi!

KHENSANI: Where does he think he should be?

FLO: He wanted to know if you had organised a lawyer yet?

KHENSANI: I told you I have been sad…

FLO: We did not know this earlier madam.

KHENSANI: I guess. This is all distressing.

FLO: Tea madam.

KHENSANI: (*Accepts the tea and brings it to her lips.*) What else did he say.

FLO: Nothing to distress you madam. Drink up.

KHENSANI: How can I even think of drinking tea. When he is all cold in jail. I am selfish right.

FLO: No. Drink up. You should sleep and you will think clearer in the

morning.

KHENSANI: He asked about a lawyer?

BONTLE: Yes.

KHENSANI: He must have called someone else. To help with a lawyer.

BONTLE: Perhaps.

KHENSANI: Imagine. Oupa asking other people for help. No. no!

FLO: Madam you are getting worked up. Drink your tea.

KHENSANI: This tea is cold. Listen. I must find Oupa a lawyer. Bring the phonebook.

FLO: The phonebook?

KHENSANI: (*hands Bontle the tea*) Take. I must not rest. I must get Oupa out on bail.

FLO: This late?

KHENSANI: Flo, go, call for a taxi for me. I will go to one of his friends. Someone must know a lawyer.

FLO: (*desperate*) Taxi? This late? Bontle, go warm up Madam's tea! Madam relax. It's late.

KHENSANI: He called right?

FLO: But that is –

KHENSANI: And you didn't tell me. He needs me.

FLO: Well, you were so upset, so we thought.

KHENSANI: You thought?

FLO: If we say, Oupa called. You will be upset. So, we thought we wait.

KHENSANI: Wait for what?

FLO: For Oupa

BONTLE: To come home and surprise you himself. You never know phela Madam. That they delay his release.

KHENSANI: You both are ridiculous. Go phone! FLO, get me a taxi. I will go see a friend of mine about a lawyer. Why didn't I think earlier? Hurry up. Go on. *(She pushes FLO out of the room. Flo leaves)* Flo, Flo!

(Flo stops at the door with fur coat in hand)

FLO: Madam?

KHENSANI: My coat!

FLO: Madam?

KHENSANI: I am going to need it. I am going out into the cold.

FLO: Oh Madam!

(*Flo hands over the coat. Stares at Bontle*)

KHENSANI: I think I am going crazy! *(To BONTLE*) When did he phone?

BONTLE: ha! Tea Madam?

KHENSANI: When did he call?

BONTLE: Before Ausi Khensani came in. (*pushes cup into her hand*)

KHENSANI: (*Takes the cup to drink but doesn't drink*) what? And This tea!! What did he say?

BONTLE: He wants a lawyer.

KHENSANI: Where must I get one? What else did he say?

BONTLE: Nothing.

KHENSANI: Where am I going to find a lawyer at night?

BONTLE: Sometimes, they work late.

KHENSANI: How do you know that?

BONTLE: I read newspapers. I know these things.

KHENSANI: Oh, you do?

BONTLE: Yes. Drink the tea Madam?

KHENSANI: What about the accounts for the salon? Let me see them. I've got time!

BONTLE: Flo knows where they are. I don't know . Madam drink your Tea it's getting cold.

KHENSANI: That's right... *(Staring at BONTLE)*
You are so pretty Bontle.
You know this kind of work doesn't suit you.

BONTLE: Oh Madam!

KHENSANI: Yes, you are suited for better things like me.

BONTLE: Oh!

KHENSANI: Unlike your sister. She is made for this work. You, you should be a star or something. Look at your face. We should work on you getting back to school. Maybe working outside the house. What do you think? When Oupa returns we should make it happen.

BONTLE: Really Madam?

KHENSANI: Yes. Why not. Like now, you would have found a lawyer and a taxi for me right?

BONTLE: Yes. Flo does struggle a bit.

KHENSANI: A bit. I am so glad you came to help her actually. She struggles all the time.

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani...

KHENSANI: I don't mean to offend you. It's just that.

BONTLE: No.

KHENSANI: You care so much about me.

BONTLE: Yes I do.

KHENSANI: I can see it in your eyes. You love me. Unlike your sister.

BONTLE: Yes, I do.

KHENSANI: You would go to the end of the world for me.

BONTLE: Eh… yes. Madam

KHENSANI: Bontle?

BONTLE: Madam… the truth is that Oupa has been released.

KHENSANI: What? Why didn't you tell me the truth?

BONTLE: We, I was not sure…

KHENSANI: You are telling me I am here worried about lawyers when Oupa is out?
(Silence)
Where is he then?

BONTLE: He said he would go for a drink.

KHENSANI: A drink?

BONTLE: That's what he said.

KHENSANI: Where?

BONTLE: Circle Bar.

KHENSANI: Why didn't you tell me? You let me go on and on?

BONTLE: I thought he would be back to surprise you.

KHENSANI: Surprise… oh what a wonderful idea Bontle. I will surprise him. Oh that one….
(Silence)
Bring my gold dress. I must look proper.

BONTLE: For the lawyer?

KHENSANI: No, of course not. When the car gets here, I am going to Circle Bar. The dress Bontle.

BONTLE: This dress madam?

KHENSANI: Yes. I need it for tonight. I will give it back. It will look great on you. I just need it for tonight.

(Bontle hands her the dress.).

Your hands are so soft. Unlike your sister's. Where is your sister. What can she be doing?

BONTLE: There aren't many taxis at this hour. She probably had to call several companies.

KHENSANI: You think so? I've lost track of time.

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani ought to sit down. I'll go and heat up the tea.

(*She starts to leave.)*

KHENSANI: Don't bother, I'm not thirsty. It is champagne I should be drinking tonight. You can be sure we won't be coming home.

BONTLE: Really, just a little tea...

KHENSANI: (*Suddenly she sees the apron*.) That apron, what's that doing here? Where does it come from?

BONTLE: The apron? It's FLO's, from the kitchen.

KHENSANI: It is? Why is it in my bedroom?

BONTLE: *(She takes the apron and folds it*) She wears it all the time. She cleans your bedroom.

KHENSANI: Oh yes. You're at home here. It's your domain… She's certainly taking her time. Go look for her. And take the Apron with you.

(She sits down at her dressing table. She looks at herself in the mirror and talks to herself.)

And what about you, you fool, will you be beautiful enough to receive him?
Oh Jeso! Oupa o tswile? Bo Oupa le bona ba ya tena. Ke ntho ena ke neng ke sa batle akgente. Ke mang ya tswang teronkong at this time of the night. Next thing motho wa teng o tlo batla hore wena o patale diMoet, le diHennessey. Ka tjhelete e tswang kae? Yuu o wa tseba motho ke beetroot. O jewa kahodimo le katlase. Why mare mapolesa a montsha, he? Ya phela imali yazi. And le baa. Ba ja dijo tsa ka. Ha ba ka re ba qeta ditjhisi, le kgoho letshehare lohle. Ba batla le ho ekeletswa tjhelete. Motho e mong le e mong o nahana hore ke ATM. Ke nke chelete kae? Sheba ka mona? They never clean. Look at this place. Ba hlwekisa neng? all they know is to finish my sugar, ba apare diaparo tsa ka. Kamore ya ka yona is filthy!
[Oh Jesus! Oupa is out? He is also so irritating. Who gets out of jail at night? Next thing I go surprise him and he doesn't have money. This is why I didn't want to call a lawyer. Where do I get the money from? He will be ordering Moet and Hennessey, with money coming from where? You know a person is being milked. Why are the police doing this to me! And these two. They are milking me dry. They can't even clean good. All they know is to eat all the food in my house. And demand for more money. Everyone thinks I am an ATM. Where should I get the money from? Look at this place. When do they clean? They drink tea and finish the sugar and wear my clothes, but my bedroom is filthy]

(As she utters the last sentence, BONTLE enters the room. She stands silently behind AUSI KHENSANI, who suddenly notices her in the mirror.)

KHENSANI: Eh? BONTLE…

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani ha a thaba ke mosebetsi wa rona?
[Is Khensani not happy with our work?]

KHENSANI: But I am, BONTLE. Delighted. In seventh heaven.

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani o wa re phoqa? [You are making fun of us?]

KHENSANI: I wonder who told the police about Oupa. I suppose you wouldn't have any idea?

BONTLE: Does Ausi Khensani mean? ...

KHENSANI: I don't mean anything. I'd like to know, that's all.

BONTLE: You shouldn’t worry. Abuti Oupa is free.

KHENSANI: What can she be doing? She's been gone for almost an hour! And why didn't you tell me at once that Oupa had phoned? He'll be furious.

BONTLE: We didn’t want to give you a shock, tea.

KHENSANI: That was very bright. You're quietly killing me with your kindness.
(Silence)
What do you think of this hair? Do you like it?

BONTLE: Tea? If I might venture...

KHENSANI: No. Please, venture. Well? What do you think of it?

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani's hair would look nicer up! Tea!

KHENSANI: Are you sure? Like that? You're right. You are a bright girl. You know, Bontle.

BONTLE: I'm not complaining. Tea! Ausi Khensani should have some tea because of the cold.

KHENSANI: You're trying to kill me with your tea. You're too much for me.

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani must drink it…

FLO enters.

KHENSANI: Well!

FLO: Ah! Ausi Khensani's still here?! Tea?

KHENSANI: No thanks Flo. The taxi!

FLO: First you drink you(r) tea.

KHENSANI Did you get a taxi?

FLO: … I've looked everywhere. No one wanted to come as late as this!

KHENSANI: So? Now what.

FLO: You sleep. And go tomorrow.

KHENSANI: Stop it Flo. Bontle told me that Oupa is out. Now go and find me the taxi

FLO: Oh Bontle!

KHENSANI: Flo! I can't with you. Not this evening. I am going to meet Oupa at the Circle bar.

FLO: I don't think so Madam.

KHENSANI: You are upset about the coat?

FLO: No, I don't think you should be leaving, that's all.

KHENSANI: I am. You are not my mother. *(She slips past Flo).* Now, you will not stay up. We are going to have champagne.

FLO: Oh. Bontle?

KHENSANI: Now go, Flo!

FLO: It's here…

KHENSANI: What?

FLO: Ausi Khensani. It's downstairs, Ausi Khensani.

KHENSANI: Why didn't you say?

.

(She starts walking out. Stops and comes back)

Uhm, before I leave. You know that I have a bit of a problem with the accounts, why/what with Oupa's arrest! Remember the money I gave you earlier this week? Ke kopa ho e kadima?

(Silence)

BONTLE: Nna Madam, I already sent my money home.

KHENSANI: FLO?

(Silence)

FLO?

(*Flo takes the money out of her breasts reluctantly. She gives it to madam. Madam picks it with her fingers and leaves.)*

SCENE FOUR

FLO: Mosebetsi wa hao o motle hore, Bontle? [Your work is wonderful Bontle]

BONTLE: O se ke be wa ba wa leka! [Don't even try!]

FLO: O nwele? [Did she drink?]

(BONTLE shakes her head "no.")

FLO: Le hanyane feela? Ache, o wa nyahamisa hle, Bontle. Bona mosebetsi wa hao o kgabane. Ruri o sebeditse hle ngwaneso. [Even a little bit? You are such a disappointment Bontle. Look at your great work. You really worked hard.]

(*Sarcastically clapping. BONTLE remains motionless for a moment and then walks away.)*

FLO: O ya kae? [Where are you going?]

BONTLE: Ke ilo robala! [I am going to sleep]

(Bontle leaves)

FLO: BONTLE!
(Silence.)
BONTLE!
BONTLE, I'm calling you.

BONTLE: Good night Ausi

FLO: Bontle! (*Screaming*).

(BONTLE walks in untying her apron.)

BONTLE: Ke eng! Ke phoso ya ka hore e be ha a nwa tee? [Is it my fault she didn't drink?]The tea was ready ausi.

FLO: Jwale o nahana hore o robale? Ba tla kgutla Bontle. [So, you think you should sleep] They'll both be back tomorrow, drunk, happy and in love. I hate her.

(BONTLE shrugs her shoulders)

O wa tseba hore ke mo hloile jwang? [I hate her! I loathe her.] And you, you just stand there! Didn't you see how she sparkled? How disgustingly happy she was? She took the coat!

BONTLE: She also took back her dress. But...

FLO: But what Bontle? She hates us. She likes shaming us. She rubbed it in our face that she will be with Oupa all night.

BONTLE: (Silence)

FLO: Othotse!

BONTLE: Ke reng Ausi?

FLO: Let's get on with it.

BONTLE: With what?

FLO: The act.

BONTLE: I am tired ausi.

FLO: YOU FAILED US BONTLE! I deserve this act

(Bontle stares in shock)

FLO: Hee!

(Silence)

FLO: It's my turn to be Ausi Khensani.

(Flo finds a dress, but it looks small for her. She looks through the coats. And is perplexed. She goes to the mirror and does Khensani's gestures. As she does them a couple of times. Bontle watches her. Flo looks bad doing the moves.)

BONTLE: Take the apron.

FLO: But BONTLE

BONTLE: I'm used to it.

FLO: But Bontle

BONTLE: BONTLE!

(Silence)

BONTLE: Oh, should I skip that?

(Silence)

BONTLE: Should I get to the part where you swear at me?

FLO: I am going to sleep.

BONTLE: Stop it ausi. Come, nthwake ausi wa ka. Ka ditlhapa tsa hao kaofela! [Swear at me my sister. All the worst swear words you know.]

FLO: Stop.

BONTLE: Tell me you hate me.

FLO: Bontle I am going to bed. You Should pour out that tea.

BONTLE: Ausi. You know Khensani thinks I am prettier than you.

FLO: (laughs) Of course you are.

BONTLE: So, hate me.

FLO: I hate Khensani. My dear beauty.

BONTLE: Flo...

FLO: Stop worrying.

BONTLE: I told Khensani that Oupa was out.

FLO: I know she told me.

BONTLE: You are not upset.

FLO: I am, but not now Bontle

BONTLE: Flo,

FLO: You want me to be angry? Ok. I am upset. I want to be Khensani, and you failed me. You want to brag about how she likes you better. Well, guess what, you are still a low filthy maid. She likes you better as filthy. So do us both a favour and actually drink that tea. You want me to strangle you. For once do something right and drink and stop being a burden in my life. Go on, just drink, drink

BONTLE: FLO.

FLO: Don't yell! It's useless. This life. It is useless. Don't yell.

BONTLE: FLO, FLO, kgutla!

FLO: (*Wakes u*p) It's late. Tshwarelo ausi. Cleans up the room. Let's go to sleep.

BONTLE: BONCLAIRE, tea

FLO: Empa, Bontle

BONTLE: TEA.

FLO: We're tired. Are tlohelle.

BONTLE: Ausi Khensani must have her tea.

FLO: Bontle

BONTLE: *(more firmly)* Ausi Khensani will have her tea...

(gives FLO a death stare)

BONTLE: Repeat after me, Ausi Khensani will have her tea...

FLO: Ausi Khensani will have her tea

BONTLE: My tea!

FLO: Empa?

BONTLE: I said: my tea.

MUSIC

(Bontle drinks the tea.)

THE END

Playmaking as an Ethic of Care and Anger

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> *"… gona jwale bana baka bamakala; 'mama haosana modumo!' waitsi nekenale modumo jwang? Lena hake sa golwa. Kea leboga hle bomme, taba yarona ya ho gyma, re raloke ka di drama enthositse hle, hobane, hakena modumo ko di long tseo ke di ratago …" (Mme Mosima, 2018[7])*
>
> *[…like now, my children have remarked; 'mama you don't have a lot of anger anymore – you aren't shouting at us that much!' You know I used to have a lot of anger? I also can't believe how easy I am. Thank you, boMme, our gathering for gym and doing the dramas has helped me, because, I don't have anger for the things I love.]*

Many of us take on social justice projects as a response to the pain and anger we feel. Anger, a normal emotion, is not easily associated with black women in South Africa; pain on the other hand is our daily bread. With the growing popularity of feminist articulations young black South African women are growing into taking up the role of being angry. Theirs is a clear articulation of the racialised, class-based and gendered lives of black women. As a theatre-maker I am interested in how anger manifests itself for those women who are not in the public spaces where we usually expect to find resistance against forms of oppression, i.e. for women who are not young, nor in the academic and social media settings. How has anger manifested and what projects and actions have they done?

In this chapter I am interested in looking at how playmaking (my own social justice project) can be an ethical experience of care; or, how playmaking allows older black women to experience myriad gestures of care. We know that when we are angered we may want to confront, fight, or punish the wrongdoer who treated us unfairly or got in our way. Anger can also occur indirectly. Indirect anger involves carrying feelings from one interaction to another, unrelated interaction. A co-worker may insult us. The anger we feel does not resolve. Our thoughts and feelings from one anger experience can shape our perceptions of subsequent, unrelated situations. Researchers call these carry-over feelings "incidental emotions" (Tronto, 1993). I use playmaking as an

[7] This reflection was shared by the character of Mme Mosima, remarking how she doesn't have a lot of noise. (Modumo – Sepedi word for sound. In this instance, modumo is for noise. It also speaks to anger. Like thunder makes noise but it also creates a feeling of anger.) Even her children noticed that she is not as angry.

engaging methodology to facilitate personal growth and provide a powerful, transformative experience through which emotions can be, if not resolved, then at least allowed to be felt and acknowledged.

In this chapter I discuss the process of creating a play with domestic workers, how the experiences of everyday life impact on the creation of a play, and how anger, care, power and powerlessness are significant variables that contribute to the shared experience. Consequently, I explore how to create stories that are relatable from such anger and stress. The play this chapter will look at is Dipina tsa Monyanyako created in collaboration with a group of domestic workers and performed in June 2018 (Figure 5). I will first look at the landscape of anger as experienced by black women in South Africa, I will then share how I met the group and then go on to relate to the various variables of care and anger in the play as well as our process and what we encountered in our experience of creating the play.

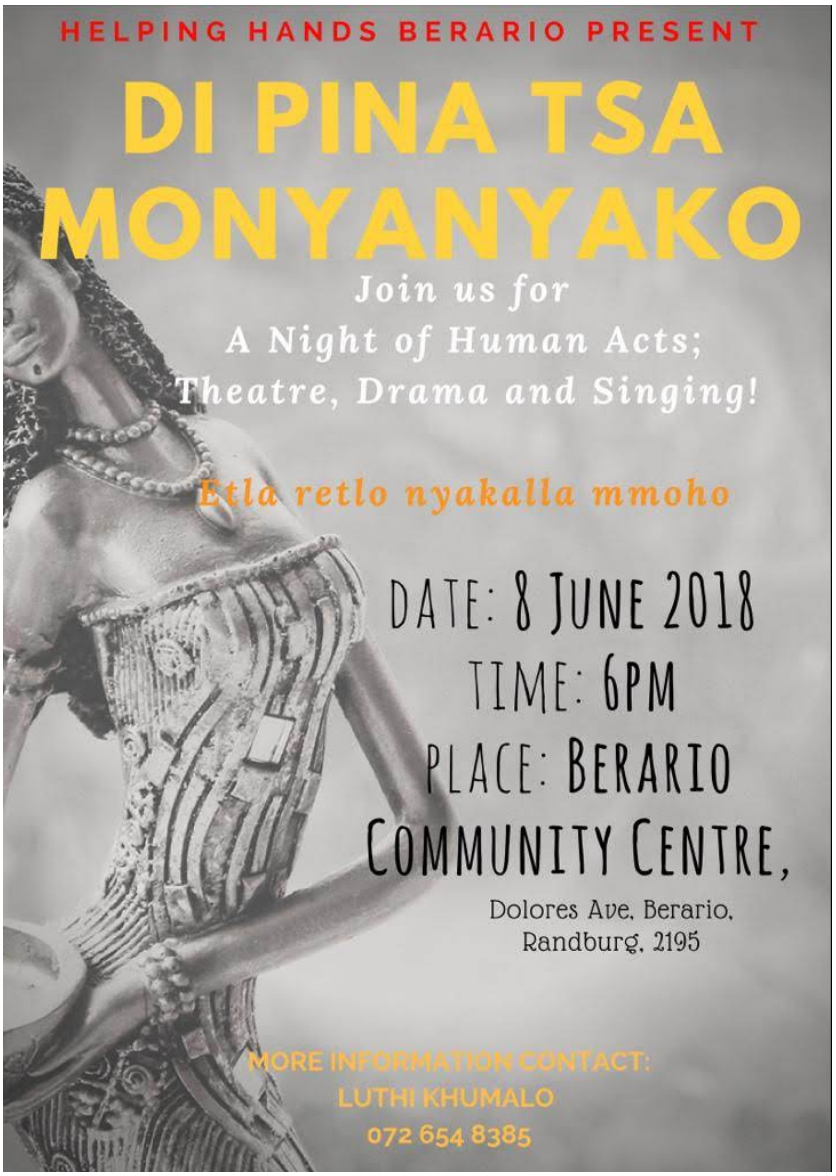

Figure 5: Advertising poster for Dipina tsa Monyanyako

On anger

At the end of the play I wrote and directed, Postcards: Bodily Preserve,[8] the character of Maleeto seems to have resigned herself to being maimed and preserved in bottles by her lover, Nick. She responds to an unheard question of what is wrong, saying: "no, nothing … just a steady anger … it rises in me" (Lepere, 2018). When thinking about women, specifically South African black women and their experiences, anger is rarely the description used to address their responses to life. Silent, mute, the invisible,

[8] *Postcards: Bodily Preserves* is a play created as a response to *Dipina tsa Monyanyako*. It is the writer's visceral response to the shared stories, songs and experiences.

(Baderoon, 2011a; Motsemme, 2004) are adjectives more commonly used. A play on the deaths and maiming of black women is therefore an anomaly; a story centred on black women, and the novelty of expressing anger. Maleeto acknowledges and expresses the steady anger that she has. This has been of interest to me: how do black women express and experience their anger?

