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Humanising the dehumanised: an autoethnographic performance project

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2020
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Masters Research

Reflective Research Essay

Essay 4

TITLE: Humanising the dehumanised: An Autoethnographic Performance Project

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this research report is my own original work and that it has not previously, whether in its entirety or in part, been submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand or any other for the purposes of a degree.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dedication

This research is dedicated to South Africans living with pain and stories that are not shared and to my mother for not letting the after effects of apartheid limit and dehumanise her.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- To my **Heavenly Father** le **ba kubung ba batle**, for the personal support and resilience given to me in this journey of my research. Glory to thy name Father forever.

- To my Mother, **Puleng Salmina Kgotle**, the paragon of human perfection for your continual prayers and love for me which have kept me grounded and focused on serving. Your faith in my ability to be great has allowed me to look beyond my circumstances and to grow. I love and cherish you mama.

- To my sister, **Palesa Kgotle**, your support is amazing. You believed in me, in hard times and good times and you kept inspiring me to be better.

- To my Supervisor and mentor, **Warren Nebe**, You held my hand and monitored me. Watched me grow to be a better person. I thank you for believing in me. I am eternally grateful for your support during this hectic research process.

- To **Monica Nkosi, Mmanako Marumo, Dr Marumo, Sbusiso Mkhize, Sinenhlanhla Zwane and Mamaki** I thank you for being understanding and supporting me in pursuing my dream even when it appeared difficult. Your presence kept me going. I love you all.

- To the Drama for Life team, I thank you for allowing me to be me at all times and when this was hard you guys were so supportive. I am humbled.

<u>This paper serves as Essay 4.</u>

<u>This reflective research essay attempts to broadly accomplish two objectives, namely:</u>

- **To provide a reflective context and description of the research**
- **To provide a reflection about the emergent methodology discovered in this process.**

Introduction

Lebitso laka ke Moeketsi Kgotle a son of Puleng Salmina Kgotle and brother to Palesa Kgotle. I am a Mosotho. Ha ke ipolela kere:

Ke Mokubung oa Mahoete oa Komane

Kubu-Kubu ntsha marota re bone

Kubu ho hlapa tse potlana

Di hlapa di a nyolosa madiba

Tse kholo di a seha feela

Ke motho wa bodiba botala ha bo okamelwe

Marakwe a bo okamela

A wela ka mahlwana le ditsejana.

Le monko o mobe batho ba Monaheng

E re Kometsi a jele a hlatse

Kometsi Radifiri tsa phirimana

Sebouledi se boulletse motse

Se boulletse motse wa ntatae

Motse wa Mmanoka le Mmankekele

Ha o seha thebe tje o re o lekisa mang?

O lekisa Tsoeu le Ramohlabudi

Tjobolo e tjhaba yabo Mokoloko

Kobo-tata wa Ramoitheri phula-le-manamane

Kubu kubu ntsha marota re bone

My home town is Parys, Tumahole. We have sections in Tumahole like Mandela, Ghana, Mbeki, Thambo and the Sisulu section. My home is located at Sisulu section next to Botjhabatsatsi Primary school. My home is so warm that you will find people coming and visiting often. Ha hona le ka tsatsi leleleng ke ile ka bona motho a etswa heso pelo ele bohloko kapa a kwatile.

'Botho' is one of the things that my mother preached to us. She believed and loved to say that the community will raise a child and, if not, the child will fight the community. Ha re hlokomelaneng. Empa nna kene ke sa utlwisisi taba eo hobane Mme wa ka o ne a thusa batho ka morao ho moo, ha yena a hloka thuso ha ho motho ya mothusang. She kept saying humanity is important, but my question was how and why? Then I would ask myself a question, if humanity is so important, why is it that I was mistreated? ka nyenyefatswa ke makgowa ao keneng ke a thusa ka ho hlwekisa tshimo ya bona.

Then comes the time in 2016. Ke tloha lefatsheng la Parys ho tla lefatsheng la Gauteng to study at Witwatersrand University (Drama for life). Hotla mona Wits University, without

money or accommodation was a stressful process but my mother had boundless hope that things would work out for me.

Shortly after my arrival at Wits University the Fees must Fall campaign started. For me, it was a call for humanity. This was what my mother was talking about; the call to South Africa to take care of students/children; as my mother would say, "The community will raise a child and if not the child will fight the community. Ha re hlokomelaneng."

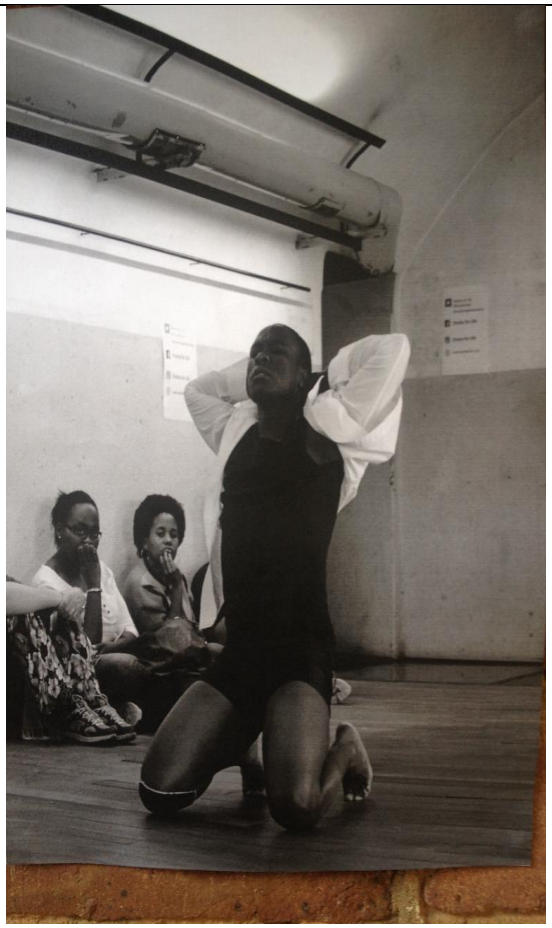
Ke hopola hantle! It was in the morning we moved from Wits University to Rosebank College to mobilise the college students to join the Fees must Fall movement. When we got there, we found police officers on the road and they told us to go back to Wits University and I asked myself: **DID WE DO SOMETHING WRONG?** The answer was, **No!** We had in fact done nothing wrong so we carried on doing what we were told. We stood in front of the gate at Witwatersrand, the gate on Jorissen Street with no guns or any form of weapons. I walked to Wits School of Art next to the entrance. On my way back I saw a white policeman whispering in the ear of a black policeman. The white guy moved to the police van. I saw the black policemen moving closer to each other. I saw a line of a black men standing with guns pointing at their children. I saw the community ready to fight a child! The picture made me cry; even as I am writing my eyes are full of tears. The black man that the white man was speaking with was the first one to open fire. When I saw the community fighting children I cried. The children were running away crying for safety. Ra baleha batho bao re tlamehang ho kopa thuso hobona. The people that are expected to protect us were now shooting and beating us. I saw my father, my uncle; yena eo a hlolehang ho nthusa ho patala thjelete ya hore ke kene sekolo, kajeno ke yena ya nthunyang. Ka balehela pela Wits School of Arts; when I looked back I saw two horses. Dine di palanwe ke banna ba babedi ba makgowa. This

was my ultimate shock. They were standing, not shooting not beating anyone, but giving the despicable instructions to our fathers to do so to their children. The sound of guns was captured by my body and that has made me react to any sound that makes a loud bang. Every time I hear a loud bang I jump and feel like running away for safety because of the memory of that event. Then the news came out. Reporters said that we were a bunch of hooligans causing nothing but trouble. I did not like that statement because all we wanted was the community to raise us.

