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2012-01-19

<http://hdl.handle.net/10539/11104>

Research by Creative/ Practical Project Research Report:

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Theatre Studies and Performance Theory

DRAA7015/1

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Course: Theatre Studies and Performance Theory

Course Code: DRAA7015/1

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Due Date: 25 August 2011

Topic: De-stressing Race. Documenting 'The Trauma of Freedom' in post-apartheid South Africa; through the viewpoint of a Black Female born during the state of emergency (1985-1990).

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ABSTRACT:

This study is as an examination into the everyday experience of Freedom in our democracy as a traumatic one.

I outline my search as a Sartrean existential project, via the definitions of the key terms in the investigation: Race, Trauma, Freedom, Post-apartheid, South Africa, Black and Female. I make use of a practice-as-research mode of exploration through the methodology of Narrative Inquiry to discover the stories that give meaning to my being; as a free being. Through a critical reflection on the theatrical praxis, I draw meaning as to what it means to be a young Black woman in South Africa today.

Freedom as a conceptual fact and the awareness thereof is outlined as the cause of the distress that has been termed the "Trauma of Freedom" What this work reveals to me is the paradoxical optimism that is inherent within the "Trauma of Freedom"

Introduction:

What is post-apartheid South Africa? The term posits that it is what it is not: apartheid South Africa. This might seem a positive identification on the binary spectrum of good and bad, where apartheid South Africa is bad hence post-apartheid South Africa is good. Kreuger (2010: 183-184) notes that “there is still a prevailing anti-apartheid stance, or in other words, a division of the world into good and bad sides.” The creation of a “new South Africa” as this post-apartheid South Africa has sometimes been called, as the not of the “old South Africa” works as identification through nihilization; I am because I am not. This “I am because I am not” identity becomes difficult to define as all definitions would have to refer to what was in order to describe what it is not and yet not actually saying what it is. The reference to the past that it is not becomes problematic when the factuality of the prevailing identity relies on the very identity which it claims to have nullified. Post-apartheid South Africa becomes a part of the grand narrative (Kreuger, 2010: 92) that is apartheid. However, where, as Kreuger (2010: 184) later observes “notions of identity, which rested confidently on structures of good and bad, seem increasingly insecure” so the identity of post-apartheid South Africa¹ seems to be undergoing a transformation.

The idea of a transformation alludes to the expiration of the “post-apartheid” term, which in revealing our ties to the past sits uncomfortably for many South Africans who would rather move on and do away with discussions on issues around race², as a legacy of that past. In this study, as an examination into the everyday experience of freedom in our democracy as a traumatic one, the preceding question then becomes: What is South Africa?

¹ The epithet of “the new South Africa” which was so commonly heard after the first democratic elections in 1994- and subsequent inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected president- has faded in its use. Along with the refrain of “the Rainbow nation” losing its currency as a way to describe the nation after the abolishment of apartheid has come a gap in identifying what the South African nation is now. We have been called to be “proudly South African” and to celebrate together in the spirit of the game of soccer as a unifying force during the 2010 world cup; but all calls to unity seem to reveal a painful truth, the fragmented nature of the current South African society.

² Kreuger (2010:93) points out that “the white population have become skittish about being reminded of the past.” Furthermore,, I would add that there is a sense that the black population seems tired of excuses about the past mistakes and really want to start to see improvement on an everyday, personal level such as having water, electricity and such basic amenities that were promised to them at the end of apartheid; as would be evidenced by 2010’s violent and lengthy strikes. But, in agreeing with Kreuger on this point of a general need to carry on, I must note that while he tries to shy away from discussing race in *Experiments in Freedom* that he makes use of the term in a manner that accepts the regular appropriation of racial identity as classificatory of groups of people in South Africa.

Did I act?

As young women who were born during the latter half of the 1980s, we come from a legacy of theatrical events that put the country's stories on the global map and helped to curb the continuation of the oppressive regime. The theatre was literally a critical event within the apartheid narrative so when we ask: Did I act for my freedom?; this is not simply a question about the self of the 'I' involved but also of the inheritance of the 'act' therein. As someone with the freedom to ponder on the nature of my freedom, I have come to realise that what I feared in asking the question was not the multiplicity of questions that it strung out: 'Did I experience freedom?', 'Did I have freedom?', 'Did I lack freedom?', 'Did I suffer freedom?', 'Did I live freedom?', 'Did I want freedom?' and the countless other 'Did I's' that I have not even begun to think of. What was terrifying about the inquiry was the possibility of an answer.

Janelle Reinelt in speaking about Western feminist critique is cited as saying that:

'Since it is political and also deeply personal, it cannot be put on and taken off again like a critical coat every time the scholar goes calling on a new topic; it is rather more like a second skin, which goes everywhere.' (in Holledge & Tompkins, 2000: 5)

As a Black, South African woman, the research³ that I am engaged in is also like a second skin, but one that does not fit as comfortably as it seems to do with Reinelt; indeed, it is the restlessness that I have found with my second skin that has brought me to this enquiry. It is because I was so restless in this skin that I had to conduct this type of research, using the methodology of the investigation and making collaborative use of the particulars of the undertaking. The inquiry: de-stressing race. Documenting 'The Trauma of Freedom' in post-apartheid South Africa; through the viewpoint of a Black Female born during the state of emergency (1985-1990). The form: practice-as-research. The methodology: narrative inquiry. The particulars: Ayanda Zamaseoka Seoka, her generous spirit, experiences, stories and self; as collaborator in the research.

³ It is vital to understand that while I am aware that the Trauma of Freedom exists in Black men and White men and White women and every race and gender that exists in this country since the inception of apartheid, I am unable to conduct a deep investigation into each person from each group thus my investigation is personalised to allow me the scope to thoroughly examine the trauma of freedom in our country. The manifestations of this trauma is also unique to the narratives of each group thus my selection of the category that I personally fall into. In doing so I am conducting an investigation of self.

So what is 'The Trauma of Freedom'? Before we assess what the trauma may be, as the source of the anguish that has begun this series of questions, let us look at the basis of the trauma itself, what the trauma is of: Freedom. The use of the words 'source' and 'basis' and other synonyms implying an origin are deceptive, as these questions enfold one another in a maze whose beginning and end are invisible. The initiation of this enquiry begins at a core that is unknown even to the inquirer and may be at the core of the self (hence, an investigation into identity) and yet this core is believed to be non-existent in terms of being a multiplicity itself.

What is South Africa? This is one of the questions that Kreuger tries to answer, through a number of avenues, in his post-modernist way of embracing multiplicity over the notion of a fixed identity. He places South Africa as a geographical location (Kreuger, 2010: 22), one that functions in paradoxical ways when set on the world stage⁴. He cites South Africa as being in a liminal space in terms of its current position as a shared transforming identity; but one which requires visibility in order to be integrated and heal the psyche (Kreuger, 2010: 31). Most notably he writes at length on the metaphoric use of the rhizome as a way of speaking to the multiplicity of South Africa as a heterogeneous nation (Kreuger, 2010: 40). With support from Deleuze, he says that:

the whole of South Africa might be considered a giant rhizome, a vast unity impossible to quantify accurately since it is in constant movement, in various stages of flux defined by flights of fear and the attractions of desires (Kreuger, 2010: 40).

In the rhizome model, which is inspired by the plant that has roots that form in all directions thereby eluding an origin, South Africa becomes a map where lines are constantly transforming without showing any lasting disturbances on the surface and lacking origination is constantly in-between (fractalontology.wordpress.com/2008/04/07/the-destratification-of-multiplicity-deleuze-and-guattaris-rhizome/ : accessed 08-04-2011). What may be problematic about implementing the rhizome model in South Africa is that the plant can be

⁴ He refers to the inauguration ceremony of Nelson Mandela on 10 May 1994, as highlighted by Loren Kruger, as making the nation more edible to the global consumer (Kruger, 1999: 155). I will mention the more recent 2010 World Cup closing ceremony which was praised by many around the world as an example that South Africa is still trying to find the meeting ground between its authenticity to itself-as a geographically African society- and its appeal to the global community of which and to which it also geographically and economically belongs.. This makes South Africa an object to be consumed, internally and globally.

separated into pieces that can create new plants on their own (www.answers.com/topic/rhizome : accessed 08-04-2011). This is precisely what the apartheid policies on segregation mandated with the homelands; so although the notion of multiplicities is useful in trying to quantify the unquantifiable with regard to a South African identity, the history constantly plagues its attempts at an identity as a meta-narrative. The meta-narrative as the history of South Africa is the situation in which South Africa tries to form an identity.⁵

If we are to see South Africa, not merely as a site which has and is constantly trying to identify itself but also as a people, then the rhizome model with its problems, as have been noted can be useful in a different way to that posited by Kreuger. If each root of the stem is a person who has found themselves separated in order to grow new plants then the issue of identity is on a more personal level. However, even in individuation the plants are still of the same situation, the same history, the same problems. 'The Trauma of Freedom' remains whether the rhizome is place or people.

I will make use of this personal rhizome model to show the different strands of the research as roots stemming from the same plant. These roots, although they are individually able to grow their own plant, are intertwined in a maze of questions. These questions are envisaged as 'Did I?' narratives that intend to inquire about the future but remain haunted by an unknown past.

Why did I? (Did I feel it on my own?)

In beginning this research, I had to ask myself: Why am I conducting the study at all? Why is it significant as a point of investigation? Kreuger notes that 'for one thing, a number of essays which focus on women have already been written about the contemporary South African stage' (2010: 49) and he cites three articles on women in apartheid South Africa and beyond the interregnum⁶. While I am aware of some of the

⁵ Sartre says that, 'freedom is exercised in history' meaning that the freedom which South Africa tries to act upon, in defining itself, is within an historical location. The situation opens up a variety of actions to be performed thereby implying that there are a multiplicity of actions that are not possible; through the choice of one over another (in Priest (Ed.), ed., 2001: 180). The idea of identity as a performance is being taken for granted, here, as it has been explored at length in various works (Kreuger, 2010; Ngaboh-Smart, 1999; Hauptfleisch, 1997; Jamal, 2005 etc.).