South Africa is known for its protest culture. These protests are associated with black rage; organised, orchestrated movements that are represented as pure rage (Ndlozi, 2015); a fury that drives masses to spill into the streets. Historically this expression of fury was described by the white establishment as the "swart gevaar" [black danger], invoking fear of the blacks. This phrase was "used to warn and coddle white and coloured babies to sleep" as radio presenter Eusibeus McKaiser (2018) once retorted on air. Steven Biko commented: "the imaginary bogey — 'swart gevaar' — (the idea) that there is something to fear in the event of the Black man assuming his rightful place at the helm of the South African ship" (Biko, 1979, p. XX) This anger, in most cases, is associated with black men, the colour of fear. In the height of apartheid in South Africa, theatre was the space for the young angry black man. Protest theatre declared itself to be the forerunner of a more equal society. Angry black men were celebrated by playwrights, directors and actors (Kente [1981], Kani and Ntshona [1972], Ngema and Mtwa [1983]). Male rage was hailed as a revitalising force. Women's rage on the other hand was not to be seen. Twenty-five years into democracy even on our stages, women's rage and talent remain minimally un-nurtured; silenced.

Black women are rarely seen as angry. Fear-full maybe, but rarely angry. In South Africa, they are the ever-present, ever loving help, the women who love unconditionally; they love their work, colleagues, white families and black males, no matter what. They are represented as ever resilient. They react with acceptance towards evil and see it as a necessary part of life. They let evil run its course, in nature and in people as well (Morrison, 1974). Black women, more than any group, find themselves at a high risk of experiencing violence, powerlessness associated with socioeconomic disparities rooted in a history of racism and sexism. Black women are not the face of anger because for black women anger is too risky, "because [there are] jobs to keep, families to feed, and bills to pay" (Cooper, 2018 p. 5). Britney Cooper writes that although the angry black woman is a common stereotype in American social life, the reality and presence of her in real life is an anomaly. The reason for this

is that black women in any society cannot afford, economically, to be angry. There are a lot of possible repercussions that could result from their expression of anger. They can lose jobs therefore their money, and social relations, which are integral to their survival. Black women who hold their communities together also hold the broader society together. It was from this position of not being angry that I was intrigued by the idea of working and creating from a place of anger. I was interested in playing with anger and expressing anger. In her essay, The Uses of Anger Audre Lorde (1981) argues that anger for black women is a good space for creating. She writes: "Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being," (Lorde, 1981, p. 13). In her experience of fearing to be angry she learnt nothing. She further suggests that anger can be a generative space of imagination. A space where analyses of relations and of positionality can be made (Lorde, 1981). In this regard rage is a form of energy. It is loaded with information. However, if we do nothing in response to it, if we do not re-act, create, or respond accordingly, this is wasted energy. In The Wretched of the Earth, Frantz Fanon (1963), considers the anger of black people produced by years of political oppression. He describes the rage as follows:

> The native's muscular tension finds outlet regularly in bloodthirsty explosions – in tribal warfare, in feuds between sects and in quarrels between individuals. Where individuals are concerned, a positive negation of common sense is evident. While the settler or the policeman has the right the live-long day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native: for the last resort for the native is to defend his personality vis-a-vis his brother. (Fanon, 1963, p. 42)

He labels this anger as self-destructive, always directed back to the black people and not to the settlers or police who are deserving or not of the violent actions. South African poet laureate, Wally Serote (1982), in the poem Time has Run Out captures a similar misdirected, self-destructive rage. He highlights how self-hatred turns oppressed people against themselves through various forms of violence. In this poem he articulates how we (including himself in the description) have "gone mad" identifying alcohol abuse, violence, and the senseless killing of fellow black people as instances of the outrageous "amazing things" done:

> Inside this hour
> many of us have gone mad
> we are killed with their bare fingers

we are soaked
our hearts drenched in alcohol
we tear, rip our wombs with nails
rather than give birth in oppression
alas
we do amazing things to simple people
we are human (Serote 1982)

In both of the above examples (Fanon and Serote), we see anger as a site for immeasurable and senseless violence. Both writers are concerned with the reaction of the black person in anger. Normally the anger is not towards the cause of the anger but towards fellow black people. Serote's poem creates a clear image of the horror of the lives of black people and the kind of consuming power of this rage as it goes on unabated. The poem is of interest as it includes women's anger even in the grotesque "amazing things" that are the result of anger. The poem suggests abortion: "we tear, rip our wombs with nails rather than give birth in oppression" (Serote, 1982), an example of how the anger is directed back at self. Both Fanon and Serote make me question how anger is expressed and how it can be uttered in ways that don't maim or create loss for black women and men. How then can anger be expressed in more ethical ways and in a caring manner? What are the creative gestures of rage? What are the ways that, as Lorde suggests, anger can fire the imagination? Can it?

Ethics of story-making

When doing work in a community, ethical considerations must be considered and implemented. When doing work thinking about anger, it seems even more logical that ethics become paramount. One must consider what are the implications of such work on the members of the community and the people one is working with? Therefore, a conceptual link is needed here between anger, care and ethics. I have become acutely aware that to work with anger requires considerable reflection on a lived ethics. Creating from this emotion should happen in a space of care rather than harm. Creating in the frame of rage requires that we pull back and view performances and question them – are they really just acts? Or are they a rummaging through closed wardrobes, hidden rooms of souls in order to present work that is new? How do we create in a manner that does not further stigmatise black women as just plain angry? How does one consciously code the process in order to offer the participants a holistic experience?

I first encountered ethics in the medical realm, as a component of the research hurdles one has to meet in order to do this kind of work. Ethics, in this realm, are bound to the adage: "first do no harm". It is a journey with the university's ethical guidelines through its Research Ethics Committee. There is a process to follow to ensure that this work will do no harm. All participants should be anonymous. All participants will only work in a way that is consistent with the relevant and identified ethical protocols. All the work will meet the ethical requirements of confidentiality, anonymity, and permission from all participants involved. All this was met in this case. But when thinking about working with real life people, the reflection of the ethical is beyond the protocols of confidentiality and anonymity. It is what Ellos (1994, p. 65) views as anything involving "an adventure in caring commitment". Writing about ethics in relation to medicine Kuhse and Singer (1998) explain that the goal "is not the development of, or adherence to, a code or set of precepts, but a better understanding of the issues … the value of life, what it is to be a person, the significance of being human" (1998, p. 4). In thinking about ethics as it relates to this thesis, I would like to align with Kuhse and Singer's description that ethics includes a caring, compassionate approach towards understanding what it means to be human and what it means to act morally. In the book Narrative Ethics, Ellos (1994) and the contributors ponder ways in which narratives or stories we tell become a site for moral responsibility. The contributors argue that stories provide ways of interacting with society, therefore storytelling is intentional behaviour where we account for right and wrong. In this site of responsibility "a moralizing impulse is present too" (Ellos 1994, p. 26). In addition, a story's ethic is linked to an aesthetic form. "A good story may have a happy or tragic ending, but what makes it good is the way in which the characters and plot interact in meaningful and creative ways" (1994, p. 315). The story is then a tool, and the telling of it involves the morality of 'do no harm.' In this encounter a discussion of ethics is a necessary component of creating and making a story, a play. In theatremaking processes we rarely discuss ideas of ethics. Health processes demand it, but theatre does not. Ellos's narrative inquiry ethic allows for me to reach passed the borders of the ethics of researcher/participant into the sensitivity to aesthetic form and which allows for the possibility of humane-ness to perform and exist. As humans we are susceptible to being vulnerable. Hence ethics insistence on doing no harm. This in the space of creating and storying together. Vulnerability is not only yours to bear alone, but also requires others, the community and sometimes the state to carry the effects of it. By recognising ourselves as vulnerable, we get to understand the

vulnerability of others, as well as the need for care, responsibility and solidarity. Care becomes a cultural and political action. When the subject of vulnerability comes up in theatremaking, however, we associate it with entering a character, a life of another. Rarely do we envision ourselves as political actors, where vulnerability has ethical implications. In theatremaking processes we rarely discuss ideas of ethics. Drawing from the definition of story as an aesthetic of doing 'no harm', I am intrigued then with what care means in the processes and methods of theatre and health.

The ethics of story-making with anger

In their ground-breaking book, Phakama: Making Participatory Performance, the writers go to painstaking lengths in telling stories of how they practised care with and for others. In the introductory write up, the editors clearly state that care is "to be attentive to and to take responsibility of another" (McAvinchey, Richardson, & Santos, 2018). Care is then a verb, a thing one does rather what one feels. Care is seen in Joan Tronto's (1993) approach as a possibility of agentic action, the action engaged in when people feel are free, and part of a democratic process. This approach to ethics, as ethics of care, is personal, social, moral, and political. It starts from the reality that all human beings need and receive care and give care to others. The care relationships among humans are part of what mark us as human beings. Social democracy is at the heart of theatremaking since it is a collaborative art-form. We share not only time and resources, but we also share our stories. Sometimes these are difficult, painful and challenging stories. In playmaking the excavating of such stories does not assure any kind of benefits for the storytellers. When I do this research, I get rewards – a degree, another grant, a publication etc. - while the participants in the study receive nothing for their lives and effort. This for me is the heart of ethics, that it not just 'do no harm,' but can the experience be bound in a transaction of sorts, when creating stories using a clear give and take?

Meeting the group: A landscape of dignity and agitation

I first met BoMme[1] BaBerrario when one of my colleagues introduced me to the group. They had relayed to her (my colleague) that they wanted to do a play. I was brought in as someone to help create a play with the women. They wanted to create a play about HIV/AIDS awareness as it was nearing December 1st. I agreed to help them

with the play.[2] The group wanted to create a piece that would honor family members, loved ones and friends affected and infected with HIV. They also wanted to create a play for awareness for their children, whom they do not see and talk to as often. They wanted the play to say the things they were unable to say in the few, short moments they had at home. Most women in the group worked as domestic workers but others were guardians at the local nursery school or cleaners at a school, and two were drivers and messengers at a local courier company. The ages in the group varied from 25-year-olds to an 88-year-old woman. The size of the group fluctuated between 20-30 participants, depending on the day, week, and season. In one of our sessions, I asked them, what is the point of their meetings?

"We want to be self-sufficient women. We came here to Berarrio seeking support to be able to deal with life; we want to be able to handle our own business, "(Mathilda one of the oldest members in HBBO, 2018).

When we first started working together, I wanted to create plays that would speak to BoMama's worker issues. I asked them why they were not organising themselves as workers to seek worker rights. Mama Sylvia, who had been a domestic worker for 50 years, replied that the unions do not help them. "They cause trouble for us," she had said. As a social activist, this was a blow to my project; however, after much thought and observation, I realised there were deliberate choices that had been made throughout our time. Silence was used to assert their agency on what should be presented and how they want to be represented. This article explores how song, a vocal exercise, is used. It is also good to note how silence can reveal what consciousness and subjectivity mean for South African women. The world puts currency on our abilities to speak, but silence offers another effort of legibility (Motsemme, 2004). Therefore; the aim of my work had to shift to collaboration. The questions left for me were: What exactly would an ethical, caring practice for performers and audience look like? What is the role of silence in showing and practicing kindness and care, and how does this impact the aesthetics of a performance? Dipina became the collaborative culmination of practicing care and kindness in rehearsals, choices and performance.

In reflecting on my role in the group, I was an outsider that facilitated a creative process. The reason was that I wanted to allow for BoMama to share their own artistic

practice, which was mainly song. The play was not written out as it did not have one author. It was performed to an audience of BoMama's choosing; this included friends and family members. The play was situated in the tradition of asserting black women's agentic claim to gesture, creating and communicating in a myriad of ways.

I will focus on the latest play we created in 2018; called Dipina tsa Monyanyako. The play was a workshopped play. In the section I attempt to look at the moral imperative of performance; which is to offer alternative way of being for all involved; not only for the volunteer actors, and director but also how this relation can be a caring act.

The idea of performance as healing has been bantered about, what exactly would be if healing relates to an ethical caring practice of performing? What does an aesthetics of such a caring performance look like? What would it mean for performers and audience

Care factors: Rehearsals and performances

Some factors that affected us were time, language and light. We only had one hour a week to rehearse. They met five days a week for an hour, 5.30pm – 6.30pm. This time was scheduled because it gave the women time to finish work and walk to the community centre which for some was a 30-minute or more walk. Even in winter 6.30pm is good time to walk – it is dark but not too dark. I was offered the Monday evening slot to run rehearsals. They were clear that I would not receive more than that. Table 1 is an example of their timetable. What occupied their time outside the rehearsals? As I was using the time according to what they wanted I had to adjust my assumptions around theatremaking requiring 3-5-hour rehearsals 5 days a week for four weeks. This was what I was taught in drama school. These rehearsal hours amounted to an average of 60 hours of rehearsals. My own assumptions about creation, aesthetic and time had to be laid aside.

Table 1: Example of the working timetable for Dipina tsa Monyanyako

	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
Before we met	Sewing	Gym	Teaching Workshops	Gym	Gardening
During our Meetings	Rehearsals	Gym	Sewing	Gym	Gardening
Performance Pressure	Rehearsals	Rehearsals	Sewing/ Preparation for performance	Gym	Gardening

Arising from our limited time together was a product that was co-produced, with myself as a facilitator rather than a director. The time-factor pushed the director-actress relations out of the way and required that we reimagine what was needed to create a collaborative community play. Time also placed the play squarely in the long rich tradition of South Africa workshopped/community theatre (Hutchison, 2010). The play possessed the following characteristics:

1. The play was made by women.
2. The stories told were drawn from the women's experiences. There was no one playwright.
3. The performance was made in particular for their community which included their children who don't live with them and their extended families and friends.
4. The performance had more to do with real life than with fiction.
5. The play drew on traditional oral forms including the use of *diboko* (clan praise poetry).
6. The play combined other performance forms such as music, narrative and dance.
7. The play was essentially an urban story, rooted in the urban experience of South Africa.
8. Though not overtly political in nature, the play addressed a lot of issues that were important for BoMama.

Dipina tsa Monyanyako was, to all intents and purposes, a typical workshop/community theatre play. It was not scripted, and the actresses were given roles as opposed to characters, the roles suggesting social function (Landy, 1993) where they are clear and predictable to both the actresses and later on to the audience that views the play. Considering our time constraints, that the story was co-created, and that they needed to remember lines that were improvised, it seemed practical that the performance be played out according to stories they knew, i.e. social scripts they were familiar with and roles that they could easily identify with. Some of these were stereotypical performances. For example, we had a role of a police officer who was played in a chauvinistic, but charming, manner. There was a role of a priest who brings home services. This was played in a recognisable "oblivious to reality" kind of way. The roles of children dictated some form of counter-role of parents because

BoMama members are grandparents and parents. The role of wife dictates that there is a counter-role of husband. This role of husband whether present or missing still means it is an expected role that needs to be mentioned as part of the play. So, in the play the assumption is that if there is a wife, she must explain the presence or absence of a husband.

How did we come up with the roles? We would pick a theme and then share stories that were brought up by the theme, from which clear roles emerged. The roles involved a protagonist with a desire or goal. Then there would be a clear challenge and conflict would be created with an antagonist.

Implications for anger and care

This is the way in which we elicited various stories from the group:

1. Everyone was able to tell a story with a partner.
2. Everyone told a story in their group.
3. Everyone gets to participate in story-making by offering a story and also by directing and jumping in when needed to improvise.

Time as a care factor

These were a series of exercises that we did over three weeks. The image exercises were generally wordless. When we later gave words to the portraits, it was to take the story further, to discuss what we all could see, and as a group edit, add to and make the picture better. The play was not written but created in a group. The attempt on my part to write out the whole script had been met with many fraught mishaps. The play was made for a performance and is not easily published, and made use of song, poetry, improvisation and dance. These will be elaborated on below.

Image theatre assisted in equalising the rehearsal space as a give-and-take, where everyone could be involved and work as artist. Through the images, we saw that the body as a primary method of expression, rather than speech, could express more than what BoMme would allow themselves to express. They showed more than they would have told the group in words "By using the body rather than speech, the normal 'blockades' and 'filters' of thought can be bypassed" (Boal,1994 p. XX). Most of the time

each group put on different accents. An extension of the exercise was to let the group change an image a little bit in a way that made it stronger or weaker. There are a lot of different ways in which one can use image theatre. In a training programme one can use it as an activity for about 20 participants.

Time as a care factor became an opportunity to create in new ways and create new meanings for everyone in rehearsal. What would a successful play look like for the group? For BoMme it was a piece so that they could share their hearts with their friends, and especially their children. Care in this instance was marked by the collective creation and collective meaning making of the production. For example, some days some of the actresses would not make it to rehearsal. In these moments we accepted that BoMama members would not be able to always be present. This is related to time and care as a facilitator I had to be cognisant about BoMama's time was not my time. There was a need for the group to practice kindness for those who are not able to come everyday because their job doesn't allow them. As a theatre-maker; the actresses are normally expected to give of themselves and time to the production. But in this instance, I could not make that expectation a requirement. Time became a varying and fluid experience. We work for an hour and in that hour, we are in negotiation about what we do, and what can be done.

Language

Another factor to consider was language. Language revealed the very urban nature of the group. Their stories were as diverse as the languages spoken in the room. Most of BoMama were Tswana speaking, Sesotho and Sepedi, with a few Zulu speakers, and four ya BoMme were from outside South Africa (Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi) and spoke Shona, Portuguese, Tsonga and Chiwa. We spoke English in various moments for the participants. What was interesting is that BoMama would translate Tswana conversations to Zulu for BoMme from Malawi because, I assumed, Zulu was an easier language to learn for them. It seemed to have worked. Not all of BoMama were natives of Gauteng; they also came from Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, North West, Free State, Limpopo and Kwazulu-Natal. During the sessions we spoke about whatever was required. I switched between languages and they translated for each other as required. I never acted as a core translator. I assumed that they had created the group themselves, so the mix in languages must also be worked

out by the group. However, the mix of languages sometimes did cause a tower of babel. Language was and is contentious. When it came to the choices and selection of songs the Sesotho songs were easily selected since most of BoMama were Sesotho speakers. One day there was a fight over how the group were singing one song. The older woman, an 80-year-old who had suggested the song, felt that they were singing it wrong, mispronouncing the words and being lazy to add power and vigour to the song. She threatened that she would take away the song. The group then decided to suggest other songs as a way of overriding her tantrum. The song that was suggested instead was a Xitsonga song, and the rhythms were hard. When BoMama failed to learn the song the owners of the song started chatting in Xitsonga, then the Zulu-speaking group also held their own caucus and finally the group was divided into four groups; all speaking their own language. For me as a facilitator I was excited. But I could see the nervousness from the 80-year-old who finally sang, the one song they all really liked and sang well. This eased everyone back into song.

Later in the session I asked BoMama to reflect on what happened and the choices in language and the challenge they all faced. They reflected that they were all being pushed to speak certain languages in Johannesburg. In the workplace it was English, at the taxi rank it was Zulu and now the group was also bullying them to speak one language. Language in South Africa has been a site of contention. In 1976, Soweto school children took to the streets to protest against the use of Afrikaans as medium of instruction. The idea that one language can dominate social interactions brings about anxiety and apprehensions in the collective. So, for BoMama language was important. The songs also worked as a unifying language, though there were complaints about the choices. The language challenge then led me to encourage the ones with really clear ideas on what they wanted to say to create poems that showcased their language but at the same time engaged with the group and what they were all working on. From this moment we used a Setswana poem to kick-off the play, then a Sepedi praise poem towards the middle and a Xitsonga song with a dancer at the end. Being able to create in their own language freed them, and they surprised each other with their own performances and abilities. One woman, Mama Joyce, remarked that she had never taken a leadership role, and now she was leading the whole play with a Setswana poem.

Another conversation on language that we had was on the choice of language that the action and dialogue of the play would be in. Some of BoMama wanted the play in English. But Mama Sylvia asked who the play was for: was it for them or for the madam? She suggested that if the play was made into English it would mean that they were centering their employers which would assume that in the audience, filled with friends and family, their white employers would be present, and they were so important that the play would need to shift for them. This for me was a very key moment, as she was asserting that the meetings at Berrario Scouts Hall were for the women, and it was a space to rest, be safe and away from work. By making their play in English, it meant they were bringing work into this personal space. It would mean that the story also would be different to accommodate the employer and their ideas of them. We, collectively, then decided the play will be in the languages spoken in the room. This served the story far better, as the audience was going to be their friends and family who understood all the languages spoken.

The creative outcome arising from the anger that language differences caused was the ability to recognise differences as being creative tools. Rather than letting these differences feed into the distortions and lines of differences which we inherited, the anger transformed the space for insight and new stories and creation. Participants were able to express anger to each other with the outcome resonating with these words from Lorde (1981, p. XX): "anger between peers births change, not destruction, and the discomfort and sense of loss it often causes is not fatal, but a sign of growth". What was also particular about language was that BoMama had clear guidelines – directorially – on how roles/characters should say certain things. They would direct each other on tones, age, occupation, and gender fitting language. The performance of language in this regard became a communal and collective creation. Attached to language is what any group creates as meaning. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) in his book Decolonising the Mind, relays the story of how the community co-created the play, I'll Marry When I Want, in which he shares that the role of language in the process of creation is one that not only conceptualises identity, but also social roles and actions (wa Thiongo'o, 1986). Thus, not only is there creation of the show, but also a creation of a common performance language that enables everyone to be able to act and perhaps enables a form of social action. The use of multiple languages allowed for everyone to make the play theirs. It also gave different viewpoints on how social matters can be handled. The different languages' allowed for everyone to take

responsibility for the action. More importantly, they looked forward to trying out the character themselves in case an actress fell through.

