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**BREATH-BODY-SELF:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE BODY
AS A SITE FOR GENERATING IMAGES
FOR PERFORMANCE MAKING**

Sara Matchett

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the body as a site for generating images for purposes of performance making. It is a methodological study that draws from various traditions, methods and somatic practices, such as yoga, Fitzmaurice Voicework®, the Sanskrit system of *rasa*, body mapping and free writing. The study specifically focuses on interrogating the relationship between breath and emotion, and breath and image, in an attempt to make performance that is inspired by a biography of the body. It explores the relationship between body, breath and feeling and how this impacts on the imagination in processes of generating images for performance making. It further investigates whether breath can be experienced as an embodied element that is sensed somatically by performers, and in so doing act as a catalyst for activating memories, stories, and experiences held in the body of the performer. The potential of breath as impulse as well as thread that connects imagination, memory, body, and expression, is investigated.

Using the conceptual framework of somaesthetics, the study draws from theories of the body, neuroscience and cognitive philosophy to support its claims. Through the disciplinary framework of somaesthetics, as an embodied philosophical practice, it is suggested that the performer cultivates a heightened awareness that makes possible what is being proposed as a process of performance making.

It draws on my experience as a lecturer of theatre in the Department of Drama at the University of Cape Town as well as on my experience as a maker of performance with The Mothertongue Project, a women's arts collective I co-founded in South Africa in 2000. My work with The Mothertongue Project, emanates from a particular ideological position in the world that is informed by the context in which I locate. South Africa has some of the highest rates of rape and sexualised violence against women in the world. The result is a society where women's bodies, in particular, are constantly under threat of being violated.

In summary, this thesis explores the relationship between a particular kind of performance making process for a particular kind of work within a particular kind of context. It seeks to provide women with the tools and space to speak back to the social context they inhabit.

The choice to include a creative project as a case study alludes to the synergetic relationship between theory and practice. One that is cyclical; one that speaks directly to the method of image generation for purposes of performance making that is being proposed, where the route between breath, body, emotion and image, maps a circular trajectory.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION.....	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VI
CHAPTER ONE – THE RAW MATERIAL	1
Introduction	1
Rationale and Motivation	3
Some methodological considerations	9
Practice-led Research and how it relates to this study	11
Methods.....	17
<i>Observation.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Reflexive journalling.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Focus groups</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Case Study: Digital Documentation and Blogging</i>	<i>21</i>
Ethical Considerations.....	23
CHAPTER TWO – CULTIVATING AND HARVESTING	26
A Short Review of Literature	26
Overview	26
Somaesthetics as a Conceptual Framework	28
Somaesthetics and the thread to Cognitive Neuroscience	30
Breath-Body-Mind and Image Generation	33
Image to Image Streams.....	34
Conceptual Blending, the Imagination, Metaphor and Meaning-Making	35
Summative Thoughts	41
CHAPTER THREE – PREPARING THE YARN	42
Section One: Tools for Developing the Relationship between Breath, Body, Mind and Imagination	42
<i>Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV)</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Koodiyattam Rasa Breath Patterns (KRB) and the Theory of Rasa</i>	<i>58</i>
Section Two: Tools for Capturing What Emerges during the Engagement of Breath, Body, Mind and Imagination.....	79
<i>Body Mapping.....</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>Free Writing</i>	<i>85</i>
CHAPTER FOUR – THE WEFT AND THE WARP	88

Small Experiments	88
<i>Experiment One: Trojan Women.....</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Experiment Two: Class Experiment.....</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>Experiment Three: Breath-Bones-Ancestors</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Experiment Four: Ngangelizwe</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>Experiment Five: National School of Drama (NSD) Workshops</i>	<i>112</i>
Consolidation and preparation for the main case study	116
<i>The Conversational Cycle of Practice and Research</i>	<i>116</i>
<i>Damasio and the connection with the Fitzmaurice Deconstructing Sequence (FDS).....</i>	<i>121</i>
<i>Conceptual Blending</i>	<i>122</i>
<i>The Soma and the Field of Performance making.....</i>	<i>123</i>
CHAPTER FIVE – WEAVING	127
The Method in Practice	127
<i>The Creative Project: Main Case Study</i>	<i>127</i>
CHAPTER SIX - THE CLOTH	197
The Place of Breath	197
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	203

CHAPTER ONE – THE RAW MATERIAL

Introduction

This study investigates the body as a site for generating images for the purpose of performance making.¹ It locates within the field of theatre and performance studies and draws on my experience as a lecturer of theatre in the Department of Drama at the University of Cape Town (hereafter referred to as UCT) as well as on my experience as a maker of performance with The Mothertongue Project,² a women's arts collective which I co-founded in South Africa in 2000. The method that this study proposes draws from and feeds into theatre-voice, my main area of pedagogy which primarily teaches young performers how to engage and develop their voices for performance. The study is further inspired by various traditions and practices that expand the method to include approaches to acting. It specifically centres on how to generate emotions without relying on cognitive emotional recall associated with method acting, a technique based on the concepts and teachings of Konstantin Stanislavski. Stanislavski's method, to a significant degree, emphasises actors drawing on personal emotions and memories as a way of connecting with their characters.

My work with The Mothertongue Project, derives from a particular ideological position in the world informed by the context in which I locate. South Africa has some of the highest rates of rape and sexualised violence against women in the world (Omari, 2013:np). Helen Moffett claims that "in post-apartheid, democratic South Africa, sexual violence has become a socially endorsed punitive project for maintaining patriarchal order" (2006:129). She further notes that "[t]his is generally and globally true of rape, but in the case of South Africa, such activities draw on apartheid practices of control that have permeated all sectors of society" (2006:129). The result is a society in which women's bodies, in particular, are constantly under threat of violation. The necessity for a women's arts collective that

¹ The terms theatre making and performance making are often used interchangeably. For the sake of continuity, I have chosen to use the term performance making throughout, when referring to the method this study proposes.

² www.mothertongue.co.za

focuses on women creating and performing theatre inspired by women's personal stories, is apparent in terms of the role it may play in redressing gender imbalances and the high levels of violence against women historically prevalent in South African society. It is necessary to challenge the silencing and marginalisation of women's stories and theatre and performance is an effective means to achieve this.

The Mothertongue Project includes artists, facilitators and healing practitioners who are committed to healing and transformation through the employment of participatory performance approaches that integrate arts methodologies. The methodologies include storytelling, physical theatre/movement, visual arts, creative writing, music and expressive arts therapies. The collective consciously creates spaces for women located at the margins to speak their stories and share their experiences in order to gain power and credence within their bodies and communities. The collective works from the premise that theatre and performance which integrates the arts with the expressive arts therapies, are a valuable means of enabling those most excluded, and provides them with an ongoing resource for negotiating social and political obstacles with which they are faced. It aspires towards a society where self-recognition, self-honouring and self-celebration of women are commonplace.

In summary, this study investigates the relationship between a particular kind of performance making process for a particular kind of work within a particular kind of context. It seeks to provide women with the tools and space to speak back to the social context they inhabit. The specific traditions and practices that the proposed method employs include yoga, Fitzmaurice Voicework® (hereafter referred to as FV), and the Sanskrit concept of *rasa* (elaborated on in Chapter Three). In Sanskrit performance traditions, *rasa* is the experience of emotions aroused in the audience by the performer. The study specifically focuses on investigating the relationship between breath and emotion, and breath and image, in an attempt to make performance that is inspired by a biography of the body. My personal experiences with the practice of yoga and meditation, and subsequently with students in the theatre-voice class and with performers in The Mothertongue Project, have evoked an acute interest in the relationship between body, breath and sensation and in

what way this relationship impacts on the imagination in processes of generating images for performance making. These experiences are expanded on in Chapter Four.

