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# BODY ARCHETYPES IN THEATRE MAKING

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## INTRODUCTION

I am a theatre practitioner as well as an actor and director in Mozambique. In my country, the theatre we have been making, in the last decades, is mostly text based. We have been devising, adapting western plays and Mozambican folktales, short stories and novels. Those plays are mainly spoken in Portuguese, which can be an advantage in a country with 23 different languages – Portuguese is the language of national unity.

But on the other hand theatre spoken only in Portuguese has its disadvantages because Mozambique is completely surrounded by Anglophone countries and in the rest of the world there are only seven Portuguese-speaking countries. So, our market is very limited and it has been difficult to tour and take part in festivals and other forms of cultural interchanges in English and French speaking countries. I have the perception that Mozambican theatre has remained isolated because of these language challenges.

So, from a personal point of view, first, I believed that I needed to create a theatre that is independent of spoken language in order to overcome the language barrier. Nevertheless, to create such a theatre language, apart from the aesthetic value, it would also be important and interesting for over 50% of the Mozambican population who do not speak Portuguese.

### The seed

In 2010, I decided to run a workshop with five drama students at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, at Maputo. My initial idea was to make a nonverbal theatre piece in order to overcome the language barrier. In my mind it was clear that I should make a performance based on body and sound. I did not want to do a mime performance and I also wanted to avoid going for a dance or a contemporary dance approach.

Without setting a rigid methodology or predetermining the framework or outcomes, I just began practicing and observing what was emerging within the group, allowing the process of practice to establish what emerged, just as Bert Dijk says:

> I note that such an approach to research and knowledge creation ... you know where you are coming from (a strong passion) but you don't know where it will lead you (new knowledge and understandings) (Dijk, 2010: 12).

We started to improvise using body movement and gibberish. I asked the actors to use gibberish as a way to search for a pattern of meaning and the emotion, musicality and rhythm inside the sounds produced. The music and songs of Mari Boine, a Norwegian Lapp musician, inspired my idea of sound. I also asked the actors to avoid using behavioural gesture or gestures from daily life.

As a result, the actors found themselves disarmed, without their ordinary clichés, and naturally obliged to find, in their bodies, ways to express themselves. This produced amazing results in line with Keith Johnstone's description of his acting students using gibberish for improvisations:

> They become better listeners (…); they learn to interact and develop stories non-verbally; their resonance and articulation improve; they bring great insight and 'physicality' to the playing of text (1999: 214).

What my five actors/students experienced, appeared to be a birth of a language, paraphrasing Antonin Artaud, 'precisely that sort of theatrical language foreign to every spoken tongue, a language in which an overwhelming stage experience seems to be communicated' (1958: 57). I could feel that I was moving towards new understandings of my own theatre practice.

The Tree

I intuitively turned the interrogation of these improvisations into an artistic investigation. It thus became an essential part of the research project I intended to carry on for this MADA. But, I realized right in the beginning of the creative process that I was too ambitious, because to create a nonverbal performance exploring sound and the body I would first need to understand the means by which to achieve that end. I needed an entry point. Following the Mozambican proverb that says one should not climb the tree through the branches I decided to narrow my field of

enquiry in order to get foundations that could better help me address the enterprise.

So, that led me to ask different questions and to find other ways of continuing the process. I tried to identify certain claims that explained how and what made this experiment work. Firstly I wanted to know why gibberish stimulates ‘physicality’ in improvisations. But also, I wanted to understand what enables the emergence, of that ‘sort of theatrical language, foreign to every spoken tongue’ that Artaud refers to. I realized that at the heart of my inquiry is the following affirmation of Artaud:

> The domain of the theater is not psychological but plastic and physical. And it is not a question of whether the physical language of theater is capable of achieving the same psychological resolutions as the language of words, whether it is able to express feelings and passions as well as words, but whether there are not attitudes in the realm of thought and intelligence that words are incapable of grasping and that gestures and everything partaking of a spatial language attain with more precision than they (Artaud 1958: 71).

So, I made a clear choice to investigate what sort of elements contribute to the plastic and physical expression of theatre but which do not exclude the spoken word. As Artaud clarifies:

> It is not a matter of suppressing speech in the theater but of changing its role, and specially of reducing its position, of considering it as something else than a means of conducting human characters to their external ends (Artaud 1958: 72).

So the work consists of by exploring movements and gestures to find a combination where the theatre can be a visual and plastic materialization of speech. But the main work with gestures should avoid the classical conception, the dualism of impression-expression that sees the actor’s gesturality as a means to produce signs and not as a language per se that communicates sentiments and attitudes contained in gestures. Instead, seeing gesture as a means of expression and as the exteriorization of the psychic content to be communicated by one body to another body is, as Peter Brooks says, “frozen +systems of attitudes which we reject today”

(1990: 125). So, it was clear that for this research I should consider the theatrical gesture as the source and subject of the actors' work, because, according to Brook:

> Actor's freedom in choosing anything whatsoever from the gestures of everyday life is equally restricted, for in basing his gestures on his observation or on his own spontaneity the actor is not drawing on any deep creativity. He is reaching inside himself for an alphabet that is also fossilized, for the language of signs from life that he knows is the language not of invention but of his conditioning. His observations of behaviour are often observations of projections of himself (Brook 1990: 125).

I found I could relate Brook's observation to the workshop with my students back in 2010 in Maputo; using gibberish they were cancelling the gestures of everyday life or behavioural gestures. Later on, I found that this goes with Jerzy Grotowski's Via Negativa. According to Grotowski, the negation of daily life gestures is *per se* a way to research:

> "New ideograms must constantly be sought and their composition appear immediate and spontaneous. The starting point for such gesticulatory forms is the stimulation of one's own imagination and the discovery in oneself of primitive human reactions. The final result is a living form possessing its own logic (Grotowski 1991: 141).

Up to this particular point in my research my practice had clearly relied on the tacit belief that body archetypes were instrumental in the creation of a 'plastic and physical language of theatre' such as Artaud refers to.

Archetypes are defined by Carl Gustav Jung as the basic elements of human life – an original pattern, model or symbol, a persistent representation of an idea or concept across cultures, which seems to represent common patterns of human life and which indicate an innate origin for archetypes as heritage, deposited within the collective unconscious of each human being (Jung 2000: 88).

So I push the claim that there are archetypes archived in the body of each single

person that allow him to communicate (produce) meaning for others and also to read from others. I call them body archetypes. Within this Research Report I examine the role body archetypes play and the extent to which they participate in the production of meaning in theatre making. I explore movements and gestures to find a combination where the theatre can be the visual and plastic materialization of speech.

**Research Questions**

So, in the course of this research the following questions emerged:

1. How can body archetypes, as the visual and plastic materialization of speech, play a key role in the creation of a theatre performance?

2. What issues and conclusions will emerge when applying these principles of body archetype practices to a performance laboratory exemplar?

In order to investigate my research claims I needed to find an appropriate conceptual vehicle within which to work. The first stage of the research consisted of an engagement with theoretical concerns, which also helped me to set up the Research Project.

To interrogate these claims and to test the research questions I created a performance laboratory entitled *Franz and Marie – A kind of Woyzeck,* as the practical stage of this research. I used the play *Woyzeck*, by Georg Büchner as inspirational material. The central concept that drove *Franz and Marie – A Kind of Woyzeck* was the juxtaposition of selected artistic and theatre practices and the theories which explored the new links between these practices. These would be a means to bring to the surface the archetypal narratives, sourced through improvisation, which could be used as a tool for the excavation of the archetypes stored in the body.

In order to share the tangible and intangible aspects of my research in a meaningful way I produced a written Research Report. It came out of the dialogue between theory and practice. I also presented the core of my research in the form of a performance laboratory *Franz and Marie – A kind of Woyzeck* which was shown at

the University Corner, 17th floor venue, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) facilities at Johannesburg, following a six-week exploration process.

**Methodology**

Scholars such as Conquergood (1999), Nelson (2006), Haseman (2006), Barrett (2007), Fraleigh (2000) speak of Practice as Research as a paradigmatic research methodology, which offers scholars an alternative approach that allows for practice to be the basis for research and includes the works that are rooted in the body. Furthermore this methodological approach allows an engagement of the praxis-based frameworks with theoretical underpinnings emerging across disciplines. In *A Manifesto for Performative Research* Haseman (2006) presents an argument to acknowledge performative research as an autonomous research paradigm – a methodology with its own approaches to designing, conducting and reporting research – and according to Dijk 'the Performative Research paradigm heralds a radical shift from research on practice (practice as an object of study) to practice as (a method of) research' (2010: 11), and for Conquergood Practice as Research offers creative practice that is 'embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, co-experienced, covert – and all the more meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out' (1999: 312).

Thus, my intention for this Research Report is to investigate the praxis of making a performance laboratory, closely aligned to the Practice as Research model. This is basically an exploration of the theory on and the practice of the creation process of the performance laboratory, because according to Robin Nelson's argument:

> [A]lthough an arts practice or artwork may stand alone as evidence of a research outcome, it may be helpful, particularly in an academic institutional context where much rides on judgements made about research-worthiness, for other evidence to be adduced (Nelson 2006:112).