Light for rehearsals and performance

The literal meaning for theatre is 'a place of seeing.' This suggests that to be seen and being able to see is important in the making of theatre. Traditional rituals and performances usually happen during the day, with light playing a particular role, for audiences and people to see, and also to create a mood. In modern stage craft, light is equally important. This is such an important aspect of theatre that in a production there is generally a lighting designer/director. Light in theatre is used to draw audience's attention towards a point. Sometimes light can reveal or hide forms on the stage. Light is an integral part of creating theatre. With this in mind it was a dilemma to discover that there were no lights at the Berrario Scouts Hall. However, dealing with this proved to be an enlightening mission.

In 2018 when we met and did the plays there was no light in the building we were working in. The Scouts Hall, which is a government building and community centre suffered from some maladministration, with no one clear authority. From BoMama I learnt that the building owed electricity of over R160,000 for a period of five years. No one was clear on who should pay the debt. Was it BoMama, who had been in the building since 2016? There was a scuffle with a white male community member who wanted to get them out of the building. The issues were laid to rest, but for our entire time in rehearsals and performance there was no light. When the sun set, and it got dark we continued to hold our meetings in the dark. In the earlier months, March and April, there was a bit of residual light from the setting sun. After that the place was in complete darkness. There were days where we would just listen to each other's voices. The lack of light was the main subject of our earlier conversations and storytelling. I was obsessed with trying to find alternatives to lighting the place. More importantly, I was worried about the final play production that would be shown to audiences. How would we stage a play with no lighting?

The group was equally worried about the light, but they also just wanted to create and meet together. The light became secondary. Creating and running workshops and rehearsals in the dark allowed for more sharing to occur. One night we sat in a circle

and we shared stories of pain, loss and hurt. It was not the intention of the session. The intention was to story tell. Using two rocks a participant would take the one rock and say: "What story is in my heart," and then take the other rock tell a short story on "What story is in the world." The rocks evoked strong emotions and seemed to concretise the various personal tensions that BoMama held; ideas of what it means to be an individual, a worker alone in Johannesburg away from family and children, next to stories on what it means to be part of a collective of women. The symbolic significance of inside/outside also lit up conversations on their own insider/outside role at work and home, and in broader society.

This confrontation led me to believe and solidly know that there was much to be gained from stories. In the story circle we created we asked people to come as they were, to put away phones and lend an ear to hear or share a story that made them laugh, cry, and cheer in real life. The story circles revealed lived experiences. Story circles are a methodology I am working on developing. It is an interactive drama exploring social issues through a dramatic process of role-playing. The circle is a tool of resistance; it is an open, engaged, safe and compassionate space. This theatremaking/aesthetic process is at the intersection of art, activism and social relevance and sees theatre as an instrument of real change. In this approach stories are a tool for social justice, creating a space to explore the interdisciplinary intersections between drama, theatre and performance, and social justice. In this case it was a projective tool where BoMama could tell their stories. However, for some reason, the storytelling went to a very personal space. Everyone shared stories of loss. It seemed from one story of worry, another story on fear came, then stories on death. One woman, Dorothy (not her real name) from Malawi, had a good friend who lost her husband, so his body had to be returned home to Malawi. The cost of taking him back was more than two months' rent. This death not only meant loss of another breadwinner, a life partner, a father but also a large portion of the community's resources. This story led to other stories of women who have patched big gaps for communities.

Songs and silences

Monyanyako is choral music. Defined as "Mmino wa batho ba bangata, o binwang ka dikarolo ***tsa*** mantswe a fapaneng, o hlokang diletswa; ***pina*** e binwang ke sehlopha

sa batho" (Futhwa, 2011, p. 68). It is music sung by a group of people in a choral arrangement with different voices singing in four-part harmony: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The tradition of choral music in South Africa is long. In the ever-famous quote by jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim he retorts in the film Amandla that "the revolution in South Africa is the only revolution anywhere in the world that was done in four-part harmony" (Hirsch, 2003). Composer, musician and researcher Neo Muyanga (2016) describes the long history of song in SA from religious rites to protest and how choral music leads people to contemplate about their lives, imagining being healthier, happier and better citizens. Song, as a form of expression is one of the most accessible and revealing artworks that people create to map their experience (Coplan, 1994)

The play we created was named tsa Monyanyako by the participants because they wanted to sing. They wanted to sing and tell stories. The stories were sad, but they wanted the songs to not be harrowing. "We don't want to sing sad songs" (Mama Sylvia). Sad songs included religious songs, which they already sang at the beginning of the sessions. They had suggested that *monyanyako* meant party, from the phrase "go nyakalla" meaning 'to be happy'. Songs were a big feature in the group. We started each session with a song and ended in song. We sang church songs and closed off with praise or worship songs. These moments were accompanied by long silences. Songs in South Africa are an integral part of everyday life. They have a strong presence in living the everyday; in song people express their anger and dissatisfaction in protests against the ruling parties. Historically it was an important component in political mobilisation. Songs function not only to entertain, or to "umthokozisa, odabukileyo" as the song goes:

> Ukuhlabelela,
> *Singing,*
> Kuyamthokozisa,
> *Causes happiness,*
> Odabukileyo, hlabelela!
> *So, to the sad/torn person, sing!*
>
> Bonga, bonga, bonga, bonga,
> *Give thanks, give thanks, give thanks, give thanks,*
> Njengenyoni enhle, hlabelela!

Like a beautiful bird, sing!

Songs also function to unite a group of people who sing together, and function as opportunities for reflection and intervention (Mkhoma, 2017). Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo'o, in arguing for a language for African Theatre, suggests that song is an integral gesture, and a sort of everyday life verb. "What is important is that song and dance are not just decorations, but they are integral part of a conversation, that drinking session, that ritual, that ceremony" (wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 45). Here is an example of how songs functioned in the session. The following song was sung not in the final performance but during rehearsals and meetings. The song Sinqanda Amayeye means: "we are preventing chaos." Historically the song has been sung in political movements and unions. The song in particular was sung at the ANC 2008 National conference. According to researcher Janet Cherry (2015), the song was sung as a reflection of the divisions and factions within the party at the time. It goes like this:

Sinqand'mayeye

Sinqand'mayeye,
We are preventing chaos/disorder
Amayeye,
Chaos
Amayeye (sinqand'mayeye)
We are preventing chaos/disorder
Izolo bekumnandi
Yesterday it was lovely
Namhlanje kuyaliwa
Today we are fighting
sinqand'mayeyeye
We are preventing chaos

The song is rhythmical, with tempos of militancy. It was sung while clapping and stamping. It is reminiscent of Xhosa battle songs. I had heard the song being sung in union meetings and various other versions in student protests. The words in student protest were changed to:

Izolo besifunda

Yesterday we were learning
Namhlange kuyaliwa
Today we are fighting
sinqand'amayeye
We are preventing chaos

However, in our rehearsals it was sort of remixed, sung by the younger women. It was sung as a way of moving from the daily religious songs we sang in the group, and as an offering to a fun song we might include in the final play:

Sinqand'ma voetsek uyeye
We are preventing fuck you chaos/disorder
Amayeye
Amayeye (sinqand'mayeye)…

The song was not included in the final piece because of its militancy. BoMama were clear that they were not trying to rally each other politically. Most of them worked six days a week with one day off, usually Thursday or Friday. The space was a place of rest and one where they were getting away from work. Because they worked in people's homes all day and evening (as live-in domestic workers/cleaners/logistics) they didn't actually have a time where work stopped. So, the meetings with BoMama were a space of safety and relaxation. My intention when working with them was to respect that and not cause them to continually talk about work. They were also clear from the onset that they were not interested in organising themselves politically, i.e. fighting for better wages. They did not want to rock the boat. Not everyone was in agreement, but most people were clear on this, so it was respected.

The song functioned as an expression of anger. The line: "Sinqand'ma voetsek uyeye / We are preventing fuck you chaos/disorder" suggests that the person singing is preventing "fuck yous" that can result from chaos. In this sense this conveyed the idea that during their everyday life, at work and even in the group, they were preventing anger from happening. This echoes what was mentioned earlier, that for black women, anger is too dangerous. So, the work they do is to consistently dissuade it from being expressed. However, by singing this song in particular, they made present the anger that existed, and the song then functioned as a gesture of sweeping it away. There was anger about not having lights at the centre, anger over their family issues,

anger about work, etc. The song came from what had happened, but also allowed the BoMama to experience the anger, without it being an over-consuming emotion. Jacqueline Jones in Labour of Love, Labour of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present writes:

> On the factory floor in North Carolina tobacco factories, where women stemmers were generally not allowed to sit or to talk with one another, it was not uncommon for them to break out in song. Singing in unison not only reinforced a sense of collective identity in these black workers but the songs themselves- most often religious hymns- ranged from veiled protests against the daily indignities of the factory to utopian visions of a life free of difficult wage work. (Jones, 1985, p. 140)

The singing and re-creation of new songs, which are seemingly spontaneous, form an important part of everyday acts of resistance. The songs were sung in chorus and choral tone. The chorus in Greek mythology is a key character that drives the story. In this play the chorus also acted as a driving force in the play. The chorus was a community of onlookers who were able to change the tempo and course of the play. Because there was no script, and the possibility of improvisation was big, the chorus, as a collective, worked to curb any kind of enthusiasm that could go on for too long. When an actress would indulge for too long in a character the chorus would break into song, to bring them back. This form of using song with improvisation was not strange or new to BoMama. Many attended churches[9] that use similar strategies to allow more people to preach or witness. The songs sung in rehearsals and the final production were not original compositions; they were songs that emerged from improvisations and some were known to most. The songs conjured historical and present realities. They were an opening for sharing of stories that were associated with the song. These then led to improvisations of stories and short skits. The melodies functioned as both transition strategies; background vocals for stories but also as a group and collective ritual for creating. An attempt on my part to write out the whole script has been met with many fraught mishaps. The final product was a play with three skits, interspersed with songs. It was not a musical. More of a collection of songs that were interrupted by stories. The songs played an important role for messaging, since the skits were varied; the songs helped to link the stories together.

[9] The churches are a strand of Apostolic Faith Missions Churches. The performances or preaching are normally improvised. The church members and choir use song to transition from one preacher to the other, or one thought to the next.

The Skits

- *Ijob yijob* was about family feud and how unemployment affected a family
- *Mama's got a boyfriend not a job!* was about a domestic worker's fraught relationship with her children.
- *When Thuli changed* was about the impact of drugs on a family

Singing allowed for the rehearsal space to be democratic, a sort of give-and-take, call and response where everyone was involved as an artist. The collaborative nature of singing allows for everyone to use their body and be present in the play, even if they were not core characters in the skits. Singing forced the expression of the body.

The songs in the play

The play opened with the following song. BoMama entered from the back of the venue (behind the audience), they then made their way to the front of the room singing the song.

Iyele yele siyenza njena

Iyeleyele siyenza njena
It's fine we are doing it like this
Iyeleyele (iyeleyele)
It's just fine
Iyeleyele (iyeleyele)
It's just fine
Iyeleyele (iyeleyele)
It's fine we are doing it like this
Iyeleyele siyenza njena

The song acted as an introduction of sorts, stating clearly: This is who we are, and this is what we do! More importantly, it spoke to ally our fears; mine and BoMama. The fear was: "What would people say about this play?" As co-creators we were acutely aware that the play did not fulfil the common aesthetical elements of a play, which were a clear script with clear characters and roles. A play with guidelines on story, costuming and lighting. *Dipina tsa Monyanyako* was an opportunity to create anew what would a successful play look like for the group? For BoMama, it was a

piece that they could share their hearts with their friends, and especially their children. Care in this instance was marked by the collective creation and collective meaning-making of the production. The play was an improvisation that shifted from day to day and rehearsals to performance. The only constant in the artwork were the songs. These stayed the same. These were sung to punctuate action or stop an improvisation from going on too long.

The opening song, declaring that "this is what we do," was sung with confidence and enthusiasm to propel them into the performance space. A similar song with praise properties was MaBerrario. Here the line between song and praise poetry was blurred. Praise poetry and singing is a heroic recital. The praise poetry is a particular oral poem recited to honour a people, a tribe, self or a leader and even nature; animals and landscape are praised. The poetry is about admiration (Jadezweni, 1999).

MaBerarrio

MaBerarrio,
Women of Berarrio
MaBerarrio
Women of Berarrio
Hare kopaneng,
Let's come together
Batla sala ba botsana bare bale ke bo mang
They will be left asking each other: "who are those women?"
Ke Bomme Ba Berarrio
They are women from Berarrio

This song was created by BoMme for their group. It was a song they first sang for me. It's like a praise poem of sorts. They sang it with a lot of pride. It is like a war cry, a song that foretells that they are here. They exist and they have something to say and do in the world. The song is an assertive song that speaks also to a performative-ness that someone is watching. An audience is watching and will be left asking themselves; "Who are these women?" This question evokes awe, wonder and possibility. It removes the robes of oppressed worker, revealing someone of wonder. The self-praise song is a response to some really hard experiences of daily living. The song as a creation was a shield against dependency and exploitation as well as a rallying call

towards changing something that will lead to even bystanders asking themselves: "Who are these women?"

Regarding composition, historically in South Africa women are not named as individual composers of songs. In the anthropological book *In the Time of* Cannibals: the Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants, David Coplan (1994) offers a look at Bosotho women who created and were part of a musical genre called the Shebeen Songs (Bar Songs). Shebeen Songs were songs sung in particular in shebeens (informal bars). He doesn't name the women as composers although the songs, unlike the male songs, have clear titles. He suggests that the women are seen as a collective. He writes that the shebeen songs were kept generic and not accorded to one person in order to "avoid public criticism of men, Basotho women were not interested identifying themselves and thus being singled out for condemnation for a genre" (Coplan, 1994, p. 158). We see here again the choice of black women to want to be part of a collective, rather than be singled out. The genre of Shebeen Songs can be linked closely to Dipina tsa Monyanyako, and differently to Difela, which were and are related to church songs. The migrant women coming and living in South Africa used song to encode their experience. The following song, that was sung in the play, seems to hark back to the Shebeen Songs. The song is about a mother bemoaning the effects of drink and the dangers that her children face when they go out at night. The song is a sort of complaint but sang in an upbeat tempo, to blend into the content and lyrics around beer.

Jwalane mantsiboea

Jwalane,
Small beer
Mantsiboea ee
In the evening
Jwalane,
Small beer
Mantsiboea ee,
ee mantsinboea ee (backing)
yes, at night
Bana ba rona (ee ke mantsiboea)
Our Children

Ke di tsotsi
They are thugs
Banwa bo jwala
They are drinking alcohol

The song works to make the singer and the audience think about the lyrics. When BoMama sang the song, they also found a communal strength, because the fear and worry about their children who they don't live with, was a shared anxiety. The song demonstrates how song was used as reflection and a form of social action.

Political lullaby

The following song became popular in the South African political scene in 2017, in the run up to the ruling party, the African National Congress', presidential elections. Historically, it's a lullaby where the singer–a mother–comforts her baby and assures them that things will change. In 2017, ANC delegates adopted a comforting recital to comrades who wanted a change in the leadership. It is not a political song. Therefore, it was welcomed in the production as a song that mothers could sing and reflect on.

The lead singer declares that things will change. Because it is easy to learn and it was already known in the public, the song appealed to the group in order to include the audience to sing along.

Wena ukhalelani? (isiZulu)

Zizo Jik'izinto
Things will turn around (lead)
Thula mntanami
be still my child, (Backing vocals)
Wen Ukhalelani
Why do you cry?
Thula mntanami
be still my child,
Wen Ukhalelani
Why do you cry?

Isikhalo somntwana sihoye
a child's cry must be tended to
Thula mntanami
be still my child,

Sifubeng sa darly/Sebaka nyana was made famous in the 1970s by jazz vocalist Abigail Khubeka. I remember hearing the songs as a child, sung at weddings and choir competitions. There are various versions of the songs. In 2003, Afro-pop music group Malaika released an amalgamation of the song that became the anthem for wedding dances and adult parties.

Sifubeng sa darly

Sifubeng sa darly waka, (lead)
On my lover's chest
nkabe kelesefubeng sa (backing)
I should be lying on that chest
Sifubeng sa darly waka, (lead)
On my lover's chest
nkabe kele sefubeng (backing)
I should be lying on that chest

Hona jwale Kabe kele (nkabe kele)
Now, I should be
Hona jwale,
Right at this moment
nkabe ke le,
I should be
Hona jwale,
Right at this moment
nkabe kele
I should be
Hona jwale,
Right at this moment
Nkabe kele sefubeng sa darly waka
I should be on lying on the chest of my love
nkabe kele

The song was one that was enjoyed by all who sang and heard of it. One because it is familiar and two because it was one of the lighter songs, and about love. The song speaks about a lover, and possible rest. The domestic worker image is one of obedient black women. "She is asexual. Therefore, she poses neither threat to the mistress nor temptation to the Master" (Simms, 2001, p. 882). In this mould, the lives of BoMama could be easily reduced to the known role of worker and invisible. However, through the songs about night life, where drinking and life happens, and about having a lover, the songs revealed that BoMama were more than asexual beings. They had desires to be loved and held. "Sebaka Nyana" is sung with bravado and authority, with an elaborate high pitch when asserting "Hona, Jwale!" (right now!). The song is also heart-breaking as it reflects and responds to the physical hardships and separation of lives split between work and home.

In this next song, sung in isiZulu, the lead singer sings that this man is my man. The song consistently brought about conversation on how one would approach the 'other woman'.

Lendonda ngeyami

Ngeyami le ndoda
He is mine, this man
Lendoda ngeyami
This man is mine
Nawe ngeyakho le ndoda?
He is also yours, this man?

In the song the singer admits that the man also belongs to the 'other woman,' but never resolves what must happen. It goes around in the circular and doesn't necessarily find a resolution. The song revealed that BoMama were also willing to sit in the ambiguous. The song is a cry of desperation, a demand and also a playful rendering of "the boy is mine" (Norwood & Monica 1998). The relationship that is established in the song is one where the singer is in negotiation with the other woman that this is my man. The singer holds a quiet dignity by her own admission that "He is also yours, this man".

Transcripts of silence

There was a lot that was also not shared. Zora Neale Hurston (1935), writing about researchers, writes: "He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my mind. I'll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I'll say my say and sing my song" (1935). In my experience I can also see how silence was used to keep me out of reading BoMama's mind. The use of song to create silence was also a way of enveloping secrets which can't be easily interpreted; like I am trying to do in this chapter.

There was a day where there was a discussion about another facilitator who used to work with them. When I asked what happened to him, the room fell silent. From this moment what was key was to recognise that silence was used to keep me from knowing too much. This act of keeping out was one way of protecting themselves. They made me realise there is virtue in remaining silent. Anthropologist James Scott (1990) offers an opinion on 'invisible power.' In his book Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts he suggests that the oppressed have other forms of resistance, suggesting that resistance occurs not only in the big events of protest and collective action, but also in "everyday resistances". He suggests that the calm surface of consent in not always an act of defeat, but it can be a way that the respondent transcribes a declaration of war (Scott, 1990). His research looked at various types of subordinated groups (peasants, slaves, prisoners, etc.) and their ways of responding to domination. The research looked at acts and gestures that can't be seen or observed, which is otherwise the type of observations normal anthropological research relies on. He suggests that these acts that are not observable are small acts with a focus on rebellion, as well as forms of cultural resistance and non-cooperation; for example, "a groan, a sigh, a moan, a chuckle, a well-timed silence, a wink, or a stare, [may serve as a message]" (Scott, 1990, p. 155). Similar to Motsemme's declaration (2014), Scott (1990) calls us to an ethical reading of silences, groans, and gestures. The silences that I encountered with BoMama were read not only as refusal but also as protection. I suggest that there are times when being seen could be a disaster. The silence was to avoid being made invisible in the presence of the other. The keeping of some secrets from me and each other was an ethical choice of care, making the women in the room more human and more visible. Silence can be employed as a strategy for coping with precarious everyday life, a form of tacit communication of ambiguity as well as a claim-making strategy. Unpacking the gendered dimensions of silence reveals power

dynamics with deep implications for societies transitioning from war. The silence that BoMama offered was shared in feelings, silent tears, and never in words. The challenge of a narrative is to embody words, groans, cries, absences and silences (Hartman, 2008). These moments of silence form part of a collective 'narrative'.

> Interpretations of silence adds to growing attempts to elaborate on notions of South African women's subjectivities and forms of agency with living in urban ghettos. Overall, what I want to demonstrate is that when we reject dominant western oppositional hierarchies of silence and speech, and instead adopt frameworks where words, silence, dreams, gestures, tears all exist interdependently and within the same interpretive field, we find that the mute always speak. (Motsemme, 2014, p. 910)

In her work United Order of Tents, about a secret society of black nurses organised in 1867 by two former slaves, American artist and activist Simone Leigh (cited in Davis, 2015) engages in the idea of the secrets and silences that black women have held and kept. She suggests that the society which was created as part of the underground railroad needed the silences and the keeping of secrets "for practical reasons … If you can't be completely human in public, maybe you can do that privately" (Leigh cited in Davis, 2015, p. XX). This, she suggests, is the continuous work that black women practice, what Saidiya Hartman (2019) terms a refusal. The silence and keeping of secrets even from me was a rejection of being remembered in ways that are trope-like.

> **refusal**: a rejection of the status quo as liveable and the creation of possibility in the face of negation i.e. a refusal to recognize a system that renders you fundamentally illegible and unintelligible; the decision to reject the terms of diminished subjecthood with which one is presented, using negation as a generative and creative source of disorderly power to embrace the possibility of living otherwise. (Campt, 2019, p. 83)

When we first started working together, I wanted to create plays that would speak to BoMama's worker issues. I asked them why they were not organising themselves as workers for worker rights etc. Mama Sylvia who had been a domestic worker for 50 years said that the unions don't help them, "They cause trouble for us". It's easy to essentialise the refusal to organise as the choices and work of naïve women, but this makes sense when one thinks of the intuition and deliberate choices that have been made throughout our time. As Mama Sylvia said:

> "Rona re lebasebetsi, hothata. Re gatelwa kamo le kamo. Hae se basadi ba reba berekelang ke basebetsi ba bang."