The study further investigates whether breath can be felt as an embodied element that is sensed somatically by the performers with whom I work, and in so doing act as a catalyst for activating memories, stories, and experiences held in the bodies of the performers. The purpose is to explore whether this is a conceivable pathway towards generating material and images for the making of performance with a group of women whose bodies are under constant threat of violation. Additionally, I investigate the potential of breath as impulse as well as thread that connects imagination, memory, body, and expression.

Rationale and Motivation

My interest in exploring breath in relation to theatre and performance arose out of my personal meditation and yoga practices and later out of work I engaged in at Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Art Research³ (hereafter referred to as Adishakti) in Auroville, India. In 1998 I undertook a ten-day silent Vipassana⁴ Meditation course in Igatpuri, India. The premise of the technique is to observe breath while meditating. The technique requires sitting for an average of eight hours a day in meditation, observing breath as well as the sensations that arise and are experienced in the body as a result of focused observation. Nine out of ten days are experienced in silence. This profound engagement with breath planted the seed for my acute interest in researching breath and its relationship with theatre and performance,

³A performing arts company involved in creating performances, researching genres and disciplines and creating processes and performance methodologies. Founded by Veenapani Chawla. According to Geeta Doctor 'Adishakti is an experiment in the living theatre created by Veenapani Chawla outside Puducherry' (Doctor, G. 2014:33). For more information on the company see <http://adishaktitheatrearts.com/>.

⁴ According to the Vipassana website 'Vipassana is a way of self-transformation through self-observation. It focuses on the deep interconnection between mind and body, which can be experienced directly by disciplined attention to the physical sensations that form the life of the body, and that continuously interconnect and condition the life of the mind. It is this observation-based, self-exploratory journey to the common root of mind and body that dissolves mental impurity, resulting in a balanced mind full of love and compassion' (<https://www.dhamma.org/en/about/vipassana>).

and in particular performance making. This interest involves an interrogation of breath as both a physiological act as well as a spiritual concept. My conceptual understanding of breath is inspired by, David N. Elkin's definition of spirituality, which "[...] comes from the Latin spiritus, or 'breath of life', and refers to a way of being and experiencing that comes through awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterised by certain identifiable values in regard to self, others, nature, life and whatever one considers the Ultimate" (Elkins et al., 1988:10).

In 1999 I began to learn the discipline of yoga with a teacher from the Bihar School of Yoga⁵ in Munger, India. The experience of yoga *asanas*⁶ and *pranayama*⁷ practice served to deepen my connection to, and understanding of, breath and the way it functions both in my body and life as a whole. My first encounter with Adishakti occurred in 2002 where tangible connections were made between the Sanskrit theory of *rasa* and breath. My understanding of *rasa* in the context of performance is that it can be translated into a sensation experienced in the body of the performer and ultimately in the bodies of the audience and is comprised of nine emotional states, namely: love, laughter, sadness, anger, bravery, fear, disgust, wonder, and peace⁸ (Dace, 1963; Bharata-muni, 1996; Schechner, 2001; Zarrilli 2002, 2009; Meyer-Dinkgräfe, 2005; Higgins, 2007; Nair, 2007; Madhavan, 2010). The Koodiyattam *rasa* breath patterns (hereafter referred to as KRB patterns) which I learnt while at Adishakti, involved an approach to generating emotions that engaged a triadic relationship between breath, posture and facial expressions.

In some of the work I participated in at Adishakti, I experienced emotional states as sensations in my body, powered by breath. This experience influenced my practice of performance making as well as my teaching practice. At that stage I had recently co-founded The Mothertongue Project and had begun to experiment with encouraging performers to create a *rasa* breath-text, akin to a sub-text. I started to

⁵ The Bihar School of Yoga was founded in 1964 by Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati to impart yogic training to householders and *sannyasins* (renunciates) alike. The yoga techniques developed there are a synthesis of many approaches to personal development, based on traditional Vedantic, tantric and yogic teachings in conjunction with contemporary physical and mental health sciences (<http://www.biharyoga.net/bihar-school-of-yoga/about-bsy/>).

⁶ The physical postures of yoga.

⁷ Breathing exercises associated with the practice of yoga.

⁸ As translated to me from Sanskrit by Vinay Kumar, current artistic director of Adishakti.

explore using the *rasas* as a directorial tool; in essence I began to work with the idea of directing a breath-text.

Until then, my interest and experience of breath had remained within the realm of acting technique. When I encountered FV, I began to explore the possibility of breath as a catalyst for making performance and in particular, autobiographical performance. To this end, in 2012, I completed the FV Certification Programme in Los Angeles with Catherine Fitzmaurice and the Master and Associate Teachers of the work. I have subsequently been implementing the work as part of my training of student actors in theatre-voice practice at UCT, and facilitating one-on-one sessions with experienced professional and amateur performers alike. It is useful to note that Catherine Fitzmaurice, the founder of this work, came to her discoveries through practices that include bioenergetics, yoga, shiatsu, and Euro-American voice practice. Years of exploring these modalities through practice have led to what is now termed FV.

My interest in autobiographical performance making stems from my involvement with The Mothertongue Project, where over the past fifteen years, I have been involved in making autobiographical performances with women as part of the work produced by the collective. The decision to locate this research within The Mothertongue Project is informed by my desire to continue exploring how processes of performance making employed by the collective can potentially provide a place for women who occupy marginalised spaces in society. Hopefully, these processes will assist in reimagining their personal narratives. The process of reimagining, arguably relates to ideas around unmaking and remaking. Notions of unmaking and remaking resonate with processes of Destructuring and Restructuring in FV (discussed in Chapter Three). The reimagining and remaking of personal narratives, in this instance, aligns with anthropologist Tim Ingold's ideas of "wayfaring" (2007:15-16) where a map emerges through the process rather than being present at the onset of the process (discussed later in this Chapter). My choice to use body mapping as one of the tools for generating images for performance making in this study, could be viewed as contradicting my choice to use Ingold's wayfarer approach to inform the methodology. However, in my opinion, body mapping, as a term, is

misleading here. In the context of this research I contend that rather than offering a predetermined map/plan, the process of body mapping emphasises Ingold's idea of the map emerging through the process (discussed later in this Chapter).

As a lecturer in the Department of Drama at UCT whose practical teaching profile spans theatre-voice, acting, and performance making, and who functions as a performance maker outside of the Drama Department, it is important to state that I view the relationship between my teaching practice and performance making practice as conversational, one informing the other. Given this, I will take a moment to reflect on my own experiences as a student of acting in the 1980s. These experiences have shaped my current teaching and performance making practices as well as the questions that inform this study.