⁶ These articles focus specifically on the gender difference issue in South African body politics and not on the racialised female body nor on the black females who would not have a conscious recollection of

literature written on women in South Africa and even on Black women in the country, I felt that there was nothing, and I could not source anything, written on young Black women and their particular struggles in post-apartheid South Africa. Race is understood as a construction of our identity, one that has split its people into a fragmented society along colour lines. I had to find out if I was the only person who felt that: ñI was restless in my skin and in my mind as to what the experience of freedom was.ð

When I came across the term ðTrauma of Freedomð at a lecture by acclaimed academic Achille Mbembe on his interpretation of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (ðAn Evening with Fanonð 2010) I was stunned at how accurately the phrase seemed to surmise my feelings at the time. Hearing the words seemed to justify my need to articulate what I had only known as a personal feeling. The ðTrauma of Freedomð as a paradoxical term communicated the internal struggle that I had attempted to perform in my performance project a month earlier, the yearning for suicide.⁷ In the countenance of a pain that never ends; an anguish that causes one to question their very existence. What was so fascinating about this trauma was that it was constantly confronted by freedom, making the torment more acute.

Trauma is not a singular entity that can be compartmentalised and neatly sorted out. It is even defined in various ways. There is psychological trauma, post-cult trauma, vicarious trauma, paediatric trauma, geriatric trauma and medical trauma- which consist of blunt trauma, penetrating trauma, blast injury trauma (www.medterms.com: accessed 08-03-2011) - and a variety of other physical injury traumas. There is also situational trauma, betrayal trauma, shellshock and historical trauma⁹ (Msimanga, ðFraming documentð 2011: 8)

having struggled for freedom, but on women who are older than those who are the main focus of this analysis.

⁷ In the article entitled, ðFREEDOM ALL THAT IT'S CUT OUT TO BE?ð Miyeni writes about having suicidal tendencies in his adult life and that they only began post-1994. He emphasizes his mental and physical health and that his dream of suicide is a happy one. He envisions suicide as the final act of freedom that in death he will finally be free from the struggle that never ends. He comes to the conclusion that although he is exhausted from fighting that he does know the beauty of freedom which he allegorises as having reached the top of Mount Everest; and that even in his exhaustion that he has climbed the highest mountain so he is capable of climbing the rest.

⁹ Historical trauma could be the closest type of trauma in diagnosing the Trauma of Freedom as it encapsulates some of the other types of trauma in the list. It is increasingly emotional and psychologically wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, originating from massive group trauma experiences. The historical trauma response is a collection of features in reaction to this trauma. Historical trauma is an example of intergenerational trauma, which is the general idea that a trauma an individual experiences in an earlier generation can have effects that reach into the lives of future generations (Kaminer, 2010: 155-204). This may be the type of trauma that is the cause of what we call the Trauma of Freedom, as an existential trauma that shakes the core of a person's being.

Whilst I was careful not to diagnose what 'The Trauma of Freedom' is in terms of the recognised types of trauma, I now recognise that it was not the naming itself that was significant to my inquiry. I found that in practice even the term 'Trauma of Freedom' which I had so welcomed, became dissatisfactory. It was the result of the trauma and not the trauma itself that was vital to my question. I wanted to know how in the constellation of traits in reaction to this trauma (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma: accessed 08-03-2011) I and at least one other Black woman in my age group were manifesting our responses to the trauma. I was intrigued at how this invisible force was made visible whether voluntarily or involuntarily within the context of our daily lives. Mbembe had clarified in his lecture that he was speaking only to the masculine 'Trauma of Freedom' specifically the Black 'comrade' expression in relation to the age group of Julius Malema¹⁰ and his fellow, older comrades. My investigation of trauma, although politicised by the focus on race and gender and philosophised by the tendency toward the existential questions it produces, is not merely psychological but experiential. It tends towards an everyday experience within and without a single person; but as I am intrinsically involved, it also speaks to my personal, lived experience. In this way, and in various others, it splits.

The question here is not 'To be or not to be Freedom?' 'Freedom' that is the question.¹¹ Freedom is a question of rhizomatic tendencies itself; its roots split in numerous directions. What is Freedom? Sartre says that 'the writer should write to express their own freedom and liberate the reader' (in Priest (Ed.), 2001:14). While the issue of writing to express freedom in this work will be explored later, there are a number of ideas that are conflated within this statement which are interesting to explore from the existential standpoint. Firstly, freedom is described as something that should be expressed so that freedom becomes visible through an act. Here, the act

¹⁰ Julius Malema is the ANC youth league president but as a man born in 1981 (a few years before the state of emergency and therefore outside of the age bracket that I am investigating) he was active in the struggle against apartheid as a young boy (Du Preez, 2009: 25).

¹¹ Reference is to the classic existential question in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* where the title character faces the responsibility he has to his father's ghost to avenge his murder and the freedom he has in the multiplicity of other choices, one of which is suicide in order to escape being haunted: To be or not to be. That is the question. I take being as already having taken place at birth, when I was thrust into the most critical moment of our country's historical situation, the state of emergency, so that in being, the question falls upon freedom. Although I am aware that, as Hamlet recognises also, being or to continue to be is also a choice; one that could be the end to the questions around freedom in South Africa.

is named as writing but it is understood that the same responsibility would apply for different kinds of performances. The next significant point is that of responsibility as Sartre mandates that the person should express their freedom as well as having to liberate the reader. Freedom, in the Sartrean, existentialist mould involves a deep responsibility to not only make visible their own freedom through the act of writing but also that in displaying their freedom that they ought to liberate the receiver of their act, the reader.

Preparing to act: (Did I free my thoughts?)

In trying to make sense of the moment that we live in (Mbembe, 'An Evening with Fanon, 2010) we have become engulfed by innumerable questions; questions that tend to overwhelm the mind and cause the skin to itch. If freedom is both starting point and ultimate goal (Sartre in Detmer, 1986: 5) of this search it seems that Ayanda (my collaborator) and I find ourselves in a moment of existential despair where, like Estragon and Vladimir, we posit to go but find that we do not move.¹² As we find ourselves standing at the point of our beginning, after a long journey, we have to ask: Did I? Or did I not? Search! Move! Act! The questions remain and yet something has changed that which we can hardly begin to name.

I first encountered Ayanda at an audition for *A Kind of Alaska*, a Pinter play that I was directing in the interest of displaying how one's freedom can be a foreign and debilitating fact, and while she was eventually not cast for that role I had been fascinated by a quiet sadness behind her eyes. I wanted to know what stories she had to tell. I immediately sought to work with her on this project, and while others came and went in the duration of preparing to begin she stayed. When Ayanda and I began our practical research, we did what I called 'musical timelines' which were specific memories in our individual lives that we could associate a particular song to. I found it important to perform the tasks that I had set out for her also. I wanted a sense of real collaboration with her, in keeping with the ideas of narrative inquiry. I was also involved in a process of self-scrutiny even though I had chosen to take a directorial approach in order to be able to step back for the purposes of this research. I had

¹² *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett is an existential absurdist play.

conducted research on myself the previous year in my performance project and felt the need to be able to observe and gain a new perspective.

The Encounter, as the culmination of the three-phase process¹³, was designed to showcase the answers we had discovered through the practice. What we eventually presented was a continuing search for knowledge with regard to the nature of freedom in our existence. The search was visualised as a physical maze illustrated on the floor, in air of the room as well as on Ayanda's costume, with tape; that became a tangle of lines by the end. The maze of questions that had begun with freedom, led to the use of different strategies¹⁴ in our performed attempt at untangling the loops. One of our most revealing strategies was the use of sound, sourced from popular music that had an emotional connection to a certain memory, such as Mary J. Blige's "Fine" and a cover of "The Bohemian Rhapsody" *inter alia*. The lyrics of the songs were negligible; we tried to unearth the core of the emotion in connection to the sound of the songs. This action created an intricate link between the restricted body and the free voice.

Sartre's thoughts on the idea of freedom are of particular interest as he advocates for an absolute freedom saying that "the agonising reality of our freedom of choice is inescapable" (in Detmer, 1986: 41). He says that our freedom of choice haunts us in our daily reality in a manner that causes anguish but then adds to that the

¹³ The process was initially split into three phases: uncovering, discovering, and recovering. Uncovering was an exploratory phase of trying to find what some of the stories may be. Discovering was based on some of the earlier observations and trying to look from the outside in as well; an event was planned in order to bring our world into the process by sending Ayanda out to the Matrix at Wits, a social hub and central geographical location at the onset of the state of emergency. The event involved tying Ayanda's hands and removing her freedom to speak so that she had to ask to be freed using only the phrase "Please free me." I then followed her wherever she chose to go within the area and wrote my observations of her interactions. Recovering, as the third and final phase, was trying to recall some of the pivotal moments and finding ways to incorporate the inner personal work as well as the more public event into a theatrical performance; the Encounter.

¹⁴ We began with the invention of three characters to provide different points of view in our search, Slindile, Nokuthula and Ayanda. The Viewpoints book of techniques toward composition (Bogart & Landau, 2005) in the theatre was useful in practically showing some of the stereotypical ways that we perceive of people and helped us to find the stories of the characters in a way that felt authentic. Authenticity became very important to our way of working as we tried to find the feeling of the memory or story or song first before allowing that impulse to guide the action. We enlisted the help of the character, played by myself, Prof. Solomon to provide the theatricality of the work as a recreation of our actual process. The Recreation of the crime, as Prof. Solomon would say, the crime being the process itself. Prof. Solomon is the creator of the AMAZING METHOD of finding lost objects (www.professorsolomon.com: accessed 13-03-2011).

sense of responsibility so that we are obliged to act both for ourselves as free beings and for those whom our acts would influence. It is noteworthy that in using the synonym *liberate* in speaking to the existence of freedom that he alludes to political freedom. Liberty speaks to the fundamental right that human beings are believed to have within a political community; it declares that all people should be allowed the power to act or express themselves without restriction (www.answers.com, accessed 09-04-2011). This political sense of freedom denotes the legal foundations of a democratic justice system, which paradoxically determines the degree to which an individual's freedom may be restricted by a state.