The time came for my exams. We were told that we should create solo performances. At that time we needed to celebrate being a South African. My heart was sore and my body was shaking. I did not see the humanity that my mother preached about and now I must be proud to be a South African says the former president while I struggle to pay fees, sleep in the resource centre (computer lab) and I am expected to act as if all is well!

I was challenged a lot by the speech/poem of Former President Mbeki (I AM AN AFRICAN) which was celebrated when the Market Theatre had a show with that poem. The speech took me back home and I asked myself if I was proud to be a South African? The response was **No!** There was nothing to be proud of while we were still fighting the same battles. We are meant to be raising the children, but instead we are beating them up. The trauma of the Fees must Fall movement was absorbed into my being, and so I presented the work that spoke back to the after effect of the Fees must Fall movement The performance helped a lot to deal with that trauma. The show was performed at Wits Theatre (NUNNERY), and then moved to Constitution Hill and the Orientation Week program.









(Drama For Life Conference at Constitutional Hill)

The picture of two white men on top of horses looking down on me while I was running for safety brought back the feeling I felt when the white couple I worked for, trusted and respected turned out to be giving me food on the same plates that they were using to feed

their dogs. The moment that really hurt me was the moment when they tricked me and I saw the dogs' plates. Usually, when I got to work, the plates were not there, so I never knew until they seemed to decide that I needed to know, I needed to see what they thought of me. Now I think I understand what my mother was saying about the role we need to play as part of humanity. First and foremost we need to learn to look at the person as a human being without looking at what they have or can do.

The process taught me that we need each other but that does not mean we need to take advantage of each other. I find the process very important for my life because of all the energy that I spent on belittling myself because of what was projected on to me by someone else. Nsow I can face it and deal with it. Haholo ha tseding tsa dintho di etsa hala re nahana hore di fitile ho fihlela di kgutla di e pontshahatsa haholoholo maikutlo. Jwale, tsela ena eng thusitse hobane nka bolela ka se etsa hetseng ke be ke sa amehe maikutlong. I felt re-humanised because of the process. The process helped me to face the story of my life and was hurting me and now the story does not have power over me.

The process helped me to forgive but not to forget what I went through. The Fees must Fall campaign was one turning point in that process because it helped me to face up to the fact that it is the same fight that I am fighting even now as I writing this paper. The process helped me to find a better way and not to let issues get to me. So in the presence of Fees must Fall Moeketsi must, while the movement is still continuing, survive. I can co-exist with the Fees must Fall campaign and yet i must be aware of the effect that is coming with it. We must look at the choices we make and we need to be very critical of how we are pushing ahead to make the dream a reality. The process showed me that Fees must Fall and with it re-

humanisation, will happen when I am aware of the things that trigger me. The other thing I have learned through the process is that it is OK not to accept everything, uncritically. In life one needs to be smart and to exercise choices which will prevent one from suffering because of the choices we have made, and which we cannot ditch. It is true that something that will dehumanise you will come, regardless of the course/space you are in. However, when it comes, use the process of self-introspection and always check your contribution. This is a positive approach that came to me when looking into the issue of dehumanisation which arose out of the Fees must Fall incident. I have realised again that other people will not always be fully invested while you are putting all your energy into the course and, somehow, after all your efforts, you are left with the weight of everyone on your shoulders. This goes back to my mother and her teaching about botho. Everyone needs to play their role.

This research report on Creative Research began with a desire to explore how performance, if at all, could embody the process of humanizing the dehumanized. The study is born out of a need to address the unspeakable trauma emanating from the history of apartheid and its impact on our daily lives to this day.

The research is sparked by the fact that I have not told my mother about the treatment I got from the white couple that I was working for. The event left me with a memory that was held in the body. Yes, sometimes we cannot talk, but we need to find a way to project what we are not talking about into a performance that uses dance, music or storytelling. We do not talk sometimes because we want to protect the people we love, as I did, by not telling my mother.

My Performance as Research did build an interest in using performance to tap into those dark places with simple and easy theatre approaches. By looking at what was happening in our country, all the sad things, I was forced to ask myself: Why? What is the root cause of this?

I realised that the child is fighting the community because the community failed to raise the child.

It took me back to my reactions to the intervention at the Fees must Fall demonstration which reminded me of the dehumanising story that I had encountered early in my life. Everyone is fighting to be on top of someone else because of an experience which they have had and which made them feel vulnerable and dehumanised be it rapes, killings, fights or robberies. Looking at all the issues I have observed that no one wants to check on the story of the perpetrators but only want to see it from the victim's perspective. So I asked myself what could I do to give everyone a chance to tell their story. What change would we encounter after we had told or heard the story of another person. I got scared, but the thought persisted....how can I explore that idea in academia? Autoethnography was the key point; a chance to tell my story in a contained space; using my-self as a source of data. I wanted the story that I told to be heroic and to highlight the hero's journey.

This is the method that I explored in the research. First I looked for the space that would help me explore and give me aesthetical merit. I thought of putting the work on in theatre but my supervisor asked me if I wanted to limit the experience, or did I want to go with the flow of being free? The question made sense to me later when I tried to put the work down. I saw the limitation of theatre in terms of space, and the positioning of the audience and I realised it was not mobile. I looked and found the Wits School of Arts to be a place which I could use to explore the idea. It has lots of space which I could change into anything.

The walls are white, and the space is cold and accurately describes what I had felt. I remember being cold, I remember freezing when I realised that I was being fed with the same

dish as was used for the dogs. Yes, now it might mean something different, but in those times the meaning was different, and in the context leaned heavily towards wrong ideas about the notion of race, humanity, and the value of being.

I looked at the signs which showed that the building was used as a hospital before it became an arts department or school. I presumed that a decision had been taken to turn the hospital into a School of Art without making any changes. Next to the lift are written the words Dental Hospital WOSOA. I found it interesting because for the past two years Wits and other faculties have been renovated but in the School of Art (hospital) nothing has happened. It became clear; why would you do renovations while the sick can still go there for treatment?

The history of that building fascinated me with its white walls and tiles. The building was used to house the white community and the building was designed during apartheid times. I believe that when facing your fears you must go to the place that will challenge you and make you face the challenges. The research was beginning to making sense to me because I was getting the tools that would make it come alive. Ke fumane tseo tsohle di dumellana le mosebetsi wa ka. Sena ke sebaka seo diqeto di etswang ho sona mabapi le bokamoso ba rona. So eba sebaka sa bohlokwa haholo honna. Empa ha kena ho sona, ha ke ikutlwe ke amohelehile se skolong se na, seo ba se betsang sekolo sa art, an art which has connotations with healing and sacredness? Fela heh, ba se bitswa jwalo nna ke ketlareng.

How do we bring life into the space, also the pride of being an artist? I was dehumanised by someone I respected, a couple I trusted and worked for and then, when I arrived at the school I found that the dehumanisation continued; it was in the building that is called the School of Art, yet it does not look like a School of Art nor does it feel like one. It is cold, and cluttered

with its history. I compared it with the accounting building where you can see and feel the pride invoked by the building through the medium itself. I looked at other buildings which had been renovated. I visited the Law School; you can see the difference in the colours, the paintings, the sculptures. It has presence and is an abstract for the medium of Law. But our school, the School of Art has nothing that shows or defines it to be an artistic space. It is just a building that carries the history of the sickly bodies that resided in it. The idea to re-humanise the dehumanised came to life through all of these experiences.