As a student of Drama studying at UCT some twenty plus years ago, I vividly remember feeling extremely alienated by what was termed, the 'Stanislavskian approach to acting'. This form of method acting, I have subsequently learnt, was filtered through America where it was developed by amongst others, Stella Adler and Lee Strasberg (McCutcheon, 2008:16). I have only recently started to engage with Stanislavski's system from the perspective of what he originally termed "spiritual realism" (Stanislavski in McCutcheon, 2008:16), a preoccupation with "find[ing] a conscious path to unconscious creativeness" (Stanislavski, 1956:571). The idea of consciously exploring the unconscious through creativity is something which connects with my endeavours to develop an integrated approach to performance making, as well as to my conceptual understanding of breath and the manner in which it relates to performance practices. It therefore, came as no surprise to subsequently learn that Stanislavski fervently engaged in the practice and philosophy of yoga (Carnicke, 2009; Gordon, 1987; White, 2006). According to Jade Rosina McCutcheon (2008:18), Adler and Strasberg's adoption of Stanislavski's techniques in the 1930s favoured the psychological component of his technique over the spiritual component. I agree with Phillip Zarrilli who maintains that the: "Preoccupation with emotion and the psychological has meant that most American method approaches to work on the 'self' and creating a character have been highly susceptible to some form of body-mind dualism" (2009:17). Here the use of 'self'

references the self as synonymous with ego. I am rather inspired by Elkins' notion of self that views self in relation to, "...others, nature, and life..." (Elkins et al., 1988:10). In other words, a relational self that emphasises the interdependence of self, and by implication, a rejection of the notion of self as ego-identification.

The notion of body-mind dualism in Western theatre approaches and performance can be attributed to the Cartesian⁹ perspective. Cartesian dualism implies that there is a distinct split between the mind, brain and body. Although Descartes, in his theorising, does admit that body and mind are united (in Ariew, 2000:136), his view that they operate as two distinct modes, in other words, modes of the body and modes of the mind, is in keeping with his notion of dualism. His famous statement, "I think therefore I am" (2000:136) further illustrates this dualism. In support of his statement, he asserts that:

From this I knew that I was a substance the whole essence or nature of which is simply to think, and which, in order to exist, has no need of any place nor depends on any material thing. Thus this "I," that is to say, the soul through which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and is even easier to know than the body, and even if there were no body at all, it would not cease to be all that it is. (2000:136)

The above conceivably illustrates his privileging of the mind over the body.

In considering in what way this notion connects to Euro-American approaches to theatre and performance, in particular the method approach made popular in America, I was led to explore the connection between Descartes' Cartesian metaphysics and Aristotle's *Poetics*, a treatise that laid the foundations for Western dramatic theory. According to Richard Schechner in his discussion of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Bharata-muni's *Natyasastra*¹⁰ (which I will expand on in Chapter Three): "[...] in Western theatre, the eyes and to some degree the ears are where theatricality is experienced. By etymology and by practice a theatre is a 'place of/for seeing'. Seeing requires distance; engenders focus or differentiation; encourages analysis or breaking apart into logical strings; privileges meaning, theme, narration" (Schechner, 2001:27).

⁹ Informed by Rene Descartes' concept of dualism.

¹⁰ The ancient Indian treatise on the performing arts.

He further adds:

This binding of 'knowing' to 'seeing' is the root metaphor/master narrative of Western thought. [...] Where does seeing take place? Only at a distance from what is being seen. There is both a logical and a practical difference keeping what is observed separate from the observing instrument (and/or observer). [...] The Greek theatre that Aristotle based his theories on was fundamentally a seeing place. (2001: 30)

This suggests an approach to acting in which its genesis is in the mind before it filters into the body, in other words, the mind dictates what the body attempts to show. I have only to cast my mind back to the struggle I experienced as a student when it came to textual analysis that involved cognitively mapping out or scoring the character's super-objectives, objectives, obstacles, motivations and sub-text before attempting to embody this mental map/score. The result felt inauthentic to me, over-intellectualised and decidedly Cartesian in nature. The mind-body split was evident.

Furthermore, as a student I was perplexed by the concept of emotional recall, which seemed fickle, unreliable, and at worst, re-traumatising. I often found it hard to re-create an emotion connected to a past memory. My experience in the past that made me sad, for example, very often shifted its emotional state in the present. By contrast, however, there were times where I felt that cognitively recalling a particular emotion led to a process of re-traumatisation, leaving me 'carrying' the memory and the emotion for days without being able to 'shake' it off. It felt as if the memory was literally 'put' into the body without my having the tools to release it from my cells and thus it became a burden that re-traumatised me.

Twenty plus years later, I find myself at the same institution, teaching students of theatre and performance. My past experiences have certainly influenced my desire to explore alternatives to method acting in an attempt to reconnect with Stanislavski's original psychophysical teachings as taught in Russia, where as Cormac Power notes, "[...] the aim of art, and the actor, should go beyond physical, surface reality, and should strive to a higher, spiritual realisation" (Power, 2008:50).

Further, I became increasingly interested in how these alternatives that I speak of could influence performance making processes. This study was motivated by my

desire to seek an alternative way to generate images, ideas and concepts for performance making processes with women performers who are faced with the threat of being violated; ways that challenge Descartes' dualism by allowing the body equal space to engage with processes of meaning-making and image generation, and means by which women are afforded the space to speak back to their social context. I was motivated by a desire to evolve a performance making process that assists women to develop a sense of the relational self, enabling them to be more visible to themselves and others; a method that provides a way of reclaiming bodies that are under constant threat of violation; a method where self-identification and self-exploration in relation to the world they inhabit, inform the kind of performances that are made. The method that this study proposes thus asks the women performers with whom I work to explore who they are and how they relate to the world in which they live. It focuses on assisting the release of energetic blockages, and through this, asks them to face the issues which are causing the blockages – in other words, the societal context in which they live. Energetic blockages can take the form of physical as well as emotional blockages that manifest as habitual physical tensions and patterns as well emotional and mental patterns. These do not exist in isolation, but rather intersect on physical, emotional and mental levels. This can be seen in how emotional trauma often manifests as mental stress and/or physical ailments and vice versa.

In light of my experience of being re-traumatised as a student of theatre and performance, the tools this study proposes to engage offer an alternative to the system of method acting I reference above. They provide performers with technical and physiological tools, such as breath, posture, and facial expressions as a way of accessing and processing felt bodily perceptions. I offer an extensive explanation of these tools in Chapter Three.

Some methodological considerations

When I initially set out on this journey, I envisioned undertaking a study that incorporated a creative project. This would mean that a percentage of the thesis comprise written chapters (no less than 40 000 words), while the remaining

percentage would be apportioned to a practical creative project that would constitute one or a number of chapters. The creative project in such an instance, would form an integral part of the thesis and would be considered Practice as Research (PaR)¹¹, where the research is evidenced in the practice and where the practice is able to stand entirely, or in part, on its own, as research. Over the past couple of years, there have been a number of books published on PaR (Barrett & Bolt, 2007; Allegue et al., 2009; Riley & Hunter, 2009; Smith & Deane 2009; Kershaw & Nicholson, 2011). This indicates a growing interest in, and acceptance of, PaR as a concept as well as a research methodology within the disciplines of theatre and performance studies. Kershaw et al. note that, “by the twenty-first century a well-founded and sometimes controversial methodology [PaR] ... had been added to research repertoires in university theatre and performance studies” (Kershaw et al., 2011:63).

My thinking when embarking on this study was that a PhD with an integrated creative project would be the most logical route to take, given that I had come to my particular research questions through practice. I spent the first two years after my proposal was accepted (2012 & 2013) focusing on practice, and only began the process of writing in 2014. However, when I started to write up this thesis, and as time drew closer to engaging the specific project I envisioned as the creative component of the study, I realised I had far too much to write about, and that by incorporating the creative project as an integral and assessable component of the study, I would be compromising it. I needed the written words to reflect my research discoveries. Additionally, since the creative project did not intend to culminate in a performance, but rather focused on a method of performance making, I found myself struggling to find a way of incorporating the practice, which involved a process, into the thesis. I therefore took the decision to submit a full written thesis and to include the creative project as my main case study.