Liberty seems to have a different definition to Freedom if one points out this limitation by the state in comparison to Sartre's absolute freedom. In fact, when thinking about our own country's history and the multiple restrictions on various levels that the state placed on a large portion of its people¹⁵ it seems difficult to believe in freedom as unrestricted. But Sartre does not deny the facticity of these restrictions; in fact, he posits that the relationship between freedom and this facticity of society as restrictive is not merely ambiguous but also interlinked. He satisfies this in saying that: "facticity both limits freedom and makes it possible in the first place" (Sartre in Detmer, 1986: 42). This, qualified by the idea that freedom is choice, which means that freedom is always restricted by what is chosen and what is not (Sartre in Detmer, 1986: 42). In this way freedom is what it is not. Freedom is paradoxical in its very definition. If the question is no longer, "To be or not to be?" but freedom itself then it stands to reason that being is to be free. But Ayanda and I were struggling to sense the freedom of being as the facticity of our freedom was overwhelming us with despair. The Event, which had originally been planned as the voluntary arrest of passers-by, became a much needed exercise in the different facets of our own freedom.

Ayanda and I met at the Matrix, the social hub of the University of the Witwatersrand, the Witwatersrand being one of the first places to affect the State of Emergency in 1985. She was unaware of the exact nature of the event until I explained to her that she would be tied with a red scarf and so lose her freedom to move her hands. She would then have to go to different people (whom she was free to choose) and ask, "Please free me" when she was ready to be let loose. When free she was able to exercise her freedom by speaking freely. She would then have to engage different people to participate in taking away her freedom again, by tying her

¹⁵ Black people were restricted by a number of laws regarding where they could live, who they could have sexual intercourse with, what kind of education they should get, where they could work and even what work they could do (Orkin, 1991: 1).

hands again. While Ayanda performed the task, I followed her wherever she chose to go and wrote down observations to chart the journey. The interesting responses we each noticed were that most of the black women refused to see Ayanda sitting next to them with the bright red scarf around her wrists, in fact they generally pretended that she was not there and so ignored her pleas for freedom. Most of the white males were quite quick to untie her and released their tension by asking her many questions as soon as she was free and the answers were usually followed by great laughter (‘Trauma of Freedom P-A-R Journal’ 04-03-2011).

This ‘rehearsal’ as it eventually informed and formed part of the presentation, practically crossed other boundaries as well. It was both a performance in its own right, in the form of living theatre¹⁶, and research as a kind of live action survey. The usefulness of this kind of event was that it provided empirical knowledge that helped us to shift our thinking about the nature of freedom and really brought us out of the despair¹⁷ that the investigation was sinking us into. While the Event was crucial, in reflection, it was not the Critical Event in terms of our narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry: (Did I remember?)

The *arts-informed enquiry* started mainly with narrative enquiry (which has now become almost a distinct methodology) (O’Toole, 2006: 159) and the word ‘almost’ becomes momentous when you look into the nature of narrative enquiry as well as at its implementation.

The methodology finds its basis in the tenet that we are made up of the stories that we tell ourselves as well as the stories that we are told of ourselves. In this way, the method embraces an ambivalence that is unique and quite well suited to an assessment that has its foundation in the hesitant connection between trauma and freedom, and the contradictions therein. The philosophy of narrative enquiry becomes its methodology and as an attitude or a belief about how people live their lives on a daily basis it brings with it the complexities that are part and parcel of the experiential inquiry¹⁸. The philosophy is most clearly outlined by Sartre, the philosopher that provides the theoretical underpinning of this research, when he writes:

¹⁶ Living theatre is a type of theatre that is performed in everyday situations, which unlike Invisible theatre of the same quality, is not necessarily designed to go unrealised as a theatrical event.

¹⁷ Our experience of freedom through our digging into memories of freedom or an awareness of it had up till that point brought us to the feeling of deep anguish that Sartre finds comes with the realisation of the real responsibility that comes with freedom (in Priest (Ed.), 2001: 16).

¹⁸ The word ‘almost’ as used above, is also poignant in terms of the research utilising a practice-as-research medium. The same ‘almost’ that I initially found freeing also revealed its limitations as a theatrical methodology because the final presentation lay in an in-between space as *almost* being a performance; but also almost not as it remains an undefined work in terms of theatrical terminology.

*“People are always tellers of tales.
They live surrounded by their stories and
The stories of others; they see everything
That happens to them through those stories
And they try to live their lives as
If they were recounting them” (Sartre, (1964)(cited in Webster& Mertova, 2007).*

The telling of tales is not always in writing or even verbal but sometimes a physical embodiment that is unaware of its status as telling. Lorna Marshall in her work *The Body Speaks*, features the implication of body awareness in the rehearsal room as much as in performance, saying that 'the body is the core of all real world human communication' (Marshall, 2002: xi). So in my search for authenticity and stories told in day-to-day interactions, it was the body that I looked to as my first recourse of action. I was additionally intrigued by the physicality of the amputation metaphor used by Manganyi in referring to the psychological split between mind and body when faced with conflicting narratives about the body as the site of self-construction (1991: 52).

Ayanda discovered a mental block in trying to write her musical timeline and similarly with the mind-maps, especially that of “Trauma.” It was the physical exercises that she and I ascertained to be the most able to free up the stories. The focus on the physical retelling of stories also allowed her a feeling of safety as the physical story could be as ambiguous as the memory and provide her with a feeling of privacy in not having to articulate the actual story in words. However, it was critical that she was engaged in an excavation of self, and not have to stress about finding the words to speak what was sometimes unspeakable, as she relived the action of her recollections. I found the collaborative nature of the narrative approach allowed the author to empathise with her and not stand aloof as the “researcher-director” barking orders, but to honestly partake in a journey together.

Indeed, if “we are not free not to be free” (in Priest (Ed.), 2001: 20) then we are not free not to be since we have no choice as to our existence in this world. Then, once we are we have to be and be free. Our inability to choose being in this situation is the ultimate paradox to our being as being free. Sartre, whose thoughtful philosophising about the nature of being and freedom corresponds with my own

sensibilities and, in fact, what I felt to be true after the process of working with Ayanda; finds the same paradox. He pronounced that:

“The paradox of freedom; there is freedom only in a *situation*, and there is a situation only through freedom. Human-reality everywhere encounters resistance and obstacles which it has not created, but these resistances and obstacles have meaning only in and through the free choice which human-reality *is*. ” (in Priest (Ed.), 2001: 47)

What was interesting about our process is that it revealed to us this immense sense of absolute freedom, we made choices every single step of the way from larger choices such as whom to observe in searching for further insight into our own personal experiences to smaller ones like when to take water breaks. Each decision felt weighted by the mass of the task at hand; freedom is held to be the greatest of all qualities of human existence, it is fought for in wars and struggles such as apartheid and the Holocaust. We were careful to use our freedom to reflect the nature of the inquiry. The sense of responsibility is what our situation as Black women born during the state of emergency and living in post-apartheid South Africa has given us in paradox to our freedom. It is a similar feeling to that described by Sartre, although he finds it under different circumstances.¹⁹ The intuition of responsibility is severe and it is this emotional connection with freedom that causes anguish when one is confronted with one’s own choice.

The pain of freedom is in being aware of the multiplicity of choices that face us even in our restrictions as well as the corresponding weight of the responsibility that this autonomy places on us to be true in our selections. It is this distress that brings the researcher- in me- to question the meaning of Trauma as a result of the consciousness of freedom. If the obstacles to our freedom only have meaning because of the facticity of our freedom; if resistance exists only because freedom exists and it has meaning in its nature as the paradox to freedom then trauma as an obstacle to freedom is a resistance that is paradoxical to freedom and its meaning is only true in relation to freedom. Yet that does not provide a definitive explanation of what trauma is. So, what is trauma?

¹⁹ Sartre finds responsibility not in connection to the past as he believes that in continually constructing ourselves that human beings are not their past choices although he does paradoxically find that “humanity makes history and history makes humanity” (ibid.: 20). The significance of the past in relation to freedom will be further discussed. He also connects responsibility to humanism; which will also be elaborated upon later.

²¹ The existential nature of the inquiry into freedom brings to the surface the responsibility of the free being to live authentically in the manner that Sartre says, “Existentialism is a Humanism” (in Priest (Ed.), ed., 2001: 7)

I have briefly mentioned that narrative enquiry as a method that comes with complications. The researcher within me was drawn to the use of the methodology because there was no prescribed technique of how to go about uncovering, discovering and recovering the stories. As a methodology, narrative enquiry was open in its approach added to a human-centred approach; which was of ultimate import to this study in maintaining authenticity. The task was to source diurnal narratives that feed into the greater tale, allowing for a sense of freedom within the practical research, and fulfilling the responsibility to the existential²¹ subject at hand. As one makes use of a Sartrean kind of existentialism, the humanist parallel is unshakeable. It was the humanist²² responsibility to all humankind to act truthfully in freedom that cast us into despair, as we became aware of our freedom.

The choice of narrative inquiry was, therefore, directly influenced by the topic of freedom as an existential humanist exploration and the need to address its real obstacles. I am aware that this was not the only avenue that I could have looked into in terms of an experiential, practice-as-research project. Many²³ who have embarked on such projects have found phenomenology, as a philosophy on and a **method** for studying experience (Frailigh, 2000: 54, **my emphasis**), to be useful to the endeavours. Brooke, convincingly argues for a phenomenological reading of Jung truthfully cites that consciousness, a prerequisite of freedom, is physically internalised and lived daily as action first then appropriated in a reflective manner as 'knowledge' which even when written remains an incomprehensible diurnal (1991: 2). And I say 'truthful' as my experience in reflectively writing the 'knowledge' of the lived action, is that it remains obscure and dense in exegesis. The definition of phenomenology (which has been problematised in its growing popularity over the years) is that it

²² Sartrean humanism is a concept researched in relation to the idea of visibility and invisibility in: 'The Scene and Unseen. An analysis of the invisible figure Morena in the play *Woza Albert!*, where I argue for a positive reading of the character's unseen nature; and use Blackham's definition of Humanism as 'the assumption that man is on his own and that life is all and an assumption of responsibility for one's own life and for the life of mankind' (1968: 13).

²³ Athena Mazarakis's phenomenological research is an example I use even in my Proposal, as she researched a personal topic through practical research also. I am also aware that there are other young Black women who have engaged with similar issues in their research such as Alude Mahali (Mills, 08-07-2011: 2); with whom I had the opportunity to work with at Rhodes University, where I first began to formalise my itch into academic thought. My praxis led me, not to ignore the existence of this dialogue but, to an introspective retrospection on why there was such a lack of connectivity between myself and others like me.

does not rest on the uniqueness of experience phenomenology becomes a hermeneutic and shared exploration (Fraleigh, 2000: 56).