Consequently I planned to use  steps that would serve as a mode of academic

research and which would offer an opportunity for analytical enquiry into creative work and which allowed for both theory and practice to co-exist within the academic field, in a way that recognized and validated the artistic process as a valid research activity, because as Nelson notes:

> Practitioner knowledge is both a necessary and sufficient condition for arts practices but it is only a necessary condition for practice-as-research since research sufficiency may lie in sustained and structured reflection to make the 'tacit knowledge' explicit (Nelson 2006: 112).

Acknowledging the fact that this Research Report is driven by embodied experiences my methodological approach seeks to balance the experiential praxis taken from an embodied perspective with academic investigation demands.

I designed and implemented the research project as a phenomenological practice-based method, acknowledging that Phenomenology claims the centrality of the body and the embodied experience as the mode of experiencing the world, because according to Johnson it is through 'our bodily perceptions, movements, emotions, and feelings that meaning becomes possible and takes the forms it does' (ibid: ix). This means that phenomenology recognizes that an embodied experience is closely tied in various ways to 'perception and to other forms of cognition and emotion' (Gallagher, 2005: 8). That makes phenomenology an appropriate methodological tool because it, 'at its point of beginning, attempts to view any experience from the inside rather than at a distance' (Fraleigh 2000 cited by Fatseas 2010: 7).

Driven by Johnson's observation that 'aesthetics becomes the study of everything that goes into the human capacity to make and experience meaning' (2007: x) and by the fact that theatre is an aesthetic with communicative functions that require the generation and expression of meanings through movement, signs, language and symbols and that during the process we put the body at the centre I decided that in order to excavate it I should carry out a phenomenological interrogation putting questions to the bodies involved in the experience. I wanted to recognize the bodily source of the concepts directly in order to understand how the body holds and plays the archetypes, and finally how the body archetypes are influential in the way they convey meaning, signs, symbols, consciousness, unconsciousness, and language.

In the scope and timeframe of this research I decided to narrow the field of enquiry to a definite number of selected artistic and theatre practices and theories and by exploring new links between these practices, and by contextualizing them through a critical literature review see how I could use them to accomplish this experiment.

In the performance laboratory I counted on the collaboration of Keitumetse Kasonkola – Wits BADA (Honours) student, and Hamish Neill – MADA student; both with a strong performance background as drama students at Wits School of Arts. Their contributions were to be in the form of their use of their own bodies to excavate the archetypes, culminating in their contributions through spoken words and written thoughts, as well as in their performance of *Franz and Marie – A Kind of Woyzeck*. But these theatre processes would need ethical and sensitive facilitation that would help provide pathways for the participants.

The challenge when facilitating such a process is to create an enabling environment for the participants that will help them find their own pathways when dealing with the materials that are emerging. The safe space was created through a process which I facilitated. I wanted the participants to feel safe and free to excavate the archetypes from their bodies. As a researcher I played the role of facilitator and observer, putting the participants needs first, protecting, encouraging and kindly giving space for their natural pathways to develop. At the same time I was stimulating the dialogues between us, and I was facilitating the techniques we were applying.

It is critical to state that the focal point of this study was the participants bodies' lived experiences in the course of the process of the creation of *Franz and Marie – A kind of Woyzeck.* The creative practice process needed a body consciousness from the participants so they were, from the beginning, informed that this research would include dialogues about their bodies and emotions. It was also clear between us that we all held a certain degree of authorship of the work – and my role as researcher and facilitator would never enable me to experience in the flesh the same insights as they would as actors. The participants voluntarily shared their personal experiences and permitted me to responsibly use them in this study. Thus, the participants authorized me to use their voices (both in quotations and in my own writing) infused with the insights and knowledge gleaned from the embodied experience of making the work. It was made clear from the beginning that there was the risk of the invasion

of privacy or breach in confidentiality. Within this context all University of the Witwatersrand non-medical ethical procedures were adhered to.

So, during the process, in order to capture my own reflections, responses and associations relating to the laboratory and dialogue with collaborators, I used different layers of reflection sourced from key documents, including a workbook. In addition, I asked the participants/co-researchers to keep an artistic journal. In this way, the making of the performance laboratory would serve as a case study that would test the research questions.

## CHAPTER ONE: ARCHETYPAL AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL BODY

This chapter is divided into two parts under different headings namely: '*Movement, our mother tongue*' and *Towards the Theory of Archetypes*. It draws from two key theoretical and praxis-based disciplines in order to create the framework in which to interrogate the notion of body archetypes. In this way, I will be putting in place the building blocks on which to construct the argument for the body as a meaning maker, of special significance once I look at theatre as a sign system to propose meaning and action. This chapter will become an integral part of the theoretical investigation that will be used to support and dialogue with the research emerging out of the performance laboratory discussed in the next chapters.

### 'Movement, our mother tongue'

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2009) makes an inquiry into origins and identifies the Archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations as one of the critical elements to understand language and the way animals produce meaning. She argues that 'by definition an animate body is already present in archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations' (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009: 220). She considers Archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations as being 'corporeally patterned entities' (ibid.). This argument leads her to conclude that archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations are rooted in the body and they are found directly in bodily experience and 'for this very reason, they point us in the direction of a veritable phenomenology' (ibid: 222). The corporeal movement of our bodies enables us to recognize the bodily source of concepts directly, including the concepts of archetypes.

Sheets-Johnstone also argues that in the ability to move, resides the evidences of the origins of language, because in the 'way "social animals" move they communicate and provide meaning and those meanings are rooted in archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations' (ibid: 221). She elucidates in these terms:

> Living bodies – animate forms – are natural sources of meaning. The movement of animate forms naturally *displays itself* to others, indeed, regularly and readily displays itself to those about them, communicating annoyance as in aggressive threat displays, or fearfulness, friendliness, playfulness, curiosity, and so on (2009: 247).

Drawing from this argument, Shawn Gallagher argues that 'bodily movement, transformed onto the level of action, is the very thing that constitutes the self' (Gallagher 2005: 9). Sheets-Johnstone completes this by saying it 'shows how movement is our mother tongue' (Sheets-Johnstone 2009: 247), because out of those dynamic kinetic figurations and movement, language is generated. This refers to animals in general as they are deeply sensitive to movement, both visually and kinetically: they apperceive the articulatory gestures of others, whether by uttering sounds or performing signs, because 'it is through our bodily perceptions, movements, emotions, and feelings that meaning becomes possible and takes the forms it does' (Johnson 2007: ix). In other words 'where meaning is represented, it is represented corporeally – kinetically, posturally, directionally, auditorily through sound-making, visually through staring or glaring' (Sheets-Johnstone 2009: 230). In the animal kingdom, particular groups or species as whole, generally share gestural acts and communicative signs. Among social animals like peacocks, lions, gorillas or chimpanzees, performance takes place through playful patterns and displays in the different situations of their lives.

> [T]he animals alter and elaborate their behaviours, movements become independent of their original causes and develop their own releasing mechanisms, becoming exaggerated and at the same time simplified; they frequently freeze into postures; they become rhythmic and repetitive (Loizos, cited by Schechner 1988: 261).

From an ethological point of view the analogy is clearly visible in that the very same behaviour is still resonant in human dance and theatre today over all cultures. Schechner notes that 'the theatrical actions vivifying drama are rhythmic, repetitive, exaggerated; the body adornments and physical deeds of theatre are spectacular' (ibid: 243) and very close to those of the animal playful patterns that originated, according to Loizos, in ' behaviour that appeared earlier phylogenetically and for

purposes other than play' (Schechner 1988: 106).

This ethological analogy builds up a bridge towards the theatre anthropological studies by Barba and Savares (1991) where they concluded that performers utilize specific body techniques that are separated from those used in daily life. These re-invent the performing body in order to use an alternative means of scenic behaviour, enabling the actor's body to become scenically alive and present as means to engaging the spectator.

So in my point of view, these kinds of patterns, which are present in animal displays and human performances, can also be considered archetypal patterns of performance and ultimately can also be considered archetypal gestures. The linguists Armstrong, Stokoe and Wilcox define gesture, in short, as 'a functional unit, an equivalence class of coordinated movements that achieve some end' (Armstrong, Stokoe and Wilcox 1995: 46). They also claim that 'gesture is a critical link running through the evolution of perception, conceptualization, and language' (ibid: 28) and it is through such evidences, they argue, that the 'language has been and always will be gestural' (ibid: 42). They champion a gestural origin of language. Therefore they also mention the existence of gesture archetypes which are:

> [T]he cross-cultural images we have had ingrained in our psyche that connect to deep familiarities in the subconscious and they can communicate a concept as clearly as the spoken word (Armstrong, Stokoe and Wilcox 1995: 57).

This also reinforces my argument that the animal displays are and can represent performance archetypes as they communicate meaning corporeally, posturally, auditorily, and visually. Therefore this can also be a valid entry point to research the body archetypes in the realm of performance.