> [We as domestic workers are victimized on every side. If it's not the women we work for it is also the fellow workers].

Mama Sylvia required an ethical response to think how the domestic worker rights are violated by everybody, even by the women. The same women who are the employers are also in the feminist movement, as commented on by Angela Davis (1983):

> White women – feminists included – have revealed a historical reluctance to acknowledge the struggles of household workers … The convenient omission of household workers' problems from the program of middle-class feminist past and present has often turned out to be a veiled justification – at least on the part of the affluent women – of their own exploitative treatment of their maids. (1983, p. 96)

Feminist women are advocating for sexual freedom, maternity rights etc., but don't want the domestic worker, who is working in their home, to study, have an active sexual life, have her children around her and in many cases, have citizenship. In the labour unions I have witnessed that workers also have domestic workers in their homes but do not desire the same salary adjustment for the women working in their home as they are demanding for themselves at their workplace. Thus, there is a refusal to be political and interpret political participation in ways that are legible to everyone.

Navigating home and work

I am telling the story of Melo, because it is one that brought to light a lot during the sessions, revealing visible shifts. Her story shows how performance allows for other ways of knowing and collecting information, and how, through performances, more than what was said was created. Hers was one of the stories that showed how through the mask of theatre performance we can learn a lot about someone.

Melo was a young domestic worker, 30-something years old. She only started coming to the sessions in 2018. Early on in her attending the sessions she was clear; she only came because the space promised Woolworths Food.[10] She would sit quietly and not

[10] Woolworths is an expensive grocery store in South Africa. BoMama received Woolworths Food as part of the store's community engagement work. Every Tuesday and Thursday they drove to the Woolworth store that was close by and they shared the food amongst themselves. They have a system; I did not stay long enough on the nights they shared the food. The food they collect on Thursdays is given to other organisations and charities: the church they share the space with or a children's home.

share in the early sessions. She would sit throughout warm-ups and exercise routines. Once when she did engage in a physical warm up with the group, she was vocal asking why she has to suffer through all these activities, referring to the drama work, the exercising/training practice for the marathons BoMama ran on weekends. In the story about her name exercise, Melo's partner shared that Melo's Sesotho name is Mmabatho, which means 'mother of the nation'. In her interpretation to the group, she added that means Melo had other things to do and she wouldn't stay long in this work (meaning the domestic work). The story of your name process revealed a lot about the other names too. For example, when I first met the group in 2016; everyone told me their English name. What they call their work names. These were; Joyce, Jackie, Evelyn, Maria. So for a couple of years I knew them with those names. But in the story of their names, they told stories about their African names; for example, Mosima, meaning a hole, or Lesedi meaning light. The story of the name revealed for all the women there was more to each other than meets the eye. This was true for also Melo, who was not a favourite in the group; but BoMama liked that she was consistent in attending the sessions. She was also a hard worker for her young child at home and she desired more from life than her current position. They encouraged that. Her name Mmabatho was testament to her being a person of the people.

In the Family Portrait Improv exercise using hats, Melo was part of the group that picked up graduation hats when we did the role play exercise. Their family picture became about graduates. In this session:

Refiloe: Who is in this picture?
Melo: Renale nurse, (pointing to Limpho) and rona rema teachere.
[We have a nurse, two teachers, and our mother is missing but she was also a graduate as a social worker.]
Refiloe: Who gets along with who?
Melo: Ra utlwana rona. [We all get along}
Refiloe: This family has no conflicts?
Melo: No.

According to the group there was no conflict in the family. This posed a difficulty in creating a story or drama. I mean, we come to theatre for drama-conflict.

BoMama have own rules on attendance, a person must be present at least one session a week in order to receive the food on Tuesdays.

I then asked each character to share their story in monologue-like form. In the family portrait Melo's character was the youngest of the sisters. They were all wearing their graduation gowns because they all came from her graduation.

> Limpho: When our mother died; she made sure we are all educated. I am nurse and these other ones are teachers. We are happy she is finally done. It took a long time for her to get there.
> Rea: Studying is important. But hard work is also very important. We are glad our sister has finally graduated to start working and understand the meaning of hard work.
> Dippy: I am really excited I have just graduated. I am glad because it has been hard trying to study and work. You know everyone thinks that studying is easy. That once you are done you will get work. It has been hard for me. I fell pregnant in 2nd year. And my mother; could not help with taking care of the child and keeping me in school. I had to leave school. While I was home during the day, I took care of the child. At night I worked as a dancer and as a hostess at Moloko.

From the story we see that Melo's feelings of belonging were connected to other ideas of work. Her everyday life revolved around housework and childcare. Domestic work is mainly the work of mothering. In her city-wide exhibition, Mary Sibande's Sophie speaks to, in colonial imagery, a mothering figure. By placing the exhibition in the middle of city, Sibande centralises and locates the domestic worker in the colonial city that has made her invisible. But she also continuously serves it. For many black women, domestic work is what has brought them to the city. Their function is to mother in many homes that are not theirs. Johannesburg city therefore is a space of work and making money, for many individuals. But for domestic workers it is both a space of work and a space for domesticity, while other workers experience domesticity at home (that may be outside the city). For BoMama, the periphery of home and the centrality of the city as a place of work was a sort of continuum. Work and home existed in similar ways. They work in homes, and when at home they also do work that is similar to work they do at their employment. The differentiation of the two places is acute. This is what was expressed in the play. The negotiations between the social ideas that Melo and the other women had about 'proper' motherhood are brought into being. Work and home required Melo to organise life as a continuous experience of work. Thus, home and work, are spaces where mothering and domesticity are the main roles or functions that BoMama embody. They are clear the performances of being woman is closely linked to being mother and particularly a providing mother. Most of the women related to the story of Melo about being a (single) mother. They praised her for doing a good job with her daughter. She was

seen as a good mother even when living in Johannesburg. She was working for her child and devoting her time to her daughter. All these choices of finding a job signify practices that constitute motherhood within the space of domesticity. The way Melo performed motherhood makes her gendered position intelligible to the other women. By working she displayed the 'will' to become a good mother. I could see that this was important to Melo, as the performance of acceptability and unacceptability became a delicate balance for her. On the one hand she expressed that she did not care much about the group; but at the same time, she did care, as she tried to not create conflict and wanted to receive the compliments of being a good mother.

Melo together with BoMama also offered a window into the complexity of unpaid labour and the desire to create and maintain a family but also being at the core of one's work. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) in Black Feminist Thought writes that black women sit at intersecting oppressions that are complex. For black women, she argues, unpaid family labour is both restrictive and empowering (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 52). Melo holds in her character the restrictive roles of black women: the oversexualised woman and the nurturing mother. The mother role is insidious as it is also her work role. As a domestic worker her role is also of mothering, therefore the intersection of three oppressions – race, class and gender – is more complex as she also accepts and desires some of the roles that seem oppressive. She does not have a distinct reaction to these three oppressions, although she seems aware of her circumstances. Generally, motherhood is the primary obligation of women. In the South African imagination women, as mothers and care givers, "are typically construed as the symbolic bearers of the nation" (McClintock, 1993, p. 62). They are understood as fulfilling domestic labour (Gqola 2001a). Amadiume (1987) regards motherhood as not only the preserve of child-bearing women. She writes that it is a pre-colonial social concept that not only exalts women for their maternal power, but that motherhood is a shared form of work across genders. Amadiume points to the cultural definition of motherhood as an autonomous unit. Amadiume's reading of motherhood shows that the concept relies on a woman's capacity to show that she is able to run an independent economy that contributes to the building of the household. In this reading, motherhood is not only about childbearing but also about economic power. McClintock argues that "exalting women for their maternal power alone has calamitous consequences, erasing and undermining the multifarious other forms of women's work" (1991, p. 117). Motherhood is then suggested to be about Melo's ability to make money for her

children and family. The mother identity was also a rallying collective identity. "Motherhood [is] central to African women's personal and cultural identity as well as their social and economic roles" (Gaitskell, 2005, p. 260).

Conversely, with the embrace of motherhood, there was one Mme who was not so clear on sharing the joys of being a mother. One of the stories that was improvised was a story about a family. In the portrait/picture there were grandparents with two boys who were still in school. (Characters created from the picture exercise).

> During the drama; the kids needed school items however the grandparents could not meet their needs. They, grandparents and kids, decided to call the mother in who had left them to go work in Johannesburg. A phone appeared and she was called. This action demanded the creation of a mother so required one of BoMmme to improvise and play the mother. She picked up a beret, and immediately played a very cheeky mom.
>
> The boys then asked to speak with her on the phone so they could calm her, however the other directors in the room told her to be equally rude, to think of how children are disrespectful.
>
> The two women who played the children spoke Sepedi, however the woman who played the mother spoke Zulu. In their conversation, the children also called out their mother for now speaking a different language since she has been to Johannesburg. This then caused the group to require that there should be a Zulu boyfriend who influences the mother. When one of the women was playing a young boy, who spoke rudely to his missing mother who then revealed that she was not interested in trying to be a good mother.

When this piece was first improvised, and Maki, who was in the mother role, told the children she was not interested in them, everyone in the room was shocked. In the role she had suggested something contrary to what everyone seemed to want. As the weeks went by the story was developed. The group added the role of the boyfriend as a speaking character. He then proceeded to be abusive. And then finally the cops were called on him. This new part was improvised when I was not around. This addition I came to understand was because as a group they could not let a deviant mother exist. This became a cautionary tale, a corrective story on how mothers should be dedicated till the end. It is was also indicative of how some roles seem set and unwilling to be changed.

Conclusion: Anger as ethical practice in theatre making

Songs and performance of self as worker, mother, lover and other variations of woman in Dipina Tsa Monyanyako has for this thesis important methodological and theoretical implications. Here I have outlined a method and an ethics. The practice of playmaking allowed for the establishing of complex work on meeting and working with people. The process of playmaking allowed for a negotiation of a relationship of embodied knowledge-making. The process endorsed for BoMama their anger, frustration and pain of their work, and their lives. The songs created a collective of knowledge. They created and produced knowledge for themselves and others. The knowledge was shared as stories through song. The songs also provided insight into how BoMama came to consciousness about their everyday realities. The songs created are what Davis (1998) calls 'aesthetic communities'. Through song and playmaking, the lives of BoMama members were validated, therefore allowing for other possibilities to happen. This is what Lorde (1981) describes as anger as a site of generative and creative potentiality. The performances privileges BoMama's own self-conscious discourse and provides an internal, reflexive account of the experiences of being worker, black and a woman in South Africa. Song and poetry performance allowed for an ethical approach to anger, through aesthetic rigour.

The play Dipina tsa Monyanyako, raises a number of themes regarding the role of song as an element of black feminist aesthetic. I argue that women's performances of song and theatre-making are closely linked to expressions on everyday issues. Dipina tsa Monyanyako was, for all intents and purposes, a workshop/ community theatre play. It was not scripted. The actors were given roles as opposed to characters (Hutchison, 1996). It was made in community. What is important is that the play also drew on traditional aesthetics forms such as singing, praise poetry and storytelling. The process of creating rejected conventional theatre-making practices that allowed for other performance forms such as music, narrative and dance. It is a form of black feminist theatre-making aesthetic since the central theme was women's experiences.

The play attempts to offer insight into the significance of black feminist aesthetics to healing processes. Being engaged in this work revealed to me that research rhetoric is inadequate in capturing song, poetics, and forms of performance that black women are engaged in. Here I have attempted to provide insight into the role of black women in South Africa. The performance of the play and songs serves as an expression of

aspirations and expectations, care and anger, joys and sorrows. I suggest that performance is an important source of information of how black women imagine their role in society.

I have briefly outlined an approach to research which is a method of co-creating and making stories. From the above activities I am convinced that performance allows for the researcher to learn more about participants. But more importantly it asserts that the everyday resistances at work and in public spaces that BoMama engaged in holds rich insight into how we conceive of political action. The elusive silences and transcripts of anger and care are everyday oppositional strategies. These offer us not necessarily new ways but other ways of thinking about politics and social action. The connections between workers' labour community and an imagined future is possible when the performance is a rehearsal for a future that could be possible.

PART III

Performances of Edible Bodies

A version of this chapter has been submitted to be published in Agenda Journal 2020. The manuscript is titled: "Story Circles: A conversation on black feminist theatre practices drawn from creating the play 'Postcards: Bodily Preserves'"

"The ear shop
Where is it
Where they sell ears
When shall I see it
And hear the voices of my children
And sweet whispers of my beloved?"
(Constance Mkombwe, from Shopping for an Ear, 1993)

Throughout the thesis, I have shown how black women as theatre-makers exist at the intersection of blackness and womanhood in a dramaturgy that functions not only as a production process or practice but also as a relationship-making one. This dramaturgy is both a creative and critical activity that not only centres feelings and experiences but also reveals historical and contemporary complexities for conscientisation. The dramaturgy of this kind of theatremaking allows for participants to be knowledge-makers, to critique social disparities and engage in self-exploration. This theatremaking or aesthetic process is an intersection of art, activism and social relevance and sees theatre as an instrument of real change in women's lives and is a marked contribution to performance as research. This thesis has articulated how an ethical response to creating and collecting data through performance is important. When thinking about the history of black women creating in South Africa, we encounter a certain silence. A lot more work is needed to find black women playwrights. "The apartheid system worked on multiple levels to not only disenfranchise Black women and Black subjects in general, but also to repress creativity and the capacity to dream," writes Boswell (2010, p. 4). Currently there are a number of prominent female directors in South Africa, but they experience marginalisation in writing, directing, acting and producing plays. The theatre scene in South Africa is minimal and most artists are already scrambling for the few opportunities that are available. In this context women are easily side-lined with comments that they should work harder. Plays that place a woman as lead and politicise her life are few and far between. Feminist scholar bell hooks states that the silence of women in media – film, news, and theatre – is due to the fact that men

mystify women's realities by insisting that gender is the sole determination of woman's fate (hooks, 2000, p. 16). So, creating a piece of work that represents and highlights women's experiences seems to be the sole job of women. There is a lack of women directors, and in everyday media such as newspapers there is a lack of women commentators, columnists and thought leaders. This absence is glaring. There is a silence on women's issues, unless the issue pertains to the interests of men or the wealthy. In this chapter I look at how I co-created the play Postcards Bodily Preserves as a process of analysing my time with BoMama and of presenting what the time has left me with. Gobodo-Madikizela et al. (2019) curated a book on South African trauma, These are the Things that Sit with Us. The title makes visible the unobservable and undocumented everyday experiences that shape the lives of ordinary people. It is a record of things that "sit" within all of us memories – the visceral and the meaning of the missing parts (Gobodo-Madikizela et al., 2019).

Here I share the process and ask myself various questions, the main one being: What does a black feminist theatremaking aesthetic look like? I use this chapter to make a case for story circles, as a performative story-making model. Here I argue that story circles is a black feminist theatre aesthetic that captures dynamic and multilingual frames. It is an aesthetic grounded in the fundamental belief that artistic practice and critical reflection can spark lasting political change.

The story of Postcards: Bodily Preserves

Postcards: Bodily Preserves was created in 2018 as a response to an intense three-year theatremaking process with domestic workers who live and work in Berrario, Johannesburg (see Figure 6 and Part II). The play was a sort of visceral reflection on my time with them. It was also a way of working through the residual creative process. The story of its creation, therefore, is intertwined with the process of making plays with domestic workers. In my work with them I realised that the plays we were creating were theirs to make. And it was their choice on how to present them, and to which audiences. This revealed that I could not direct the process or the product. Therefore, my role was one of a facilitating director who probed, encouraging new ways of creating, which created moments of reflection about the process and product.

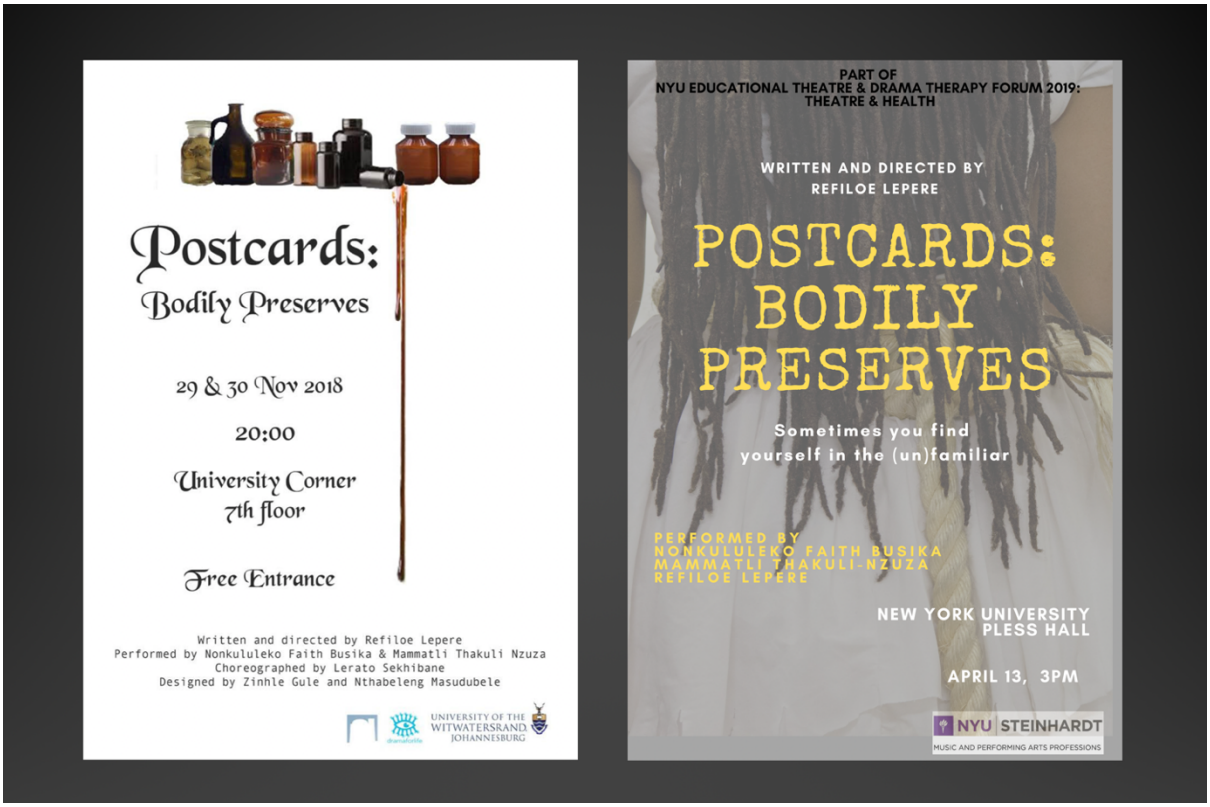

Figure 6: Posters for performances of Postcards: Bodily Preserves

In 2018, after we created a fourth play, I wanted to reflect on my time with BoMama. I wrote Postcards: Bodily Preserves as a reflection. The play is about how the body carries various traumas and how these are played out in our lives, fragments of our own experiences and what we have been exposed to while being present in a room full of stories. It is also about what is unsaid and the silences we sit with when creating with older South African women. Postcards: Bodily Preserves has since been performed in Tubingen University in Germany in 2018 as a one-woman show. Then it was expanded to a three-hander and performed at the University of Witwatersrand in 2018 and at New York University in 2019. All the performances happened in non-traditional theatres, mostly gallery-like spaces to accommodate the exhibition of preserved bodies which was a major element of the set.

The play opens with Maleeto, the main character, at the home of her lover, who we know only as Nick. We never see the lover but learn about him and his house (the preservation space) from Maleeto. The setting of the house is a room filled with mason jars and preserves. In their encounter Maleeto is poisoned by Nick who is a cannibal, and she waits to die so he can cut her up and preserve her like he has done with all

the other women who have come into his life, and his house. During the period that the poison is taking its effect, Maleeto meets the other women who are represented in the preserved jars. Mme Morrie, a domestic worker, who should have retired, but never found time to get a day off. She reveals to Maleeto that she had worked all her life for Nick's family. She is also the welcome party of sorts as she is the one who gets the women comfortable and ready for being preserved and eaten. Phelisa MaThousand is an ex-cleaner-secretary-messenger, who is running away from the police. She ends up in the house seeking shelter and work but finds her quick tongue preserved together with her hard-working hands. She tells the hilarious story of how she was told she had a few months to live, therefore spent money from her employers who were over-working her. Mokotong is a young social worker who ends up at the house because she was doing a house call looking for Phelisa. Her lovely legs are preserved. In her tale, she reveals that she also knows the trauma of being stuck in a loop. She shares the story of her parents' deaths. Her loop of retelling reveals that she is not a pure victim since no one knows if she was part of the plot to woo and to kill the women. Tshego, Nick's dead wife, is a silent character but is ever-present throughout the play. The preserved women let Maleeto know that she is not alone and will be entering a community of women. Postcards: Bodily Preserves is about unforgettable female characters whose outward dissimilarities belie their inescapable link: a traumatic past plagued by a cycle of violence and abuse. In it, I try to bring to life a series of harrowing stories that weave together each character's friends, family, lovers, and therapists into an explosive narrative that uncovers the darkest corners of humanity – and disturbs our notions about trauma, revealing how it is stored or preserved in our bodies. It is an episodic exploration (Hutchinson, 2013) so the recollection of stories and the traumas does not happen in a clear, linear way in which we are used to thinking about memory. Sometimes, happenings can be a blink in reality. This play draws heavily from orality, storytelling, rituals, and dance. The performance examines how bodily behaviours are repeatable and embodied activities, and how these bodily encounters change due to context, space, gender or politics.