The inquiry as I set it out and which shifted through the process, did not seek to build community by searching for an essence to the self. The study also let go of the idea of trying to hold or name the of the experience of freedom, so it was not a hermeneutic analysis; as we found language to be cumbersome at the height of the creative praxis.

While the researcher in me attempted a phenomenological²⁴ project before, through a view of the Saartjie Baartman narrative in contemporary society, 2009, it was found that the researcher was personally not ready for such an undertaking and Ayanda was not ready for it either. A phenomenological approach may be the next step in this line of inquisition.

Again, there were welcome gaps in utilising narrative enquiry, but I did make use of Viewpoints as a practical guide to composition in providing a sense of structure to the overall rehearsal process. Bogart and Landau, the initiators of this philosophically free means of creating speak of Viewpoints as an alternative to conventional approaches (2005: 15). I must note that Viewpoints were not used as a technique but called upon to help us play with different perspectives and so give us the freedom to explore an action or thought more fully.

What I found unique to narrative inquiry as a methodology was the notion of the critical event. The critical event is part of a story and highlights a moment of change of understanding or worldview by the storyteller (Webster and Mertova, 2007: 73). The critical event is what Ayanda and I called the 'Ahaa moment' (a term that is popularly used by Oprah). I was interested in the idea of the critical event not only for the real personal value that it holds in terms of being as recounting our stories but for its theatrical value to boot. Ayanda and I were unanimous, without

²⁴ To the extent that Sartre's existentialism can be called libertarian and phenomenological (in Priest (Ed.), 2001: 3) my task is also. Although I do not agree with the atheistic portion of Sartrean existentialism, I find that even his most contradictory statements on freedom are true to my own personal experience. But his existentialism is a freeing philosophy in his argument for absolute freedom and in its humanism; it also connects each individual through the belief in responsibility to self and humankind in turn.

any prior discussion, of what our ñcritical eventò was. The following is my own journal entry from the day of the óAhaa momentô

10 February 2011

Today was something of a breakthrough for me and Ayanda***

I had to leave her for an hour to go to a meeting with Warren on the dates etc. of our research projects. I left her working on joining the three charactersôtopographical stories on their defining moment (I decided to call it a defining moment instead of traumatic moment because we had discussed in our trying to extrapolate the meanings of the word átraumaô for ourselves, that the word is traumatic in and of itself because it halts definition or acting to find meanings. Ayanda recalled that in *Shutter Island* they say the word means ówoundô in German so it made clear to me that it is difficult to ask someone to open up a wound and dig into it.)

I had asked her to create topographies of the defining moment for each of the three characters we were working with: Herself/ version of, most similar to self, and most different to self. She began with most different- easier to start far away from herself in working, comfort of concealment. Then she did closest. But when it came to doing her self topography her body seemed to refuse.

I find it incredible how similar we are and I believe that we were somehow drawn together because the very process of getting here has been long and tiresome and I would have all but given up were it not for the fact that she made it known that she was there and ready to work. She really is a god-send.

I recalled my own research-performance piece at the beginning of last year and how when Athena Mazarakis who was working with the idea of the experiential being and using the body-así archive and how when she touched on something that my áinner childô was terrified of opening up my body tensed at the idea and then relaxed in refusal to perform the taské my mind followed.

Ayanda seemed to display something similar so in having been in a similar position, because I am no expert at reading body-language, I was able to be sensitive to that and allow her to stop. This allowing the process to stop when it feels that she has been worked enough for the day has become important for me because I feel it also allows the process of freedom in time tempo and duration of the rehearsal, when itô over itô over and we stop; instead of pushing on and adding something else.

But in that I also have to be able to give her the strictness of the structure to give her a framework within which she can work freely. Viewpoints, has helped in creating a free structure of listening and responding and exploring and giving. But also being able to chat to her in a free way not dictatorial has been useful. Today, the breakthrough happened because I did not allow her to not do what she did not want to do. She was terrified at working with and through her own topography- traumatised/ halted/ wounded by the thought of having to FEEL. She is able and quite willing to move and work and generous with explorations. But doing the action is separated from the feeling of what the action represents. She was fearful at the idea of me reading through her journal í to see where I could find text to use or ideas to work through; because those were her feelings.

ALONE and BELONGING is a task I would love to go back to because of todayô break.

The break was evident in the quality of the work she was able to show after being alone for an hour and just going over and over and over the task at hand. Time to repeat without the directorô eye which becomes a crutch to check if sheô doing the right thing time is CRITICAL.

The quality of the work was so real through all the characters that I was touched even though I couldnô find what the right words were to ádefineô what it was that I was feeling in response to what I was seeing. It was more than just action every moment was imbued with meaning-indefinable. She performed the task first with humming the tune of the song which deepened the action and gave it a rhythm. But then when she worked with the sound underneath the song it left behind the songô rhythm and became more real and substantial and meaningful. It was intense in a way inexplicable (ôTrauma of Freedom P-A-R Journalô 10-02-2011).

***I have tried to maintain the authenticity of this writing as a journal entry. The only editing that exists has been done to eliminate spelling mistakes. Whereas I had only included part of this record as an addendum to my Framing Document, I elected to use the full account for this report because I feel now that the whole story is important; the larger image of my personal worldview has informed the undertaking of this research as an entry in my lifeô journal.

Practice-as-research: (Did I know how?)

In 'Foucault's What is an Author? Towards a Critical Discourse of Practice as Research', Estelle Barrett suggests that in Foucauldian thought discourse and art as discourse, was 'an *act* situated in a field between the sacred and profane, the licit and illicit' (in Barrett and Bolt (Eds.), 2009: 140) meaning that art was able to traverse the space between the lawful and the forbidden. She also emphasizes that discourse was an act and in its transgressive ability this implies a true act of freedom. Practice-as-Research is a term that has complicated definitions as it is sometimes called Practice-based-Research and Arts-informed-enquiry *inter alia*. I have chosen to use the Practice-as-Research terminology as the more commonly used term but also as it implies a use of practical explorations **as** the research. This term, for me, most qualifies the idea of an act- in this instance a theatrical act- that occupies a space in between the holy and sacrilegious, the legal and prohibited; by making visible what society has masked.

In *Jung and Phenomenology*, phenomenology being defined as 'a method for studying the essences of phenomena' (Brooke, 1991: 31), psychic activity is described as the 'function of the archetypes and archetypal images and of the ego's relationship to them' (Brooke, 1991: 18). Trauma, as a psychic activity fulfils the function of being a coping mechanism when the relationship between the ego (as the individual persona) and the archetypes and archetypal images are significantly disturbed (Brooke, 1991: 18). Jung outlines four possibilities in these relations:

- (1) A psychosis where the archetypes and archetypal images swallow the ego. In this instance the ego may dissolve or exist in fusion with the archetypal reality and only recognise the difference between the outer and inner reality inequitably
- (2) A neurosis ensues when the ego fights the archetypes. It results in the person being in opposition to oneself
- (3) An alienation as the ego disengages from the archetypes. Association is lost with the self so that meaning disappears from life
- (4) Self realisation in the ego acting in unison with the archetypes. The self submits to its multiple archetypes in an internal dialogue that allows for healthy maturity (Brooke, 1991: 18-19).

These four processes are recognised as occurring ordinarily in human life but that the internal dialogue, which can take place everyday, can have disturbing affects on the person's life when traumatised. The 'dialogue' (Brooke, 1991: 18) halts in instances of trauma and instead of being in constant flux the trauma causes a singular relation to remain static. As the Greek etymology translates to 'a wound' (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trauma, accessed 08-03-2011) and the verb is 'to wound' trauma is a wound in the psyche that in its infliction continues to afflict the sufferer.

The use of practical knowledge within the logocentric field of research is not only a philosophical performance but also a political one through its ability to cross borders. Psychologically, this is a 'freeing' labour; even if momentarily, in the sense of feeling free. Ayanda and I were able to enjoy the liminality of this type of research, as the chosen means of performing this study, by making use of writing in our practice. The experiential nature of the undertaking meant that an empirical project was necessary, but we found a need to journal and write down observations as a critical means of recollection (which has been invaluable in the exegesis) and reflection imperative. In creating mind maps we were able to chart our own thoughts on the key words of the topic at hand. Moreover, we were able to view the additions and changes that were occurring to these descriptions. Through free-writing we found an honesty that is difficult to surface beyond the habits of our daily existence that cause us to edit even our thoughts. The exercise that most encompassed the liminal liberty was in the form of the staged Event; where Ayanda walked in search for freedom, at the Matrix.

We found in actuality what Conquergood located in de Certeau, that in Practice-as-Research, 'what the map cuts up, the story cuts across' – one official and abstract 'the map'; the other one practical, embodied, and popular 'the story' (2002: 311). The story, which began as the researcher's own, was considerably dispersed and became 'trans-discursive' (Foucault, in Barrett, 2009: 140) through sharing my bondage with Ayanda and vice versa. Our individual stories found multiple perspectives that became the occupation of different authors; simultaneously ourselves and yet not.

Theatre as research medium: (Did I act for my freedom?)

Asking questions can be a traumatic experience in the self doubt that it presents. But as Ayanda was able to articulate about 'Trauma' in her mind-map, it is sometimes comforting to stay in trauma as you do not have to face your future if you are stuck in the repetitive cycle of the past.

The fear is to hear the answer that Sartre gives to a pupil seeking advice on whether to go to war and avenge his brother's death or to stay at home and take care of his ailing mother; that in asking the particular person for guidance you have already chosen the kind of answer you seek, so choose (Sartre, in Priest ed., 2001: 16). The answer in other words is no longer preoccupied with the past as the question was, it is active, it is present and future confronting you; instead of 'Did I?', I dread even more so the response: 'Do!'. In the unrelenting words of freedom: 'Act!' In *Bad Faith*, as Biko—who was also strongly influenced by Sartrean philosophy²⁵ rebukes in his seminal text *I Write What I Like*, I have often behaved like a 'non-white' by hoping that God will come and do for me what I should do for myself (1978: 24). Just as Didi and Gogo in *Waiting for Godot* continuously plan to go but do not move; I have been consumed by the 'Did I?' impulse and ignored the 'Go, go' voice.