**Towards the Theory of Archetypes**

In an exhaustive cross-cultural analysis of the mythic, symbolic, and collective nature of the human personality Carl Gustav Jung (2000) developed the concepts he

designated as archetypes of the collective unconsciousness. Archetypes relate to the basic elements of human life and he defines them as an original pattern, model or symbol, a persistent representation of an idea or concept across cultures, which seems to represent common patterns of human life (Jung 2000: 58). Jung also argues that archetypes are innate, requiring no conscious learning for their acquisition and we are not directly aware of their existence, and according to Andrew Samuels 'archetypes are in some way beyond time and space' (Samuels 1994: 23). These are what we all share as human beings and they also represent the experiences of our human predecessors which indicate that they pre-exist without the necessity for past experience and they act in the same way as the human instincts which lead man to exist and to act as a human.

Jung's archetypal theory also demonstrated that individuals across culture, space and time, take on and play out in their everyday lives universal themes and archetypal roles subsisting in history, literature, art, religion, and mythology. According to Landy these appearances 'indicate an innate origin for archetypes as heritage deposited within the collective unconscious of each human being' (Landy 1993: 139). So at the unconsciousness level, the archetypes are the critical element that enable the human to share similar experiences and behaviours and which show that 'archetypes force his ways of perception and apprehension into specifically human patterns' (Hogenson 2009: 327). However, the perception and apprehension are affected by social and cultural factors, nonetheless, this also explains the differences in culture and belief systems across the universe. Paul Rudman argues that what we have in the theory of archetypes

> [I]s a combination of features that include ways of knowing the world (patterns of apprehension and intuition – a specific subset, it seems, of ways of acting in the world), patterns of behaviour, affective states that accompany these intuitions and patterns of behaviour (Rudman 2005: 2).

This argument draws a connection with that of Sheets-Johnstone that archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms and relations are rooted in the body and they are found directly in bodily experience. On the other hand, the patterns of behaviour mentioned by Rudman, naturally include the performative archetypes, as laid out above, which allow man and social animals to put up displays in situation of play.

James Hillman, disregarding the traditional definition of archetypes that sets them as being the primary forms that govern the psyche, corroborates Rudman's argument, asserting that archetypes 'cannot be contained only by the psyche, are also manifested in the physical, social, linguistic, aesthetic and spiritual (Hillman 1983: 21), which implies that the body is its main vehicle. Thus, the body is the provider of language, meaning, signs, and symbols to the consciousness. Consequently, we also experience the unconscious through the body. So, as the archetypes are manifested in the physical, social, linguistic and aesthetic, there will be archetypes archived in body that are manifested in theatre and dance performance, ritual, and language. But we must keep in mind that bodily practices, like the archetypes, remain unconscious to us. According to Hillman this justifies why we have questions about archetypes:

> Where are they located? Are they knowable – if so by what means, and how can we "prove" their existence? What is their origin? How many are there, and do they form hierarchies and subclasses? Do they change or age or go through history? What sort of "body" do they have? (Hillman 1977: 36).

Hillman concludes that 'whenever we try to define conceptually (…) an archetype we find that neither can be grasped adequately by conceptual means' (ibid). So, taking Hillmans' advice, phenomenology appears as the ideal conceptual framework for this research as it considers the lived experience also to be a form of knowledge.

## CHAPTER TWO: ARCHETYPAL ROOTS ON THEATRE MAKING

In this chapter I will investigate the presence of the archetypes in theatre performance by looking at practices and theories of theatre innovators, such as Artaud, Grotowski, Chekhov, and Schechner. By doing so, I wish to demonstrate how body archetypes are a critical link found in a 20th and 21st century theatre that seeks a theatrical language that embraces the visual and plastic materialisation of speech.

### From Artaud's Vision

My first inspirational theatre theory is Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, where he states that he is looking for a theatre that 'finds its expression and its origins alike in a secret psychic impulse which is speech before words' (Artaud1958: 60). He also argues that if this language exists,

> [It] is necessarily identified with the *mise en scène*... as the visual and plastic materialization of speech ... as the language of everything that can be said and signified upon a stage independently of speech (Artaud 1958: 69).

According to Sheets-Johnstone "that language" resides in the Archetypal corporeal-kinetic forms, which makes the movement our mother tongue, because out of those dynamic kinetic figurations and movement, language is generated.

Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty is in its turn inspired by the Balinese theatre which Artaud considers as 'a state prior to language and which can choose its own: music, gestures, movements, words' (ibid: 60) and he catalogues such language as something to which 'it seems we no longer have the key' (ibid: 57). What drives Artaud to consider such a sort of theatre as 'a state prior to language' is mainly the fact that it communicates beyond the words and the speech does not take the leader role.

But Peter Brook draws attention to the fact that 'Artaud never achieved his own theatre: maybe the power of his vision is that it is a carrot in front of our nose, never to be reached' (Brook 1990: 60). About Artaud's vision, Jerzy Grotowski is even more critical:

> As soon as Artaud moves from description to theory (however), he starts explaining magic by magic, cosmic trance by cosmic trance. It is a theory which can mean whatever you require (Grotowski 1991: 89).

For Grotowski the theory that underpins such claims from Artaud is blurry. So, I am aware that I might not blindly carry forward Artaud's visions, because as Brook also warns: 'Artaud applied is Artaud betrayed: betrayed because it is always just a portion of his thought that is exploited' (1990: 60). So, for me, what is important is to find an entry point to address Artaud's theory or vision, in search of such language for which it 'seems we no longer have the key' (Artaud 1958: 57).

**The ancient root**

However, from Artaud's discourse one can also infer that he recalls an ancient pattern of human life, just like many other contemporary theatre practitioners. What is common in their discourses is that they all point towards the past, to traditions in order to link back to ancient practices. For instance, Grotowski describes his own work as 'an attempt to rediscover the values of the archaic theatre. We are not modern, but the opposite: totally traditional' (Flaszen and Pollastrelli 2007: 118 – *my translation*). But Grotowski, quoted by Thomas Richards, argues that the key to the 'values of the archaic theatre' resides in the human body itself:

> One access to the creative way consists of discovering in yourself an ancient corporality to which you are bound by a strong ancestral relation. (...) This is a phenomenon of reminiscence, as if you recall the Performer of primal ritual. Each time I discover something, I have the feeling that it is what I recall. Discoveries are behind us and we must journey back to reach them (Richards 1995: 77-78).

So, in this respect Artaud and Grotowski are converging at the same point, by suggesting that we must look in the human being's foundations for that 'ancient corporality' which is 'bound by a strong ancestral relation'. But still, what is needed is a vehicle capable of taking us on that journey back to ancestry, because as James Roose-Evans suggests, the actors and the bodies of today 'must strip away their outward personalities, mannerisms, habits, vanities, neuroses, tricks, clichés, and stock responses, until a higher state of perception is found (Roose-Evans 1984: 184).

At this point it is clear that the body plays a key role in the search for such a theatrical language. My experience and observations propelled me to push the claim that body archetypes are (also) a critical link running through the perception and conceptualization of a theatrical language that evokes that 'ancient corporality', 'a state prior to language'. Thus, I believe that that "identity of the individual" which Grotowski mentions, resides at the level of archetypes – the body archetypes. Roose-Evans also argues that 'by putting people in touch with their elemental and archetypal roots, it is possible that a new kind of theatre, a new kind of art, may be born' (1984: 159). This new kind of art can perhaps create a link to Artaud's vision and help in finding the "key".

**Archetypal Gesture Technique**

At the heart of my enquiry there is a commitment to interrogating the body archetypes in the realm of theatre making and so the Michael Chekhov Psychological Gesture technique seems to be one of the most suitable for this process. This technique when applied to the 'exploration and expression of the archetypal dimensions inherent in culture provides a universal model from which the variations are derived' (Dijk 2010: 40). That is why the Psychological Gesture or PG – later also called Archetypal Gesture technique – is considered as one of the most important elements of the Chekhov Technique.

Psychological Gesture is defined by Joanna Merlin, cited by Zinder, as 'the physicalization of the character's objective in archetypal form' (Zinder 2009: 268). Psychological Gesture is a strong, complete movement where the 'strength of the movement stirs our will power in general [because] the quality of the same

movement conjures up our *feelings*' (Chekhov 1953: 65), contrary to the natural and usual everyday gestures which are:

> [U]nable to stir our will because they are too limited, too weak and particularized. They do not occupy our whole body, psychology and soul, whereas the PG, as an archetype, takes possession of them *entirely* (Chekhov 1953: 77).

In order to create an Archetypal Gesture for a certain character an actor is going to play or explore. Chekhov suggests that the actor will begin by establishing some of the essential characteristics, based on their first general impressions of the character. One way consists of asking 'what the main desire of the character might be' (ibid: 73), thus 'through the gesture, you penetrate and stimulate the depths of your own psychology' (ibid: 65). Chekhov also encourages actors to use their creative intuition rather than the analytical mind in their efforts to penetrate and discover the characters they are going to play. So, when applied to the exploration and expression of the archetypal dimensions, the physical element of Archetypal Gesture moves the essence of a character, or a specific objective, from a conceptual state into a fully embodied sensation or experience.

Archetypal Gesture has two distinct applications. Firstly, it is a technique used to explore, develop and strengthen the essential qualities of a character or role, and secondly, it offers a key instrument to develop and explore the totality of our objectives, and according to Zinder, its application goes from:

> [W]arm-up, as vital key for the overall trajectory of the character and for every entrance; as a creative "charge" in the real time of the performance if concentration wanes; and through the creation of an array of related PGs, it can also be used to key into individual scenes, moments, and transitions; and as technique to create a score for the through-line of actions in the entire play (Zinder 2009: 269).