Black women, research cadavers and ethics of storytelling

Postcards: Bodily Preserves borrows staging imagery from the story of Sara Baartman. Hers is a story that epitomises themes of silence, cadaver and the ethical implications of telling this story. Baartman was taken to London and then to Paris to be paraded in

the streets, the circuses, the bars and most notably, the universities of Europe. She was exhibited naked, and was obliged to walk, stand or sit as her keeper ordered so as to show off her protruding posterior and genitals (Abrahams 1996, Gqola, 2010). After her death she was dismembered, her brains and genitalia preserved in scientific jars in Parisian museums. The dissecting of Sara Baartman's body and soul is important to me because it was done in the name of work, and in the name of diversity and science. I became fascinated about the ethics of exhibition or telling and what is the justification for, and circumstances surrounding, the retention of any human material post-mortem? At the Wits Medical School there is a Museum for teaching which holds cadavers that have been on exhibition for over 40 years. A cadaver becomes available for medical science mainly because there is no family to claim the body and make burial arrangements. In commenting about medical practices and its engagement with black bodies, Simone Leigh (2016) uses artworks to challenge biomedical violence. In explaining her 2016 exhibition The Waiting Room, she articulates that she intended to reveal the failures of distinct institutions meant to care for cultural objects, ailing bodies, and their attendant communities (cited in Davis 2016).

Setting the play in a cannibal's home designed as an exhibition was quoting Leigh's work and also calling into question the ethics of research, and the institutional practice of collecting, preserving and presenting people. I was also questioning my own process as a performance researcher, how I could be engaged in machinations like the people who presented Baartman's remains as evidence and science. When we think Baartman we think body parts. Postcards was created to think about how we remember things as human and as women, and how our bodies store memories and trauma. In 1999 the government of France finally agreed to return the remains of Baartman to South Africa. This act of return required most of us to think about what Baartman means to us, what her remains signify (Gqola, 2010).

In the play the women are presented in an exhibition of sorts. Mme Morie walks Maleeto through the exhibition together with the audience telling the stories of the women who are exhibited. She speaks of them as if they are alive. These cadavers have histories and stories. The imagery is dark but it implicates the audience as witness, as it is living people who are principally affected by what is done to cadavers and body parts. All the women in the play tell their stories, how they were easily forgotten by family and friends because of silences they had to keep and so had to run away. They

end up in this house, dead and dismembered, preserved only for their best parts as perceived and selected by the killer (see Figure 7). The body parts are like postcards, personal messages that the body holds and sends to those who pay attention. Postcards are also messages sent from one person to another. They are not just static messages; they are intended to communicate. The postcards on the bodies are moments frozen in time on bodies. I am thinking here of trauma. We have come to understand that trauma is not a one-time event, and that it does not go away. It is a history, a story. It leaves traces, marks the body in ways that are both visible and invisible and profoundly affects how one experiences time. When we think of postcards, they are expressions of a moment, and an experience. They are personal as well as public. The sender is personal enough for the receiver to acknowledge the intimacy but a postcard is equally public as it goes through a public system and can be read by anyone who picks it up. They function like scars or trauma, which is experienced as a private experience even though it is publicly viewed. A postcard captures a moment, a picture, a slice of life. Postcards: Bodily Preserves suggests that the experiences of trauma offer us an extensive archive for testimony, for witnessing, and for research.

The public experience of trauma is one that has been looked at by Jasbir Puar (2017) in her book The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability. In the book she provides an analysis of the deliberate debilitation of entire populations which serves as a tactic of biopolitical control, where "maiming is a productive form of weaponized epigenetics through the profitability of a speculative rehabilitative economy" (2017, p. xiv) meaning there is a concerted effort to mark and traumatise bodies in order to extract value from the bodies. This value can be in rehabilitation efforts, and sometimes to make them inactive in public life. Postcards: Bodily Preserve makes real the public and collective control of work and state on black women's bodies. The women don't occupy fully the land of the dead or fully the land of the living. As Puar says, "the right to maim supplements if not replaces the right to kill … permeating relations between living and dying" (Puar, 2017, p. xv). Instead of being killed outright, these women are, in effect, kept alive in the cannibal's house, to "make power visible on the body" (2017, p. xv).



Figure 7: Preserved body parts

Trauma and time

Maleeto meets the women at the crossroad between life and death. They provide a ghostly influence, a haunting community of stories and support. In this, Postcards: Bodily Preserves articulates the significance of death and the possibility of bending time. The women are dead, but they are able to speak to this one woman who is in the middle of death and life. Here I was trying to link the physical world to the spirit world, the past to the future. The stories that all the women tell are not linear. They jump from moment to moment, from present time to past time; this is done in order to effectively discombobulate our senses and force a form of disorientation. These different spaces and temporal moments arise from my own feeling of being neither in

the present or the past. From the creation of the plays we did, a lot of issues we dealt with were playing out from the past but were also a rehearsal of sorts for the future. Negar Djavadi (2016) in her novel Disoriental, on being an Iranian immigrant, explores acts and the consequences of trauma. She asks us to consider what are the strategies that people use to understand the archiving of trauma in their lives and bodies. Her characters also look at ways to navigate and re-imagine past and present. She writes: "The truth of memory is strange is it not? Our memories select, eliminate, exaggerate, minimize, glorify, denigrate. They create their own versions of event and serve up their own reality. Disparate, but cohesive. Imperfect yet sincere" (Negar, 2016, p. XX). In both moments of the past and the present the only thing that is consistent is trauma. So, in creating a play, and wanting to represent this traversing of time and trauma, the use of death allowed for the unformulated material, memory and all, to be integrated. The previously inaccessible pieces from rehearsal, my own past and a shared experience could be represented.

The depiction of death also was a way of working through how, when in trauma, one functions outside the confines of time. A traumatised person is simultaneously in the present but also still experiencing the past.

Controlling images

The play highlights the struggle of black women at the intersection of the three primary controlling images that have been cast upon black women throughout history: the mammy (domestic worker), jezebel and the mule (Harris Perry, 2011; Hill-Collins, 1990; Hurston, 1935). Mme Morie is the mammy (domestic worker). She is seen as submissive, loyal to the master and his needs, including always ready to serve and love and care for the white children over her own. She never forgets her place, even if she is fussy at times. As a domestic worker, she is civilised through her interaction with the white family. She becomes socially acceptable because of the influence of the white master and his paternalistic nature. This image serves to enforce male dominance through stereotyping the black women as deferring to her master (Simms, 2011).

In the play, both Mme Morie and Phelisa MaThousand embody the image of the worker (See Figures 8 to 11). They are both hard working women, the difference being

that Phelisa does rebel. The play comes from that place of struggle and debate around the black female and her historical representation. The idea of it was drawn from a number of places. Firstly, the silences, what BoMama refused to share in our time together. Secondly, stories they did share. These were mostly related to work, family and an attempt at finding life in and beyond work. So, it was difficult to play with the stereotype and at the same time subvert it. At times we drew on the stereotype with the aim of reimagining it. Through Mme Morie's speech and gestures, I explore the rhythms and tempos of the working day; the constraints and opportunities of working and familial life, as well as the dangers and degradations for African women living and working in the heart of whiteness. In the character biography Mme Morie is described as:

> Old woman who should be in retirement but still works. She has been pushed to retire for the past 7 years. But something keeps her at work, money or running away from her family … she is sharp, edgy, angry, sarcastic, very brilliant at her work and most things. Morie has a lot of passion about what she does, which, of course, makes her give little regard for anyone who stands in her way. She has a huge ego, which allows her to brag and give away important secrets to anyone who strokes her ego. (Lepere 2018)

Mme Morie, is named with an intentional play on word 'memory.' She knows everything about her place of work and everyone. She offers historical and sociological analysis. But her refusal to use her power and knowledge to leave, or rebel against Nick, was something I wanted to grapple with. She wields power and uses it in either revealing what she knows about everyone or just finding a space for herself to exist. In her interaction with Maleeto, she reveals that, in a way, she chooses to be in the house.

> MALEETO: Lona why are you here?
> MME MORIE: Where else should we be? (Lepere, 2018)

In his book Appropriating Blackness, Patrick Johnson (2003) interviews his grandmother who was a domestic worker for the chapter 'Mother Knows Best: Blackness and Transgressive Domestic Space' (2003). In her dialogue with him she reveals the complex relations between domestic workers and their employers. Her response articulates a performance of sorts. She, like Morie, performs loyally through even the civil unrest and riots. Johnson sees this as a way of attaining certain freedoms. "Though abiding by the language and laws of the labour site, she is permitted, thereby she takes advantage of more freedom of movement within the site" (Johnson, 2003, p. 108). In the play Mme Morie moves more than the other characters, knows more and is the weaver of everyone's story. In essence she carries the role of storyteller, and

trickster (Johnson, 2003, p. 118). She has choice and movement in terms of retirement or being in the house. Mme Morie represented a number of BoMama members who had worked for years in the neighbourhood. Their stories were never told in the plays we created but in the pre-rehearsal moments, and also the silences when it came to organising around wages and work conditions. They withheld information from me and other younger workers, as a way of wielding power, and perhaps storying themselves in other ways from being a domestic worker.

All the women are named with very specific focus on their names having working meanings.

> "MALEETO: *Her name means the one who journeys."*
>
> MME MORIE: *Mme Morie, is derived from Memory. She is a person who holds a lot of memories.*
>
> PHELISA *Her name means finisher. Full nickname is Phelisa MaThousands, meaning the one who finished thousands and thousands of Rands*
>
> TSHEGO (35); [*Full name: Tshegofatso meaning the comforter*]
>
> MOKOTONG (mid-30s); [*Mokotong is a name given to a child born after a miscarriage or still birth. It means a stray dog. The reason for such a name is to suggest to the spirits who take babies, that this baby is named with a terrible name because they are not loved. Therefore the spirits will not take her.*]



Figure 8: Actresses; Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza as Mme Morie, Faith Busika as Phelisa Mathousand and Lerato Sekhibane as Tshego. Photo by Marta Garrich

In 2016, poet and playwright Vuyelwa Maluleke created a play No One Wants a Black Woman With a Mouth. Her focus was on the silencing experienced by black women in general. This was interesting for me – what are the silences and significance of remaining or choosing silence? Nthabiseng Motsemme (2004) in her article; The Mute Always Speaks: On women's silences at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, suggests that the language of silence forms the economy of those who are invisible. In making the effort to understand their language of silence we have possibilities to uncover. There is a level of power they wield. When we lay bare these other forms of expression, we uncover experiences of living under violence and oppression. So, the stereotype is not just that, but is also a questioning of what kind of black woman the world wants to see.

The second controlling image used in the play is that of Jezebel. She is a woman who is seen as oversexualised, immoral, controlled by lustful desires (Harris-Perry, 2011). Here I am thinking of the character of Maleeto. She comes to Nick seeking comfort, away from her live-in-lover, Thami. In her dying moments she shares the story of a childhood rape where she was made to forget it and how her parents swept it under

the rug. This image has led people to believe that black women who make choices about their lives are punished for it. We justify the rape of, and other sexual atrocities against, the black female body by both white and black men.

MALEETO: I feel dizzy all of a sudden... Oh this isn't good. I feel so tired ...Yes, let me have a seat. Wait. Why are you lifting me? Why are you placing me on the counter? What… Oh, you are a bit… (Slurring her words) naughty.

(He places her on the counter.)

Wait, I can't move my legs. My arms are so heavy. It wasn't supposed to be like this. No but ... What are you doing?
Don't want my shoes off. Put back my shoes on my feet. I need my bag, pass me my bag!
What do you mean, I don't have long?

(BEAT)

You mean you did this to me?
How? Why?
The meat? Earlier? That's why it tasted funny!
You added poison?
What do you mean the last thing you want to do is hurt me?
You poisoned me?
Marete ahao, o nyele, wa nyela, sies. (Your)
Voetsek, get me out of here! Stop this. What is this about?
Is it about me leaving Thami?
Come on, okay I won't leave him. He loves me. He worships me. I'll call him and we will be back to … What? You do have a wife, I knew it…

(Listens.)

Hearing this should make me cold, but you know what? I can't move at all. My entire body feels like stone.
FUCK YOU! What do you mean you love me! "Ya love you, Ya love you."
You love everything about me? Tsek maan (Fuck you). That's why you are doing this to me? Feeding me poison?
What?

(Gives up.)

Nicholas!
What are you?
Why didn't you tell me?
Yes. You said you preserve stuff.
I just thought you were like the old tannies [aunties], preserving peaches.
I mean all these jam jars, mina I thought you have moerse (bad) Gin and Tonic parties. Why do hippies have jam jars kante? (Lepere, 2018)

In this monologue Maleeto highlights that she might deserve this violence meted out by Nick, because of some sin she committed i.e. cheating on Thami. In the same monologue she later prays that if God forgives her and gets her out of this she will not cheat. The reason for this representation and engagement is to highlight how even women who are victims have internalised the violence. Maleeto battles with the idea

of how love turns toxic and violent. In South Africa, most murders of women are by their lovers or partners (Gqola, 2015). The poem For Women Who Are Difficult to Love by Warsan Shire (2011) resonates with this imagery of internalising the violence and making one ready, open for the violence to be meted. Shire writes: "I tried to change / closed my mouth more / tried to be softer, prettier, less awake" (Shire, 2011).

Gqola (2015) articulates that women are denied even their ability to mourn and be mourned as humans. The play is filled with imagery of violence and the idea of the black female body being eaten or preserved. When we think about the world currently, we are inundated with images of black women in pain (Sharpe, 2016). Why would I choose to represent the bodies as parts, and separate? What was this representation communicating about the aesthetics of theatremaking, as well as the daily struggle for power over the woman's body that has been a site of oppression? Black women face terrible incidents of violence. However, amid the violence, oppression and hardship women face, they still have to undertake the responsibility of keeping families together. This includes keeping silent about their abuse to create a form of normality for their children and their community (Motsemme, 2004). So, it was not just for the sake of replaying violent scenes of oppression, but to also think about how we are forced to consistently make ourselves palatable in the face of that violence. The play attempts to look deeper into choices of silences as protection, but also how one becomes just a fragment of one's body, not allowed to be a being that is whole.

Still on the internalised violence, later in the play Maleeto retells a forgotten memory of when she was 12 years old. She tells the story to Nick as a way of letting him know he cannot really hurt her more than she has been hurt in her life already. This scene triggered buried pain about rape in audience members as well. In a few performances, some men and women later spoke to the writer and the cast, sharing personal and family stories about their experiences of jackrolling. The term 'jackrolling' is used in the play for its historical resonance. Generally, jackrolling was the forceful abduction of women in the township (Mokwena, 1991). The word is taken from a specific gang called the "Jackrollers." But over the years as the abduction of women became more common, anyone who did it was called a jackroller, and "jackroll" became a commonly used verb in township vocabulary. Jackrollers would rape and kidnap, steal cars and rob banks. This was a real fear for me and many other women. The term resonated

with audience members very vividly because it is a forgotten term. At the time, if you were abducted parents, friends and community blamed the girls, what Pumla Gqola calls the "unrapability of black women" (2015). In the play Maleeto reveals that the cops said to her parents: "She is alive, she is back, and she is not dead." And her friends retorted: "You came back with new clothes? Then he is your boyfriend now" (Lepere, 2018). These reactions showed how communities have internalised that black women cannot be raped. And it is the face of this communal denial that most of the audiences related to. One male audience member after the performance in New York revealed that these were similar words he had heard said to many women. Clearly, there has been collective amnesia on the trauma of this particular gang rape.

MALEETO: I learnt later that these guys, together with the other BMWs were thugs from Soweto who came to Brits to steal cars and pick up women. Mostly steal women at bars. I was thirteen. I was not at a bar. I was not supposed to be picked up. But there was no one in the street, I was an easy pick. The fat guy felt for me. So, they left me with him. They took us, myself and four other girls, to Soweto. I stayed with fat guy for three weeks. He brought me food and a change of clothes, he just asked me to clean his room. He said he would have taken me home earlier; he just didn't have a car. They took me back home the next time they went to Brits for stealing cars. When I returned home I was wearing new clothes. So the police said I was not kidnapped.

POLICEMAN: Four men? Wena? All wanted you? (to the parents) She is alive. She is here. We can't go and arrest people for someone who is alive.

MALEETO: My parents took me to a doctor. He said:

DOCTOR: Tell me, nana – during the incident, did you feel pain? Did you like it? Did you get involved?

MALEETO: My dad said we must stop going to the police station. I said to the doctor. He also said the cops were too scared to go to Soweto to arrest thugs. My parents opened a missing person case but when I returned the police closed it. They said I was found. And my parents must be happy to have me back.

My mother never asked me what happened. My father was too upset to ask. We never spoke about it. My friends said it was not rape because the guy who I stayed with was fat and I was lucky, he had a small penis. And he got me new clothes. We never spoke about it. I tried to forget about it. Until now. Lying here like this. I am telling you. How can I convince you? (Lepere, 2016)

The memory not only returns to Maleeto but to members of the audience, as the trauma that she has experienced resonates as familiar to many black men and women. The play tries to examine the casualties of the everyday and people whose lives are affected by the traumas. The relaying of violence is used not to just represent violence for violence's sake but to grapple with what does it mean to be used, what Saidiya

Hartman describes as "The use of the body as tool or instrument. Of occupation or possession" (2019, p. 112).

"Wa jeha! [You are edible.]" Most of my life, hearing this compliment, meant the world to me. It meant I was amicable, compliant and palatable to be around. The world requires that black women be a certain way. They don't want all of us. They want parts of us. In essence, women do just enough to be palatable, and not cause problems in order to stave off violence, keep their work, and keep bosses happy, friendships and families at ease. The play then looks at the pitfalls of palatability of "ho jeha" for black female bodies. They are not allowed to perform vulnerability, otherwise they become prey. Through the characters I explore the intersections of violence, the embodiment of cannibalism and trauma. Yvette Abrahams (1996) writes: "Physical pain aside, the enduring trauma of rape is that, like slavery, it makes a person a thing. It denies human subjectivity. A woman who has been raped is implicated: it has happened, and she has to give it a meaning, any meaning that enables her to make sense of its horror, even the possibility that she herself was somehow to blame," (Abrahams, 1996, p. 10). Her ability to be eaten, then, therefore makes her unrapable and unmournable. Cannibalism and being eaten is a motif that is used throughout the play. How does the idea of being eaten – "ho jewa" – correlate with concepts of work and black women? I am thinking of labour and women's work of childbearing, taking care of others. Women, especially black women, are burdened with the care of the bodies of others, whether it is nurturing the family, providing health care, preparing food for others.

Women's labour of childbearing and taking care of others is linked to the third controlling image which is the mule. "De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see," (Hurston 1937, p. 16). Stereotyping them into nonhuman and senseless animals whose value is only through their physical labour (Simms, 2011). In the play Mme Morie offers cold comfort to Maleeto, saying:

> MME MORIE: Basadi ba Gauteng, ra jewa. Re di beetroot, re jewa hodimo lefase. [Women in the Gauteng – city of gold, Johannesburg – we are eaten. We are beetroots. We are eaten above and beneath]. Mare, oseke waswaba ngwaneso, hare fela [But don't be sad child, we, don't get finished]. (Lepere 2016)

Beetroot is eaten both as a root and its leaves are eaten as spinach. In essence, nothing is left of the vegetable. It is eaten as a whole. The cold comfort in the metaphor is, unlike the beet which disappears after being eaten, the black women in Johannesburg don't get finished. They keep coming back. A resurrection of sorts. Hence Mme Morie's insistence that the women have offered themselves to the house. A sort of metaphoric messianic offering; of "Take this and eat it, for this is my body" (Matthew 26: 26, New Living Translation). Fully alive and fully out of the land of the living. The women exist in a "a space of fluidity, human-nature hybridity, flux, time travel, spatial disorganization and reorganisation all at once" (King, 2012, p.90)

When thinking of edible bodies, I am also thinking about how in a capitalist system the ageing female body is regarded as 'other'. The challenge when working with older black women was their ability to move and engage in physical activity. The story of Mme Morie was key in relating to an ageing body that should be on pension but is still having to work. The ageing body offers a bit of a challenge to the modern capitalist world. It is seen through the prism of decline and devaluation in a consumer culture. The third, however, appears to hold some promise for a more just and flexible way of accounting for the integrity of, and culturally valuing, the gendered body. There is a demand for procreation, and economic productivity – useable human capital. In Postcards: Bodily Preserves I am looking at domestic workers as performers of work who are caught up in the matrix of race, class, gender, sexuality. In this matrix the body becomes a consumable being, a working body defined by its ability to perform work. Using performance as work I also challenge the reductive and dehumanising processes involved in work. Work, as I have come to understand it, is a performance of the body. Theatre is an interesting model to use in order to show how the body becomes consumable. For example, theatre is itself exploitative in nature. Performers and workers as creative labourers rarely get paid well for their work. So, in essence there is a level of consumption that is related to performance.



Figure 9: Actresses; Nonkululeko Faith Busika as Phelisa MaThousand and Mammatli Thukudi-Nzuza as Mme Morie in a scene from Postcards: Bodily Preserves. Photo by Marta Garrich

David Coplan (1994) in his book In the Time of Cannibals – The Word Music of South Africa's Basotho Migrants offers the metaphoric link between cannibalism and work. He uses the trope of cannibalism to describe a myriad of experiences and events. The various types of cannibalisms he names are race, racial capital, mining, work, thieves and the city itself. The "cannibal of cannibals, is white South Africa" (Coplan, 1994, p. 248). The play allows for an examination of work as a form of being eaten and as a social and symbolic practice through which eating informs the production of political inequality (King, 2012). This is the kind of labour that women engage in in the play, namely, unpaid domestic labour and collective affective labour. This is the work that women do at home for loved ones and others. In the play we suggest that these could be forms of being eaten up by these unseen cannibals such as Nick and other employers who have no boundaries and some not even family members and lovers. The cannibal motif is not just for the sake of the grotesque but is drawing on the metaphor that black women's labour and bodies are consumable. We engage with the ordinariness of work and its simultaneous extra-ordinary feat in the various spaces. I am here thinking that black workers need to be seen as rational, as genius, not just as severed parts (Hartman, 2019).