¹¹ There are numerous terms that have been attributed to research that incorporates a practical/performative component. Most notably are the terms ‘performance as research’, ‘practice as research’, ‘practice-based research’, ‘practice-led research’. I have chosen to use the term ‘practice as research’ because this particular study is not concerned with a performance *per se*, but rather with the practice of performance making.

To say that I felt I was something of a 'sell out' would be an understatement. I had envisioned myself being one of the few pioneers in my particular university department to see the PhD with a creative project through to the end, thereby making an indelible mark on the development of research into theatre and performance in my university. Similar to Riley and Hunter I support "the idea that performance can be more than creative production, that it can constitute intellectual inquiry and contribute new understanding and insight" (Riley & Hunter, 2009:xv). I, too, subscribe to the view that PaR is "a concept that challenges many institutional structures and calls into question what gets valued as knowledge" (2009:xv). After much deliberation, I decided to engage practice-led research as my main research methodology. The choice to use practice-led research as a methodology speaks to the idea of practice leading research that manifests in writing. Lindy Candy supports this view in her observation that:

Practice-led research is concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice [...]. [...] the results of practice-led research may be fully described in text form without the inclusion of a creative work. The primary focus of the research is to advance knowledge about practice, or to advance knowledge within practice. Such research includes practice as an integral part of its method. (2006: 1)

Additionally, I was guided by Jennifer Parker-Starbuck and Roberta Mock's claim that:

Practice-led research techniques... [include] performer training and performance-making that centre on bodily discipline and creativity; physical exploration of everyday activities with reflexive bodily awareness, participant observation; application of critical perspective upon lived experiences. (Parker-Starbuck & Mock. 2011 :214)

Practice-led research thus provided me with a useful way into a study that was led by practice rather than the practice being the research, as in PaR.

Practice-led research and how it relates to this study

The methodology of this study is, in my opinion, a hybrid of embodied practice methodology and a case study methodology. In some instances, the case study uses embodied practice as a method, and in other instances, the embodied practice uses the case study as a method. This, therefore, implies a moving between method and

methodology within the hybrid. In some instances, embodied practice refers to the teaching and in others, the making of work. These are evidently different practices, but are however still viewed as practices.

The choice to include embodied creative processes as part of my study in the form of case studies, alludes to the synergetic relationship between theory and practice; a view I share with philosopher, Richard Shusterman (2008:1). My thinking is that the relationship is one that is cyclical in that the practice gives rise to knowledge that is fed back into the practice. The cyclicity of it speaks directly to the method of image generation for purposes of performance making which I am proposing, where the route between breath, body, emotion and image, maps a circular trajectory.

Shusterman's view that the soma is "a site of ... creative self-fashioning" (2008:1), positions the proposed method of generating images for purposes of making performance. The creative aspect of self-fashioning is what is explored. The soma as "a living, feeling, sentient body rather than a mere physical body devoid of life and sensation" (Shusterman, 2008:1) is central to this method of generating images, where the body is experienced as a co-creator. Without conscious awareness and use of the body, the method this study proposes is rendered obsolete and ineffectual. Practice has informed my research questions and continued to do so throughout the course of the study. The relationship between practice and theory was one that was conversational.

The study employed a practice-led, qualitative research design that drew from ethnographic and autobiographical approaches to research. It made use of grounded theory in that it utilised methods and practices to investigate lived and embodied experiences of the people it engaged, using the interaction and communication between people as the basis for research material and the subsequent generation of theorised practice in the form of a method for/of performance making (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Coleman & O'Connor, 2008). Grounded theory also engages many different sources of data (Birks & Mills, 2011). Ethnographic approaches that focus on autoethnography and autobiography are usefully explained by Carolyn Ellis, who regards autoethnography as "research, writing, story, and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the

cultural, social, and political” (2004:xix). Deborah Reed-Danahay asserts that autoethnography is a postmodernist construct and that “The term has a double sense – referring either to the ethnography of one's own group or to autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest. Thus, either a self-(auto) ethnography or an autobiographical (auto-) ethnography can be signaled by ‘autoethnography’” (1997:2).

Garance Maréchal (2010:43-45) advocates that autoethnography can be connected to autobiography in that it focuses on experience and story as a way of making meaning. She asserts that “[a]utoethnography is a form or method of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation” (2010:43) and that it “is sometimes made synonymous with self-ethnography, reflexive ethnography, or performance ethnography, and can be associated with narrative inquiry and autobiography” (2010:43).

In my study I explored the idea of collaborative autobiography as a form of autoethnography which, according to Judith Lapadat (2009:955-956), engages collaborative approaches to writing, sharing, and analysing personal stories and experiences. The methodology involved myself in the first instance, thus employing an autoethnographic practice-led approach. To this end, I completed training in FV, which included the making of an autobiographical performance that was developed into a 20-minute performance piece entitled *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, first performed on 1 August 2012 at the *Freedom and Focus* Conference in Vancouver, Canada. While developing *Breath-Bones-Ancestors* at the beginning of 2012, I concurrently worked with a South African performer interning with The Mothertongue Project to create a work entitled *Ngangelizwe*¹². The performer expressed an interest in making an autobiographical work and was curious to employ the particular tools I was using to make *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*. In addition, a workshop around autobiographical performance making resulting from these experiments was conducted at the National School of Drama (hereafter referred to as NSD) in New Delhi in September 2012. I have incorporated these projects as mini case studies into the thesis. They constitute Chapter Four, which I have sub-titled

¹² Xhosa for ‘of the nation’

'Small Experiments'. Included in these small experiments are two additional investigations. The first, with second year UCT students of theatre and performance where I experimented with combining body mapping and KRB patterns in character and textual analysis. The second, was a class project undertaken with first year UCT theatre and performance students where I attempted to investigate the relationship between the Fitzmaurice Deconstructing Sequence (hereafter referred to as the FDS and elaborated on in Chapter Three), breath, body, emotions, and meaning. These small experiments led me to understand exactly what this study investigates, and ultimately fashioned the two-week creative project/process (expanded on in Chapter Five) that forms the main case study. The choice to document the practice chronologically as a timeline documentation as opposed to grouping and analysing findings across various experiments, was something I considered at length. After much consideration, I decided to go with the former. The choice was primarily informed by the iterative nature of the embodied experiments that culminated in the main case study. Small Experiments One and Two engaged first and second year students of drama. The third was an exploration that focussed on myself. I felt the need to consolidate my findings in my own body before progressing with further experiments. This self-exploration was pivotal in developing the method this study proposes. The fourth and fifth experiments involved more experienced performers and thus enabled a more in-depth exploration. This allowed more time to focus on the tools the research proposes, whereas with the junior year students of drama, I had to be mindful of the balance between their learning and my research. Each experiment built on and informed the next. These experiments culminated in the main case study that involved senior students of drama working alongside two graduates; one recent graduate and one experienced professional. The main case study allowed space to revisit the findings from the small experiments. It provided a focussed laboratory-like space in which the findings the small experiments had raised could be investigated in more detail.

Inspired by Mark Fleishman's engagement with notions of dwelling and wayfaring in relation to theatre and performance (2012), I was drawn to Ingold's ideas around "meshworking" and "wayfaring" to inform the methodological choices for this study.