The technique of Archetypal Gesture can be applied to the entire character, but can also be used for any segment of a role, for separate scenes, speeches, beats, sentences, or vital moments. As the essence of the character, the overall Archetypal

Gesture will, on its own accord, influence all derived Archetypal Gesture's. Chekhov stresses that it is up to the creative artist to determine whether the Archetypal Gesture is the right one.

## CHAPTER THREE: *FRANZ AND MARIE – A KIND OF WOYZECK*

This section offers a detailed description of the drama process and examines the working method generated from the practice-based research laboratory. Here I break down the working method and analyse examples from a synthesis of reflections generated from the laboratory and embedded in performance as research.

For the discussion in this section I employ a phenomenological method, an approach sourced from the material emerging from the workbook and the journals (mine and those of the two collaborators) kept in the creation process and also the dialogue with the two participants/co-researchers. These captured critical points in the research process during and after the laboratory. I will also present the methodological approach in the creation laboratory of *Franz and Marie – A Kind a Woyzeck* in order to provide the necessary contextual framework for the discussion of the examples that will answer the research questions.

### Process Approach

During the second semester of 2011, in the MA Directing course I was taking for this MADA, I adapted and directed *Woyzeck* and I tried to transgress the stylistic boundaries, experimenting with physicality in text-based theatre. Already focussed on this research, I deliberately used different styles and forms, seeking for a particular theatricality for the piece, where the body would play a major role and the visual aspect of it would be highlighted.

In this research I decided to work on the same text. Using Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, I studied the characters Woyzeck and Marie and their scenes. My main intention was the exploration of this archetypal story and also its archetypal characters through the bodies of the participants, in order to facilitate the investigation of the central research claim.

## The Play

Franz Woyzeck, a lowly soldier, is living with Marie, and is the father of an illegitimate child. Woyzeck earns extra money for his family by performing menial jobs for the Captain and by agreeing to participate in medical experiments conducted by the Doctor. The Doctor tells Woyzeck he must eat nothing but peas. Woyzeck's mental health is breaking down and he begins to experience a series of strange visions. Meanwhile, Marie turns her sexual attentions to an overly masculine Drum Major. With his jealous suspicions growing, Woyzeck confronts the Drum Major, who beats him up and humiliates him. Finally, Woyzeck, in a fit of jealous rage, stabs Marie to death, for her infidelity.

Written in 1836*, Woyzeck* is an existential tragedy, which does not present a hero, but a human being – a poor and vulnerable man, victim of the oppressive society in which he lives.

## My Roles

During the process I made use of multiple roles: facilitator, researcher, and, director. However, when focusing on the facilitator role I tried, in a balanced way, to always provide the right stimulus for the group to participate fully and to enhance their involvement in the research. Most of the time I was facilitating the techniques we were applying, and also stimulating the dialogues between us. But sometimes, I was an observer and witness of what the actors/co-researchers were doing, in a participatory manner. I observed the improvisations and captured my reflections on the impressions and images that seemed to be emerging out of them. My observations and reflections on the emergent material fed the actors with insights that they would not have arrived at on their own and enabled more explorations. So my witness role provided a dialogic relationship between us and allowed a deep investigation of the material that emerged. Later on in the process I also engaged myself with the directorial tasks.

**Creative Process: Learning and Discovering**

The methodological approach is divided into key sections that look at the methods of preparation or on-going training within the process and the range of improvisations employed.

Text Treatment and Improvisation

For the creation laboratory of *Franz and Marie – A Kind of Woyzeck* we did not do the normal table analysis of the play. I deliberately skipped that phase. We read the script and we shared our first impressions about the story and the characters. Immediately afterwards, we started to improvise, because I wanted to give the actors an opportunity to analyse the story and the characters from within the text, by the living-through experience, instead of an analytical and intellectual approach.

The first two sessions on the rehearsal floor were dedicated to these improvisations and we ran through all the scenes of and between Marie and Woyzeck. The first improvisations on each scene were done totally from the actors' offers using their points of view on what they thought the scene should be. As we scored all the scenes of Marie and Woyzeck, we managed to get the sense of the story through action – physically and emotionally.

Preparation: Improvisation and training

> *I need to identify the body archetypes, what are they? How do I identify them? How do I help the actors to find them?* (Workbook, 2012).

This entry in my workbook reflects the need to prepare and to train the actors for the task. I felt from the beginning that this research would require the development of its own method of training in order to explore the body archetypes. However, it was clear that I was not looking for obvious archetypal body movements and gestures, like the "palm up gestures are from the *requesting* or *pleading* archetype"; but the strong movement which, in Chekhov words, 'stirs our will power (…) and conjures up our *feelings*' (Chekhov 1953: 65) because, as Brook warns, "choosing anything whatsover from the gestures of everyday life is equally restricted" (1990: 125).

So the difficulty was, mainly, that I needed to address an approach to training that would allow for a range of responses that was not available in the training and experiences of both the researcher and the performers.

From a set of techniques, I analysed and implemented the Viewpoints and Composition technique, as described in its practical guide exercises by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau (2005); the Michael Chekhov (1953) technique of Psychological Gesture and the Grotowski's (1991) Via Negativa technique. Also, I have borrowed from various theatrical practices and modified them to generate a practice which could be used for this process. Through consultation of the theory discussed in the preceding chapters, the discussion of particular examples will reveal how to access the body archetypes as a tool for theatre creation. So, in this section I will describe that process.

**Introducing the Viewpoints**

In the third session on the rehearsal floor, along with scenic improvisations, I introduced the Viewpoints exercises, which is 'a philosophy translated into a technique for training performers and creating movement for stage' (Bogart and Landau 2005: 7). Viewpoints, originally developed by the choreographer Mary Overlie, began with the exploration of six elements, which she called Viewpoints: space, shape, time, emotion, movement, and story. Through Bogart's work with Overlie and later with SITI Company, these elements evolved into the modern Viewpoints of Time (tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, and repetition), Space (shape, gesture, architecture, spatial relationship, and topography), and Voice (pitch, dynamic, acceleration/deceleration, silence, and timbre). The philosophy behind Viewpoints is the notion that these Viewpoints exist and interact around us and within us at all times

> [B]ecause they are timeless and belong to the natural principles of movement, time and space (...) things that we do naturally and have always done, with greater or lesser degrees of consciousness and emphasis (Bogart and Landau 2005: 7).

So, Overlie, Bogart, and Landau first simply provided a vocabulary through which to define and create with these natural and pre-existing elements. The technique then becomes their conscious exploration. For example, in an exercise exploring tempo, ensemble members may create a movement or a sequence of movements or a simple gesture and then repeat the movement over and over, exploring it through different tempos ranging from hyper speed to as slow as possible. As each individual Viewpoint is introduced it also aggregates other Viewpoints. For example, the aforementioned exercise could also include different Viewpoints such as Duration: how long a movement or sequence of movements continues; Kinesthetic Response: a spontaneous reaction to motion which occurs outside you and the timing in which you respond to the external events of movement or sound; Repetition: the repeating of something on stage; Shape: the contour or outline the body (or bodies) makes in space.

By doing this exercise we get to understand how changing tempo or shape alters meaning and impacts on the movement. Another important aspect is that in Viewpoints exercises the actor uses his own body to generate the movement through his own intuition and the information produced by that movement belongs to the actor himself and is thus organic. As Bogart and Landau complete:

> Through Viewpoints we learn to listen with our entire bodies and see with a sixth sense. We receive information from levels we were not even aware existed, and begin to communicate back with equal depth (2005: 20).

These exercises provide the vocabulary of the training and offer the actor or ensemble room to play with the breadth of each Viewpoint in a purely process-based sense, without following any predetermined set of movements or steps.

My focus was mainly on the Viewpoints of Time (tempo, duration, kinesthetic response, repetition) and the Viewpoints of Space (shape, gesture, and spatial relationship) and a slight introduction to Viewpoints of Voice. My main motivation was to create a sort of physical awareness in order to help the actors to deconstruct their vocabulary gained from theatre training because the Physical Viewpoints focus solely on exploration of body movement, in its neutral state – without implying the creation of a type of physical vocabulary for the work of the actor, which at some

point can become a source of resistance. The exploration of Viewpoints and the development of Composition pieces may open the perspective of a performer to more unique, abstract forms of expression. These may enhance a performer's ability to contribute creatively. In that sense, the Physical Viewpoints demonstrated to be a good tool to break away from old movement habits and to create surprises, contradictions and spontaneity in the performer.

After four weeks exploring the Physical Viewpoints we approached the following elements of the Individual Vocal Viewpoints: tempo, kinesthetic response, shape, gesture, pitch, dynamic, timbre and silence, following Bogart and Landau descriptions of the exercises. Vocal Viewpoints addresses sound in the same way that the physical Viewpoints addresses movement. The objective of these exercises is to increase an awareness of pure sound separated from psychological or linguistic meaning. So these exercises helped the participants to understand that 'sound itself contains information and expressivity' (ibid: 105). I wanted to focus on these Viewpoints in order to do research on archetypes present in the human voice and sound, but due to time constraints we could not explore it at a deeper level.