Racial contradictions and slippages of race: (Did I stop being black?)

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) as a manifestation of the psychological activity of trauma is a coping mechanism. It is a personality split that spoke directly to the idea of fragmentation in the Trauma of Freedom in Black South African women of my age group. 'The DID patient, by definition, has undergone a dismemberment of the self for a specific purpose; to survive severe childhood trauma.' (Ross, 1997: 11) and the description of the traumatic ordeal as a mutilation is not only congruent with those of Manganyi and Miyeni but also with the sense of fractured selves that I felt to be the experience of the Trauma of Freedom. This disorder challenges the notion of identity but also the sense of being that a person holds onto in order to make the decisions or actions that are required by their absolute freedom.

²⁵ 'The idea that Biko's Black Consciousness philosophy was influenced by Sartrean humanism as existentialism, as I developed in 'The Scene and Unseen: An analysis of the invisible figure Morena in the play *Woza Albert!* is thoroughly explicated in the essays in *Biko Lives!*'

Identity is a contested construct. Some believe that a person is born with an identity, as Jung believes that the archetypes are predetermined identities which fight for their place in the individual and that the degree to which these archetypes are performed in the person's internal dialogue constitute that being's personality (Brooke, 1991: 18-19). Others, like Sartre, believe in multiple identities in constituting a self; his concepts, such as, of the-being-in-itself, the-being-for-itself are popularly used in philosophical and even some psychological descriptions where the being is not predetermined and can alter their selves through the actions they perform in their free state of being. Dr Colin A. Ross, as a premier D.I.D psychoanalyst is of the persuasion that a person is only actually capable of holding one personality in a healthy manner.

D.I.D is not literally real. It is not possible to have more than one person in the same body. People with D.I.D do not have more than one personality. In its childhood onset forms, the disorder is an effective strategy for coping with a traumatic environment: It becomes dysfunctional because environmental circumstances have changed by adulthood. Debates about whether or not D.I.D is real are meaningless. The reality of the disorder is that it is both real and not real at the same time. (Ross, 1997: 62)

Ross's definition of D.I.D encompasses the central paradox that should be at the heart of any and all hypotheses on the nature and reality of identity, that it is not literally real but that debating its existence is futile as it has been constructed in a way that is real for anyone who finds themselves dealing with the facticity of their existence. In this way the inquiry brings about the necessity for the inclusion of race in the questioning of The Trauma of Freedom in our country.

In coming to terms with the many faces of Black, we constructed the characters: Slindile (*We are waiting*), Nokuthula (*One with patience or One with silence*), and Ayanda (*They are increasing*). Slindile represents the character most like Ayanda- the-person and Nokuthula being the most different to Ayanda-the-person; Ayanda-the-character being a version of Ayanda-the-person. We had come to a distrust of language in performance at the point of creating these personas so we chose to use our written observations of other Black females to create live action for the characters that were all in the same age group. In doing this, we chose to create topographical accounts of a 'defining moment' in each of their lives; each one had

already had a detailed C.V. fashioned for them. The next step was to find a song that would suit the moment, not a song whose lyrics were close to the action of the critical event in that person's chronicle but one that emotively would provide a soundtrack to the memory. This emotional connection meant that Ayanda had to find a song that she personally connected to.

It was in recounting these critical events that we would discover our ñAhaa moment.ò

Ayanda, in trying to recall the first moment when she had to define herself as Black writes about her confusion at having to tick which box she belonged to. She initially speaks about her language and that she lied when she said that her home language was English because they spoke Zulu but that as a person who actually belonged to the Pedi culture and yet did not speak the language that it was cause for confusion. She notes that in recalling that moment that she had wished that she had had more options such as a category for 'Good Blacks' as she thought she needed a space somewhere between the White, Black, and Coloured option. In asking her to make that recollection, I remembered how I had also felt that I needed a separate category to identify myself that Black or Other was inadequate to describe me. I did not feel that I belonged to the group; especially when my mother's friends and just about every other older Black woman I was in contact with called me *Umlungu* (white person). Ayanda moves on to say that it has become easier for her to identify herself since that instance, that in varsity she came into contact with all kinds of Black people and that she can firmly say:

I AM BLACK, not sure about PROUD yet, but my shoe fits comfortably with me. I have pride in who I am, how I was raised, how I found myself to be the person I am today and my visions & dreams for the future, my influences and struggles and how they have shaped the woman I am today and the fact that I am black comes with it as it cannot be divorced from who I am, my upbringing and hurdles and so there it is!!! (Journal entry, 02 February 2011)

Race, and being Black in particular, is not black and white it involves the totality of a person's being as Ayanda cannot separate her past, present and future from her racial identity; she observes her visions and dreams, influences and struggles and her very womanhood in her identity as a Black person. Steve Biko, the premier constituent of Black Consciousness as a socio-political movement that grew to its greatest popularity after the 1976 massacre of school children marching against the use of

Afrikaans as the language of instruction in Black schools, was the first person to define being Black as an identity that encompasses much more than physical visibility or invisibility.

Biko's definition of Black in *I Write What I Like* encompasses a philosophical view of the identity rather than a specifically racialised one. Black is said to be a 'false image' (1978: 52) that needs to be corrected. Unlike the colour-blind philosophy that attempts to erase blackness, Biko does not merely take a negative image and try to make it positive, he recognises the complexities of the Black identity and 'although Biko is rather harsh toward white liberals' he equally rebukes those 'dull-witted, self-centred blacks' (Msimanga, Long Essay, 2009: 10) that he believes are exercising Sartrean Bad Faith²⁶ by refusing to recognise their absolute freedom. It becomes clear in observing Biko's philosophy that Black is a choice.

He does not recognise certain blacks, in terms of skin colour, as belonging to the Black Consciousness conceptualisation of Black. When More emphasizes that all non-whites, Black, Coloured, and Indian were negatively identified during apartheid and so all non-whites were seen as Blacks by the Black Consciousness movement (in Mngxita, Alexander & Gibson (Eds.), 2008: 55) he over-stresses the point by failing to point out the other key element to the philosophical classification. The point is clearly articulated in the quotation that is cited in the same text but not clarified by More who references *SASO on the Attack: An Introduction to the South African Student Association* where Biko and comrades initially classified the term for the purposes of the movement. They said that blacks are people 'who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated as a group in the South African society **and** identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspiration' (in Mngxita, Alexander & Gibson (Eds.), 2008: 55 **my emphasis**). It is the racially open and yet philosophically restrictive characterisation of the Black identity that I find useful as it brings to light the variations and intricacies of blackness that became significant in my study. The Black Consciousness

²⁶ Bad Faith is a Sartrean concept relating to the nature of freedom as absolute thereby in constant confrontation with our social reality which restricts choices for differing reasons. Bad Faith is the denial of freedom which is paradoxically impossible as Sartre notes that 'we are not free not to be free' (in Priest (Ed.), 2001: 16); consequently Biko's reprimand of blacks that give up their very consciousness.

designation speaks to a variety of oppressed groups which means that women can be included in the idea of Black as a discriminated group; but with particular emphasis on their identification of themselves in the unit of struggle for the realisation of aspirations.

What is intriguing about the classification is also the fact that it speaks directly to the practical definitive that Ayanda was able to come to by re-assessing the stories that she has told herself about her identity as a Black person. The emphasis on struggles and dreams as well as the necessity for self-affirmation in saying: I AM BLACK. She also, very interestingly, indicated that being a woman and being Black is definitive of the type of woman she is. Oshadi Mangena, in her argument for a gendered presence within the activities of the Black Consciousness movement, however, unintended testifies to the possibility of the female perspective within the Black referential (in Mngxita, Alexander & Gibson (Eds.), 2008: 55). She also calls attention to the fact that the term *non-white* was used to distinguish the Bad Faith *blacks* from the Black Consciousness *Black* people (in Mngxita, Alexander & Gibson (Eds.), 2008: 55). In this vein the use of the notion of *woman* needs to be explained for the purposes of this examination.

In my previous writings toward this research I have absolutely declared that I did not know what the original impulse for my need to conduct this research had come from.

This story has multiple beginnings. It is a tale of many voices and simultaneous *truths* (*Shwele Bawo!* Practice-as-Research project report 2010: 1).

Black and White may be taken for granted as linguistic constructs of past regimes that sought to dehumanise the other in order to gain superiority and wealth. But, these ideas have been internalised into our individual and social lives in ways that cannot simply be swept under the carpet and ignored. This internalisation of racial constructs is what I believe has resulted in an inability to experience Freedom in South Africans like myself and artists such as Eric Miyenié. This deep need to know Freedom; to be able to say, *I feel it in my bones* or *I hold it in my heart* coupled with the paralysis of never being able to really practice it is what Achille Mbembe terms the *Trauma of Freedom* (*An Evening with Fanon* 2010). (Msimanga, *Proposal* 2010: 2-3)

The above text traces the beginnings of my attempts at describing the impulse that lead me to question what the experience of freedom is to the young black woman living in South Africa. As a young black woman in South Africa myself I found that I was being plagued by questions of whether I did experience being free within our young democratic society or

whether, like our young country, I was a rainbow of personalities trying to find my true being but remained haunted by the fragments of memories from the past where I may have actually lost my original self? (Msimanga, "Framing Document" 2011: 2).

In the past year I have come closer to realising what the source of my inquiry has been. Even though I have always recognised the very personal nature of this research, I am finally able to say that I, that my trauma, the reason why I feel unable to know the experience of being free, is that I was molested as a child. Sexual trauma, as I have mentioned it in the list of different types of traumas, is also "a psychic activity which fulfils the function of being a coping mechanism when the relationship between the ego (as the individual persona) and the archetypes and archetypal images are significantly disturbed" (Msimanga, "Research Report, 2011: 9) to appropriate the Jungian definition used above. It is the type of trauma that Dr Howard Fradkin says that the sufferer, in speaking to the group of 200 men who suffered sexual abuse in their childhood on the Oprah show, has to allow for a place where the man and the child can live together (*Oprah: The Farewell Season*, SABC 3: 02-05-2011). In saying this, he indirectly speaks to the show that helped me to frame the performance Encounter²⁷ by providing me with a means of presenting one of the manifestations of trauma that is more specific to women, D.I.D.