Ingold contends “that what is commonly known as the ‘web of life’ is precisely that: not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines” (2011:63). He argues that, “beings do not propel themselves across a ready-made world but rather issue forth through a world-in-form, along the lines of their relationships” (2011:63). This echoes philosopher, Paul Ricoeur’s sentiment that “[...] the story of my life is a segment of the story of your life; of the story of my parents, of my friends, of my enemies, and of countless strangers. We are literally ‘entangled in stories’” (Ricoeur, 1996:6).

Meshing associates with the act of weaving, where experiences, events, memories and relationships mesh and weave/interweave/entangle themselves into the fabric of the soma. Meshing carries with it a quality of unpredictability and fluidity. Ingold distinguishes between “meshwork” and “network”, by viewing meshing as an “interweaving of lines” rather than “a set of interconnected points” (2011:64). The fluid, unpredictable weaving and interweaving of lines connects with his ideas around wayfaring where “[t]he knowledge ... [people] acquire ... is integrated not *up* the levels of a classification but *along* paths of movement, and people grow into it by following trails through a meshwork” (2011:143). He views this as a process of “trail-following” that he calls “*wayfaring*” (2011:143, italics in original) and contends that:

[The] distinction between trail-following or wayfaring and pre-planned navigation is of critical significance. [...] [T]he navigator has ... a complete representation of the territory, in the form of a cartographic map, upon which he can plot a course even before setting out [...]. In wayfaring ... one follows a path that one has previously travelled in the company of others, or in their footsteps, reconstructing the itinerary as one goes along. Only upon reaching his [sic] destination, in this case, can the traveller truly be said to have found his [sic] way. (2007:15-16)

In my experience, practice-led research as a methodology is precisely about “meshing” and “wayfaring”, where the research reveals itself along “paths of movement”, and as it does so, it meshes itself into a performance, or a method of performance making, as is the case with this study. When I set out on this PhD study, I knew I wanted to explore breath and its relation to performance making with women who live in violent contexts. That was all I knew. The specific questions,

however, revealed themselves to me through practice. As Chapter Four suggests, a series of small practical experiments led to the method of performance making that this study proposes and tests out in Chapter Five. Additionally, the insights gleaned from the practice informed a set of theories that underpin this study. Data was collected, out of which theories were defined, which in turn were woven back into the data, leading to what could be termed a grounded practice methodology. The set of theories, based both on my own practice experience and that of other people, gave rise to the method for making a particular kind of performance which engages women's experiences in particular kinds of ways to speak back to a specific social context, to assist them to develop a sense of self that enables them to become more visible to themselves, and to relate to the world they inhabit.

The initial title for this study was 'Mapping breath-body-self'. My exposure to Ingold's notion of "wayfaring" opened a series of questions around whether the study engaged me in processes of mapping or whether the fabric of the method revealed itself to me through the experience of "wayfaring". In considering the features of a map and mapping, it became apparent that I was not following a pre-ordained path which had been clearly written or mapped out for me, but was rather making discoveries along the journey, and that these discoveries culminated in a mesh of ideas that I have called a method of performance making.

It is necessary to discuss the apparent contradiction between the processes of ethnographic data collection with which this study engages and Tim Ingold's rejection of the idea of data collection. Ingold makes a distinction between anthropology and ethnography (2013:2-4). He notes that people frequently conflate anthropology and ethnography in that they understand the work of an anthropologist to be ethnographical. He argues that this is not the case and rejects the idea that an anthropologist collects data to prove a pre-existing point (2013:2-4). Given this, my use of Ingold's notion of "wayfaring" and "meshworking" to explain my research process, combined with the use of ethnographic processes of data collection, could appear confusing. Ingold states that what anthropologists do is take what they have learnt and move forward all the while reflecting on their earlier experiences (2013:7). He makes it clear that "[t]he impetus ... [in anthropology] is

primarily transformational, whereas the imperatives of ... [ethnography] are essentially documentary” (2013:3). He goes on to state that: “Anthropology is studying with and learning from; it is carried forward in a process of life, and effects transformations within that process. Ethnography is a study of and learning about. Its enduring products are recollective accounts which serve a documentary purpose” (2013:3).

This study arguably utilised an anthropological approach in that as a researcher I studied with the people with whom I worked. It also implies an impetus to move forward. Additionally, it utilised a case study method to collect data, which allowed space for different kinds of case studies that had different purposes. For example, Chapter Four: Small Experiments, could be viewed as mini case studies that helped refine the research questions I was asking about the practice. The small experiments aided me in coming to a clearer understanding of what it was I was particularly interested in developing through this study. The second kind of case study I utilised was one that puts the understandings gleaned from the first kind of case study into practice, as a way of testing something rather than opening up or refining a territory. This is what I set out to do in the main case study discussed in Chapter Five. The study engaged me in a process of working forwards through practising on myself and on others as a way of developing my ideas before refining them. Thereafter, I engaged in a process of testing the ideas in a more concentrated way. The aspect of testing shifted the way of working and engaged more of a documentary element evident in Chapter Five. The combination of these two kinds of case studies enabled me to combine Ingold’s notions of “wayfaring” and “meshworking” with ethnographic approaches that are concerned with data collection.

Methods

Some of the key qualitative methods I employed in data collection were: interviews, observations, reflexive journaling, focus groups, and digital documentation and blogging. The first four methods were used in the small experiments phase of this study (Chapter Four), and the last four for the main case study (Chapter Five).

The small experiments outlined in Chapter Four involved various forms of interviews. I have included the set of questions posed under each experiment in Chapter Four. The interviews for each of the experiments were a combination of structured and unstructured questions. The first experiment involved face-to-face interviews with a sample of four participants. Each interviewee was interviewed alone. I structured a set of questions, but allowed further questions to emerge from each participant's responses. These unstructured questions contributed to a conversational tone that characterised the interviews. I audio recorded and transcribed each interview. The data helped shape the particular research questions that emerged. The second experiment involved a class task made up of two key open-ended essay questions that were posted on *Vula*, UCT's online collaboration and learning platform. These questions, although open-ended, were structured. Experiment Four involved a face-to-face interview as well as a set of questions that were emailed to the research participant. As with Experiment One, I structured a set of questions, and allowed for unstructured questions to arise out of the participant's responses, which resulted in a conversational tone. I audio recorded the face-to-face interviews and after transcribing the responses, identified key questions. These questions were structured and emailed to the participant for further deliberation. The participant's responses gave rise to further key questions.

Observation

Elaine Aston's notion of "embodied practice" as opposed to "disembodied observation" (2007:12), led me to understand the observational role of facilitator/performance maker/researcher as one that is embodied, that works in relation to the performers being facilitated, which is continually being shaped by the engagement with, and responses to, the work the facilitator/performance-maker/researcher brings to the rehearsal room. In this way a conversation is set up between the facilitator/performance maker/researcher and the performers. Arguably, this conversation is where the research lies. The research in turn becomes embodied. Embodied implies a sense of immediacy, a sense of the unknown becoming known from moment to moment, and in this process, changing from moment to moment. Ingold refers to participant observation as "a way of knowing

from the inside" (2013:5, italics in original). This is aligned with Aston's assertion that embodied knowledge, "points to modes of exchange and sharing of knowledge and of understanding orientated towards the experiential, the physical and the material" (2013:12). The disembodied observer, on the other hand, implies a research method that rely predominantly on retrospective academic reflection. This is not to say that I did not retrospectively reflect academically on the research that was produced in practice-oriented focus group sessions, workshops, and in rehearsals. It is, however, to say that the process of generating material in the moment informed, from moment to moment, the knowledge this study produces.