This project really made me trace the journey that I had been through and I ended up finding the 8 steps/stages that I had followed. Allow me to share with you my journey which I see as a method that people can use to explore their own journeys. The 8 stages focus on 5 scenes that can be performed with one scene that is used as the climax with the help of the Hero's Journey.

I call it **The Eight-Story Parts method (ESP)** because of the selection of the parts in the story and the spaces that have to be explored. The **ESP** method can be explored broadly by youth and elderly people because it depends on the participants taking decisions by themselves. All of the stages require the participants to be present and make choices. Hobane ngwana e monyane o tlo hloka a guardian ho nka di qeto jwale ka tsela eo the method ha ebe le tshusumetso ho yena. The method needs the participant to be accountable because it is a personal journey.

ESP method

The stages.

First, participants need to agree that they are willing to go through with the process. In simple terms, the ethics of the process is the first thing that one needs to engage with; the reason is that people will be sharing part of their personal story with other people. It is important that there is a written copy of the ethics agreement as words can be manipulated. Ho bo hlokwa hore o tsebe seo o i ikenyang ho sona. Ho hloka ha la hore o tsebe maikutlo a hao a kanna a bewa pepeneneng wa ba tlokotsing. Everyone needs to understand that being vulnerable does not mean weakness. I like the way Brene Brown speaks about being vulnerable. She says that we look at being vulnerable as a bad thing but yet there is a positive side to being vulnerable (Brown, 2017).

First items must be selected that bring up memories. I strongly recommend the use of photos because of time, fallibility and memory loss. Pictures/photos are the captions of the story of one's life and one can get a lot out of photos. Photos bring back the memories and the experiences that one has faced in life. They are a constant reminder of one's life and experiences. Once the photos have been collected, the next thing is to put them down in the working place/ rehearsal room and to move around them, looking and touching the photos. The photo that captures a person's emotion helps them to start narrating the story of that day till the time that the photo was taken. Allan alluded to that:

> The realists of whom I am one . . do not take the photograph for a "copy" of reality, but for an emanation of past reality: magic, not an art . . . The important thing is that the photograph possesses an evidential force and that its testimony bears not on the object but on time. From a phenomenological viewpoint, in the Photograph, the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation (Allan).

Have the participants narrate the stories which are related to the pictures which which they will embody and then look at the various ways to present them. Multivocality ke ngwe ya tsela e ka thusa hore re fumane mokgwa oo, o ka o sebedisa. My understanding of Multivocality is that it gives all the voices that are located in the researcher a chance to be represented in the autoethnography. Re kopanya di ketsehalo tsohle re kgethe tseo o batlang hodi arole lena le ba bohedi ba hao. Ethically that is correct because you have exercised the power of choice. Using Multivocality to find the voice for the narration of the story possibly assists one to distance from the story

The process of analyzation of the story starts with the choices of the voice you would like to use to tell the story. The Hero's Journey helps to put the structure to the story so that it has a clear beginning, middle and ending. The next step is to put down the story on the ground and start to work on finding the aesthetics of a performance (how to deliver or present a scene); it goes to rehearsal, but the rehearsal is not like the typical way of rehearsing or rather a standard rehearsal. All of the rehearsal is based on empowering the actor's body to carry the story so that it is ready to relive the experience. My mind and body believes that telling the light stories can help us to reach the dark stories and still be safe.

In the (**ESP)** method I have been experimenting with the story and then stepping away and interacting with the body. In general, (ESP) is playing with the idea of connection; memory and body being a sounding vessel. It links the voice and the body. How can the body and mind respond to the signals of nature and the world of the story? How can the body be put into action. Part two consists of getting into the story without preparing the body.

Stage 1

Ethics

We need to look on the consent as the first thing to be done. Be explicit to the other participants on what is implied by the consent. They must know that it implies that they are aware of the process they are about to undertake and that they agree. Taba kgolo ke ho hlokomela le ho boloka batho ba o tlo sebetsa le bona. Ena ke tsela eo bohle balo nkang karolo ballong ho bolokeha.

Stage 2

Space/site

Selection or identification of the space/site for the presentation. Select 5 main spots in the site of your choice. O hlokahala hore o tsebe sebaka seo o tlose sebedisa le hore o ka sebedisa jwang. You must know what you have in the space. Tseba history ya sebaka le hore ke difeng di ketsahalo tse ile tsa bateng sebakeng seo. O tlo tlameha o buisane le beng ba sebaka hore bao dumelle hose sebedisa.

Stage 3

Items/Photos

This involves the collection of the photos to be used as a tool for memory and story. The goal is for the photos to take them back in time so that they can remember the stories. It is important for humans to look back and reflect on the decision taken. Dinepe di bapala karolo e kgolo kaba le reng re dula re nka dinepe nakong e kgolo. Ka tsona o kgona ho thola dikarolo tse ngata tseo o ka kgethang ho tsona.

Stage 4

Analyzation

Start by analyzing the stories on the photos and grouping them together to find the stories that are related. The participants are the ones who will be choosing what they want to tell. Choose five main points that the participants are willing to share and have the one that will be used as a climax. O ka diarola ka diketsahalo kapa ka dilemo eo eba kgetho ya participant. The facilitator will just guide hore o ka difihlella jwang.

Floor plan

Ho bohlokwa hore o bone sebaka seo o sebedisa. Sebe karolo ya hao ha o ntse o sebetsa. Hobane ha o ntse o sebetsa o tlo bona hore eng e tla lokela ho kena ho kae le hore jwang. Place on the floor the selected stories on points so you can see the flow of the whole story.

Stage 5

Story

Use Hero's Journey to give structure to the story so that it has a clear beginning, a middle and an ending. Sena se thusa aka hoo tsela eo o tlamehang ho e latela. Then put down the story on the ground and start to work on finding the aesthetics of performance.

Stage 6

Rehearsal

Visit the space and move around the points you selected. Feel the space and familiarize yourself with the space. The idea is that you don't rehearse a lot on the space because you will be presenting your personal story. It goes to rehearsal, but the rehearsal does not follow the standard procedure for a rehearsal. My ritual was as follows: Ha kena ko rehersal room ke nka 30 minutes of. Meditation hobane ke yona tsela eo ke kgonang to ‘chanela’ focus yaka. Then 1 hour of physical exercise. 1 hour to focus on the story and 30 minutes to meditate and

reflect. The physical body is important, and this is the kind of process that focuses a lot on the physical to channel the internal. Find a ritual that one can explore to prepare the mind and body to enter the world of the story. The entire rehearsal is based on empowering the actor/participant to be able to embody the story and be ready to relive the story/memory again. ESP uses the body to explore an exercise called Opening the Window of the Senses. The exercise is attached.

Stage 7

The day of the performance: it is important that the same ritual is used every time as a way to enter into the story and as a way to back out of the story.

Stage 8

This is the reflection on the experience and how it makes one feel after going through the process.

