

https://dspace.org/

For out of the darkness, comes the moment of exposure: discovering androgynous performance through alchemy

Khutsoane, Namatshego Kelebogile

2014-01-28
http://hdl.handle.net10539/13604

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

For out of the darkness, comes the moment of exposure

Discovering androgynous performance through alchemy

This research report aims to reflect on a practice based period of inquiry in the area of performance studies. It will reflect my analyses, interrogations and experimentations informed by questions around the possibility of creating a performance event that does not take gendered practice of role/behaviour/sexuality as given or essentialised embodiment (Smith 1993:3) but which challenges, problematises and attempts to re-construct the frames that exist in role expectation in an effort to create androgynous performance. The study looks for the possible answers to this question through the lens of performance studies, using the metaphor of alchemy to explain the process of performance, or the process towards creating a performance event itself. The research is informed by the researcher's personal lived experience, agitations and recollections of events in the past and recent. The paper will function on various levels. The first being to frame the concept of alchemy for the purposes of arguing in favour of it as a practical and reflexive approach to creative processes. I will discuss performance as a malleable phenomenon, doing so by drawing on creative processes that have already been carried out. These experiments include an improvisation which I recognise as and have named: *moment of exposure*, a performance titled: *invitation to correct* and another experiment which I have called: *the garage process.* These processes fall into the domain of performance via different but connected modes of inquiry. The study embraces an auto-ethnographic research methodology of 'discovery through alchemy'. Autoethnography as explained by Tony E. Adams and Stacey Holman Jones (2011) is a research method which tries to disrupt traditional and dominant ideas about research, particularly what research is and how research should be done. The Autoethnographer, they say, treats identities and experiences as uncertain, fluid, open to interpretation and revisable. The researcher might respond to subject matter using various media to represent 'findings'. Such responses may value embodiment, performance and alternative ways of knowing. An example of other ways of knowing may be evidenced in the researcher embracing: through analysis and interrogation, the cultural standpoints they inhabit for example.

The autoethnographic research method uses personal experience with culture or a cultural identity to make unfamiliar characteristics of the culture evident or identify what is familiar for insiders and outsiders. The ‘autoethnographic’ refers to a sharing of politicized, practical, and cultural stories that resonate with others who are then motivated to share theirs, effectively bearing witness, together, to possibilities shaped in different kinds of telling.