(Dismembered body)

REPORTER: This lady says the victim was loved by all the people in this township. They are shocked by her death. The last time they saw her she was drinking at the nearby shebeen. And that she came to the shebeen to get to know people. She was not even a drinker. Here we have the local councillor. What is the community feeling about this?

COUNCILLOR: We are shocked, we are very shocked. Just last week we built not one, not two, but three fences around a number of shebeens in the area to protect our women and girls. As the city we believe the protection of women is of utmost importance. Those people out there sharing stories that we hate women are lying. I mean we love our women. We love them very much. We love their bodies, their lips, their hair their hips …

REPORTER: There you have it. This community has done all it could to protect their women. So many fences around the shebeens. They really love their women. But the government needs to do more. Malungelo Nagomso, for SABC 2, Duncan Village.

(*Switches off the TV.)*

(Lepere, 2018)

Story circle and dethroning the director

We speak about women as creative labourers. One of the actresses brought her baby to rehearsals because she did not have a child minder. I allowed for a lot of flexibility even during warm-up sessions. Feminist theatre challenges the structure of theatremaking from the production process, plot, casting and rehearsal processes. It strives for inclusion. It gives space for many different intersectional voices to be heard in the stories that are worked on. It also allows for collaboration which is a rejection of hierarchical structures and a singular authority (Anderson, 2008).

Postcards: Bodily Preserves had a full script and through the development of the performance, actresses were encouraged to make the script their own. They could change the language of the characters and how they expressed themselves.



Figure 10: Director Refiloe Lepere and actress Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza Photo by Marta Garrich

When I think of women as creative labourers, I am also considering the pitfalls of exploitation that has marked the creative industry in South Africa. When creating theatre with women – especially when one can't pay them the desired fees – it is important to consider the ways that care, and relief can be practised. I had to not subscribe to the traditional dominant ways of creating. Feminism, in particular black feminism, gives me the language to think about practising care with and for others (Ahmed, 2010). In my work with BoMama rehearsals could not be business as usual. There, I learnt how to practice care. For one, they had other jobs so they couldn't always be at rehearsals. Two, they also couldn't learn lines, therefore a different strategy was used. It was important to me to return to storytelling as care work. But most importantly to not act as boss or instructor, but more as a conduit of stories, allowing various ways of being to exist. I wanted the production process of Postcards: Bodily Preserves to embody the ideas I had learnt. I therefore experimented with what it would look like to embody black feminist theory in the rehearsal room. This for me

meant that I must consistently be aware that we are working in the context of capitalistic labour and there must be a re-imagination in the division of work and rest.

I am inspired by black feminist writings on self-care, which are built around the wisdom of Audre Lorde (1988), especially her extraordinary text, A Burst of Light. Self-care gets dismissed too quickly as neoliberalism and individualism. In the hands of Lorde (1988), however, caring for one's self is about how we inhabit our fragile bodies that can become exhausted. It is also about finding ways to exist in a world that is consistently in battle. Caring for oneself is also caring for others. It is important work, often painful, practical, boundary breaking and collaborative work. We must, when creating with each other, create conditions for each other's existence to thrive.

As a director I have learnt that actresses and performers do not respond in the same way. When I called the various actresses to be part of the process I called them for specific reasons. I called Faith Busika for her ability to dig deep for an emotional performance that leaves everyone raw. Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza has great comedic timing and an insidious kind of mischief. Lerato Sekhibane was brought in as a physical theatre choreographer. She helped the actresses choreograph their movements. I had noticed early on while doing table readings of the play that Faith and Mammatli struggled with moving. The play was too heavy; the lives of all the women we carried were weighing our bodies down. Finding a movement coach/ actress allowed for the others to consume themselves with their own strengths.

The story circle becomes a space of collaboration. The black feminist aesthetic makes use of the vernacular of the women involved (Downes ,2015). This can be the written, spoken, and embodied dialect of women that includes dance, music and the issues the community valued. My role as director was to notice and see things that I as a facilitator may be missing. Allowing everyone to exist in the space is an important part of my role. Story circles is not a new approach but challenges me as a director and playwright to think of what is the lineage of women creatives that I am building on. What is the artistic inheritance of women creatives?

Story circle as black feminist theatre aesthetic

Aesthetic has its roots in philosophy, linking it to beauty and what it means to be human (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). But story circles as black feminist theatre aesthetic is a rupture of sorts, what Hartman (2019) calls a refusal to conform for the sake of inclusion and recognition. Is story circles a creation of a new art-form? For example, in my world, stories and story circles have been part of my life as long as I can remember. I had the privilege to sit in the story circle of the men and the women in my family. My grandmother would always share her wisdom with us through stories. Sometimes, the story circle would be large depending on the issue at hand, and sometimes it would be small. She would sometimes sit with just the older children and address an issue using allegories. The stories would have wisdom on how bad or good things can turn, or they would teach us about strength and courage. She would resolve family feuds and help everyone get clarity on an issue at hand using stories. She would also pave a new way of doing things using stories. So what is novel about story circles?

The role of the audience in the circle is to be witnesses. Jones argues that transformative witnessing happens when empathy is induced in an individual (Jones, 2010). Postcards: Bodily Preserves was received with empathy by both men and women, even though it centred on women's stories. How does on manage the balance of telling a story that appeals to all, reimagining victim and perpetrator, and subject object roles?

When thinking and talking about centring black women's stories, there is a binary reaction from men and white women. I think the work has to embrace that not everyone's expectations can be answered. What the play was doing was allowing the characters to exist, feel and tell their stories in different ways. Creating empathetic audiences is about tapping into a shared humanity. Trauma is that shared experience. We tend to think of trauma as a one-time event, an unchanging experience. However, trauma in its expression is distinct, it has a history, a story. It leaves traces, marks the body in ways that are both visible and invisible, and profoundly affects how one experiences time. The audience becomes part of the making of a full circle. They also bring themselves and their stories into the room. The circle allows for us to reflect on what strategies we use to archive the trauma, re-imagining how we call attention to

past and present wrongs and creating possibilities of redress. The play comes from a space of being trapped in this body of human, woman, and noting all the postcards, letters, notes that life has left. I wondered how we are trapped in this, or free from, or in a temporal lapse of life's constraints. Postcards: Bodily Preserves is an experiment in embodied encounters. There is something very human about our body's ability to remember things. Physical pain in situations of abuse has no reference in the external world and therefore the victims have no language through which to speak. It is this lack of expression that keeps the terror and pain of those experience trapped in the victim's body (Motsemme, 2004).



Figure 11: New York Performance of Postcards: Bodily Preserves. Refiloe Lepere as character, Tshego and facilitator and actress Faith Busika as Maleeto. Photo by Laura Farret

I think there are elements of the playwright in every play they write – it's hard to completely disassociate from your characters and their given circumstances when you are the person creating it all. So, yes, there is a lot of me in this play. More importantly, as a facilitator, you become a conduit of the subtext, the visceral and what others have said. You help them say it better. You voice their subconscious, (Landy)In psychodrama the director holds the Tele, the unsaid things. The aim in creating the play was not so to get an audience to feel or change. I think more importantly it was

to get the stories out. A conduit in shamanism and African spirituality you are required to hold the feelings and let them speak. It was really hard. People's personal stories are theirs to tell and to change. In reality when we tell and retell our own stories we remake and shift things depending on the audience, time, and age, and knowing from my personal experience that the changes are mine to make. I will be upset with anyone who would even call me out on a change to a story I have told before. Therefore the burden of telling a number of stories, the burden of listening to the collective sighs and pain, was a lot. Hence the decision to tell my own story. And of course from my story, it is now mixed with the collective telling. In his book on collective trauma, TITLE, Peter Kellerman (2007), a sociodramatist, reflects on the use of sociodrama for peace building within local, regional and international conferences in the UK, Sweden and Israel. The author writes that these settings provide a marvellous forum to bring together diverse cultures for the exploration of social issues and describes how sociodrama can be used to nurture genuine encounters between individuals and small groups to create ways to effect constructive change in and between societies, cultures and countries.

POSTCARDS: BODILY PRESERVES

By Refiloe Lepere

Performances

Tubingen Germany 2018
actress – Refiloe Lepere

Studio Gallery, Johannesburg – 2018
Director – Refiloe Lepere
Actresses:
Faith Busika
Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza
Lerato Sekhibane
Designers – Nthabeleng Masulubele and Zinhle Gule

Loewe Theatre, NYU, New York – 2019
Director – Refiloe Lepere
Actresses:
Nonkululeko Faith Busika
Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza
Refiloe Lepere

Wits Theatre, Johannesburg 2019
Actress – Refiloe Lepere

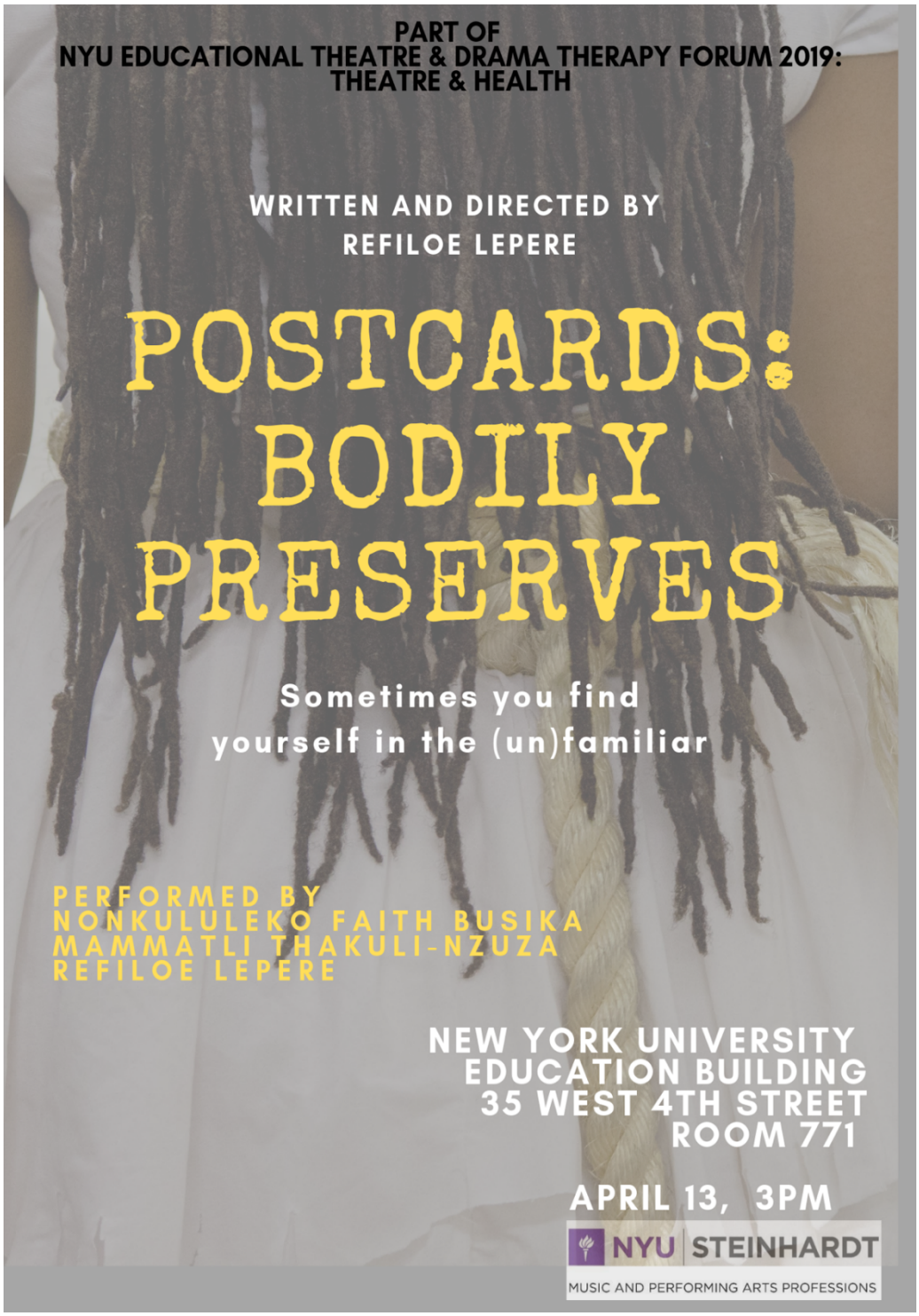

Figure 12: Poster advertising Postcards: Bodily Preserves

Synopsis

Postcards: Bodily Preserves; is an episodic play that explores how trauma and stories are stored in our bodies. In the play, a woman called Maleeto, is introduced to other women she finds as body parts in her lover's house. The women are presented like an exhibition and she takes the audience on the exhibition and tells the stories of the all the women.She questions the reliability of their stories of trauma, their experiences and the faithfulness of the narrative. She together with the women embody the stories.

The recollection of stories/trauma does not happen in the clear, linear way in which we are used to thinking about memory. Sometimes, happenings can be a blink in reality. It is an exploration of how we store memories—we preserve records in our bodies because there is something in them that defies understanding but we want to grasp the conspicuous, and feverish. The focus is on how the choreography of the human body creates meanings — abstract or concrete. The play comes from a space of being trapped in this body of human, woman, and noting all the postcards, letters, notes that life has left.

The play was first performed by Refiloe Lepere as a one-hander. Later, performed by Faith Busika and Mammatli Thakudi-Nzuza, choreographed by Lerato Sekhibane, it draws heavily from orality, storytelling, rituals, and celebrations, the performance examines how bodily behaviours are repeatable and embodied activities, and how these bodily encounters change due to context, space, gender or politics.
The play brings to life a series of harrowing stories that weave together each character's friends, family, lovers, into an explosive narrative that uncovers the darkest corners of humanity — and shatters our notions about trauma.

Characters

MALEETO (30); [*Her name means the one who journeys.]*
Young, timid, angry, worked up and single mother. She is easily angered. She has plaster on her hands. Can't really do much with her hands. Always in pain.

MME MORIE (70); [*Mme Morie, is derived from Memory. She is a person who holds a lot of memories.*]
Old woman who should be in retirement but still works. She has been pushed to retire for the past 7 years. But something keeps her at work; money or running away from her family…she is sharp, edgy, angry, sarcastic, very brilliant at her work and most things. Morie has a lot of passion about what she does, which, of course, makes her give little regard for anyone who stands in her way. She has a huge ego, which allows her to brag and give away important secrets to anyone who strokes her ego.

PHELISA (45); [*Her name means finisher. Full nickname is Phelisa MaThousands, meaning the one who finished thousands and thousands of Rands.]*
She's a bit of a snob, though pleasant in her own way. Looks at the people as nothing more than "subjects" in life's experiment, which is a joke she thinks. She is also very clever and tired. She looks tired and dishevelled. She used to have a lot of money. She stole thousands of Rands from former employer and finished it all. Thinking that she is going to die. But she is still alive and hiding as a domestic worker.

TSHEGO (35); [*Full name: Tshegofatso meaning the comforter*]

Churchwoman. A domestic worker. Used to be Nick's wife. Has a lot of humour and ridiculously funny. Finds humour even in church

MOKOTONG (mid-30s); [*Mokotong is a name given to a child born after a miscarriage or still birth. It means a stray dog. The reason for such a name is to suggest to the spirits who take babies, that this baby is named with a terrible name because they are not loved. Therefore the spirits will not take her.*]
Social worker. She is bit of a nervous wreck, but a true representation of the local flavour. She works hard and is a respected person in the community

NOTES
The play can be performed as a solo or multi-character. When it was conceived and performed the first time, it was a solo performance. It later became a multi-character play.

Setting

Scene opens, a very small crammed space with a lot of boxes and bottles filled with liquid; some are empty. There are small and large bottles packed neatly around the room. The room is gloomy. The silence and gloom are stifling.

YOU!

An elderly woman, Mme Morie, walks in, carrying two empty bottles. She looks around and finds a place to place the bottles on the boxes. She panics a bit by not finding space. She finds space and she slowly looks at the other contents of the bottles. She finds other bottles in boxes. Cleans them. Coloured bottles of different sizes. Examining each bottle for scratches and what is in it and reading the labels etc. She places them in different boxes and exchanges other bottles for new ones. She pours herself something to drink from one of the bottles and then switches on the radio. We hear a loud and obnoxious presenter announcing the next song.

She sits on a black box, takes out a sewing kit. She begins sewing into a paper/box (no thread just needle). And we hear the sound of the needle going into the box (FX: Sound Effect). We see her sitting in the middle of boxes riding up to the ceiling. We see her methodically sewing and drinking. Everything is done with tremendous thoroughness. She looks comfortable. She bops her head as if she is listening to Classic Music. We, audience, can't hear what she is listening too. Slowly the music comes up and fills the room with loud noise. Woman is bobbing not in rhythm to the music. (Music is pop base gospel – house music.) In her seat she pulls out all the stops, of elegance as if the sound is classical music. The voice on the song sings even harder, howling, and she slightly shifts her actions but not much. The singing is fraying out half to hell; she sits piously with her sewing. Enjoying the sound that is unlike her conservative look.

VOICE OVER: Maleeto!

She stops to listen. Switches off the radio. Listens. Then continues sewing.

FX: Sound of sewing

Speaking to the audience as if they are a guest.

MME MORIE: Oh, Come in… I am sorry for the mess. Please come in. yes. I wouldn't mind a refill actually. (*gets up and pours herself another drink*) Hello dear. You know, there was a time when I had beautiful hair like yours? (*Shouts*) Phelisa, Tshego!

(Pause)

Morie. Just call me Mme Morie. I like that better than Miss or Mrs and much lovelier than Mam!

(savouring her drink)

It sounds so much lovelier. Miss, makes me feel I like: ekare they are announcing: "ha nyala!" ["she is married – not!"] Yes, Morie. Obathong

[oh wow], Morie. Morie means beautiful, young and Princess, ahh Queen… don't look at me like that. It means Princess! Helang.
Did you know the reason they put rose petals on wedding bed? It is because it helps to turn the woman on? The smell of rose petals being crushed underneath bodies in heat excites the senses. You know how it is? When bodies are locked together, and they land on the petals?

(winks)

Or maybe you don't. You've stopped for tea? Well it's not really tea?

(With a stern look Morie starts pouring out two glasses of the drink; she pours in silence.)

Sugar?

(Laughs)

It's not tea?
And cream?
Bread and butter?
bread and butter?
One never drinks tea with company without bread and butter. I know you are not staying for long. Mare Sesotho sere: "molomo ojang o roga osajeng" [There is an old saying that says: "the mouth that eats insults the mouth that doesn't."]
Well you see in olden times the wise and those who knew better have established an etiquette that pushes a host - even when unwilling – to ask a visitor who find them at their meal to join. Welcome! We are so happy that you are going to be a part of us. Mare leno lewo! [But that tooth]
Jerr, you must do something about it. I can't believe that Nick choose to bring you with that tooth.

HANDS, ARMS, ME

(Laughter, and Maleeto enters. Swirling and swooning)

MALEETO: Oh wow, Nick! *(eating)* This biltong, you made it yourself? It's so delicious!
And this is this place you have been hiding from me? It's quiet… quaint. From outside you can't tell it's so farm like. So homey.
And all these bottles?

(Silence)

Nick? Nicholas! You know how I've been trying to tell you something since I arrived...? ...Well it's something important. I... I'm not sure how you will take this... I left Thami.

(Listens)

Just before I came here.

(Listens)

No, no he doesn't suspect anything about us. It was really bad already to just, dump him out of the blue. You know… I wasn't intending on doing it. It just happened. I know ...We are not about this, but can I just tell you a bit. Yes, we have never really… well its terrible timing. It's just

happened. I saw him there, in the house, my house actually, my apartment. He wasn't doing anything in particular. But I could smell him. It just bubbled up and I had to…

You know, for the longest time; I thought my job in life was to be in the service for other people. I learnt it early on in life. And I did, keep my room clean, clear the way for my mother so she could walk around inspecting, looking for clues where my father has been… What does this have to do with our affair? Well, I learnt early on that affairs were a necessary extension of marriage, an extra wing in the house. You know: "Nyatsi itisa lelapa "[The mistress strengthens the home!].
I understand my father, now why would you want everything from one person? That seems a lot to expect. And truthfully, I don't want everything.
You don't look happy, Nick?

(Listens)

Surprised? Surprise is good. I don't think he suspects anything about us. He is a bit vengeful, he would have said, or perhaps did something; if he really wanted...

(Listens)

My dad was a wonderful man who waited on me, hand and foot when I was a child. So, when I grew up, I thought this is what love is. I thought I could have any man I wanted if I put myself in front of him. And this worked, for a long time until I met Thami and, and he made me into a family and put me in a house with no wing for being able to put myself in front of other men. A house, no yard, no garden, no birds singing for other birds… Instead I found Thami. Nothing wrong with him. It's just that, I always give Thami 45-minute backrubs, which he always asks for. He never gives me back rubs unless… unless I beg, and then, only then he gives me a rub for only for like thirty seconds. Last year, I broke my arm, this one; it was in a cast. I use this arm everyday. It's my strong arm. And Thami said it's my strong hand; so he wanted the rubs. I got pains in my arm; I told Thami this and he said:

AS THAMI: Ai wena you are exaggerating. Usho if you don't want to give me the backrubs. I'll understand. But kahle kahle, I think wena you are just lazy. No, it's not a bad thing. Just tell me if you are lazy. I will have to go ask someone else to rub my back for me. You want me to do that ne? You don't care about me ne? You don't care the amount of pain my back is in. You know at work they give us these terrible chairs to sit on and wena you don't care. It's fine you must listen to the doctor. I wish I had enough money to see a doctor about my back.