The end of the process

Essay 2

Performance as Research

Tlhaloso

Papadi e qala ka ntle sebakeng sa ho paka ma koloi mo School of Arts. E qalwa ke bahlanka ba bapala bolo ya maoto. Ba etsa menyabuketso e thabisang ba buhi. Ba ntse babapala jwalo, hofihla motho ya hulang koloinyana e tsamaya ka mabidi hodima yona hona le baiki, motho enwa o tla a labile ho Moeketsi. Moshana o ye a lemohe hore hona le baiki e tlang e labile ho yena. The jacket spoils the fun for Moeketsi and the friends. He runs into the building of Wits School of Art. Ha a fihla teng, he starts to dance e le yona tsela a e sebedisang ho nahanisisa seo a qetang ho se bona le hore e kaba baiki yane e batlang ho yena. He starts to dance and as he does so he says these words: **I AM JUST A CHILD AND ALL I WANT TO DO IS TO PLAY SOCCER.**

He goes up the stairs saying ho a bata, sebaka sena, sea bata. O nyeloha jwalo ho fihle la a fihla setsi sa mehlodi second floor. Teng a fihle a bue ka bophelo bahae ha ntse a etsa diketjhe le sehlopha sa Siyaya Cultural Group. O re phetela papadi tseo baneng ba di etsa like drama, music and dance. The mother keeps telling him that he is not doing the house work because of the Cultural Group.

He runs away from the jacket that appears while he is still talking. He moves to the stairs next to the offices of the Art lectures. Here he finds a drum, he starts to sing and we can hear the other voices joining in. He starts to play the drum the sound fills the Wits School of Art. He goes down the steps to his home and finds the sick mother sitting on the chair with food on the table; she dishes out food for him and he starts saying to the mother that she was supposed to rest, and he will dish for himself. Moeketsi as the Narrator tells the story of Kgotle's family and how the mother was doing everything to make sure that they did not sleep with empty stomachs. He moves back into the character of Moeketsi. He starts to eat and while he is eating the jacket again enters and he begins to fight the jacket till he finds himself wearing it.

Taba eo e qala e moimela, o leka ho e hlobola empa ha ho kgonahale. He accepts the call of duty and moves to the corridors on the 1St floor asking for work. He meets a white woman and he gets work as a gardener. He is told to work in the courtyard to clean up the dog's shit. Mosebetsi wa hae ene ele hore ha a fihla hoseng o qala ka ho phuta makaka a dintjha. Mosadi wa le kgowa o, ne a moneha dijo. The woman brings him bread and homemade jam and coffee with a lot of sugar. He can't eat the food because there is too much jam on the bread and sugar in the coffee, but he tries, Days pass and he continues working then one day he is told to put the plate on the other side of the house where the dog kennels are. He goes there

and ha a fihla a fumana hore sekotlolo seo a neng a jella ho sona se tshwana ha ntle le sa dintja. Mmele wa thothomela, a tshoha, a lahle sekotlo fatshe and runs out of that place to the reception space in the building.

He falls onto the floor and sings and posts messages on the wall. Then he dances as a response and in the process releases all of the tension. He sings the song Nkosi sikeleli iafrica. He finds the strength to taking off the jacket. He is singing and shouting Vulani Indlela, khululeka, kuya banda kule ndawo as way of realizing, perhaps acknowledging, the energy which he takes into the building as he moves up the stairs. Ke ha, a tsamaya to room 109. E ne e tletse dinepe tsa Moeketsi. Hone ho ena le setulo le tafole and another chair on which was written

TLOHO HA RE KOPANE

COME AND MEET MOEKETSI

Essay 3
Critical Performance Installation

Thlaloso

This is the critical performance installation as the response to performance as research. The idea of the installation was to mute the voice and to use the body as a medium to deliver the message. Papadi e qadile where the performance ended. Two chairs are placed in the middle of the room with the table. On one chair is written;

TLOHO HA RE KOPANE

COME AND MEET MOEKETSI

Moeketsi was sitting on a chair while the audience was coming in. 5 people were in that room: the cameraman, the stage manager, the examiner, and the supervisor. A pota potilwe ke di nepe, koloi tsa mapolesa diletswa tsa mmino, dikotlolo le mabekere hape le bolo. He was wearing tights with some white stuff on the body. The performance was based on response and reaching out. He calls for help but no one wants to respond. There is movement and

sound. Taba ya bohlokwa ke hore batho ha ba batle ho atamelana hore bathuse ba bang. The reaching towards the other chair was a motive that kept coming back. The focus was on the involvement of the people, so that everyone o na le karolo eo a e bapalang bophelong ba e mong. He used the musical instrument as a way to reach out. Music is a universal tool that brings the world together. He used the blanket as a symbol of his mother and love. The sound of plates created another voice. He moved around collecting all the items placed around the room placing them on the chair to create an image. He included the audience to help him to create the installation. Finally he sits on the chair and relaxes. People come and meet Moeketsi then he later becomes part of the installation.



(16 March 2019 at Emakhaya Theater University Corner Masters research)

ESP METHOD

The principle of this method is based on autoethnography, a lived experience, a body and is site-specific. There is an audience, storytelling, performance and reflection.

Autoethnography

This is a form of qualitative research in which an author uses anecdotal and personal experience to connect the autobiographical story to a wider cultural, political, and social meaning and understanding (Carolyn Ellis, 2004).

Qualitative research employs a variety of methods and takes a humanistic stance in which the phenomena under investigation are examined through the eyes and experiences of individual participants (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Personal narratives, experiences and opinions provide researchers with valuable data and the tools to find those tentative answers they are looking for (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

Autoethnography as a research method

Autoethnography, as a method, is interested in giving an individual a voice, and the opportunity to tell "their" stories. The people who have explored it explain it in different ways because it is an emerging way of doing research. Autoethnographers vary in their emphasis on auto- (self), ethno- (the socio-cultural connection), and -graphy (the application of the research process) (Reed-Danahay, 1997). I am in agreement with Reed because all of us tell stories but from different contexts, and, as it is personal each explanation will be different. The common denominator is the self. Although some consider a personal narrative to be the same thing as autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), others use auto-ethnography as a means of explicitly linking concepts from the literature to the narrated personal experience (Holt, 2001; Sparkes, 1996). And, as Duncan has said, they support the approach as rigorously and justifiably as any other form of inquiry (Duncan, 2004). The underlying assumption of qualitative research is that reality and truth are constructed and

shaped through the interaction between people, and the environment in which they live (Silverman, 2000; Freebody, 2003). I hear all these voices, but I think that the one that is most clear to me is the one of Silverman and Freebody because, for me, autoethnography is about two things: the reality and the honesty of the story. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) "...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (2000, 3). Although a qualitative approach opposes the positivist standpoint that assumes that reality is objective and independent from the researcher, it has been accepted as a valuable practice of research. Qualitative Research employs a variety of methods which imply a humanistic stance in which the phenomena which are under investigation are examined through the eyes and experiences of individual participants (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). This approach ensures that personal narratives, experiences, and opinions become valuable data which provide researchers with tools to find those tentative answers they are looking for (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

The approach in this method, which is what we have explored, is the one called evocative autoethnography because it focuses on giving the people the emotions and the experience of the researcher allowing the readers to make a connection with the researcher's feelings and experiences. Foley (2002) argued that autobiographies should be regarded as one of the common genres that will contribute to bridging the gap between researchers and ordinary people. I strongly agree with Foley because of the experience we had with the audience. I was the 'searcher' and the audience was meeting me as an ordinary person. As Bochner and Ellis (1996) suggest, "On the whole, autoethnographers don't want you to sit back as spectators; they want readers to feel and care and desire" (p. 24). It seems that evocative autoethnography is gaining ground in researchers' practice because of the connection it

allows readers/audience to make to their own lives and because people apparently do not understand fully their life in the context of academia. Autoethnography helps by opening the door for the researcher to look into others lives.