Throughout the process, Viewpoints allowed both actors to develop more awareness through kinetic communication (movement, gesture and posture), proxemics (the use of space, distance between individuals) and vocalics (the gestural features of vocalization).

**Introducing the Archetypal Gesture**

Simultaneously with the Physical Viewpoints I introduced the Michael Chekhov Psychological Gesture or Archetypal Gesture technique.

In order to create the Archetypal Gestures, I started by asking the actors to establish the essential characteristics of the characters based on their first general impressions and on their answer to what might be the main desire of the character. They started intuitively to physicalize it. So, we started with the Overall Archetypal Gesture for the character. By Overall Archetypal Gesture I mean the body movement

or gesture key to the overall trajectory of the character or its essential qualities in the whole play. The sessions then moved on to a series of improvisations for all the scenes completely informed by the Overall Archetypal Gesture found by repeating the gesture before or during each scene, but also by mentally evoking the gesture during the score of each scene. As Kasonkola recounts

> *PG opened completely my view about the scenes... It awakes a new imagination and understanding. I become aware of the tempos of the scenes* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

After several repetitions of the scene's score, we used the new insights obtained to refine the Overall Archetypal Gesture. We also employed Physical Viewpoints to confront and to re-inform and deepen the Archetypal Gesture, by playing it with variations of tempo, duration and repetition, which allowed the exploration of its quality through the body. After some repetitions they got to find different pallets in the dramatic situation and story. With this dynamic of exercises the actors were easily moving into different and deeper details of the character, followed by further clarification of the dramatic situation and even the objectives and motivations of the characters in each scene. They could not have achieved this from their first impressions after reading the play.

The first sign of improvement was the change in the rhythm of the score, including the appearance of moments of silence and stillness. This also helped them to start to establish and build up the background story, which was, from the beginning, a hard task given the incompleteness and fragmentation of the *Woyzeck* script. This comes up in some examples from the actors' words during rehearsal and reflection dialogues, Kasonkola says:

> *Marie was a very more patient woman than I thought before. She is not a small heart. She has certain things she wanted to be doing, so she is not very happy with that. Initially I thought she was fiery. I couldn't imagine someone who was fiery and to be patient at same time. I also imagined she would be bored, because nothing is happening in her life* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

Finding the Scene's Archetypal Gesture

In the following sessions I focussed on finding the Archetypal Gesture for each scene using the Overall Archetypal Gesture and the score of the action for each scene as a starting point. After they had defined the Archetypal Gesture for each scene, I asked them to perform each Archetypal Gesture of the scene applying different Time Viewpoints in order to also get the right rhythm for that scene.

> *Now there's a different challenge because there's a physical sensation that can summarise the scene, so that is a sort of foundation. And in that Archetypal Gesture there's also the different dynamics that can be translated and expanded to the scene* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

The repetition of each Archetypal Gesture as many times as necessary just before they played the score of action helped them to get inside the characters' psychology. They did this for each scene, with more insights from the Overall Archetypal Gesture.

**Via Negativa: Distillation and Abstraction**

After the introduction of the techniques described above, I introduced the Grotowski's technique Via Negativa. Grotowski speaks about his technique:

> In terms of formal technique, we do not work by proliferation of signs, or by accumulation of signs... Rather, we subtract, seeking **distillation** of signs by eliminating those elements of "natural" behavior which obscure pure impulse (...) we take the **via negativa**' (Grotowski 1991: 18).

According to Grotowski that "natural" behaviour, including gestures, are the 'organism's resistance', they are 'blocks', therefore via negativa is rather a process of the 'eradication of blocks' (ibid: 17).

So, I asked the actors to negate the behavioural gestures of daily life. Also as a process of elimination of the daily life techniques I asked them to eliminate other

artificial or even their actor's training or performance clichés that ultimately block the body. But not all behavioural gestures are cancellable – for example the action of using the hand to give or to receive something, or of scratching oneself, although these are behavioural gestures, are inherent to the action itself. I might stress that this process is not meant to invent new gestures, instead, it serves to intuitively awake dormant gestures and movements in the body. At the beginning, the actors faced some difficulties because they found themselves disarmed, without their "natural" behaviour or ordinary clichés. Thus, they were obliged to find in their bodies other ways to express themselves, and above all they needed to get completely attuned with their bodies. But after some sessions, they slowly started to really experience something new. In the following, Kasonkola tells of her experience of the exercise:

> *You say: "Strip everything away", and I say, "But I'm not acting". Then the body really does become an archive, you really do draw from the body and it takes you to a place where performance and acting alone can't almost. This whole process I was not really sure of where I was getting my emotional reactions. What is happening physically it just draws that out as opposed to me trying to think this would be the appropriated kind of emotion, and movement, and then prejudge it* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

Barba argues that this negation process leads the actor to 'his technique of indirect imitation, the search for an equivalent by means of the only reality at his disposal, that is, the organic use of his own body' (Barba and Savares 1991: 96). In that sense, the body, not the actor, allows for the emergence of 'new' corporal forms that also help to access emotions and feelings. Here, the Viewpoints exercises on Expressive Gestures allowed the actors to find other possibilities of movements.

One of the most notable results of this particular experiment which used Via Negativa merged with Viewpoints is that it forced the actors to present clear and justified movements and gestures, including the dynamic transformation. Automatically, this brought clarity and economy to the scenes' score.

**Movement Composition**

Then we started to play the Scenes' Archetypal Gestures as a sequence from the first to the last scene, always applying the Physical Viewpoints. The movements of each Scene Archetypal Gesture were varied in rhythm and composition. So, when placed one after another, as a continuous sequence, there emerged a kind of choreography of almost one-two minutes, very organic and fluid, mainly because there was a clear dialogue between different Scene Archetypal Gestures as they share some common elements from their creation, giving them an organic flow.

This became the basis of warm-ups before each work session and revealed itself as a very useful improvisational strategy because the archetypal gestures helped the actors to directly connect with the dramatic situations of each scene. With the application of the Viewpoints this exercise provides a structure for practice and becomes the space for heightening awareness and allowing for a listening to the body impulses emerging, either from the Archetypal Gestures or from the dramatic action. Below is an extract from a journal entry reflecting on the effects of this experience:

> *I do believe that was that physical journey – the exercises on Viewpoints that really shifted then my thoughts on the character ... and directly impacted as an internal stimulus or internal kind of feeling of the characters. If it's to the right tempo, the right pace, the right movement every time and exactly at the right place, the emotions and the psychology and whatever will fall into place immediately, I feel like the muscle memory and what the body is doing, and how it's doing it, support all that stuff automatically. So you don't have to worry about acting it out, portraying it, because it just comes spontaneously if you get the physicality on the dot. But if you don't then it's a miss* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

In the above extract, it is clear that the emotions are triggered by a physical action. From this approach to the exercises came a kind of awareness which led the two actors to experience the emergence of a narrative journey. In the same sequence of movement, for instance, changing rhythm alters meaning and impact – so the same sequence tells a different story each time any of the Viewpoints is changed. This

daily repetition also helped to activate the connections between movement and imagination and narrative, which mean that these “warm-ups” also helped to create connections with the character’s psychology. I believe that the result of this strategy also showed that it has the potential  to create a physical theatre score. I applied this to the “Bible” scene that I will describe later in this chapter.

Then I asked the two participants to play the Scene’s Archetypal Gesture randomly, out of sequence. This resulted in new and almost unrepeatable chaotic choreographies each time they did the action. This destroyed completely the sense of narrative which they got from the sequenced experience. So, everything they had done before got confused and blurry because, within the un-sequenced repetition, there is no externally provided stimulus – the narrative. But I had a strong hunch that it should be possible to bring up the same or similar impulses because they also used the same patterns of archetypal movements. I insisted on this un-sequenced choreography. Meanwhile, some gestures and movements recurred more frequently than others. After several repetitions we discovered that the body started to select by itself the movements and the gestures, according to a certain criteria which the actors could not explain. As Grotowski’s observes ‘when there is nothing else, the body remains the asylum of human dignity’ (Flaszen and Pollastrelli 2007: 116 – *my translation*). They concluded that this chaotic improvisation allows for playing and exploration in which anything can emerge: gesture, emotion, motif, sensation, and image. This means that the Archetypal Gestures differ between them. Perhaps some were keen to trigger some sensations and emotions, others were more for some images.