All the small experiments and the main case study involved an aspect of embodied observation. In all of them, bar one, I occupied the role of facilitator. In some, I occupied the role of performance maker and director and in one, the role of maker and performer. Observation occurred over a period of time and worked in tandem with self-reflexive journaling on my part. Experiment One involved a four-week process, during which I met with students on a daily basis during the week to rehearse a production. The research occurred during the rehearsal sessions. Experiment Two involved facilitating, and by implication, observing, a semester-long theatre-voice course, which comprised two 90-minute classes a week over a period of 13 weeks. Experiment Three involved a considerable amount of self-observation as I developed a performance using the various tools (and combinations of tools) outlined in Chapter Three. I engaged with this experiment as performance-maker and performer. My observations in this particular experiment gave rise to key features of the method of performance making proposed by this study. Experiment Four engaged me in the role of facilitator, performance maker and director. I was able to explore a number of questions that arose during Experiment Three, which subsequently led to further refinement of the proposed method. Experiment Five involved facilitating a group of 25 actors over a period of five days for three hours a day. The main case study involved working with five research participants for seven hours a day over a two-week period (Monday to Friday).

Reflexive journalling

Over the course of this study, I attempted to document my discoveries through Kaye Shumack's notion of the "conversational self". Shumack proposes that "[t]hrough a structured approach using journal entries, experiences of the ... process are introduced as reflective internal talkback" (2010:1). She adds that in this approach, "decision points and perspectives are negotiated and potentially contested through a series of voices of self as I, Me, You, and We. These voices are intertwined within the journal narrative" (2010:1). The decision to use this method was an attempt to explore ways of capturing the multifarious experiences and discoveries made during the various experiments. Robert Mizzi's ideas around multivocality in research writing, resonated with Shumack's notions of the "conversational self". Mizzi advocates for:

Multivocality as an autoethnographic method to: (a) illustrate that there is no single and temporally-fixed voice that a researcher possesses, (b) unfix identity in a way that exposes the fluid nature of identity as it moves through particular contexts, and (c) deconstruct competing tensions within the autoethnographer as s/he connects the personal self to the social context. (2010:1)

The choice to use these approaches in processes of reflexive journalling resonated with the choice to use practice-led research as a methodology. The "conversational self" and "multivocality" imply a mesh of ideas and perspectives. I found that journalling with the intention to converse with the multiple roles I occupied in this study – in other words that of researcher, facilitator, performance maker, director, and performer – offered discoveries that informed subsequent experiments. In this way the research revealed itself to me along "paths of movement" (Ingold, 2011:143). The conversations I had (with myself) through reflexive journalling, unearthed dynamic pathways that gave rise to pivotal discoveries and ensuing experiments.

Focus groups

Small Experiments One, Two, and Five and the main case study involved working with different groups over varying periods. Experiment One engaged a group of ten students in a four-week rehearsal process. A major component of this process

involved group discussions at various points during the rehearsal sessions. These discussions served to inform the manner in which I structured the following day's rehearsal. Additionally, they contributed to shaping the method of performance making that this thesis proposes. Similarly, Experiment Two involved a class of 30 students in structured classes over a 13-week period. The classes were interspersed with group discussions and reflections that informed research into the relationship between the FDS, breath, body, emotions, and meaning. Experiment Five entailed working with 25 actors over a period of five days. The sessions were punctuated with regular group discussions. With verbal consent from the participants, these discussions were audio recorded and informed the research material covered in Chapter Four: 'Experiment Five: National School of Drama Workshops'.

The main case study of this research engaged a group of six research participants, including myself, over a two-week period. Verbal discussions and reflections were audio recorded and informed the findings and analyses thereof in Chapter Five.

Case Study: Digital Documentation and Blogging

Challenges that surfaced at intervals during the course of this study included methods of documenting and capturing the ephemeral moments that constitute the main case study of this research. To this end, I decided to document the two-week creative project through a private WordPress site¹³ that I set up prior to commencement of the project. The site functioned as a repository for participant reflections, my reflections, video and audio footage, still images, and images that were generated during the process. It serves as the main annexure to this thesis and holds the traces that emerged and were generated over the course of the two-week project — The site contains 7 pages:

- Introduction to research

This page provides an overall introduction to the research undertaken in this thesis.

¹³ I have kept the site private to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. They however all agreed to make it available to my supervisor, external examiners, and academic scholars.

- Blog

I posted questions on a daily basis to which I invited the participants to respond. I chose to use the format of a blog to allow space for interaction and reflection between participants. The blog served as a digital journal for the participants. My intention in setting up the blog in this way was to encourage a collaborative approach to journalling, as well as a means of extending the exploration of collaborative autobiography as a form of autoethnography into the main case study. I began with some idea of the broad blog questions with which I wanted to engage the participants. The specific questions, however, emerged out of the practice. The experiences and reflections of the participants each day informed the planning for the following day's work.

- Media Gallery

This page houses video as well as audio footage captured over the two-week process. I uploaded the audio and video footage as private YouTube clips so as to protect the privacy of the participants.

- Researchers Notes, Reflections and Insights

I used this page to journal my reflections and observations as well as to plan and outline the structure of each day.

- Free Writing

The participants were invited to upload selections from the various free writing (elaborated on in Chapter Three) exercises undertaken over the two-week period.

- Research Participants

This page provides brief introductions to each of the research participants (including myself). I chose not to dictate how they should present themselves and allowed them to include whatever information they wanted to share about themselves. Some of the introductions take the shape of more formal biographies, while others are more sketchy and playful.

- Generated Images

This page contains samples of the images that were generated through the proposed method of performance making that this study proposes.

The WordPress site proved to be an effective way of collecting, capturing and analysing the data that emerged over the two-week project/process. Apart from saving hours of transcribing audio recordings and handwritten journal entries, the site assisted in organising and structuring Chapter Five. In this way, a conversation was set up between the actual research in practice and the analysis of the practice. In other words, the structure of the two-week process informed the manner in which the material was analysed and recorded in the thesis. Additionally, the structure of the two-week process emerged as the process progressed, with each day informing the next.

Ethical Considerations

In four of the five small experiments, I used pseudonyms for the participants. The third project directly involved me in my own research and the data collected comprised my own experiences in making a work. The first two projects were undertaken before I had finalised what this study would cover and before I submitted my proposal to UCT's Doctoral Degrees Board. I therefore did not ask participants to fill out and sign written consent forms. I decided to include these two experiments retrospectively.

For Experiment One, I invited volunteers to be part of face-to-face interviews. Four students, from a class of 12 came forward. I obtained verbal consent from these four students. I audio recorded their verbal consent prior to the interviews, which were also audio recorded. Experiment Two involved a class task that was set up on *Vula*. The task was voluntary, and the students were aware that this would form part of my research in the Drama Department. 17 out of 30 submitted the task. By submitting the tasks, they agreed to participate in my research. The performer in the fourth experiment signed a written consent form. The consent form I used was drafted by UCT's Department of Drama.

The main case study involved the research participants signing written consent forms as per Experiment Four. Due to the nature of the principle method of data collection and analysis, in other words, digital documentation and blogging, it proved challenging to conceal the identities of the research participants. I therefore requested that their names be used in the study, and all agreed. I emailed them a draft copy of Chapter Five, which contains the findings and analyses of the two-week process. For ethical purposes, I asked them to read the chapter and inform me whether they were in agreement with the way in which I had presented their experiences, discoveries, and reflections. I allowed them one month in which to respond, and indicated that if I had not received feedback after the month, I would assume that they were in accordance.