Body-telling: (Did I change? Did my body tell?)

Definitions of womanhood centre on the negative as the antonym of manhood. The story of being a woman is, therefore, constantly in contrast to the story of being a man; but, significantly the male story is set in a hierarchical perspective to the female narrative. Michel Foucault sees the modern subject as "created and policed by power-knowledge relationships between institutions and individual bodies" (in Distiller & Steyn, 2004: 1). He recognises that the creation and regulation of an identity story, in this case a gendered-identity, is determined not only by the individual body but also by institutions, which have historically been male-dominated. If "life is not how it was but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold" (Bruner, in Webster & Mertova, 2007: 2) then being a woman is the story that we not only tell ourselves or are told by chiefly patriarchal institutions but also the retelling of the narrative from

²⁷ The Encounter, with a capital T is the name given to the performative event that showcased my practical research and its "findings" The reasons for the name and its Grotowskian influence will be discussed later.

different perspectives. I speak of the constructs as stories precisely because being ñwomanò or being ñmanò is the story that we tell ourselves, generally based on the biology of our sexual organs.

ñThe body is where gender distinctions are generally understood to originatedò (Brown, in Loots, 2006: 449) so the body is the site of gendered interpretations and reinterpretations. In one of the four mind maps titled: Freedom; Trauma; Black and Woman, which Ayanda filled out over the duration of our rehearsals, she wrote that ñwomanò represented strength but that the inner strength is taken as a given but that the outer strength is hidden. This part of the story of womanhood is of particular interest as it signifies the conflict between the inner and the outer being of the body as well as underlining the subjugation of visible aspects of being woman. The visible is not only the physical body, which Ayanda additionally found to be sexually patrolled, but also the story that is written on the body.²⁸

In telling the different tales (the inner and the outer in the form of three women) we were splitting our selves into different roles; as it was also illuminated that each role was still a part of the self. This psychological dispersal which Barrett found to be useful for áreflecting on the multiple positions the researcher must occupy in reportingò (in Barrett and Bolt, 2007: 140) and Manganyi saw as the loss of limbs found its manifestation as DID in performance. While DID is by no means an official diagnosis of the Trauma of Freedom nor is it the only psychological amputation possible;²⁹ it is the condition that we found most useful in this research. The disorder tends to affect women even though it is usually the result of a childhood trauma that may or may not be remembered; it lays dormant in the overwhelmed young girl who remains in the situation until it is triggered by a critical event at a later stage in life (Oprah on *Oprah*, 08-03-2011). The disorder is the psyche's manifestation of the trauma that it can no longer endure. The psychological fragmentation is the

²⁸ Taking the idea used by Lillian Loots that áthe physical body is understood to be a text written by race, class and genderò (2006: 449) which speaks to the notion of the self as story but in this instance a written text inscribed on the body, I pursue the idea that the visible self of the woman is made invisible or suppressed in the narrative of freedom in South Africa.

²⁹ Dr Colin A. Ross, writes that from his own personal clinical experience and research that he can posit that the disorder is not only common but that dissociation features commonly in various other disorders related to the psyche (1997: vii).

internalisation of the saga that is the person's being. The fable that is the self's attempt of making meaning becomes the reality of that being.

“The D.I.D patient has a fragmented self caused by real physical, sexual, and psychological assault. **Her** fragmentation represents a creative strategy for coping with and surviving this assault. D.I.D requires treatment because, like all defences gone wrong, it causes more suffering than it prevents, especially when the victim has become an adult and the original abuse is no longer present – the abusive events are traumatic in and off themselves, but they also give rise to *the problem of attachment to the perpetrator*’ (Ross, 1997: 7, **my emphasis**).

The DID manifestation is useful and correlative to the nature of this enquiry in a number of ways. Firstly, the connection between the mode of research and the fragmented self has already been made but the truth of the cause of the fragmentation is important to note. I have mentioned in a pithy fashion the realisation that the actuality of my own sexual abuse as a child has been the underlying impulse for my need to follow this line of investigation. Hence, the reality of a personal psychological, physical and sexual assault underpins the tentative conceptualisation of a trauma of freedom in other Black women in my age group. The emphasis on “**her**” in the above mentioned quote is to make visible the fact that this expression of trauma is specifically associated with females; as I have suggested that the appearance of trauma is different in the female relation than it is to the male fiction. Ross fascinatingly sees DID as a creative method for dealing with and living through the trauma; which brings to the forefront a theatrical, or at the very least, an artistic interpretation of the disorder. As with practice-as-research or narrative enquiry as methodologies that are creative and aid the researcher who has to go through a difficult process, the disorder fulfils the function of being a coping mechanism.

DID additionally links to historical trauma as the kind of trauma that comes closest to a definition of trauma as is required by the task of this excavation. Historical trauma as a trauma that is experienced in a previous generation but only affecting the lives of future generations long after the initial cause is history, has particular associations with DID. Apartheid, as a past trauma, continues to plague younger generations who would have no real recollection of the cause of the trauma. The inability to know the source makes it difficult to mourn its passing and in so doing move on. Instead, the unintelligible attachment to the past holds the trauma sufferer captive, unable to discern the reasons for the actions that they take; as their absolute freedom does not allow them not to act. Their anguish becomes intensified as

the intimate discovery of myself is at the same time the revelation of the other as a freedom which confronts mine (Sartre, in Priest (Ed.), 2001: 39).

The Encounter was given the title *D.I.D I?* as it was a re-enactment of our search for freedom. In this way the Encounter asked: 'Did I lose my freedom?' and confronted the audience with the same question by asking them to help us look for our freedom. They had to perform³⁰ by helping to blindfold Ayanda with a red scarf when she tried to 'visualise' what might have happened to her freedom; in reference to the Event at the Matrix.

Storytelling: (Did I have a story to tell?)

The experience of alterity as being Other to one's own self sends a person into utter despair. It is the ultimate confrontation of existence, seeing the self outside of the self's body and, therefore, verifying the self's own existence as definitively free. In the 'Framing Document' to the presentation, I cited the Marvel comic book character Trauma as the enactment of the psychological split that being-in-trauma creates. I observed how he was living in question marks in search for the origins of his traumatised being and that because death was not an option for him (he was resurrected) that he was denied the freedom of death as the final act, but that the main question was how to continue living in such misery. It was in the performance of The Encounter that I was able to appreciate, not the taking on of a different self as Trauma was able to do, but the freedom of giving up the fight.

The Encounter began when the spectators had seated themselves, on chairs that were placed at a specific event in the life of one of the three women. The audience was able to watch each other watching the work, and this was made inevitable at certain points in the search. We began with Ayanda re-arranging the furniture. This was important because the space was not set up to fulfil its regular

³⁰ While the role of the audience during the Encounter was purposefully awkward, it was interesting to observe that most of the audience members chose to participate in the traditional passive role of viewers. The doors were wide open for them to freely leave if they chose to, as at the Matrix where the space is also built to foster an ability to move freely, but most participants chose to stay in the awkward situation we had placed them in. At the Matrix, this uncomfortable situation was even more telling of social behaviour than at the Digital Arts Exhibition space of the Encounter. As people remained in their seats but pretended not to see Ayanda and her plight for freedom she exaggerated her actions but her presence was ignored. The audience in the Encounter could not erase her from view but they also generally chose not to engage when she asked them to.

function as an exhibition area, but Ayanda had created a topography of her childhood home by sectioning off parts of the room. As myself, I posed nagging questions to her as to why she was doing what she was doing, when she was free to do anything else. The line of inquiry led us to the discovery that she had misplaced her freedom. We chose to recreate our search for freedom in this way as it became apparent that our investigation was futile because we already possessed what we were looking for, even if we did not realise it. The act continued for over an hour as we combed through every strategy we could access to help us search. Professor Solomon's aid was sought after as a desperate act in the face of despair. He was enlisted by me, who "When in doubt google[d] it" as I had done in our praxisⁱ; when we struggled to define our key terms in our mind maps. The Encounter made use of six gestures that Ayanda and I had developed as the daily acts of the performance of womanhood. They involved cleaning and comforting a baby *inter alia*. These gestures were performed in sequence, backwards, repeated, and slowed down to the point of creating a trance effect in the audience as well as being performed in different parts of the body and space. The same gestures were also put through Prof Solomon's "Twelve Principles" (www.professorsolomon.com, accessed 13-03-2011). The Encounter was exhausting to perform and although empathy was not induced, there was a sense that the spectators made contact with the endeavour. By the end of the experience there was a feeling of having let go of expectations. We had "confront[ed] ourselves with them in order to understand ourselves" (Grotowski, 1968: 59) and I believe that the inverse was true for them.

At the end when Ayanda sang, "Oh carry on, nothing really matters" as the soundtrack to her own topographical critical event, I did not feel the morbidity that that song had carried for me as a young girl contemplating the end of my life. The version of the song, as was meaningful for us, was that sung by a destitute black woman in her early twenties, as we are now. When we had tried to excavate the sound beneath the words we found a choked up resonance that would not let us carry on, but as we closed that act in our play of life, the noise was freed up as we realised that we would carry on, could carry on no matter how difficult.

Act in three parts: (Beginning, Middle and End???)

Initially, the three acts, representing the three phases of the process,³¹ were constructed as a kind of Aristotelian plot with reversal, discovery and calamity (Aristotle in Dorsch (Ed.), 1986: 46-47). I quickly realised that Freedom as an act required more than the acts I had planned to perform. In fact, the act of freedom unravels a wave of rippling acts that are demanded of the same commitment. The critical event, as outlined in the journal entry, had not been planned as such. The event's enlightenment of the process as a whole did not reach completion in the performance of The Encounter either. The constant call to action that freedom demands, is heard whenever one of those songs is playing. And we were not able to achieve a similar kind of 'break' as we did in that moment during the performance of the Encounter; most likely as a result of the fear of unmasking the full extent of the trauma in the presence of others. The Encounter was planned to be the final act of the three-phase programme. It should have been the moment of 'recovery' after having uncovered and discovered our freedom through the process. At the moment of performance it was already seen as the unwritten fourth act because we had gone beyond the instant of recovery into the need for contact. As on the world stage that we perform our selves on everyday, this play must keep playing if it has any hope of truly knowing itself.