So the next step was to learn to listen and read what the bodies were internally experiencing. Later on, from this sort of chaos there was a kind of narrative emerging, which could relate the narrative obtained from the regular sequence. This meant that they were able to connect with the dramatic scenes, as some gestures or short sequences of movement from the different Archetypal Gestures were strongly evoking some segments of action, and situations, and even dialogues. According to my co-researchers, when we played the entire score of scenes, certain movements or gestures and energy from the chaotic choreography were also evoked, which also contributed to getting more narrative insights. The relationships between both

characters were becoming strong and clearer. The following journal extract from one of the participants illustrates the insights the exercise was providing:

> *This playing and playing with the Archetypal Gesture shifted the way I saw the scene and led an emotional kind of something that first I didn't understand. And when we did the piece it enlightened me to a back story I haven't thought about ... I took for granted that it was obvious because of the text ... I hadn't allowed myself to be open to the subtext* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

This repetition and "choreography" made up of the Archetypal Gestures helped to excavate the embodied memory, and through it, I believe it enhanced the archetypal movement qualities archived in the body. This was observable when the body was able to choose in the chaotic chain of movements a kind of pattern of gestures and movements by "itself". Below are some of the journal entries by the actors that reflect on this part of the process:

> *For me, what emerged, even in every mood or emotion – if it was a sad emotion, sadness was not like [just sad]... you can be sad and hopeless, sad and devastated, sad and whatever. I discovered that there is more than just sad: the different colours, different textures, to those types of emotions. That's why it is difficult to get to identify those particular archetypes. I don't feel that those archetypes are communicated, those messages, because what we found is such an intricate thing, which from outside can be just happiness, anxiety or conflict. But it was so intricate within the moment, it was so coloured and it wasn't just a conflict that was there. There was a pain, there was a corroded relationship, miscommunication, and all of those add such different colours. So it would be limiting to say we reached a particular kind of archetypal feeling* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

> *Before the things were very separated and now it's a lot more integrated, in terms of the physical and the spoken as well. Understanding the spoken cues - like you say this, then react is robotic; you learn through repetitions and you fix the timing. But now the physical has to be organic in order to*

> *get the timing and the impulse, because when this is not organic you have the contradiction, it feels awkward, you feel that it's not there* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

This approach to the exercises helped to unblock the body – the actors made a better connection with the body, as they learned to listen and to obey it, which fostered a better understanding of the characters' qualities, unpredictable in a first approach. As Grotowski says:

> All authentic reaction begins within the body. The exterior (the details or the "gestures") is only the end of the process. If the external reaction is not born from within the body, it will always be deceptive – fake, dead, artificial, rigid (Flaszen and Pollastrelli 2007: 172).

**Body Postures and Awareness**

Eugenio Barba (1986), in his theatre anthropology studies, compares and differentiates the ways we use our bodies in daily life and in performance situations. In everyday life, he says, we have a body technique that has been conditioned by cultural and social aspects, whereas in a performance situation we have different way to use body: we use an extra-daily technique. But he remarks that the extra-daily techniques of the body are mainly a result of training and are essentially methods to break the automatic responses of the "natural" behaviour of our bodies in daily life. Barba also explains that for the performer to find the extra-daily techniques of the body, he creates a linkage of external stimuli to which he reacts with physical action like:

> The way he exploits and composes the weight/balance relationship and the opposition between different movements, their duration, their rhythms, permits him to give to the audience not only a different perception of the body but also a different perception of time and space (Barba 1986: 95).

During the very first improvisations on the rehearsal floor, I followed their body responses during acting. I noted some of their gestures, body postures and

movements, including the rhythms that emanated consciously or unconsciously from the improvisations.

Later on I asked the actors to reincorporate some of those “original” postures and movements in the score of action. They did not recall doing some of the movements or taking some of the postures. So I came to realise that when they first executed a given action in a given dramatic situation, the body is somehow being ‘original’. It seems that the body reacts as it thinks, as it is facing a situation for the first time, very often without the judgments which then happen when the score is repeated.

So, we started to interrogate those body postures and movements. We tried to turn those body movements that were unconscious into conscious movements. After several attempts they could consciously recognise them as something that was missing in the flow of the action and sometimes as something strange too. In this instance it felt strange because it was destroying their “natural” and “spontaneous” way of using their bodies in daily life and in performance and this obliged them to leave their comfort zone. With more repetitions, as we worked through the scenes, those strange postures and movements finally fitted.

> *In Marie’s body, I get tired. Her posture is hard. When I feel a bit of discomfort at the back of the knees, I know that Marie is in my legs, because she stands in a strange manner. Is very weird. She locks her knees. How the character walks, stands, I didn’t look for that at any point. She just grew; she inhabited my body in a particular way.* (...) *it wasn’t something I have chosen, it emerged from the process. I suppose because I’ve just to rely on what my body has archived and has in its storage, allowed myself to be taking from there* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

The performers discovered that that was the character emerging through their bodies and was not necessarily what they wanted the character to be like as perceived in the first mental impressions.

When referring to the body postures, Sheets-Johnstone cites Nina Bull’s experiment, where she defines postural attitude as ‘a readiness to do something, a corporeal

readiness to act in some way or other, and it is this postural attitude that is the generative source of emotion' (Sheets-Johnstone 2009: 2002). This means that through the posture the body can lock (like Marie locks her knees) or prepare itself to do something. In the same way the emotions felt or generated may rise from the posture the body has taken, because a 'certain neuromuscular attitude is necessary to, and coincident with, each particular emotion' (ibid: 200). This corroborates with both actors discourse when reflecting on the effects of this particular experience:

> *Her [Marie] standing with a different posture shifted the mood, the energy, the way her mind set most of the time and allowed her to be bored with her life. She couldn't really be interested with what was happening in her life. I knew she would be bored... I never experienced such a thing before* (Keitumetse Kasonkola).

> *There's a sense of purpose in the body. Sense of purpose to the action. That purpose is the closest equivalent to the physical character that I have. (...) it comes out for me the most in the moments of tension of the body experiences, states of hold, a state of movement through the tension the body has. They feel very emotive and emotively derived from an emotional experience* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

These are the evidences that indicate that in spite of their first impressions about the characters' physicality, desires and psychology, the body took over and assimilated those postures despite their awareness. This was completely out of the control of the actors' consciousness. I risk to say that this was the characters' postures and movements thought up by the body. So, those postures and movements were archetypal.

**The Emergence of Silence, Slowness and Stillness**

In our last week of the process, for a reason they could not explain, both actors started to do the "Earring" scene at a very slow tempo, almost in a slow motion. However, the slow tempo and the moments of silence were already present in the

majority of the scenes. But with this change, their gestures got much clearer and stripped. I could almost see the origin of each gesture and each movement growing from their bodies. So, I asked them do the other scenes in slow tempo too. Everything got clearer. The stillness and the silence became deeper and longer. But nothing was static, because there was a lot of movement in the stillness. I believe that the archetypal qualities of the movements just showed themselves in this way, as Kasonkola demonstrates:

> *Not natural tempo – but it becomes organic and natural for itself. It is not of our life. It is not performative nature neither. We do it in a very slow tempo ... But has pure and clear movement, and with certain level of sincerity* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

At the same time I also believed that if we continued with this process, the states of silence, stillness and slowness could transform into other states as the body would adapt and find its way out within the "restored behaviour".

**Movement Comes First**

Towards the end of the process I introduced in three of the scenes another variation. I asked the actors to always react first physically, moving the body, whether with a big or small movement or gesture (taking a step, turning, moving the head, etc.), followed by the line or the physical action that must run within the dramatic situation. This was like a gesture of activation feeding the body for the action. Hamish Neill roughly translates the effect of this change in the following words:

> *How does moving like that feel? What is it creating inside me? When the shift came now to doing the scene, there's understanding of the movement generating this feeling. Generally the movement is abstract and has to be a lot more defined as an external gesture, but drawing from that internal impulse. So, understanding how the body can move and create… from the movement the impulse is created, the experience of the impulse is created. (...) By showing the body's reaction in movement and*

*responding in movement, and getting the timing of this thing and being organic, you're telling without having to "Oh what's that?" – demonstrating. You don't think on timing, it just happens. For example, your tempos and everything... those will be governed by how emotionally you respond. (...) The movements are connecting and as they connect they build the story* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

**Pelvic Movement**

I tried another way to excavate the body movements in our improvisations by focusing on the structural elements of movement in the pelvic movements of African dances. I selected this pattern of movements because the majority of African dances, including Mozambican and South African, hold the pelvis as the centre of the movement and of the aesthetic  included in the usual swaying and wiggling. I believe that it structurally contains or holds an exploration of the archetypal movement in its curve and circular progressions.

I asked the actors to play some patterns of pelvic movement from any dance they knew. Then I asked them to add the rhythmic pelvic movements to their Archetypal Gestures choreography.

But this pattern of movement has a strong sexual and erotic connotation structurally embedded in the dance. Most importantly however, the pelvic movements provided an intersection of sexuality and playfulness in the scenes. After hearing the actors' feedback, I decided to not develop it further, because as they described, all the situations changed because of the sexual connotation and  the playfulness added by the movements and everything that was built up till then was lost,

This could be one of the paths of investigation, but at that stage of the process (during the last week) this variation could strongly divert the course we were on at that moment of the research and we did not have time to explore the new insights. I could understand clearly that the pelvic movements contain a potential archetypal quality in themselves.  I acknowledge that potentially this could be another path to

follow in the continuing of this research in the future.

**Directing the "Bible" Scene**

For the purpose of this study I selected to work the "Bible" scene in detail in order to take the work towards a place where I believe it starts to speak back to the research question. I tried to achieve a combination of the visual and plastic materialization of speech, by searching for movements, gestures and attitudes. I decided to experiment by using several things: the African pattern dance movements, the Archetypal Gesture score that drives the scene, the archetypal power of the circle, merged with the archetypal dramatic situation of that particular scene and of the play in general.