AS MALEETO: And I explained that I love him, but I also can't keep giving the rubs. I asked him if he would like to give me some back rubs. He said:

AS THAMI: Yazi babe, [You know babe], you are being selfish now? I do so much for you. You need to start counting your blessings and start trying to be a truly selfless person.

AS MALEETO: And so I tried to be selfless for a while, but the pains in my arm, continued. So, I figured it would just be easier to leave him than

continue trying to be selfless. I walked out and just came to you. Hopefully he is gone by the time I…… I know we talked that we should keep this a secret; why with your family not approving of you dating outside your race. I know. But I don't think he knows anything. He doesn't even know you exist. Anyway, I just wanted to tell you, you know. So, … you know…

(Listens)

Yes, yes. I haven't told anyone about you. No one knows. Why does it matter that no one knows about you?

(Listens)

No, I don't understand! I thought you'd be pleased. This way it's different. Before it was you, me, and the shadow of Thami. Everywhere. That is why we can't go to the mall, meet at coffee shop, everyone knows that I am with Thami. And they would tell him. Or we can't go to the markets, watch a show, or listen to live music… wait, there is always someone who knows YOUR mother.

(SILENCE)

Well, look. Now it's just you and me.

(BEAT)

There is something you are not telling me. There is someone else! You are married? You have a wife isn't it? Why did I not see this coming? All these stories of not seeing me in public… No, no, yes you do! It all makes sense now. Oh god what have I done!?
I have to go. Stupid, stupid,
Where is my coat?

(SILENCE)

I can't put on my coat.

(She falls on him. She is leaning on him. She tries to move, but her body gives away.)

MALEETO: I feel dizzy all of a sudden… Oh this isn't good. I feel so tired…Yes, let me have a seat. Wait. Why are you lifting me? Why are you placing me on the counter? What… Oh, You are a bit… (*Slurring her words)* naughty.

(He places her on the counter)

Wait, I can't move my legs. My arms are so heavy. It wasn't supposed to be like this. No but... What are you doing?
I don't want my shoes off. Put back my shoes on my feet. I need my bag, pass me my bag!
What do you mean, I don't have long?

(BEAT)

You mean you did this to me?
How? Why?
The meat? Earlier? That's why it tasted funny!
You added poison?
What do you mean the last thing you want to do is hurt me? You poisoned me? Marete ahao, o nyele, wa nyela, sies. [your balls, fuck you!]
Voetsek, get me out of here! Stop this. What is this about?
Is it about me leaving Thami? Come on, okay I won't leave him. He loves me. He worships me. I'll call him and we will be back to…

What? You do have a wife, I knew it…

(Listens)

Hearing this should make me cold, but you know what? I can't move at all. My entire body feels like stone.
FUCK YOU! What do you mean you love me! "Ya love you, Ya love you."
You love everything about me? Tsek maan. That's why you are doing this to me? Feeding me poison?

(Silence)

What?

(Gives up)

Nicholas. What are you? Why didn't you tell me? Yes. You said you preserve stuff. I just thought you were like a leather maker, or the old tannies, preserving peaches. I mean all these jam jars? I thought you have moerse Gin and Tonic parties. Why do hippies have jam jars kante?

(Praying out aloud)

Raba chera, moro boso soro.*(Praying in tongues)* Oh father god, forgive me, wena senatla sa le hodimo, *(Praying)* if you take me out of this I promise to stop cheating on Thami. Oh rara mabaledi wa meso forgive me, for calling myself Leeto. [*Pronounced: LEE-TOE*]
Wena Nicholas yo shit, my name is Maleeto, (*Pronounced: Ma Lea eTO*) dammit. Learn it, you might need to say it in court, to the police or someone.

You didn't know? Ke Maleeto, named after my grandmother. Leeto is for your damn lazy tongue.

(Cries loudly)

THAT TOOTH!

MME MORIE: Jwale? sello sewo?? Hey! Kwala molomo, kwala! [Close your mouth, close it!]Oh, you need to see the dentist for that tooth? Why did he choose you even with your tooth? There is a dentist just right around the corner. But you must look at our our..., what Nicholas calls; exhibition. We worked very hard le basadi ba mo. …

MALEETO: Yuuu! Omang? [Who are you?]

MME MORIE: Wa hlodiya [You are making noise] You know, Nick, doesn't like that.

MALEETO: Am I dead?

MME MORIE: Dead? Who?

MALEETO: Omang? [Who are you?]

MME MORIE: Morie, Mme Morie!

MALEETO: Are you dead?

MME MORIE: We are all not dead.

MALEETO: We?

MME MORIE: Phelisa, Tshego, Mokotong…

MALEETO: We?

MME MORIE: Eya, [Yes] I just said... Mare [But] why did you not think about your rotten tooth before coming? Phelisa, We need to solve this.

MALEETO: Solve?

MME MORIE: Waitsi nna, I've lived here all my life. Ke tlhaga Vaal. But I know everything about the place. I know this house and these people inside and out. Phelisa!
You know I am 73 years old. I still work. Ke tlile mo Gauteng ka mosebetsi. Ke Mme Morie, but they; Nick and his family call me, Sylvia!
Wena, you will have to get your tooth to the dentist, before we get you in our exhibition. Phela mona, we showcase our best parts. Sheba fela, Mole, ke maoto a Phelisa… Hona, mona, ne ele letswele la Tshego, mare eish Tshego leyena, heartache ereng. So the breast went bad. Shem, we will all die from heartache. [I mean, here, we showcase our best parts. Look just right there those are Phelisa's legs… Right here, it used to be Tshego's breast. But shame Tshego, heartache got to her and the breast went bad. We will all die from heartache]

You know my one boss died in my arms
(Shows her arms)
They like dying in my arms. Another one died Luckily I was not around. Got a call:

AS WHITE WOMAN: Sylvia!

AS MORIE: They call me Sylvia. I don't like it. Sylvia. you can call me Mme Morie. Morie short for Princess. Moretsana. Only girl amongst four boys. My mother was tired of coming up with names. My other name ke Kebitsamang! At least go nale pina for that name:
(sings name song)

Kebitsamang, oyajola, Kebitsamang!
eya bana ba le gowa called me and said:

AS WHITE WOMAN: Sylvia, my mom died.

AS MORIE: I tell you motho ong pitsang Sylvia is only 24 years old. Obitsa Sylvia

ekare ke loaf brown. Mare ke tlareng? I brought her up. She has been calling me Sylvia all her life. I can't just change now that her mother died. That's why wena, ke Mme Morie.

RUN, RUN…. RUN YOUR BRAINS

MME MORIE: Phelisa! Pheli! That's PHELISA, Mathousand. Resebetsa kaofela! Pheli!

PHELISA: Mme Morrie, nguwe lo? Ungiyeza nje?

MME MORIE: Kae mo? Kae mo basadi? Pheli, Iza la! Ke tlo ho tshebisa…

PHELISA: Uyasazi isimo sam. Awusoze ungi tshebisa please.

MME MORIE: O Phelisa, Hankekebe ka mo tshebisa ge. Phelisa Mathousand!

(laughs slyly)

They… not nna.. Bare ke Phelisa Mathousand. Otle omobone ha a tsamaya. Ekare motho le di chelete.

(walks to picture)

Hau? Phelisa? Waitsi she came to work for madam wa hae with only 300 hundred rand between life and starvation. Bare ofeditse di thousand. Kere net Three hundred Rands. How do I know? Phelisa Motshele [tell her] story herself!
[How? Phelisa? You know she came to work for her madam with only R300 between life and starvation. They say she spent thousands and thousands. She came with only 300. How do I know? Phelisa, Tell them your story.]

PHELISA: Three hundred rand, R300.

(Speaking to Mme Morrie)

Yazi what you can do nge 300? Niks. And uzwa that somebody pays labosisi abasebenzayo R200. To do what? So how I get my R300? Behaviour problems

(Laughs uncontrollably… laughter fades into sadness)
Behaviour problems that was what the doctor said. I started as a cleaner at work, delivering tea.

(Mimes pushing a tea trolley)

(IN WHITE ACCENT): Tea? Madam? Two sugars, cream. Wonderful.

(NORMAL ACCENT): Haai wena, [No, this is not for you] Thoko, you know where the kitchen is.

(IN WHITE ACCENT):Yes, madam. Your stapler. Oh my it was on your desk. I promise. I didn't move it when I cleaned.

(NORMAL ACCENT): Lo mlungu lo, wa gula wa fa. [This white woman, got sick and she died.]
Then then I was promoted. Phelisa, the secretary (*makes the name tag*). I was in charge of answering phones. "Good morning, you have reached the offices of…" I was making copies, (*makes copy machine noises*.) Taking minutes in very important meetings, organising important meetings on important dates, making copies, scanning, faxing, organizing stuff for the staff , deliveries? Delivery very well. Yes, the calls I was answering, hello! Making copies… then memory problems.

The minute I got those; life was great yazi. So, it started when I would forget that people needed a meeting set up. Or money ready for a trip. Those damn phones would ring. They were also frustrating me. And this still wanted their coffee, cream no sugar. So And then uyazi belungu sent me to the doctor. You are forgetting a lot Phelisa.
Udoctor said – I was going to die. He actually said that.

AS DOCTOR: E-mummy, you are going to die. You have dementia.

AS PHELISA: Dementia! Do you know what that is? A demon that leads to bad behaviour and memory loss. Anyway, doctor said I have 2 years to live. I must get my house in order. Dementia is incurable. it was like a death sentence. Actually, it was. How do I go back to work? How do I explain to my children, grandchildren, - angithi my daughter became pregnant early maan. What do I say: "umama is dying?" well I said exactly that. Angithi the doctor didn't mince his words. I couldn't also. So I called them;

Ntombi, Soso, Themba, uphi uSiya? My Babies, mamelani, umama uzofa. Bakhala abantwana… [Ntombi, Soso, Themba, where is Siya? My babies, listen. Mommy is going to die. They cried my children.]

So after the "death sentence" was delivered, mina, I was determined to make the most of the time I had left. And you know god won't let your tears fall to the ground. One-day nje, some money came into my account. R30,000! Where did the money come from?
It was a gift from God. You know he works in mysterious ways. He gave me a sickness. Name I don't know how I got this death sentence.

So I went and withdrew the money before Satan took it. Then the next week I applied for my pension. I mean I had been working for some time. I can't keep going to work ekbeni ngizofa. I asked that the rush it yazi, since I am dying.

Then the next week R100,000 came into my account. I thought it was my pension. I stayed a bit at work. Then another R200 000. And things were no longer nice. Dementia was kicking in fast and careless. I forgot who I was. Forgot meetings, very important meeting. Even my boss was getting it. Money went missing. Jerr,
Then R700,000 came to my account. The bank wanted to talk about savings. SAVINGS? I am dying!!

No, I went on holidays; told my kids Bantwana bam siya eCape Town, no, Mauritius, yes, after sathi Dubai, Thailand, China. When was I ever going to see Dubai? We went and we bought gifts - cars for my babies who won't see their mother.
I said goodbye to her 12-year-old granddaughter; bought her expensive shoes. I told her: "I'll still be here, but I'll be like one of those spokos you see in films".
Money came until I stopped working. After, I was at home for a while. Hau I am waiting to die… but I am not dying. I am healthy, cleaning my house. And I don't have money anymore. I had spent all my savings and said my goodbyes. I went to the doctor again. You know what he said:

(as doctor) "emummy, you are not dying"

I could die. Athi I had been misdiagnosed. One year later, the scan revealed the symptoms were a result of anxiety and depression – not dementia.

Now I was broke. I said goodbye to family everything – I was crushed.

So there I was; up to my nose in debt. I emptied my pension and savings, I went on a big family holiday and bought things we didn't need. I had read those memes; "you only live once" I was advised to give myself whatever I asked for while I could "enjoy it".
I extended the house; went on trips, you name it.
I spent everything. R2 million from my company. They discovered that money missing came to my account. I said it was dementia. They didn't believe me. I ran, I left KZN and moved to Joburg and changed my name, Phelisa!

The doctor? Oh he sent an apology, a letter. Said sorry! Sorry? Bathi the cops are looking for me, where? Uyabazi wena amapolisa?

MME MORIE: The cops Phelisa. Lerata ho boniwa waitsi! No cops here my dear. But we do have a dentist.

MALEETO: I can leave?

MME MORIE: Eya! Only to get that tooth fixed.

MALEETO: Lona why are you here?

MME MORIE: Where else should we be?

MALEETO: I really need to leave. Please help me mma.

MME MORIE: Okay. You are going to walk out of here. Then you will pass the house with a big tree. There is an old lady who lives there. Shem arem skelpsel, is lonely. Don't look too long, her children, buried in the yard, like running to the gate.

MALEETO: I really need to leave. Please help me mma.

MME MORIE: Yes, my dariy, we must deal with that tooth. don't talk to that one behind you. Ke Mokotong. She is actually a ghost!

EYES: I SAW THAT! I DID THAT!

MME MORIE: Mokotong! Otshosa ngwana omong! Obatlang hle? [Mokotong! You are making another child scared! What do you want?]

MOKOTONG: I'm a social worker

MME MORIE: Ra tseba my darly! [We know my darling]

MOKOTONG: I'm a social worker
I got my high school certificate
I went to university
I DID THAT!

MME MORIE: Ke Mokotong! Shem she has degrees and reads a lot. She is a social worker. Ona phapha leyena. Came looking for Phelisa. Phelisa ha siya mehatla…

MOKOTONG: I'm a social worker
I got my high school certificate
I went to university
I did what was good for me.
I did not let my past affect me.
I did not allow my parents life to affect me.
I did not let it.
No.

(*SOUND EFFECT: RADIO CROSS-OVER!)*

KGOMOTSO MESWE: (*In studio radio reporter)* Good afternoon, I am Kgomotso Meswe with your midday report.

(Sound of news broadcast)

President Thabo Mbeki arrived in France. For Bilateral talks.

There is massive damage on the streets in Moruleng, North West this morning after the community took to the streets to protest. At least three people are dead. A dozen others wounded. Officials say the community have been targeting cars, a school, a clinic and also a KFC restaurant.

Some stormy weather has been forecast for Gauteng and other parts; keep safe on the roads.

A teenage boy accused of killing his girlfriend's parents is behind bars. Police gave chase to his car. they finally apprehended him in parys . In the car it was him and his girlfriend. The big question, on everyone's mind especially the police is: was the girl abducted or did she go along with the boy willingly? MKHULULI NAZO tries to find out.

AS MKHULULI NAZO: (*Onsite reporter)* A weekend of terror for 15-year-old Mokotong, ended here, outside Parys, in Bloemfontein miles from home, where her 18-year-old boyfriend, David Matshabo, allegedly shot and killed Mokotong's parents.

(*Sound Out*)

MOKOTONG: I went to high school. I am a social worker. I am good. I did good.
I remember this one fight they had... it was a HORROR, it really was...
Mama had just returned from hospital. She had a broken lip. She had been gone for days. My baby brother was still a baby.
Mama. Was shaking the whole day in the house. Walking up and down. Breathing, heaving, Working herself up.
He, my father, just sat on the couch. Watching TV.
They had been drinking since mama returned. They were still drinking, both them. J&B on the rocks. Mama walking around. He on the couch.
After a bit of her walking she said:

AS MAMA: Ke kgopela madi? [I am asking for money]

MOKOTONG: He gave her money, put it on the table and she said:

AS MAMA: Ke yona e? Oba bone banna ba bae kae? Ore ke etseng ka nthoe? [This is it? Have seen these kids? The whole lot of them? What do you expect me to do with this?]

AS PAPA: Dirathane tse seben tse ase tsaka kamoka, o. (p*ointing*) serathane se ayang ase saka, le o, ha lo batla papa e. [You mean these little, bastards? These seven little bastards? Not all of them are mine. That one (*pointing at me*) must go ask their father for money. Not They are not all mine.]

MOKOTONG: He walked to their bedroom. Got dressed; oiled his face. He then took the money he had put on the table for her, pockets it and walked out the house. Past the gate into the street. Third house from ours he stops to speak to Ntate Ramokgopa. Loudly he complains about us not being his kids. They walk across to the spot, the shebeen, the drinking spot. This is not far from our house. They get a beer and sit on garden chairs, pass the drink amongst each other.

I was about 10 years old. I remember looking from the house. As he walked, crossed the road, with our money in his hand. Wearing only the best. He wore a parabellum, hat, heavy shirt, the most expensive shoes. He smelled like money. He sauntered so we all see him. Me, my mother, especially my mother.
Expensive pants, he sits , on chairs. His friend admiring him. Praising him,
Him looking back at us making sure we see him. He flirts, more like shouts at different women who walk by.

AS MEN: *(Catcalling)* Lebella, jou lekker ding! [Look here, sweet thing!]
Mopako o dibra?[Do you see that package man?]
Nka modira, waitsi! [I can do her all night!]

MOKOTONG: My mother would look out the window watching all this and she would mumble to herself

AS MAMA: Ke tlo mogalla marete a. [I am going to saw off his balls, watch me.]

(Sound of police siren)

AS POLICE: We found him in the car. The car was his. She,
the young girl? She was just scared, scared. You know scared, scared crying, screaming.

AS NAZO: Police say, early Sunday morning, David brought Mokotong, home after a night out together. Mokotong's parents, summoned Matshabo back to their home. He returned, concealing a handgun. During an argument, David allegedly shot Mokotong's father, in the head, then shot her mom. Police say Mokotong's 7-year-old sister, Karabo, saw her father being killed right by the front door.
neighbours are shocked.

AS NEIGHBOUR: You never think this could happen in your neighbourhood. I mean we knew the family so well. The father, Patrick? He so funny (*laughs a bit)* was extremely friendly to everyone. Ask him for anything and I mean anything! He would help. Money, jokes, whatever. It is such a pity.

MOKOTONG: Then she would take my brother. Try to feed him her breast. But nothing comes out. She will then while drinking and smoking cigarettes, fix a bottle for him, the baby. Holding him, drinking, smoking.
And would I say
(to mama)
Bo mma, cigarette hle. Ere ke tshware ngwana, lentse lenwa, le kamo siya fase. [Ma, uhm, the cigarette. Let me hold the baby, yes? While you drink, let me hold him. I mean he could fall.]
(Beat)
So this day, papa was standing over there at the drinking place. Laughing, drinking, smoking. His friends praising him; for a new

baby, for his nice clothes, for things. She was inside sitting, drinking, fuming and smoking. Suddenly she put the baby down on the chair. Like he could sit on his own. And gets a big cast iron pan in the kitchen. Burst out the house, past the gate, into the street. Stands in the middle of the street, shouting…

AS MAMA: Masepa, lenyele nne? Obona gore kuku e tsamaya ejewa di hulle plek… kano mang? Bophelo baka ele hore ke hlakola masepa ahao le ban aba hao. Le bua jwang hore bana hase ba hao? [Fuck Shit, are you shitting me? I have been with only. You think that my pussy has been gallivanting all over town? When? When all I do is pop out your babies and cook your food, wash iron your clothes. What do you mean these kids are not your kids? What time do I even have to make friends]?

MOKOTONG: He looks up from his beer and admiring friends. Sees her and says:

AS PAPA: Mosona' mao [Your mother's cunt!]

MOKOTONG: She runs across the street and goes straight for him. Into the gate and lunges at him. The cast iron pot leading her. She misses Ntate Ramokgopa, who beckons my father to catch his woman. The other men. They come around her, behind her, prowling. They grab her. Hold her arms. She swings with the weight of the pot and they all scurry back. All smiling, wondering. My father, still sitting, drinks his beer, sipping slowly. Stares at my mother.

She says to him.

AS MAMA: (*Breathless*) Wa otseba Mosono wa maka? Ole wa obona, wa olata mabitleng, gore otseba? Obua ka Mosono wa maka? [You know my mother's ass[cunt]? Have you see in it? Or perhaps you have been to the graveyard, and gotten to know it? Why do you feel so comfortable to talk about my mother's privates?]

(Slight pause.)

She shouts at him. But he is not moved by her swearing or her heavy breathing, or iron pot. She lunges one more time with the pot, he moves, she hits the chair. She returns quickly but he grabs her by the neck. Drops her to the ground with her pot. Starts kicking her in the stomach. And kicks with all he has.

AS PAPA: (*Shouting and kicking)* SEFEBE! KE ONKILE, KAOFA LE HAE HA BANNA KAOFELA BANE BASA OBATLE. WANG PATELA KA HOFEBA!. KANKA LE DIRATHANE TSA HAO BANNA BA BOFEBENG, KA BANKA, …. JWALE OTLA HOKEYENTSA MAHLO? Emmela, tsamo hlapa, ke batla dijo hake bowa.
[BITCH! I TOOK YOU IN WHEN ALL THE MEN DIDN'T WANT YOU. GAVE YOU CHILDREN AND YOU REPAY ME BY GOING TO GET MORE KIDS FROM HOEING. I STILL TOOK YOU IN WITH YOUR KIDS FROM YOUR HOEING AND YOU COME HERE TO EMBARRASS ME?
Get up and go get yourself cleaned. I expect my dinner to be ready.]

BROTHER: Tlo ha mo! [Get away from the window]

MOKOTONG: My brother had shouted at me to move from the window. Later I asked him, keng serathane [What is a bastard?]

BROTHER: Ngwana osenang ntate. [A child with no father.]

MOKOTONG: And I asked, "Is that what I am?" My older brother nodded

(Sound of police siren)

AS NAZO: Still unknown, whether or not Mokotong played any role in the murders.

AS FRIEND: Uhm, yes, we were friends. We grew up together. I mean. She is, was a really bright friend. Read too many books. But she was really nice. I thought she was happy. you know. She read too many books. and her parents were always so nice. Her father will tell everyone jokes. They were such a large family. But always so happy, you know.