Advantages of Auto-ethnography

The advantage I see in auto-ethnography is the freedom it creates to place life-studies in academia. An important advantage, I believe is its potential to contribute to other's lives by making them reflect on and empathise with the narratives presented.

One of the main advantages of personal narratives is that they give us access to an individual's private world and provide rich data (Pavlenko, 2002, 2007). Another advantage is the ease of access to data since the researcher calls on his or her own experiences as the base from which to investigate a particular phenomenon. This also has its limitations as, by subjecting a personal narrative to analysis, the research also becomes limited in its conclusions. However, Bochner and Ellis (1996) consider that this limitation on the self is not valid, since, "If culture circulates through all of us, how can auto-ethnography be free of a connection to a world beyond the self?" (1996, 24).

Another advantage is acknowledged by Richards (2008), who sees auto-ethnography as an emancipatory discourse since …those being emancipated are representing themselves, instead of being colonized by others and subjected to their agendas or relegated to the role of second-class citizens. Thus, auto-ethnography represents, for many, the right to tell their truth as experienced, without waiting for others to express what they really want to be known and understood (1996).

Bochner and Ellis pointed out that despite the advantages of auto-ethnography as a method of research, as mentioned above, there are also some limitations which need to be borne in mind. For example, the feelings evoked in readers may be unpleasant since the connections readers make to narratives cannot be predicted (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). Another limitation is the exposure of the researcher's inner feelings and thoughts which require honesty and a willingness to self-disclose. This limitation also entails many ethical questions which sometimes may be very difficult for the researcher to answer, making auto-ethnography a complicated method to follow. My experience highlights another limitation which is the indulgence of the actor in the emotions portrayed. For me that was an interesting and very fruitful experience because we were looking at evocative auto-ethnography. However, what is important is how the actor moves out of the moment. It is tricky because you might get lost in the moment however, if it works for the research and you able to track it back to where it happened first, it allows for you to speak back to it and to reflect on it.

Ethical Considerations

One of the main features of auto-ethnography is its emphasis on the self and it is this specific feature that raises the problematic ethical considerations of the method (Ellis, 2007). As a personal narrative is developed, the context and the people interacting with the subject start to emerge in the reflexive practice (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). It is at this point that the problem of obtaining or not obtaining consent to be included in the narrative has to be considered (Miller and Bell, 2002). Evocative auto-ethnography includes the description of periods that may involve sensitive issues with regard to the researcher and the people around him or her (Wall, 2008). Due to this, special considerations have to be taken into account when referring

to loved ones, such as family members, partners or close friends.

Evocative auto-ethnographies may be written in the first or third person. For some, using the third person gives a sense of distance from the events and the people being referred to. As explained in Ellis et al. (2007) in a statement by Denzin (1997), "I was just going to disguise myself because I still did not have the freedom to - I had not given myself the freedom to - write that narrative in the first person" (1997, 317). For others, the first person seems to be the only way to be completely explicit about the events being analysed. In a reflection on a narrative he wrote, Wyatt (2006) admits changing some parts of his narrative from first to the third person because it gave him a certain sense of distance. The ethical issue is critical and I understand why it is because the content must be true and honest when you deal with the emotional autoethnography. My contention is that we need to be explicit when talking to the people who will appear in the auto-ethnography because it is impossible to have a rule that covers or governs auto-ethnography. I did have to ask my mother because of the role she plays in my auto-ethnography and I explained what we would be doing. All auto-ethnographers use it for their different experiences, however, in general, I think that the ethics issue is important because it helps to protect our family and friends.

I suggest being explicit and open:

: Check who is the main focus in the research and why?

: Check on the purpose of the research

: Explore the aesthetics of the performance

I agree with Ellis (2007) who feels that the main criterion to bear in mind is that "…auto-ethnography itself is an ethical practice" (p. 26). For me, ethics go along with choice. If I start on a piece of auto-ethnography I am exercising my right of choice and that is part of ethics. The adaptation that is done by Pat Sikes will, I think, help to protect people when

writing.

The following guidelines (adapted from Tolich, 2010; Sikes, 2010 and 2013) are offered as prompts when considering the ethical implications of auto-ethnographic research and writing. We must:

- protect the people whose lives are the focus and substance of the research
- respectfully depict those people
- be alert to the potential misuse of interpretational and authorial power
- be aware of tricky and slippery questions and issues around truth/s (cf Medford, 2006 p.853)
- avoid what Sabi Redwood (2008) and John Bergin and Robert Westwood (2003), call 'violent' textual practices which shape and tame the lives that we use as 'data' in order to present a privileged version that serves our purposes
- respect participants' autonomy and the voluntary nature of participation and document the informed consent processes that are foundational to a qualitative inquiry (Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, 2007)
- practice 'process consent' checking at each stage to make sure participants still want to be part of the project (Ellis, 2007)
- recognise the conflict of interest or coercive influence when seeking informed consent after writing the manuscript (Jago, 2002; Rambo, 2007)
- consult with others, such as your institutional ethics committee (Chang, 2008; Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, 2007);
- do not publish anything you would not show the persons mentioned in the text (Medford, 2006)
- Beware of internal confidentiality: the relational risk is not that the researcher will expose confidences to outsiders, but that confidence will be exposed to other

participants or members of their family, friendship or acquaintanceship networks (Tolich, 2004)

- Treat any auto-ethnography as a permanent ‘inked tattoo’ and attempt to anticipate your own, and others future vulnerabilities
- Audio-visual anticipatory research ethics claims that no photograph is worth harming others. In a similar way, no story should harm others, and if harm is unavoidable, take steps to minimize that harm
- If you are unable to minimize risk to self or others, the default position should be that you should use a nom de plume (Morse, 2002)
- Assume that all people mentioned in the text will read it one day (see Ellis, 1995).

Lived experience

As humans we have experienced things in our lives that tend to repeat themselves; some are good some are bad. Our life journey produces a lot of experiences which we could share with other but in these times of technology people are so busy focusing on their own lives that they do not have time to listen to our stories.

This method gives everyone a chance to have a voice on the issues that he/she has never talked about. This method gave me the voice to share the story that I had felt ashamed to share. 2018 was a personal adventure into my subconscious in an effort to understand and find closure with the experienced events from my past but, what started out as a simple journey quickly turned into an interrogation of a personal experience of racial discrimination. As a black society, we have a history of people being dehumanised by apartheid and by words, torture and acts of racism. Hape re nyenyefatsa batho ba bang ka diketso tsa rona.

Nakong engwe re sa bone kapa resa ikemisetsa. Even our communities were separated as in Alex and Sandton for example. The two towns are divided by a road which cuts through them and I think that was a way to dehumanise people that was explored by the government. I like the way Brene Brown speaks about removing people's moral protection first with words, and then with images (Brown, 2017). Ke dumela hore karohano eo ke engwe ya tsela e sebediswa ho nyenyefatsa botho. Dintho tse redi sebedisang le tsona can perpertuate dehumanization.

To my knowledge the metal plates and mugs that are used in the prisons are not used in our homes. The sound of the metal plate made me feel alone and cold. As I remembered the plates and mugs that we used in our home I had a deep sense of pain which made me miss the warmth of my mother. I was not well treated by the white couple, but I kept on working for them and holding on because we needed that R40.