The "Bible"

The background circumstances that precede the "Bible" scene are as follows:

Woyzeck's mental health and his sexual drive are breaking down due to his participation in medical experiments conducted by the Doctor who says he must eat nothing but peas. Meanwhile, Marie turns her sexual attentions to a handsome drum major. They meet in secret and have sex in Marie's bedroom. Meanwhile, Woyzeck arrives and sees her admiring a pair of gold earrings that the drum major gave her; she lies and says that she found them. She rebukes herself, but then decides that she is no more immoral than anyone else. Later on, the Captain tells Woyzeck of Marie and the drum major's affair. Woyzeck confronts Marie, who dodges his accusations. Later, Woyzeck sees Marie and the drum major dancing at the Tavern and becomes enraged. He becomes mad and he leaves for the fields, where he starts to hear voices telling him to stab Marie to death. Later, Woyzeck confronts the drum major, who beats him up and humiliates him. He buys a knife from a Jew. While Marie flips through the Bible, Woyzeck is at the barracks, giving out his belongings, and then he meets Marie and leads her outside the town. He stabs her repeatedly by the pond.
In the "Bible" scene Marie is at home but Woyzeck has not been at home in two

days. Marie can no longer take the guilt and reads the Bible hoping for God's help, wishing to be absolved of her sin like the adulteress who was brought before Christ.

Besides this scene, Büchner also employs biblical references in *Woyzeck*'s plot. He uses the figures of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene to underscore this story. Marie's name connects to both biblical characters; she is also a sinner like Mary Magdalene. Büchner's character also has the characteristics of an innocent child like the Virgin Mary. Like Christ and the Virgin Mary, Woyzeck and Marie are also simple, humble and good people. However, instead of being visited by Godly power, Woyzeck and Marie are oppressed by society. Those biblical characters and their stories are archetypal. Moreover, a story of a man who murders the woman he loves out of a fit of jealousy is a universal theme existing in history, literature, religion, and mythology across cultures and time – so it is also archetypal.

Directing

When directing this scene I decided to use and to show the archetypal gesture as a choreographic element or physical and visual score of the scene.

The Archetypal Gesture that assists to drive the scene is a sequence consisting mainly of circular movements traced with both hands simultaneously and placed on different parts of the body. It begins with a circular movement across/over the face (much like a miming gesture of washing one's face), then the hands are wrung twice or thrice before placing one hand over the other and rubbing the bottom hand's palm on/across the torso in a circular motion (as if one were gesturing at hunger): before dropping the arms, bending forward slightly and raising the arms (out reached) to the heavens.

> *Initially I felt there was not a lot going on, everything I was doing was so typical – there was nothing interesting in the scene. So I thought I had to overcompensate and perform with my voice and put things on my voice so that it could add something in the scene* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

We began to explore the movements and gestures inherent in this Archetypal Gesture on the rehearsal floor simply by playing them, removed from their functional

application for the scene and also without respecting the normal structure. Kasonkola just executed the action with an emphasis on trying to sense or feel towards its affective qualities, as movement and as action, through repetition and variations of duration, shape and rhythm, then composition.

Then I asked her to mentally just remember African dance movements, not necessarily any she knew, but mainly some patterns she remembered having seen, or danced, or those which she thought were recurrent. The next step was to evoke those African dance movement patterns while repeating the Psychological Gesture and then to allow them to emerge from within the Psychological Gesture structure. We ended up with some typical movements from African dances, stomping the ground firmly and taking the trunk and both arms to the ground as if she was digging.

The dominant action of the scene was Marie walking in the room in clearly defined circles in a clockwise direction. She walks at a slow pace before and during her Bible reading. After one or two circles she reads:

> *— And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and set her in the midst. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more.*

But as Marie faces her first contradiction during the reading, she stops reading and increases the pace, still in circular movement where we can hear her breathing and the hard steps. Then after some one or two circles she says:

> *— I can't. – Can't. Dear God, don't take everything, at least let me pray. And Franz doesn't come. Yesterday, today. Still doesn't come. – It gets so hot!*

While she renders these lines she suddenly changes into an anti-clock direction. She moves faster and faster, in a crescendo. With both hands she does the circular torso movements, taken from the archetypal gesture, but this time rubbed onto all parts of the body – legs, thighs, back, shoulders, as if she was washing or cleaning something from her body. In this part of the scene the circle keeps getting smaller and smaller until she is standing stationery confined at the centre rubbing into the

varying parts of the body on bigger circles. Then she starts adding some movement patterns of African dance previously improvised, interspersed with those of the Archetypal Gesture. She stomps until she falls at the centre. She remains prostrated. Apart from the breathing, there's a long and deep silence. She raises her head and looks at the Bible on the ground. She reaches out and grabs the Bible and in a kneeling position she resumes reading:

> *— And she stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with an ointment* .

She stops reading and she raises her eyes looking at the empty space, then calmly she says:

> *— Dead; all dead!*

As if she sees someone before her, she stands up quickly and runs towards the vision and humbly says:

> *— Oh my Lord, my Lord! If only I could anoint your feet*.

Then off she leaves the room, quietly.

When looking at the whole picture we could sense that the text, the circle, the archetypal gesture movements and the African dance movement patterns were completely interconnected. I must add that all Kasonkola's archetypal gestures were more about exploring curves than lines, contrary to Neill. So her shape is predominantly circular too. Hence, the walking movement in circles, is totally linked with the gestures taken from her archetypal gesture where the dominant shape consists of circular movements traced with both hands simultaneously and placed on different parts of the body.

> *The circle elevated the stakes. Everything was very real, very present. When I finally found the circle – the difference of pace, tempo, rhythm made the scene hot with dramatic tension – the scene grew with dramatic potential* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

The circle is a universal symbol, *per se* an archetypal movement. The symbolism of the circle is experienced in our everyday life in rites and ceremonies, in play, and in so many situations. My intention was to reinforce the ritualistic character of the Bible reading, as Marie was trying to atone for her sins. Joseph Campbell compares the centre of the circle with “the power source”, “the illumination source”. Her ritual in the scene goes hand in hand with this Campbell explanation:

> Draw the circle and think in the different impulses or systems on your life, the different value systems in your life, and try then to compose them and find where the centre is, it's a kind of discipline for pulling all those sacred aspects of your life together, finding your centre and ordering yourself to it. So you’re trying to coordinate your circle with the universal circle – to be at the centre (Campbell 2001: Track 6).

In this dramatic situation, Marie is trying to erase the blame of her adultery. In so doing she is trying to pull together ‘all those scared aspects’ of her life. Marie is looking for her centre. Her stomping, alternating the movements of arms and trunk and the head, moving towards the ground, as if digging towards the centre of the universe, suggested strong images and symbols for further dramatic development.

> *But now that there is so much going on physically, so much visually happening in the scene, there’s no need for me to play with my voice anymore, because so much more is communicated through the physicalisation, through what is happening aesthetically in the scene, so the words became just an extra, just a cover to gloss in there* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012)

The repetition of this amalgam of movement patterns through space not only allowed for an exploration of their dramatic tensions but also the appearance of images, thoughts and ideas that certainly were evoked. These elements, structurally, offered the opportunity to explore archetypal inscriptions that can be social or cultural, including the personal inscriptions of Kasonkola herself.

> *I suppose I didn’t know that there was so much in my body that I could use, to push me in a particular direction that I don’t have to work so hard...*

> *and these things are in my body because my body acts as an archive* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

The African dance movement patterns even if they were generated from the Archetypal Gesture, might have awakened a sort of memory from her body, as they also hold archetypal qualities. So, probably we were dealing with Kasonkola's cultural inscriptions archived in her body, as a form of archetype.

So, this means that the entire structure of the scene and all the action executed by the body in this scene holds an archetypal relationship: the archetypal myth present in the text – the woman in the room expiating her sins – the circle, her body movements and gestures are also archetypal.

> *You can't come with your prejudgements. It's so little that you can do to show-off or to demonstrate that. It forces you to just allow whatever organic impulse comes in that minimal kind of movement or gesture. That organic kind of thing that rises is the only thing you can send out. It doesn't leave you space to pre-judge, to determine what emotion you have to give out, you're forced to give out what comes, because, there's no space to demonstrate anything else* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

It was clear that plastically and visually the scene was more dynamic than all the other scenes, although it was also stripped, silent, and slow. Its register and texture was much more physical, with the body playing a central role. In this particular scene, the plastic and visual expressions were dominant and were somehow materializing the words. Upon the stage they were independent because out of those dynamic kinetic figurations and movement, language was generated.

As I mentioned above, it was never my intention to identify and name the archetypes of the body. We just prepared a bed for their emergence and performance, without forcing or hunting for them through a preconception or formula. Also we did not approach the archetypal elements of the characters which I knew existed like the archetype of motherhood or wife. The question was, how do I work the motherhood archetype? Wife? Whore? In my understanding, that was an end, but I needed a starting point. But during the process those elements emerged, just as Kasonkola

talks about her character Marie, and we used them:

> *The stepping of the baby was a real connection with the baby. I don't see my self as a mother – so, I wasn't expecting to have that kind of connection almost… with a simple jersey - I felt more connect than I thought I would, it was a surprise, because it was so abstract, and even in the text the baby isn't acknowledged. It was a pleasant surprise.*
>
> *The archetype of motherhood – mums very caring, patient, nurturing... Marie was a mother but the only thing that remained was her patience. She wasn't overtly caring as you imagine a mother to be. She was still quite submissive, Marie. Initially I wouldn't imagine that Marie would be so submissive. The wife archetype was there, the submissive wife. Although she was submissive... you know the strong wife and mum who live in the household silently and let the man think he is making all the decisions. I think that kind of archetype, of the ideal that Marie stuck to. But it wasn't the way you would imagine it to be* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

This process gave me the answers. When the body is abstracted of superfluous and prejudged values it is able to find its way, just as Gallagher notes: 'bodily movement, transformed onto the level of action, is the very thing that constitutes the self' (Gallagher 2005: 9).