The critical event as the uncovering of the sounds that lay beneath the lyrics to the songs went through a three part process in the practice. First, it was the remembering of the music and the particular memory that accompanied it to provide it with a strong emotional tie. Secondly, it was the initial rehearsal of the topographies with the sound of the feeling of the song and the discovery of the raw emotive act that was present in the performance of the movement with the chant. Lastly, there was the recovery of the original impulse and corresponding affectation in a room full of people who were welcomed, ignored and needed all at the same time.

First Act: The act of acting

I had proposed to make use of the legacy within which I work, that of Workshop Theatre as a philosophically and politically poignant way of working that became favoured in this country for its egalitarian practice, therefore, allowing everyone's

³¹The phases were designed for the three-part process of uncovering, discovering and recovering.

story to be heard, favouring the multi-vocal approach. I was able to honour³² that seat of knowledge in my own way by listening and observing from the dual-position of an insider and outsider when it came to Ayanda's relaying of her personal and fictional accounts. It was an 'exercise in reinvention rather than one detailing a factual account of events, as we [did not] retell a story that has been told many times' (Homann, 2009: 17). We were able to reformulate our own narratives and choose how to perform them.

Ayanda recalled that in *Shutter Island* they say the word means 'wound' in German so it made clear to me that it is difficult to ask someone to open up a wound and dig into it. I had asked her to create topographies of the defining moment for each of the three characters we were working with: Herself/ version of, most similar to self, and most different to self. She began with most different- easier to start far away from herself in working, comfort of concealment. Then she did closest. But when it came to doing her self topography her body seemed to refuse ('Trauma of Freedom P-A-R Journal' 10-02-2011).

We were trying to define the term 'trauma' when we found that there was a block in finding what it meant to us, that it was traumatic for us to look into what shaped the way that we perceive the word. In South Africa, Workshop Theatre processes of research, repetition and revision, such as those used in *Sophiatown* and *Woza Albert!*, were often based on asking ordinary people difficult questions to glean into the horrific trauma that living in the apartheid state had caused.³³ My process was centred on Ayanda, a singular person, but in observing a fragmented identity I had to

³² 'In a country where the law said that actors who were not white were not allowed to share the same stage, where white actors performed on lucrative state-funded theatres and black audiences (those who could afford to) were not allowed to sit in the main auditorium with the white audiences, where the plays performed by the white actors were the only ones recognised as art and where the plays performed were generally Western plays from the canon of accepted European and American plays, in this country it was a revolution when different races came together in collaboration to create their own original plays about their people and the life they were living (Orkin, 1995: 5-7). It was an act of democracy in a state where such an ideal of freedom was just a dream. Kreuger observes that in such situations, the individual's freedom is often given up for the sake of the group (Kreuger, 2010: 11-12). So, to avoid this loss of personal freedom for public freedom, I elected to appropriate the style of the workshop theatre approach so that Ayanda may feel free to be, to share. But, I hoped to honour the meaning of working in this way in a democratic South Africa.' ('Framing Document' 2011: 11)

³³ In a country where the law said that actors who were not white were not allowed to share the same stage, where white actors performed on lucrative state-funded theatres and black audiences (those who could afford to) were not allowed to sit in the main auditorium with the white audiences, where the plays performed by the white actors were the only ones recognised as art and where the plays performed were generally Western plays from the canon of accepted European and American plays, in this country it was a revolution when different races came together in collaboration to create their own original plays about their people and the life they were living (Orkin, 1995: 9). It was an act of democracy in a state where such an ideal of freedom was just a dream. Kreuger says that 'this use of freedom as rebellion, revolution against the totalising ordering of society' [has] sometimes resulted in a willing suspension of personal freedom for the sake of a consolidated, communal expression' (2010: 12). So, to avoid this loss of personal freedom for public freedom, I elected to appropriate the style of the workshop theatre approach so that Ayanda may feel free to be, to share. But, I hoped to honour the meaning of working in this way in a democratic South Africa.

find ways to allow for her multiple voices to give their account. The creation of the characters Slindile, Nokuthula, and Ayanda was my method toward this aim. I realised these characters were all versions of Ayanda, even though they had not been named thus. It was in struggling to find the truth of these characters through the performance of their defining-moment-topographies that this wound became evident; it is traumatic to see the self as fragmented.

Second act: re-enactment of contact

We rediscovered some old romances of the theatre as our predecessors before us had, although for different purposes. Grotowski reminded us of what and why we were digging into our own skins. He gave us the term *ñencounterò* for the presentation (1968: 226). I found that naming the staging was strained under any other description. I had tried to use theatrical and other artistic terms to formalise what *ñItò* was but even the phrase *ñperformance-installationò* was unsatisfactory as a conflation of the notion of performance as an act (speaking back to the growing definition of Freedom) and installation to reference the space which was an exhibition space in the digital arts department. The work was able to settle into the skin that had grown around it but it remained an intangible, unnameable *ñItò*, which I have grown comfortable with. The trauma narrative of freedom and the existential construction within it is dense and eludes definition. It is felt in the moment of its expression, which may be the voluntary mask or the involuntary psychosis of dissociation; which may be construed as the wearing of multiple masks. Grotowski was also able to articulate the desire or a performative investigation as the need to make *ñcontactò* (1968, 226), if only on an individual level of making conscious the narratives that are the individual self.

The quality of the work was so real through all the characters that I was touched even though I couldn't find what the right words were to *define* what it was that I was feeling in response to what I was seeing. It was more than just action every moment was imbued with meaning-indefinable???. She performed the task first with humming the tune of the song which deepened the action and gave it a rhythm. But then when she worked with the sound underneath the song it left behind the song's rhythm and became more real and substantial and meaningful. It was intense in a way inexplicable (Trauma of Freedom P-A-R Journal 10-02-2011).

When I wrote this portion of my journal entry I was excited at the real feelings that I had had during the rehearsal but am now aware of the inherent fear that resides in not being able to articulate precisely what they were and how they were elicited. The triple question mark makes that quite clear to me now. Ayanda was also visibly

moved by what had taken place, but in our brief conversation thereafter she had a lump in her throat that made it knotty for her to even try to articulate what had just occurred.³⁴ In the writing of this very document as the culmination of the act of documenting that I had set out to do, I was daunted at the task of having to articulate the inexplicable sentiment that the process generated. “What was *ñltò*?” is a question that stands in front of the mirror of critical reflection that asks, “Did I do *ñltò*?” If *ñltò* is the Grotowskian-type contact that I initially sought then I do not believe that I achieved *ñltò*. The audience members seemed to be involved in personal processes of inquiry rather than in empathetic contact with her. But Ayanda and I certainly made contact during the presentation, not with each other, but with our selves. As a journey of self discovery in the existential manner of asking about our private identities in experiencing freedom as a kind of trauma, we were able to face up to the acts that we perform as a result of an inescapable freedom

Third act: the fact of the encounter

The Encounter was an honest display of the habits of our Bad Faith in “our daily efforts” to hide the truth about ourselves not only from the world, but also from ourselves (Grotowski, 1968: 37). Its performance was designed to make each person aware of their personal coping mechanisms in the face of trauma and freedom, as the paradox of anguish. As a personal journey, it has been eye-opening, but now that the eyes are open the work is to continue to act in Good Faith, that is authentically to the consciousness of the self keeping in mind the responsibility this holds to humankind at large.

I recalled my own research-performance piece at the beginning of last year and how when Athena Mazarakis who was working with the idea of the experiential being and using the body-así archive and how when she touched on something that my “inner child” was terrified of opening up my body tensed at the idea and then relaxed in refusal to perform the task—my mind followed.

Ayanda seemed to display something similar so in having been in a similar position, because I am no expert at reading body-language, I was able to be sensitive to that and allow her to stop. This allowing the process to stop when it feels that she has been worked enough for the day has become important for me because I feel it also allows the process of freedom in time tempo and duration of the rehearsal, when it’s over it’s over and we stop; instead of pushing on and adding something else.

³⁴ The rhizome had split and a new plant had developed. It was the nature of this new growth that we hoped to discover, not merely by discarding the older rhizome but through a process of grafting. As Shakespeare does through “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” (www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/18detail.html, accessed 13-08-2011) when he ties the parts of the two plants together (the sonnet and the muse) to grow as one, so we joined our past and our present to discover a new plant altogether.

The break was evident in the quality of the work she was able to show after being alone for an hour and just going over and over and over the task at hand. Time to repeat without the director's eye which becomes a crutch to check if she's doing the right thing time is CRITICAL (óTrauma of Freedom P-A-R Journalô 10-02-2011).

In recalling the performance, research process at this point in my process with Ayanda (which I identify as a ñbreakò in our process) I was trying to understand the similarities between us on a personal performative level. Reflecting on the ñbreakò now, I believe that it was a moment of insight. I was able to see what I had not previously seen; I was able to see her. In seeing her I saw that my ñinner childò had not wanted to take her mask off to share herself and be vulnerable, once again, to experiencing the full extent of the trauma she had suffered. Ayanda was similarly protecting her mask but through sound her inner child was able to cry out and give voice to the stories that she had been suppressing both consciously and subconsciously. As a óCRITICALô moment it was becoming aware of the mask that the inner child had carried to adulthood that sat like a lump in the throat. The awareness was that we had been acting in Bad Faith through our act; meant as an act of freedom. We had both, in different circumstances, given the power to act as the performers that we were to the inner child; who was unable act, her growth being stunted by her existence as the personification of trauma.

Fourth act: the unwritten act

The time spent in consideration after The Encounter has been in trying to keep truthful to the practice and to follow the impulse of the total act³⁵ as involving the written performance as an honest reflection thereof. The need to continue this work has grown stronger, rather than waning, which has caused me to realise that there is more to be done in relation to the topic. The act of ñde-stressing raceò is a contradictory one, as I was aware in the writing of the topic,³⁶ but it is easier said than done. It is the reason that many assume that they can stop seeing colour. But, race is also distressed by this task as racial identities are part of our narrative socially and

³⁵ The phrase ñtotal actò is also derived from Grotowski, who interestingly was rediscovered in the latter stages of rehearsal but whose thoughts became invaluable in my attempts to understand what Ayanda and I were involved in doing. His ótotal actò encompasses the performer as the prime source of theatrical presentation and their performance as a sharing with the audience of a part of themselves. He sees this type of giving performance as an óunveiling of one's beingé a gift of the self which borders on the transgression of barriers and loveé a kind of provocation for the spectatorô (Grotowski, 1968: 131).