AS PARENT TO FRIEND: She seemed to be a sweet kid on the street, and just a beautiful kid. And she knew my girls very well.

MOKOTONG: He continued to drink, she continued to chase. They would drink sometimes together. They would fight. After she woke him up with hot water. He stopped hitting mama. He moved to beating me. Us. Mostly me.
I moved to coming home late. Spending all my time in the library. Hiding and reading. He would drink and seek me out. To just hit me. He couldn't hit her anymore.
Then one day he left.

AS MAMA: Otsamaile! Ke wena omotsamaisang [He is gone. You made him go!]

MOKOTONG: She broke everything. The plates, the table, our spirits. Her word would slap. slap whoever was closest with whatever. I being a girl I was always at home. My brothers could stay out till late. I was always the closest.
Then, he was back. More fiery. With more fight. More fire. She, more tired. No fire. No fight.
Still speaking to me, reaching me with her fight, her fire. I would see her I hear her but I'm BEYOND her

AS NAZO: David had worked as a security guard and at Morula Sun for a while. This is MKHULULI NAZO reporting.

AS KGOMOTSO MESWE: We will have more on this and other stories in our talk bulletin this evening.

(Sound fades off)

THE TONGUE

Maleeto wakes up from daze with the women silent but looking at her. Watching and staring her with anticipation. Sadness.

MALEETO: Hey Nick. And all these women here? Don't tell me they came all by themselves.

(SILENCE)

My name is MaLeeto. Not Leetoe!

(SILENCE)

No. when we met you, I was very honest. Leetoe is my name. it's part of my name. It's an easier version of my name. We seriously can't be fighting that you didn't know I had an African name. when The fuck! You preserved your wife and just fed her to me. How could I know that you preserved your wife?

(Swallows vomit. Looks sick. But still can't move her body)

I should not be angry? I should not be disgusted. Oh wow, thank you Nicholas for the meat earlier that was your wife? I thought it was just biltong, dry wors. Fuck. And you know I don't like or eat wors. I only ate it because you said you made it.
No I don't want to hear it. I really don't think you explaining how you dried up and preserved your wife will make me feel better. I feel slightly sick.

(Nausea building up)

MALEETO: What was her name? Chego? Really? Chego? Its Tshego you shit of a human! Another black woman? I am not your first? (gags, Cries, gags)I always thought I was your first black woman. Of course you are the first white man to even ask me out. How long did it take you to finish, Chego?

(SILENCE)

Nick, Nicholas, love!
Please pass me my bag? Please.
No, don't do that, leave my feet please.
I feel slightly sick.
I think I am going to vomit. It's the poison, genius! Oh it's not supposed to get me sick? Really? It's supposed to do what? Kill me one time? So you can eat me one time?
Huu shem I am not the dying type. You know.

(vomits without moving her body. Cough)

Story of my life. Just before death we vomit. Well done Leeto!

(to self)

He e maan, MaLeeto!
Yes I nearly died before. Just like this moment. I was placed in a boot of a car. I was sure I was dying. But I didn't. Come to think of it. Nothing you do will hurt me.
It's true I am telling you the truth. I was kidnapped.

Why would I lie about something that serious, while you wait for me to die so you can eat me?
I don't make up these things. It's hard to be a black female in the world.
No I am not saying it for you to feel bad.
I really was Jackrolled.
When I was thirteen.
It's true! ask my mother, call her, she will confirm it.
Her number is on my phone. Okay it 0824722915. I am telling you.
Eish but she never wants to speak about the jackrollling.
Jackrolling! They used to call it that. Jackroll, like hijack? Jack has a lot work in the stealing business; cars and humans.
You don't believe me, ne? I see it in your eyes. You thought you were my first kidnapping. Ahh shame. Sorry, I have seen worse. I mean at least you get to be my first white man kidnapping? How cool is that?
Stop debating with me and call my mother.
Case number?
Are you crazy? Case number in South Africa?
Damn, that mean you also might getaway with this?
My best chance of making people believe that I was kidnapped or suffered sexual violence, is If I turn up DEAD! Then you will believe me? my corpse with the marks of rape and physical violence will think that is as fairly acceptable proof?

(SILENCE)

Huu imagine; my picture doing the rounds on social media. Huu and my cousin has the worst pictures of me. Please pass my bag?
Please send my cousin the picture you took of me last week. You take nice pictures. Please send her, her number is on my phone. Saved Cuzzy.
You know we laughed about her not having a phone for two weeks and we all never knew where she was. She was so upset;

COUSIN: "10 days, 10 full days without a phone. Waitsi, motho would be halfway to India with a missing kidney and no Missing Poster on social media. The family I keep."

MALEETO: Come on don't be like that. She needs to know to do a nice poster. If I tell you my jackroll story you will send the picture? I mean we must at least negotiate in this killing. Ok, I tell the story, you send the picture and you can call my mom to corroborate? Deal! We were still living in Brits at the time. There was a lot of stories on TV about girls going missing. There was this one story I saw on TV before I was stolen; the girl went missing and her body was found cut up and she was raped. At least you won't throw away my body, Oh no m mom needs my body. Sorry, anyway in this TV report I had watched, they didn't know what had happed to her.

WE LOVE THEIR BODIES: LIPS, HIPS, KIDS

(Switches on TV. A Reporter that is Dramatic)

AS TV REPORTER: The community of Duncan Village, East London is shocked and left reeling as a body of a young woman was found in the bushveld she was from Mdatshane was last seen in a nearby shebeen in Duncan Village. We have here some of the people from the Duncan Village.

(Woman from the township, surrounded by others)

SIMA: Yebo, Hallo. Yebo. Besingamazi yena. Asemazi! Haai ngumuntu nje wase roundini, nyabo. Ewe? Oh Mna, (*to her friend off camera*) Khaume be thetha nam. Ee, haai sim qibele kaMash last week before last. Yena bengasumuntu oselayo mare leya mini, wathi qi la kwaMash.. Sa mbuza ukuthi, theni eza eshebeen ega sele? Wathi ufuna uku wazi abatu base mzini nje. Sa muqibela then"

REPORTER: This lady; says the victim was loved by all the people in this township. They are shocked by her death. The last time they saw her she was drinking at the nearby shebeen. And that she came to the shebeen to get to know people. She was net even a drinker. Here we have the local councillor. What is the community feeling about this?

COUNCILLOR: We are shocked, we are very shocked. Just last week we built not one, not two, but three fences around a number of shebeens la areaya to protect our women and girls. As the city we believe the protection of women is of utmost important. Those people out there sharing stories that we hate women are lying. I mean we love our women. We love them very much. We love they bodies, their lips, their hair their hips…"

REPORTER: There you have it. This community has done all it could to protect their women. So many fences around the shebeens. They really love. But the government needs to do more. Malungelo Nagomso, for SABC 2, Duncan Village

(Switches off the TV)

MALEETO: I was in shock. How could anyone be around their neighbourhood and just disappear without anyone knowing anything. I spoke too soon. Two days later; it was a Friday.
I am from Brits. And Fridays were big there, And people in my township get really excited on Fridays. There was nothing else to do during the week. SO Fridays were days to really party – go to a party or come from a party. I was not allowed on the street after 5pm. So Fridays were funny days. Me on the wall people watching. Our house was a corner house. With a tall wall. (*transforms into younger Maleeto- 11 years old*)I would wear my cheeky shorts. Because when I sit on the wall I don't want the boys to see my panty.
So here is my house. Across is the busy street. All the taxis drop people off. When I sit on the wall I get to see my mother, immediately she gets of the taxi. From the wall I could watch people coming from the taxis drunk from work. Or people getting drunk walking to a party somewhere.

(*Speaking to someone*) Dumela Ntate Spokes! [Afternoon Ntate Spokes] I like Ntate spokes, he always gives me money. He is always drunk, so he never knows how much he gave me.
Over there, across the road, the boys play soccer. There is Thabo le Tshepo. They will play until its night. Well boys are allowed to play till night. Look Tshepo is waving. (*Blushing*) Yuu… How did he see me all the way…
Oh, (*surprised by neighbour's voice*) Oh dumela Mama Tumi. He e! … Eya…. Mama? He e… Ok. (starts getting off the wall slowly). Eish Mama Tsholo wa bora. She is always in everyone's business. Let's wait for her to go into her house. Then I am back to sitting on the wall.
Its already dusk. I watching people in their excitement. When all of a sudden there was this BMW, a red one. It drove past very fast. I remember the BMW because it was Brits and nothing that flashy ever comes that side. While I was looking at the BMW another one passed. So I got off the wall to have a good look. But couldn't see, so I crossed the road to the other side to catch the dust of the turning cars. Suddenly the street was empty; everyone ran the direction of the 2 BMWs. I couldn't, it was dark. I am not allowed to be in the street actually. So I tried to look from our corner, and there was everyone by the traffic light. I was alone. no one around me. Everyone was running after the cars. Then suddenly another car came out of nowhere. A BMW too. It stopped next to me. I looked at the driver, then I tried to run to my house. Some guy from the back seat of that car jumps out and runs after me. I see our gate. But I am far from the gate. The street is empty, he grabs my arm. Pulls me. I fall to the ground. Grabs for stones. He puts his knee against my back and pulls my arm. I scream in pain. He pulls my arm again to get me to stop moving. I reach out my free arm trying to grab at anything. He's holding my arm, twisting. I throw sand in his face. He lets go. I stand. I run. I feel my legs giving way. He kicked my legs. I fall face first. He is upset. He twists my left arm again. Gets me to stand on my own feet.

The guy grabs my waist. By my shorts and pulls me to the car. We reach the car, he is tired. He opens the boot. Places me on my feet and says:

THE GUY: Tsek sfebe qhitheka la uqwale a bootini. [Fuck, hoe, get into the boot.]

MALEETO: I'm frozen. Another guy comes from the front. He has a kind face. He says I should come sit next to him. He is chubby and nice. The one who chased me tells him to relax.

In addition to the one holding me, the chubby one, there is a driver and another one.

And puts me in the boot of the car.

They drive away from my house.

I lie in the boot. My left arm in pain. My knees to face. Where will my mother say I went? My dad will be home soon. I should have switched

on the lights. My dad will find a dark house. My mom had said I must take out the fish from the freezer, she will be so upset.

After sometime the car comes to a stop. The one who chased me comes to pick me from the back. He sits me on the ground. There are stones. The ground is red, a bit brown. Most soil turns … he sits behind me and holds my shoulders. I hear a song playing from the car.
Ding Dong,
It's by Joe Nina.
Ding Dong, Oh Maria Podesta!

He tells me to relax. To lie on his chest. I don't. Ding Dong. He pulls me back into his chest. Locks his legs on to mine and pulls them open. The driver. Comes from the car. Kneels in front of me. And starts pulling my one leg. Pull one leg out of shirts, one leg from my panty. One leg.

AS DRIVER: Yo ngwana o. move sfebe! Nje babe.

MALEETO: The other takes the turn. All I hear is the song. I feel I become one with the stones stabbing my back. I am not thinking. I can't think. I think of the stones I grabbed earlier. They are like these stones. They can't help me much. They are just stones. I am turned to stone. "Move, bitch. Fuck me." I hear. I am dead. Right.

Now it's the third one's turn. The fat one

I faint

They put me back in the boot.

I learned later that these guys, together with the other BMWs were thugs from Soweto who came to Brits to steal cars and pick up women. Mostly steal women at bars. I was eleven. I was not at a bar. I was not supposed to be picked up. But there was no one in the street, I was an easy pick. The fat guy felt for me. So they left me with him. They took us; myself and four other girls they picked up along the way, to Soweto. I stayed with fat guy for three weeks. He brought me food and bought me a change of clothes. Je just asked me to clean his room. He told his family I was his friend's sister and I needed a place to stay. They never talked to me or asked me anything. He said he would have taken me home earlier; he just didn't have a car. They took me back home the next time they went to Brits for stealing cars.
When I returned home; I was wearing new clothes. So the police said I was not kidnapped.

POLICEMAN: Tell your parents the truth. You wanted to see your boyfriend, right? They won't beat you. Look, She is alive. She is here. We can't go an arrest people for someone who is alive. These kids they start being naughty very young. She must have a boyfriend. Look out for he she will repeat this.

MALEETO: My parents took me to a doctor. He said.

DOCTOR: Tell me, nana – so you say; four men? All four men wanted you? You are so young. When did this happen? Did you like that four men wanted you?
Did you orgasm?"

MALEETO: My dad said we must stop going to the police station. I said we should stop going to the doctor. He also said the cops were too scared to go to Soweto to arrest thugs. My parents opened the missing case but when I returned the police closed it. They said I was found. And My parents must be happy to have me back.

My mother never asked me what happened. My father was too upset to ask. We never spoke about it. My friends said it was not rape because the guy who I stayed with was fat and was lucky, he had a small penis. And he got me new clothes. He was now my boyfriend. We never spoke about it. I tried to forget about it. Until now. Lying here like this.

(Silence)

I am telling you. How can I convince you?

THE ONE HAND

MALEETO: So? (*gives up)*I'm still slightly sick.
Nick?
Please don't eat me love. I know you love me. But you know you can have me forever?
I mean eating me means that I'll finish. You know, Finish and klaar. I'll be gone. Think about it. While if I live. I stay with you; you can always look at me. Take me out. Admire my skin. Look and think about how perfect I am. How perfect everything is. And it would always be perfect.
Look, look into my eyes. Look at them.

(Angrily)

Look AT THEM!
They are beautiful ne! if I die they will not be open.
Oh you love my hands. How were you going to preserve my hands?
Salt?
Put them in a special box too! Oh you know, I've always preferred my left hand over my right.
The right akere has suffered from the 30-minute rubs tsa Thami. Wait, there is no pain on my right hand anymore. You did that…
And I do have nice hands. No one else has thought so except you.
No nothing, just thinking.

THAMI's VOICE OVER: Maleeto! I know you're in there!. If you don't come out right now or I'll come in and drag you out! *(Breathy)*

MALEETO: I told you his vengeful!

THE END

Postscript

A song and a silence

A poem written in a form of a recipe by Refiloe Lepere (2020)

Preparation time:

The time it takes,
The days it takes to move from silence, to sound, to song, to sigh.

Ingredients:

- sighs
- a room
- a prayer
- a song
- some light
- a stone or two
- laughter
- a song, a prayer for gathering

How to:

Ask and request,
Enter and pray with gathered hands.
With weather hands. Tired souls
Gather sounds and song, to lift up

With rhythmic prayers
Carve out circles to sit in
Stich in the light
Sew in red ribbons of lost loves
Weave ribbons of love
Lean in to learn to mend sighs, hold back tears and secret lives

Weed out the anxiety to solve
Weed out the need to save
Run as speed allows to shops and homes
Gather love, laughs to fill up space
Gather sounds and song, to lift up

Story Circles a strategy of knowing

> *"There is pathos in writing about people, the majority of whom will never be in a position to enjoy you or judge you. And there is some wonder in not letting that or anything else stop you from writing. Indeed it is almost a miracle, in trying and succeeding somewhat to create in an aesthetic vacuum."* (Aidoo 1986 p.na)

The writing of the research culminates in the recipe/poem. In thinking of receipe as a performing knowledge, the offering of the recipe is to bring together all the learning. Both visceral and cognitive. The recipe is the assembling of new pieces of knowdelge together with old pieces. It makes an argument for new ways of knowing and performs in similar aptness as the plays in the preceding pages.

In her article, No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues, Sylvia Wynter (1994) draws our attention to historically racist ways of knowledge production. Drawing from analytic philosophy, she argues that the colonial epistemological framework centres man (white male) and not human. This framework still governs how we perceive what knowledge is. Furthermore, what it means to be human. For Wynter, how we come to know and what we are able to express as knowledge is all based on our perception of the world. This study has explored notions of knowledge as an ethic embodied by domestic workers. The writing has discussed how black women's aesthetic offerings have been violently erased from history and asks how we can create new possibilities, how performance can be used to understand the role, to coax and collect data about women, furthermore, how performance is used to present the embodied expressions of what it means to be human.

Reaching the end of this study, I want to stress the relational character of Story Circles as a performance as a research method. Moreover, how it makes it possible for a black feminist theatre aesthetic practice to emerge. Story Circles is a way to co-construct meanings and broaden a black feminist theatre aesthetic. With the particularity of centering black females.

- Centering the black female characters
- Centering the socio-political experiences of black women.
- Centering the storymaking process; the scripting the process of creating the play is personal
- A story circle is cyclical. A story gives birth to another story.

Consequently black feminist aesthetic practice is non-individualist. The telling of one triggered a memory and many other stories in the room. This was a finding, as it seems that there were parallel pieces of knowledge that were expressed in the meetings. The stories revealed lived experiences which allowed the group to consider other possibilities of existence. They played out their own stories, stories of other women and tried out different solutions. These stories were added into their next theatre piece. In this way, the story circle becomes an interactive drama where the possibilities are endless. It is a method of exploring social issues; it is also a compassionate space. "The story circle provided the space and the time to remember together" (Curthoys, Cuthbertson and Clark, 2012, p. 179). Story circles also allow for improvisation to happen. BoMama were able to be spontaneous and add details to the final play from their personal lives. They not only could draw from personal stories but could draw from shared stories. These shared stories became a collective knowledge pool.

Story Circles is not without its challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the abundance of stories. How does the researcher select which are vital in the selection? The answers to some of theese questions are best sought within other story circle, and in the learning and connective power of sharing a story.

The research does not set to prescribe that there is one kind of Story Circle where the enactment of a black feminist aesthetic comes to be. It does open up a set of questions. The questions are about performance and theatremakers. They are questions for practitioners about their own ethics of aesthetics and more importantly they are questions how we come to know and what are those practice we need to engage in for performance as research. The suggestion of a black feminsit aesthetic is to allow for women to use their own stories and bodies as a generative space. It is also material for ways for examining the possibilities for creative intervention. What are the strategies of interruption? What are the gaps and pause and silences that allow for black women to create without obstructions? Can we create and advance towards an ethical caring aesthetic?

Story gives birth to other stories

How do we hold stories?
How do we hold memories?
How do we heal?
In story.

The aim:
In their words
In my words

What we bring to our labour
Our birthing
A vision of Black women,
A process of arranging themselves
In relationship to each other.
A labour of love.
An improvisation.
Yes, something to be studied and celebrated,
Observed.
This choreography,
These memories
past, present and future,
of women oppressed
by race/ class hierarchical assumptions
their stories
their experiences.
The first step away from powerlessness. (Lepere 2020)

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APPENDIX A

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Lepere

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H17/03/06**
PROJECT TITLE	Performing invisible labour - A performance inquiry into the invisibility/visibility paradox as experienced by domestic workers in South Africa
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Miss R Lepere
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Wits School of Arts/
DATE CONSIDERED	17 March 2018
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved
EXPIRY DATE	21 May 2020

DATE 22 May 2017 **CHAIRPERSON** _____ (Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr S Ally

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ Signature

_____/_____/_____ Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B

From Researcher:
Refiloe Lepere
1 Jan Smuts Avenue
17 Floor
leperer@gmail.com
refiloe.lepere@wits.ac.za
079 495 8293

Participant Information Sheet,

Study Title: ***Performing Invisible Labour – A performance inquiry into the invisibility/visibility paradox as experienced by domestic workers in South Africa***

You are invited to take part in a study on domestic workers in South Africa. You can choose to be part of the research. If you don't want to take part, you don't have to give a reason. If you do want to take part now, but change your mind later, you can pull out of the study at any time.

This Participant Information Sheet will help you decide if you'd like to take part. It sets out why I am doing the study and what your participation would involve. I will go through this information with you and answer any questions you may have.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. You will be given a copy of both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to keep.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

- *The study aims to investigate how the paradox of invisibility/visibility as experience by domestic workers in South Africa can be better understood through performance.*
- *The study will contribute towards a better understanding of the role of domestic workers politically and historically in South Africa. How their performance of their identities can illuminate how the world functions and the nature of power and the way it plays out in public?*

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY INVOLVE?

- *You have been asked to be part of the study, because you are a domestic worker, working in Berario and you are part of the community of other women domestic workers. Your group of women in Berario are already creating plays and other social activities, this group has been chosen because of that.*
- *What will be done? I, Refiloe Lepere, will work with the group of women in Berario for a ten-week rehearsal session. In these sessions we will create, and rehearse a play, the content of the*

play will the choosing of the women. From the play I hope to learn more about your experiences as domestic workers.

- *What does invisibility mean to you?*
- *Is the paradox?*
- *Through Performing – acting, creating a play – can we better understand your experiences?*

— *The rehearsal sessions will be audio and video recorded.*
— *I hope that we can showcase the play to an audience of your choice.*
— *There will follow up session to review your thoughts about the play.*

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

— *Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, or to withdraw from the research at any practicable time.*
— *You have the right to access the audio and video information that will be recorded.*
— *Your information will be confidential if you want don't want to be named in the final presentation.*
— *The study cannot guarantee anonymity, since you are part of a social group and the sessions will be recorded.*

WHO TO CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the study at any stage, you can contact:

Name, position: Refiloe Lepere, Researcher

Contact number: ***079 4958293***

Email: ***leperer@gmail.com***

Name, position: Dr. Shireen Ally, Supervisor

Contact number:

Email: ***shireen.ally@wits.ac.za***

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

Study title: ***Performing Invisible Labour – A performance inquiry into the invisibility/visibility paradox as experienced by domestic workers in South Africa***

Please tick to indicate you consent to the following *(Add or delete as appropriate)*

I have read, or have had read to me, and I understand the Participant Information Sheet.	Yes ☐
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in this study.	Yes ☐
I consent to being audio recorded	Yes ☐
I consent to being videotaped.	Yes ☐
I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without this affecting my medical care.	Yes ☐

Declaration by participant:

I hereby consent to take part in this study.

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Declaration by researcher:

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project to the participant and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe that the participant understands the study and has given informed consent to participate.

Researcher's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____