The woman told me I should not put the plate in the sink. That statement made me ask the question ‘Why not?’ As I was about to clean the kennels of the dogs, I found metal plates similar to the one that I was using. My body froze and my mind stopped functioning for a second. I felt lost. Sharing the story was just the beginning of my recovery. Stories are timeless and hold the vast wealth of the psyche, they provoke thought, they are meaning makers, and they teach and inspire us to new ways of being (Campbell, 1988 cited in Beglau, 2012).

Knowing the body

Ha re se re shebana le mmele wa motho ya bapala sebaeng. Hona le dintho tseo re tla mehang hore re se kera di lebala. Ya pele, e leng bo hlokwa ba ho kwetlisa mmele. Ya bobedi, ke hore

o tlameha ho ela hloko, seo ose jang pele o ka bapala haholo beke pele ho papadi. O tla meha ho nwa metsi a mangata ha o ntse o itukisetsa papadi.

The body is one of the important tools we have as human beings/performers and it holds a lot of information that comes in the form of energy; it can be good or bad energy. So, it is important to listen to our bodies when it is responding to some of the experiences that we have encountered in our lives. It is important to trust the body to hold the information and we must be willing to listen when the signals are being sent to us.

In this method the exploration of the body and voice is used to convey the narrative and it is important to be aware of this when creating a work. The body is holding a lot of information/messages that sometimes come from the reactions experienced in the moment. With this kind of method the performance is not predictable; it gives the body a space to react to the moment; the audience too has unpredictable reactions. All the reactions work together simultaneously to compliment the story.

The body is flexible because we all react differently when we tap into some of the info that is sitting in the body. Grotowski says that the voice and the actor's body become central to the performance. This integration comes from the sum of the physical and mental reactions of the actor. This integration must be treated in a disciplined manner and is only used after intensive training (Grotowski, 1967, 61). There was a point in the process of the performance where my body just wanted to stop moving and I tried to fight it and kept moving. The body just stopped, and I had to kneel down for a few seconds until I felt that my body was ready to function again.

Performance

Performance has been seen as a way of bringing to life the many formal and conceptual ideas on which the making of art is based. Live gestures have constantly been used as a weapon against the conventions of established art (Goldberg 1979:6).

The performance demands that you are ready physically and emotionally; it is not only about the drama that is about to happen but the focus and readiness too. Slade argued that drama is not just about the performance, but about the personal growth and expression of everyone from childhood to adulthood (Slade 1954). Grotowski (1968) adds that drama can help remove inherent psychic resistance, allowing inner impulses and outer reactions to meet in such a way that they come through as one and are expressed through outer reaction. Ena, ke tsela eo papadi e sebetsang ka teng hobane e hloka maikemisetso a hao le boitelo botswang botebong ba pelo.

When the using and sharing of a story activates the memory of a time and place and reflects on a specific point that performance is holistic. I used dance as a release from the anxiety, hurt and shame of my past. In this way I was seeking to free my body from a specific pain and to hopefully overcome the unwanted triggers arising out of a painful memory. With this method performance is part of the process; it is not the end of the product. I understand by this that performance is the "happening" of all the processes which were done and which have been put together. Allan Kaprow uses these words in his work. For us to have a performance which uses this method we need a story that is going to be narrated and I like how Iser explains it: "story is the event itself. The story becomes a narrative when it reaches a resonance with is the audience" (Iser, 1974).

When planning to perform there are some important things that one needs to be aware of. These are the four basic elements: time, space, the performer's body, or presence in a medium, and the relationship between the performer and the audience. With this method, the audience can choose whether or not to be part of the performance but, as the performer, you need to be present during the whole process.

In the performance it is important to leave space for other voices so the audience can get the full perspective of the world you are creating. What is important is how you want to explore the aesthetics. Playing around with the use of symbol and metaphor is interesting. An example in my performance is my use of the jacket. The jacket is a symbol of taking on responsibilities for providing for the family and the soccer ball represents innocence. A symbol is a literary device that gives an object, place, or person a deeper meaning. A symbol is a tangible object that represents an idea. Symbols are based on the setting in which they occur, but some symbols can be common across cultures and time (Belknap, 2017).

The performance takes the form of the Hero's Journey. All stories have a starting point middle and ending. In addition, each individual has their own story and they are the Hero in that story. Every hero has obstacles, inner conflicts and fears (Bronzite, 2017). The Hero is the one who is on a journey towards self-attainment. The goal is connected to a process that moves towards a desired outcome. Like all journeys, there are challenges and obstacles that threaten the arrival at the desired destination. This kind of process takes all you have to present/perform it. At some point I felt a heaviness in my body. I needed to breathe because I was rushing things and my audience was losing me. The thing that encouraged me was the switch that I felt during the performance. That happened when the participants changed from

the passive mood to being an audience.

Audience

The audience plays an important role and we must not neglect our audience. While applied theatre can take many forms, it generally involves theatrical enactments of situations that highlight an underlying social issue or problem with the expectation of sparking conversations that will catalyse change and identify possible solutions (Boal, 1997, Thompson, 2012). In Applied Theatre, the audience plays a key role in the performance, either directly or indirectly. Audience participation in these performances can be active and direct as volunteer audience members allow themselves to be incorporated into a scripted play as actors. Audience participation can alternatively be passive or indirect, like engaging in a moderator-led discussion after they have witnessed a theatrical enactment performed by the actors.

The audience plays two roles at once; they can be participants without them realizing that they are no longer just an audience watching a show being presented to them. What is important is the need for you to check when that happens while you are performing and to judge whether the shift will affect them in a positive way or not.

Site-specific

Producing site-specific theatre means giving up a certain amount of control over the theatrical environment. The site selected for the performance may not have an actual stage (or if it does, space may be extremely limited). In addition, it may not have lighting, sound equipment,

electrical outlets, bathrooms, a box office area or any kind of "backstage." The aesthetic merits play an important role when selecting your site because of the relationship with performance and what the site is giving you to work with. A movable site is easy, and fairly flexible because you can explore it while moving, however the fixed site needs you to be aware of what you will get on the site and how you will use the site. On the site I explored I was influenced by the aesthetics of the building and all the sections that could be used to create different environments in the site. David (2014) to give us the thing to consider when approaching site-specific performance.

Things to consider in your planning

The Text: Can the play be separated from the site? Are you producing a conventional play in an unconventional site or creating a text which will be written/scripted specifically for a specifically identified, non-theatrical space?

The Audience: Is this an exclusive event (invited audience, ticketed, publicized in advance) or inclusive (flash mob events are "planned" spontaneity to a certain degree)? Will the audience be accidental bystanders or have they come specifically to see a performance?

The Actors: Performing in a site-specific production can be very different from acting in a traditional play in a conventional theatre. The actors need to be flexible and cognizant of the specific characteristics of the site and the audience/performer spatial relationship.

The Site: Is it a fixed site or is it movable (car plays, walking tours, etc.?) Do you need to transform the site in some way to accommodate the performance or is it unaltered and fixed? Do you need seating or do the spectators stand?

The Elements of Production: How much control do you have (or need) over acoustics? lighting? scenic elements? Does the site accommodate (or need to accommodate) dressing

room space, sound effects or music? Do you need volunteer ushers or helpers? Do you need a box office?