Apart from the talking about their first impressions of the characters and the play in general, during this process we did not talk about the characters' psychology. But, out of this fully embodied process that offered the actor an intuitive, physical and imaginative way to explore and experience the essential qualities of the character they are to play, they managed to glean and reach new psychological insights. So the whole work of characterization in the process was through the 'use of natural resources of the body' (Hamish Neill, 2012) – the body archetypes that in their turn led us to the 'primitive human reaction'.

## CHAPTER FOUR: BEFORE THE PALIMPSEST

> *A man in an elevated spiritual state uses rhythmically articulated signs, begins to dance, to sing. A* ***sign****, not a common gesture, is the elementary integer of expression for us* (Grotowski 1990: 17-18).

> *It is not necessary for archetypal images to be 'big' - that is 'symbolic'. Whether an image is archetypal or not depends on what one gets out of it.(…) The implications for analysis is that interpretations cease to be 'right' or 'wrong' and will be made in parallel, their efficacy assessed by the richness of what flows from them* (Samuels 1994: 119*)*.

> *Even the Stanislavski Physical Action Method is there to enhance the presence of the performer. It works with clarity. How to project the presence of the actor – the "Method" plays with that... even when we approach realism, we play with the performative archetypes* (Workbook, 2012).

Within this Research Report I intended to examine the role body archetypes play and the extent to which they participate in the production of meaning in theatre making by carrying on a phenomenological interrogation of the bodies involved in the experience.

Following a six-week exploration process, *Franz and Marie – A Kind of Woyzeck* was shown in August 2012 at University Corner, 17th floor venue (UC 17), a Wits facility at Johannesburg. It was made clear to the small audience members that the presentation was not a performance as such, but just the culmination of a performance laboratory process as part of this research. The presentation to the audience consisted of the run through of scenes of and between Marie and Franz, which I called *Franz and Marie - A Kind of Woyzeck*. The ten scenes were played in a row, stripped of directorial and presentational ambitions. But despite that the aesthetic values of the work were still available and readable.

After experimenting with a set of strategies to excavate the body archetypes in this process by employing improvisations, the Viewpoints, Psychological or Archetypal Gesture, Via Negativa techniques, and other variations on the structural elements of movement, the process of research has helped me understand that the principle of body archetypes is achieved through a preparatory training aligned with the imperatives of the physical theatre training of “freeing the body”, thereby aspiring towards a neutral body, free from all blocks, in order to facilitate the expression of the impulses.

While revealing the impulses and concomitantly the body archetypes, this research revealed the complementary nature of Viewpoints and Via Negativa, thereafter with Chekhov Archetypal Gesture technique. Viewpoints complements and strengthens Via Negativa and vice-versa. Firstly, Via Negativa forces the body to look for movements and gestures that are not of the daily life and in its turn the Viewpoints, without imposing a particular codified vocabulary, provide a critical tool to deepen the movement and gestures exploration, because it enable an unrestricted range of response for the performer through variations of rhythm, repetition, duration, kinesthetic response, shape and gestures. Therefore, the Chekhov Archetypal Gesture technique is applied on top of a body “free of obstacles”, as the Viewpoints and Via Negativa combination automatically present gestures and movements free of the restrictive gestures from the everyday life technique, then enabling the appropriate conditions for the emergence of the archetypal dimensions inherent in the physical element of Archetypal Gesture. This combination of techniques became ideal for the excavation and exploration of the body archetypes through movement and gesture.

This research also revealed that the expression of the body archetypes begins within the body and functions at the level of the impulse, which is the key to accessing the archive that the body is, as my co-researchers support:

> *This style becomes a lot more about the body and how the body gives the impulse. It generates the impulse for you... it really challenges me to really question where the things come from* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

> *I think I discovered the whole archive thing. That’s the moment of*

> *realization - that's what people mean when they talk about "body as archive". When they say "let the impulse lead you, let it take you" – It is something that has been told to me all the time at drama school. I think for the first time here I began to really feel a tangible impulse* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

The observations above indicate that this process is aligned with the principles of Physical Theatre practice which 'implicitly enables access to the inscriptions in the archive' (Fatseas 2009: 60), the body as archive. Therefore, this subliminally suggests that the body archetypes are archived in the body and a process of excavation precedes its access.

On the other hand, the process in which the bodies are abstracted from all unnecessary actions, corresponds to what Richard Schechner (1988) calls 'the restoration of behavior' and according to his argument 'the life of the performer's body on stage is the result of elimination: the work of isolating and accentuating certain actions or fragments of actions' (Barba & Savares 1991: 171). To my understanding this takes the body as a palimpsest, in which we eliminate the layers to reveal the original colours or drawings. Therefore, this process of abstraction and distillation that we carried out was also a palimpsest revelation, the restoration of the 'original' behaviour of the body, revealing the fundamental elements of movements archived in the body – the 'primitive human reactions'. Therefore, the more the superfluous action was abstracted, the more the body worked from an inner impulse and rhythm, thus organic, and the better were the conditions to act archetypically, as the body stands in a neutral state, and learns to look and listen to itself. It then acts from the inside out, in order to rediscover and reinvent itself, and so to follow a path which is not new, but dormant. Hence, the action achieved its greatest amplification and visibility. The following is an extract from Warren Nebe during the reflection after the presentation:

> *What I see is a very clear line, something still, distilled, in a way you purify the water in order to see. I'm seeing that you have drawn into detail. My attention is not fragmented; it is more unified* (Warren Nebe, 2.8.2012).

The emergence of stillness, silence and the slowness were also some of the key

results of the process in general and of the Via Negativa exercise in particular. The bodies achieved that state of the life which is revealed with a maximum of intensity in a minimum of activity, but not as an aesthetic or stylistic attempt or search, but as a way to project the presence of the performer. As laid out in chapter one, I conclude that both actors allowed themselves to think and to talk through the body, by which we see that the body actions kept the desire to act in order to express Barba's affirmation that: 'It is our actions which, *in spite of us*, make us expressive (...) the *wish to express* does not decide what is to be done. It is the *wish to do* which decides what one expresses' (Barba 1986: 134). Taking an example:

> *Before I did a physical and contemporary dance, some mime training and some butoh experience. I thought I was physically aware. During the process, what I became very aware of was the sort of deep connections between impulse and communication. Before, I was aware of the origin of the impulse, of the physical effect of the impulse on the body, but I wasn't too concerned with communication, the message* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

This investment from the actors gave them the capability to expand their presence on stage. They were no more concerned with performance, but with being present. The revelation of the palimpsest allowed them to experience a different form of awareness and expressivity. In the following excerpts from the actors' voices, drawn from our rehearsal dialogues and reflections on the process, we learn about the value of the process:

> *The layers are really in the body. It's not a sort of thing that is distanced from the body. It's an interesting split between the body and the character. ... Whereas now the challenge is that the actor and the character don't... don't even exist – IS THE BODY!. ... because the body is not trying to be the character, or trying to be the actor – the body is the body and the body is now performing. ... You have to focus that the body knows this! sees this! And forget that relationship character-actor, who knows or doesn't know – obviously there's actor-character but it feels different. It's not much about the actor pretending... no, no! It's more about the actor working with his body, allowing his body... he's controlling the imagination to help the body. So what the actor must do is to believe in what is happening. The*

> *body must be free to respond genuinely. In that process there was much less attention being paid to how the body has been communicating externally, it's more in what the body is generating internally, as an emotional impulse, ... or psychological impulse, whatever it is* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

> *Aside the fact that it feels more genuine, it feels like I'm almost not acting. (...) just felt so organic.* (…) *I don't know what it means to play anymore. The play seems like being more demonstrating. Like being obvious, acting out so that it's dramatic ... Our vocabulary of performance in this research is outside of that paradigm. (...) It's not about your acting (actor), it's about the story!* (Keitumetse Kasonkola, 2012).

> *Now the actor has to be in fully control of his body – but not fully in control to present, to perform – but to be awake, alive, listening, and honest. ...The times I don't even know where the character is, but the character is always there ... you're just there!* (Hamish Neill, 2012).

The above extracts from my co-researchers corroborate my conviction that this research has helped answer the research questions I sought to explore through this practice. The strategy adopted when approaching the "Bible" scene also revealed its potential for showing how the body archetypes contribute to achieve a combination that materialize the text aspects visually and plastically in order to expand beyond words. It is understood as a beginning, a mapping of a way forward, to create theatre that moves beyond the spoken word in a region where language limits knowledge and cross-community and cross-national engagement. This research sets out numerous possibilities for further explorations on body archetypes and has the potential to further study "physical theatre" performances where body plays a central role.

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