It is necessary to contemplate the first two experiments in relation to power relations in the classroom between myself as a lecturer and my students. This resonates with the ideas that Michel Foucault references in his writings on domination where he notes that "... [domination] is fixed, throughout its history, in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations. It establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies" (Foucault, 1984:85). He goes on to state that, "humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination" (1984:85). This raises questions around the legitimacy of the research outcomes. I am aware that the students who participated in the first two experiments may have responded to my questions in such a way as to 'please' me as their teacher by saying what they thought I wanted them to say. They possibly assumed "rights and obligations" within an educational institution where my request for them to participate in the experiments marked itself as "power and provoke[d] engrave[d] memories...even with [their] bodies". This is plausible, given that both these experiments took place with junior students. This having been said, the data that was collected in these early experiments was explored in more depth with the participants in the remaining experiments and main case study. These participants were more experienced and more invested in the research as it directly fed their own practice; it gave them additional tools to pack into their existing 'tool boxes' as performers

and makers. The responses, particularly in the main case study, are evidently more complex and thought through than those from the first set of experiments, particularly the first two.

At the onset of this study, I had no particular set of theories in mind that would frame this research. I had a notion that breath was at the core of the method of performance making. I did not, however, set out to prove that my idea about breath is correct, but rather, through the methods and methodology reflected above, to learn about how breath operates and how the method of performance making I am proposing, could potentially work in the context of South Africa, with a group of women performers.

The next chapter traces the key theories that I came to through practice. The theories were later woven back into the practice to develop the study further.

CHAPTER TWO – CULTIVATING AND HARVESTING

A Short Review of Literature

This study locates within two key theoretical areas: Body Studies (Blackman, 2008), which associates with Somaesthetics (Shusterman, 2000; 2006; 2008), and Cognitive Neuroscience (Damasio, 1994; 2000; 2003; 2010). I have chosen to focus on Lisa Blackman, Richard Shusterman and Antonio Damasio as key theorists. The Area of Cognitive Neuroscience prompted an investigation into theories of Conceptual Blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Slingerland, 2005). Given that this study situates itself at the intersection between Body Studies, Somaesthetics, Cognitive Neuroscience and Theatre and Performance, I have included theorists who explore these intersections: Rhonda Blair (2006, 2009), Amy Cook (2007, 2010), Bruce McConachie and Elizabeth Hart (2006), and John Lutterbie (2006). Additionally, as indicated in Chapter One, I am inspired by Grounded Theory and have drawn from Ingold's concept of "wayfaring" as a means of positioning the proposed method of performance making. In considering the process of image generation that this study proposes, I have looked to Theatre and Performance scholar, Alan Read (1995), who provides a useful understanding of image in theatre. I have also drawn from African Languages and Literature scholar, Harold Scheub's (1998), writings around the way in which image is constructed and understood in Southern African storytelling traditions.

There are numerous scholars who have written in the fields of Body Studies and Cognitive Neuroscience. I have, however, selected those that speak directly to my enquiry. I first situate the study within these fields before I delve into the specific theories and theorists that frame the research.

Overview

Simon Williams and Gillian Bendelow reference the "impossibility of treating mind and body as separate entities" (2002:98) and invite "the need to work at the interface between the physical, psychological and sociological realms of bodily being" (2002:98). Williams and Bendelow's concept of the "lived body" (2002) is

closely associated to Shusterman's theory of Somaesthetics. They propose a shift from theorising "*about* bodies in a largely disembodied ... way" to a model of theorising "*from* lived bodies" (2002:3, italics in original). They also reference the body as an "unfinished entity" (2002:4). The idea of the body as an "unfinished entity" implies that it is constantly in process. Connected to this is movement artist, performer and director, Sandra Reeve's notion of "being-becoming-being" (Reeve, 2013:5). Reeve's notion resonates with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1994), Elizabeth Grosz (1994, 2008), Lisa Blackman (2008), Clifford van Ommen and Vasi van Deventer (2011), all of whom propose a concept of the body in a state of becoming; not finished, but constantly in process. The positioning of "being" both before and after "becoming", suggests that Reeve is proposing a cyclical return to the idea of "being". Associated with this is Róisín O'Gorman's work on the ontogenetic body in relation to performance. O'Gorman notes that Ontogenesis¹⁴ is "[a] moving place, sometimes of origin, a place of spaces, of being becoming and unbecoming, of structures becoming and coming undone, not uni-linear but interwoven layers, generative, inter-generational, multidirectional, patterning in time, through selves" (2013:10).

In keeping with Shusterman's theory of Somaesthetics, which calls for the "strict disciplines of somatic self-control" (2008:43), Kathryn Woodward views "the idea of disciplinary power as 'lived practices' which do not simply mark themselves on people's thoughts, but permeate, shape and seek to control their sensuous and sensory experiences" (1997:79). Linked to this is Rebecca Cuthbertson-Lane's (2009:23) reference to the body as a storehouse for information and experiences. The metaphorical use of the term 'storehouse' alludes to a temporary holding place for information and experiences. By implication, the body is able to house experiences, memories and stories that can be accessed if and when needed, to be brought out into the external world. The permeability of this temporary storage space echoes Blackman's ideas of the body as an affective and generative site for potentiality (2008: 5, 10 & 103) (elaborated on later in this chapter). In this way, the

¹⁴ A biological term used to refer to the development of an organism from the time of fertilisation of the egg up until its mature form. It is also used to refer to study of the life span of an organism.

biography of a person conceivably locates in the body or what Candace Pert refers to as the “*bodymind*” (1997:187, italics in original), a term that emphasises the interrelatedness of the body and mind as opposed to the mind-body split proposed by Cartesian dualism. Pert notes that there is scientific evidence that supports the idea of a synergy between body and mind and that this is substantiated by a biochemical process involving neuropeptides and receptors in emotional processes that locate in both the brain and the body. She suggests that this provides a strong indication that mind extends “naturally to the entire body” (Pert, 1997:188). According to Pert, what we experience as emotion is the result brought on by a “free flow of information carried by the bio-chemicals of emotion, the neuropeptides and their receptors” (1997:276).

The role of breath in this process is highlighted by Jane Boston and Rena Cook, who maintain that, “Eastern thought ... assumes that breath contributes profoundly to the interconnection of body and mind and aims to make ever more explicit ... [breath’s] role in enabling higher states of mindful presence for the performer” (Boston and Cook, 2009:69). I found this useful to my study, in that it supports my argument that breath is the bridge that connects body and mind. Additionally, it associates with Pert’s ideas around bodymind. I elaborate on this in the section entitled Breath-Body-Mind and Image Generation.

Somaesthetics as a Conceptual Framework

Somaesthetics, a term coined by Richard Shusterman is, “[c]oncerned with the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self fashioning” (2008:1).