I would add that the history of the site does count a lot when planning the use of the site. One can get a lot out of the site when one approaches the site from the historical perspective. This was one of the tools I used in my planning for the performance especially when I realized that the space had been used as a hospital and that is why it was so cold with white walls and white tiles.

History of the site: Helpful questions are: how much history does the site have? What has happened there? When was it built? How can that background help to project the idea you have?

Objectives

This concept can be used as a tool to explore any personal issues that one is facing and which need to be overcome. This concept can be explored with a facilitator so that the performance can be well executed. A clear understanding of one's objectives gives one a tool for dealing with social issues in our communities. It helps one to promote the idea of ethics. It helps with the decision to take the performance out of the theatre to other spaces where you can explore your story. It opens up the exploration of theatre and one's ability to use its basic elements of sound, image and movement to convey meaning and to engage in dialogue. It improves one's understanding of sensations, feelings and thoughts which are individual and collective perceptions. The exploration of the juxtaposition of individual perceptions gives rise to a deeper understanding of the meaning of collective perceptions. By developing communication with oneself and the use of collaboration, presentation, problem-solving, negotiation with the audience and critical reflection one creates a platform for sharing. The

audience needs to be engaged throughout the process.

Reasons

Those who have been brought up in black society may have been traumatised by a dehumanising experience. When I finally got a chance to go to Wits University I realised that there were things that reminded me of the experience I had encountered when working for an old white couple in Parys. When something reminded me of that experience my body froze and I became speechless and lost hope. Performance as Research allowed me to ask why my body was reacting in that way. I found that performance helped me to be free of that experience by facing it and performing the story.

I realized then that we are all sitting with stories that are holding us back. I believe that, as people tell their stories, they can become aware of what has dehumanised them. I have also realised that Applied Theatre, which makes use of auto-ethnography, can be used to explore the problems facing those who are dealing with personal trauma. I have seen that the sharing of personal stories of dehumanisation, in a contained and guided performance can help individuals to face the emotional challenges that hinder their growth. Dehumanization means, in this context, the act of being excluded and of not being seen as a human; being treated badly, shamed, tortured and called names, to silence you. My finding and exploration of this method and the articulation in the performance moved me beyond mere description to be came a transformative tool. Contemporary performance in South Africa is locked in time, space and the description of trauma.

I am interested in using auto-ethnography because I want to give people a chance to observe

and reflect on their life's experience. I used my personal story to explore this method and the importance of addressing issues that one has never dealt with. Some experiences can make us so angry that we have a physical response when we are reminded of the experience we had in our lives. Performance as Research has given me a method which I can use to reflect on my life and a means of sharing my experience with others. Auto-ethnography can help the audience to reflect on their own life experiences. I believe it will be very helpful because no one in the audience will feel that they are being personally attacked, rather, the audience will be given data to reflect on. Pavlenko says that the main advantage of personal narrative is that it gives access to one's private worlds and provides rich data (Pavlenko, 2002, 2007). The sharing of my story with the specific intention of gaining healing from it helped me to find release. I, therefore, took from my study of Performance as Research clear steps and intentions which can be used to help others find lasting release from their hurts through the sharing of their stories.

Reflection

Ho bohlokwa ha motho a itela e bile aba le sebete sa ho bolela kapa ho qoqa pale ya boiphelo ba hae. Ho qoqa pale ho kgutlisa menahano eo o kileng wa eba le yona. Etswe, e meng e utlwisa pelo bohloko empa ha nako e fihlile ya ho qoqa kapa ho arolelena pale ho tsosa maikutlo o e phumana o se o e ntse jwalo. Slade tells us: Drama is not just about the performance, but about the personal growth and expression of everyone from childhood to adulthood (Slade 1954). Grotowski (1968) adds that drama can help remove inherent psychic resistance and allow inner impulses and outer reactions to meet, in such a way that they come through as one and are expressed through outer reaction.

I use the sharing of a story to activate the memory of that, time and place and I use dance as a release from the anxiety, hurt and shame of that time. Through this, I seek to emancipate my body from this pain and hopefully overcome the unwanted triggers from this memory.

A well-known auto-ethnographer, Carolyn Ellis (2004), defines it as the research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political. Auto-ethnography will help me to make the connection between a personal story and the social context. Auto-ethnography will allow me to draw on personal experiences to understand a particular phenomenon or culture of dehumanisation. My Performance as Research was the first step to understanding my personal narrative on dehumanisation. Auto-ethnography can be explored in different ways and I have chosen to perform in a production based on my story. Durham states that auto-ethnography is an embodied method and writing practice (Durham, 2017).



My performance takes the form of the Hero's Journey. All stories have a starting point, the middle and an ending. Ke bone ho hloka hala hore papadi ena e be ka tsela eo, eleng hore diketsahalo di tla ho latellana. In addition, every individual in life has their own story and

they are the hero in that story. Every hero has obstacles, inner conflicts and fears (Bronzite, 2017). The hero is the one who is on the journey towards self-attainment. The goal is connected to a process which leads towards a desired outcome. Like all journeys, there are challenges and obstacles that threaten the arrival at the desired destination.

The Hero exists in an ordinary world, this is where their story starts (Bronzite, 2017). Playing with other children I had a deep love for soccer and I was good at it. I used to dream about being a professional soccer player. I was the best because all I did was practise and play hard for long hours. My world centred around soccer, school and my family. Ha hololo Mme wa ka hobane o entse tsohle, ka moo a ka kgonang hore ke qetelle ke fihla moo ke leng teng. My mother was and is the centre of my world; she worked hard to provide for me and my younger sister. We did not have much but she made sure that we had a roof over our heads and food to eat and she gave us love beyond words.

On the Hero's Journey there is, secondly, a call to an adventure that the Hero must undertake; but there are obstacles. These are the Hero's challenges. They can be in the form of pain, fear, or personal issues that hinder the Hero from taking the journey into the unknown to archive goals (Bronzite, 2017). My love for soccer secured me a place in the community soccer team. I was very happy; I could see my dream of becoming a professional soccer player being realized. I was so good they even named me, “Tjhefu” meaning poison. Ere ha ke tswara bolo ho duma melodi le ditlatse. It meant that people never recovered from playing with our team if I was in the game. We would score surprise goals and we became the pride of our community. This also gave my family recognition in the community and for the first time, we were seen.

My Mom fell ill, and she could no longer work. With time we were running out of food and poverty was adding to the pain of her illness. This was my call to adventure. I had to find

solutions as the eldest child in the family. Part of this challenge meant I had to give up on the things I loved to do; the hardest was giving up on playing soccer. I had no choice. We needed to look after my mother and keep the home running.

The Hero might need a helper to help them overcome the challenges or the obstacles that are hindering the realizing of the desired goal (Landy, 2012). For many, this figure might be fictional but can be trusted to help. After struggling with the reality of my mother being ill and the possibility that, she might not fully recover my love for her and my sister pushed me to take on the role of the family provider. I spent my weekends travelling into town, to the white suburbs, to beg for work. I would wake up early, walk to town for over two hours and knock on the doors of the houses and beg for piece jobs. It took me over a month of knocking on doors, pleading for work until I finally secured a handyman's job for 10 hours on Saturdays. My salary was R40 and I would do anything and everything that they asked me to do.

The Hero calls upon a mentor to help guide, hold and support him through the adventures into the desired outcomes. Once the Hero accepts that help, the guide can support the Hero as he moves towards the destination (Landy, 2012). Through overcoming obstacles, every Hero saves the day and moves forward (Bronzite, 2017). Drumming was one of the mentors that helped me to realize the pressure that I got, from the jacket.