³⁶ I chose not to alter the topic itself even though my perspective has changed. The many questions that resulted from the original topic investigation were consequential of the self same topic. The fundamental issues remain even if the means continue to provide new avenues to question in that area.

personally. In my work, I have used racial indicators such as the word Black, the skin and racially associated performances. Race has been stressed in that way. I have also exploited sound as a raw expression of trauma, which I argue is common to all South Africans, but not for the purpose of uniting but for introspection. The audience is invited into our space, a home³⁷ space as well as an exhibition area so that they may view, without giving the option of free movement as would be expected of the gallery location, but with the freedom to observe personal tales that would not be ordinarily experienced in everyday habits.

Today, the breakthrough happened because I did not allow her to not do what she did not want to do. She was terrified at working with and through her own topography- traumatised/ halted/ wounded by the thought of having to FEEL. She is able and quite willing to move and work and generous with explorations. However, doing the action is separated from the feeling of what the action represents. She was fearful at the idea of me reading through her journal to see where I could find text to use or ideas to work through; because those were her feelings (ôTrauma of Freedom P-A-R Journalô 10-02-2011).

Paradoxes have been the overriding theme of this work. The contradictions pervaded every sector of investigation from the impulse to know a freedom that is by definition unknowable except through its antithesis as anguish, to the act of unmasking the everyday performance, to the seeking of making contact with the self through sharing the search with others and stressing the stories that make up who we are in order to de-stress the make-up of these stories. Ayanda's liberality in doing what she thought she was expected to do and, simultaneous, restraint in having to fully expose what she had discovered as a result, revealed to me that the paradoxes were true to the experience of the trauma of freedom. The rehearsal process of the acts of freedom in daily situations was an artificial one but it acted out some honest impressions of our reality as a performance of freedom, in the theatrical sense.

Fifth act: the act of writing

This report is a document of the questions, insights and continued struggles that this research has brought to the surface. It has been a task as complex as the practice itself, especially in relaying the observations of the act as an inconclusive ñtò whose value was a felt experience more than any hermeneutic solutions. Furthermore, the act of

³⁷ Ayanda's original topographical drawing had taken the shape of her childhood home and the different emotions that each room brought to her recollection.

writing itself is recognised as having immeasurable power and is undertaken with the despair of optimism that in acting I am able to fulfil not only my responsibility to myself but the need to add to the dialogue on the experience of freedom in 'free' South Africa; which I do as truthfully as I can imagine how to, beginning with scrutiny of self as a Black female. As a Black female who has made certain observations about her world, I hope to elicit a deeper understanding as to the reasons behind the world that I see from the viewpoint that I perceive it. That is why I add to the above-cited journal entry that:

***I have tried to maintain the authenticity of this writing as a journal entry. The only editing that exists has been done to eliminate spelling mistakes. Whereas I had only included part of this record as an addendum to my Framing Document, I elected to use the full account for this report because I feel now that the whole story is important; the larger image of my personal worldview has informed the undertaking of this research as an entry in my life's journal.

The sixth act: the story is never completely told

This kind of deep investigation is personal in its emphasis on the individual story as well as philosophical in how it tries to understand the being of the stories that are told. It is also psychological as it looks into specific memories that are recalled in the re-visioning of those stories and political in the questioning of the narratives. I cited a passage from my proposal in the framing document for the performance of my 'findings' in order to illustrate the reasons for my conducting the research but in the time spent considering the practice-as-research and the writing of the report I have found that some thoughts have shifted or at least revealed. The passage cited was,

Eric Miyeni writes, in *O'Mandingo: The Only Black at a Dinner Party*, in response to a white man and potential business partner telling him that he does not see his [skin] colour, that, 'The skin is my biggest organ, period. It is placed outside of every physical thing that makes up who I am. So how can you not see it?' (2006:67). He argues that the 'Blackness' of his skin is a large part of his identity as a person because of how he sees himself and how other people see him. It is a problem of sight (Msimanga, 'Proposal' 2010: 2-3).

While I cannot say, after conducting the practical and theoretical research, that 'I feel freedom' nor can I say that 'I hold freedom' I am able to recognise that the personal impulse was coupled with a theatrical need to tell my story. I became

fascinated with telling the story when during the 2010 FNB Dance Umbrella³⁸ I observed that there was an unwitting dialogue about the experience of living in post-apartheid South Africa between the works presented. What I have come to realise is that the need to contribute my story in this dialogue was a driving force for me. I needed to tell the authentic tale of a young black woman and her experience, or lack thereof, of the freedom that is supposed to be felt in our country today. In viewing and reviewing (Msimanga, 'The Thinking Person's Dance' 2010, accessed 09-07-2010.) the Dance Umbrella works I found that I admired the sheer artistry of Nelisiwe Xaba's *Black!...White* (which I initially considered writing my research on) but that there was something so truthful in Boyzie Cekwana's *Influx Controls* (which inspired my performance research piece last year) that Xaba's work lacked. Unwittingly, it was something about both these works that influenced my research. I wanted to tell the story that I felt was not being told and in that way exercise my freedom; as I have found that even though freedom may be absolute that it is an act, whether one realises it in their everyday movements or not.

In telling the story, I inadvertently and unknowingly was attempting to own it, to make visible to myself, first, and to others that 'I am not Other' (duCille, in Abel, Christian, & Mogle, 1997: 21) as DuCille observes that African American women had become in contemporary scholarship. Whereas duCille in her analysis is fully aware that she is not Other, the sentiment was not true for me, in fact the amputation metaphor of Manganyi who says that 'the progressive denial and fear of the body results in a psychological amputation' (Manganyi, 1991: 52) seemed to make visible to me my dissociation from the sense of self that makes it easier to act freely. In telling the story, I realised the importance of telling it from the female perspective, as I came to see that, even today, 'superior values are always associated with the labor of the male person while that of the female person is associated with inferior values' (Oshadi Mangena, in Mngxita, Alexander & Gibson (Eds.), 2008: 55). I had to perceive that this view of the act of being woman was part of my narrative as the story that I am told and the story that I tell myself as I discover what the experience of being and becoming a woman is.

³⁸ Performances such as *The Time of the Small Berries* by Sello Pesa, Andre Laubscher, and Peter van Heerden, *Influx Controls* by Boyzie Cekwana, and *Black!...White?* by Nelisiwe Xaba even *Moses* by Musa Hlatshwayo influenced my desire to participate in the dialogue.

Conclusion

What I have discovered is not freedom itself, freedom was always there. It is the facticity of freedom that has caused the distress that we have called the 'Trauma of Freedom.' What this work has revealed to me is the paradoxical optimism that is inherent within the 'Trauma of Freedom.' While I may not be free to not be Black in the eyes of other South Africans because our situation has given us this meaning in terms of the colour of my skin *inter alia*, I am free to choose to be Black and be an individual in my blackness; I am free to choose what to do with my existence as a Black person. I am similarly free to choose what to do with my womanhood.

In today's society and technological advancements I am even free to choose whether I want to remain a woman in the biological sense as well as the ideological manner of identification. While I may not have chosen my existence or the situation of my existence, I can select what to do with my inheritance; the apartheid that I was born into, the freedom I became conscious into, the race that I was given into, and the woman that I was trained into. Whether I do what I feel that I am supposed to do and what I feel that I am supposed to do is a matter of choice. I can choose to be overwhelmed by the trauma of my freedom or the freedom of my trauma or find hope in the simultaneity of the two. The options that are available to me are even more numerous than I have outlined and more than I have discovered; but the idea of finding out means that my work is far from over and the prospect is exciting.

Reacting to the act

The trauma of freedom is real even though it may not be visible. In trying to make it visible I have realised that its very invisibility is its visibility. It is the mask that has been revealed to me as the truth of my experience, even if I cannot say what the trauma is, in fact it was in stopping to look for it (Slindile³⁹) that I was finally able to know my impulse. What we see counts at the end of the day whether ideologically or politically we want it to or not, the history of what we see makes us not want to see but in trying not to see we feed into the negative history by ignoring the fact that the history of what we see has shaped us as the grand narrative of our being on a societal

³⁹ Ayanda's final journal notes as reflection on the process as a whole observes as an 'Ahaa' moment that as the Slindile character part of her self that Slindile needs to stop looking so hard and 'it' will find her.

level as well as having been internalised on an individual level. Our narratives as the stories told to us about ourselves by ourselves as well as externally are all part of the self who experiences these narratives in everyday life; and the self that lives as though recounting them, reinterpreting them, retelling them, reinventing them to try to make meaning of what we see. The physical body as political site is loaded with these stories everyday and some we try to suppress through the masks we put on diurnally; the same masks that through their wearing reveal that we are hiding. Others are knowingly suppressed and others come out involuntarily but all are the manifestations of trauma in one way or another.

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ⁱ Google, and more specifically Wikipedia, became a useful tool in the palm of our hands through the use of the mobile web. I have refrained from citing these sources as Wikipedia is not an academically approved resource. I do feel that this mindset may have to adjust, especially in the practice-as-research mode of academic research which recognises alternate *means of knowledge* and knowledge production. The mobile web has made information more accessible in everyday life and Wikipedia is the ñgo-to site for most young people of inquisitive dispositions who rely on these instantly accessible forms of knowledge. But, I have chosen to find more academically acceptable sources for the purpose of this document; in recognition of the fact that Wikipedia is not perceived to be a reliable resource.

ⁱⁱ The bibliography reflects the works that have influenced the writing of this document. There is a multitude of inspirations that impacted the actual praxis that have not been listed here. While these works are recognised to some degree in the report, the scope of this document does not allow for every stimulus to be detailed. The influences additionally range from works that I have cited in other pieces of writing to various experiences that I have had throughout my *twenty three* years of life thus far; so the attempt at documenting all these stimuli would be a research project in its own right. Andre Brink finds a similar position in trying to reference the literature that has bearing on his main character's narrative in *Rights of Desire* (2000: *appendix*).