The R40 was not enough but it helped us keep our heads above water. The treatment at this piece job was harsh, I would get screamed at and made to work under pressure. Those days would be long and I would work fighting back tears. I would leave from work in pain but having the R40 and what it meant for my family would make my day. The look of gratitude on my mother's face made me proud. It gave me the courage to keep going back to face the abuse and the tiring long hours.

Landy (2012) suggests that, before we all die, we should all have the good fortune to be touched by the kindness of strangers. My luck was my love for my mother and wanting to see her happy and restored was the invisible driving force that kept me from not breaking. Bronzite (2017) argues that the mentor helps the Hero find the courage to go into the adventure. Doubts and fears give the inner strength and conviction needed to take on the adventure.

With the mentor by the Hero's side, the Hero crosses the threshold and goes on the adventure. Crossing the threshold shows that the Hero is committed to attaining the desired outcome. For me, there was a deep belief that my mother would survive and also there was the need for her to heal. The love for my mother and sister was my mentor and being able to help them during that time encouraged me and gave me my strength.

The day came when my patience with the way my employers were treating me was tested. I would be served food on an aluminium plate and cup. One day they gave me breakfast as usual and I sat outside eating. Then I was told to put the plate at the door. When I was finished I took my plate to the door as instructed. As I was putting it down, for the first time, I saw that the dog's plate was still next to the dog house. I sadly realized that the plates that I had been using all along, were the plates that were used for the dogs. This filled me with so much anger, that I threw the plate down with all my strength and I ran away.

Bronzite (2017) stresses that the adventure presents challenges; it could be people or emotional or other forms of hindrances. Here, their skills, strength and courage are tested. I was hurt and tired of how my employer treated me and my emotions on that day took over my senses and I ran out of the house never to return. For the first time, I had no money to give to my mom and that shattered me but I could not go back to the place where I had been

mistreated. My actions overwhelmed me, I felt useless, vulnerable and afraid of what the future held for me and my family.

Eventually, my mother healed and started selling vegetables again. This gave me emotional relief and the chance to forgive myself for running away from our source of income. I still felt that I was a weak person and that I did not have the courage to do anything great. The inner cave offers the Hero a chance to work through their own issues, so as to be able to archive their desired outcomes and win the adventure (Bronzite, 2017). I continued with my schooling but did not go back to playing soccer. The experience with my employees had left me wounded and insecure.

This experience made me long for ‘dikhetje’, which I was part of when I was in primary school. I rejoined a drama group and spent the rest of my high school years creating and learning the art of performing through ‘diketjhe’. Through overcoming the present challenge, the Hero attains inner power and makes his way back home. It is through this art form that, I managed to find my love for life and dream again. I started indulging in stories and performances, and the group and the audiences that came to see us renewed my sense of confidenc. The Hero is resurrected and can return home a true Hero, having overcome obstacles (Bronzite, 2017). Overcoming this experience set me on the journey to Wits, to refine and learn more about performance and how it can be used to empower others.

An outcome of the performance

I was aware of the shame that I carried from that experience. I knew its triggers very well and I was always fighting against letting those triggers control me. I decided that I would use my performance to explore how I could use drama and dance to release those triggers of dehumanization from my body memory. I had been working through pictures and drawings of that time in my life. I had been observing the strong emotions of shame and pain that it triggered within me. I used the memory of the process to write my paper. I also used movement, dance and walking to work through the heaviness of this memory.

Ke fumana hore papadi ena, eng thusitse ka tsela e makatsang. Hobane, hona jwale ke kgona ho laola maikutlo a ka. Ntho eo e kgutlisa ho ba le kgodiseho hona. Nakong eo ke dutse fatshe batho ba ntse ba atamela ho kopana lena, ke utlwile ke lokolohile moyeng le fahleho sa ka saba sa ela ke kgotso. Ke kgothaletsa batho hoikitlaetsa ho sebedisa kapa ho leka mokgwa ona o ke o sebedisitseng. Hape re ka o sebedisa ka sehlopha le ka bongwe.

Looking back at the process I can see that I needed the process. I can highly recommend that people with issues that are stopping them moving forward explore this method. It is so simple but I recommend that when exploring the method that you are in the presence of the facilitator so that the facilitator can hold you, guide you through the use of the space and carry you through the process.

As a guide to exploring and finding my personal place in society, I took on the role of a navigator who keeps in mind the objective. Putting my narrative together has helped me to discover what I should use to navigate my way through auto-ethnography.

It is very interesting to explore a Hero's Journey and then to put together the story. This really has helped me to see how to create an interesting story and how to explore the aesthetics. I believe we are the heroes in our stories. Exploring the use of theatical elements helped a lot in dealing with the issue of dehumanisation. I found that distancing and taking the audience into the journey was important in the performance and I will continue to do that and to explore the idea further.

Conclusion

We all need a way to overcome things that hinder us in our lives. So I recommend the method that I have just explored to anyone who is facing social issues and I say that ESP is the way to face them.

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Appendix A

Exercises that open the window of the senses (Doyouyoga.com).

Meditation Using Your Senses

We are sensual beings, and our senses naturally turn outward to the world so, one of the easiest ways to meditate is to use the senses.

1. Smell

Sit with your eyes closed and focus on the smell of a flower, burning incense, essential oils, chocolate etc.

2. Taste

You can also start this meditation with corn flakes, crackers or something else that has a lot of texture and makes a lot of noise. Then you can meditate with honey and of course, chocolate as we have tried before: GOOD chocolate!

3. Touch

Sit with your eyes closed and explore movement in your body to some music. Ttry rocking forward and back, side to side, in circles, figure eights, spirals. After a couple of minutes slowly find total stillness.

Slowly begin massaging yourself one body part at a time, starting with a foot and ending with the face. While massaging, use the body movements we have just explored. Try to use your whole body when you massage yourself, not just your hands. Pour your body weight into the parts of the body that you massage.

You can even pound on your chest; pounding on the chest really helps improve self-confidence. At the end sit still and enjoy the amazing sensations.

4. Sound

Concentrate your full attention on the ticking of a clock, flowing water, the song of birds, the sound of the rain, music etc... Let yourself become totally absorbed in that sound.

Om - Chant Om loudly for about a minute or two and then keep repeating the sound mentally for another minute. How does it feel?

Ocean Breath - Sit tall or lie down. Place your fingers inside your ears so that you can't hear anything from the outside. Now breathe deeply and listen carefully. You will hear the sound of the ocean in your breath.

Listen to the waves coming in and out and let yourself become completely relaxed.

5. Sight

With eyes open, focus on a flower, a picture, scenery, the room, your friend's face or eyes, a candle flame etc... and notice all the little details you never saw before. After a minute or two, close your eyes and visualize what you saw as clearly as you can in your mind.

Candle Gazing (Tratak) - This exercise is best practised in a dark room. Place a lit candle at eye level and gaze at the brightest part of the flame without blinking.

Keep gazing at the flame until your eyes tear up a bit or until you feel a slight burning sensation, then you can close your eyes and keep seeing the flame in your mind, imagining it to be between your eyebrows.

When the image fades, you can reopen your eyes and do the exercise again. Try not to think of other things while doing this practice, focus on the candle only. This exercise is also said to help improve the eyesight.

Don't hold back! Let yourself dive headfirst into whatever you choose to focus your mind on. And most importantly, enjoy the journey!