Shusterman’s allegiance to Somaesthetics as a “critical study” supports my preference to use it as a conceptual framework for this study. He views it as a “disciplinary framework ... [that engages] both theory and practice” (Shusterman, 2008:1). Through Somaesthetics, Shusterman conceivably alludes to Blackman’s notion of corporeal consciousness, which provides a useful frame for this study. Blackman understands corporeal consciousness to present itself “through a

‘thinking’ body, which is seen to have particular kinds of intelligences and competences” (2008:83-4). This conceivably associates with Pert’s concept of the bodymind. Blackman maintains that:

The idea of the body as simply something that we both *have* and *are* is displaced ... as the focus shifts to what bodies can *do*, what bodies could *become*, what practices enable and coordinate the *doing* of particular kinds of bodies, and what this makes possible in terms of our approach to questions about life, humanness, culture, power, technology and subjectivity. (2008:1, italics in original)

As indicated above, I am interested in Blackman’s idea of the body ‘doing’ and ‘becoming’. This suggests that the body has an active and dynamic role to play in how we create, negotiate, mediate, and navigate our way in the world. Shusterman additionally states that, “the body must be recognized as our most primordial tool of tools, our most basic medium of interacting with our various environments, a necessity for all our perception, action, and even thought” (2008:4). Following on Shusterman’s call to recognise the body as a basic medium of interaction, and I would add, communication, Blackman in her consideration of what it might mean to think through the body, notes that: “We need to be aware both of the bodily basis of thought and the cognitive component of bodily processes and vice versa. We also need to move beyond thinking of bodies as substances, as special kinds of *things* or entities, to explore bodies as sites of potentiality, process and practice (2008:5, italics in original).

This notion connects with Shusterman’s argument for the cultivation of Somaesthetics as a “way of life”, which supports his reasoning to cultivate the body as a “primordial instrument in grasping the world [so that] ... we can learn more of the world by improving the conditions and use[s] of [the body]” (2008:19).

Shusterman recommends an engagement with practices such as yoga, Feldenkrais, and tai chi, to name a few, that “integrate somatic postures” (2008:24) as a way of developing a balanced soma, that functions as an energetic unit. In support of this, Blackman notes that “[b]odies do not remain fixed or static but are mediated by processes and practices that produce dynamic points of intersection and connection” (2008:107). Blackman argues that:

[The] *felt* body is one that is never singular and never bounded so that we clearly know where we end and another begins. This is a *feeling body* that presents a challenge to the kind of Cartesian dualism that produces the body as mere physical substance. The affective body is considered permeable to the 'outside' so that the very distinction between the inside and the outside as fixed and absolute is put into question. (2008:10, italics in original)

Blackman claims that "the materiality of the body is presented as a potentiality that is dynamic and open to being affected and affecting ... [and that] the body's materiality ... has a generative force that is not static or fixed" (2008:103). Additionally, Shusterman emphasises the potential that a heightened somatic awareness can have for 'reading' other sentient beings with whom we engage. In essence what he is proposing, is that through a heightened sense of awareness of the somatic self through the cultivation of somatic practices, our awareness of how others are feeling in their somata, is made possible (2008:43).

The notions of affect and responsiveness connect with Blackman's concept of the "lived body" that "unites perspectives that go beyond exploring how bodies are represented to instead ask[ing] and interrogate[ing] how we 'live' our bodies ... and assumes that bodies are always 'unfinished' and in process. The focus is on *experience*" (Blackman, 2008:83, italics in original).

Somaesthetics and the thread to Cognitive Neuroscience

In his invitation to pay attention to the synergistic relationship between body and mind, Shusterman draws inspiration from William James's insistence on viewing the body as an effective interpreter of what is occurring on a cognitive level (Shusterman, 2008:10). He notes that, "James displays extraordinary mastery in the introspective observation and phenomenological description of bodily feelings alleged to be involved in thought and emotion" (2008:10) in this way connecting with the parallels I make between Shusterman's Somaesthetics theory and the theories of Antonio Damasio, located in the field of Cognitive Neuroscience. Shusterman claims that "penetrating beneath the skin surfaces and muscle fibre ... realign[s] our bones and better organize[s] the neural pathways through which we move, feel, and think" (2008:24). He goes on to state that, somatic practices "refuse to divide body from mind" (2008:24). He firmly rejects the mind-body split "since

the phenomenon of sense perception defies it” (2008:44). This speaks closely to Damasio’s (1994, 2000, 2003, 2010) insistence on including the body in neurological processes, where the body is intrinsically involved in the neuro-cycle of meaning-making.

My attraction to Cognitive Neuroscience and its syncretic relationship with Somaesthetics as a conceptual framework for this study, was largely informed by my reading of Damasio. I was drawn to Damasio’s theories that concern the relationship between the body, emotion and image. My particular interest is in investigating the role of breath in supporting this relationship. However, it necessary to make sense of Damasio’s theories more broadly, and consider in what way they could be related to theatre and performance, before delving into the specific understandings of the function of breath in this relationship.

Damasio states that, “consciousness begins when brains acquire the power ... of telling a story without words” (2000:30). The importance of story is evident in Damasio’s theories. This led me to question whether Damasio’s notion of a “story without words” could be equated with an image. Key to this notion is the question of whether the initial manifestation of image is the “story without words” first experienced as a sensation in the body, which in turn gives rise to the visual image in the brain, which we then make sense of through thought processes and decipher through words. Additionally, do these visual images always manifest as what Damasio refers to as a “movie-in-the-brain” (2000:9)? Damasio maintains that, “the mind exists for the body, is engaged in telling the story of the body’s multifarious events, and uses that story to optimize the life of the organism” (2003:218). My understanding of the relationship between brain and mind is that the former is a biochemical processing organ of the body that locates in the head and the latter, a generative organ that has the ability to occupy multiple spaces in the body and exists in and for the body. This speaks to the synergistic relationship between body and mind that is encompassed by the idea of bodymind. Damasio further asserts that, “even the feelings that make up the backdrop of each mental instant are images ... somatosensory images, that is, which mostly signal aspects of the body state” (2003:19). My reading of Damasio began as an attempt to answer these initial

questions. Unsurprisingly, as the reading ensued, further questions arose, particularly around how Damasio views image and how this in turn could be viewed in the context of theatre and performance.

Damasio views image as a mental pattern that is inclusive of visual, auditory, olfactory, and somatosensory modalities (2000:318). According to him, the sensations or felt perceptions in the body generate further images, thus charting a cyclical route. He equates the process of image generation with the ability of the brain to make maps:

The distinctive feature of brains such as the one we own is their uncanny ability to create maps [...]. When the brain makes maps, it informs *itself* [...]. [W]hen brains make maps, they are also creating images [...]. [C]onsciousness allows us to experience maps as images, to manipulate those images and to apply reasoning to them. (Damasio, 2010:55, italics in original)

He further states that:

Brain maps are not static like those of classical cartography. Brain maps are mercurial, changing from moment to moment to reflect the changes that are happening in the neurons that feed them, which in turn reflect changes in the interior of our body and in the world around us. The changes in brain maps also reflect the fact that we ourselves are in constant motion [...]. [O]ur own body changes with different emotions, and different feelings ensue. (2010:57)

The mercuriality of Damasio's notion of brain maps could be likened to Ingold's idea of "wayfaring". Ingold, as mentioned in Chapter One, distinguishes between mapping and wayfaring. He views wayfaring as a kind of journeying without maps, in contrast to mapping, which has a static and predetermined plan. I maintain that the process of making performance is an interactive process characterised by wayfaring. It is mercurial in nature. In other words, as a performance-maker one commences with an idea or a concept, which develops and changes as a result of interacting with people (performers, designers, technicians, and the like), objects and spaces. Ideas evolve through the interaction with images, people, and places, "from outside the brain towards the interior" (Damasio, 2010:55) and vice versa. The permeability of the body is what allows for the fluid movement from outside to inside and inside to outside.

It is necessary to contextualise Damasio's understanding of image in relation to how image is understood in theatre and performance. Alan Read notes that:

The theatre image is composed of material elements—bodies in action and speech articulated in places, and a receptive audience for that action and speech. The images of other arts are constituted in quite different ways. This engagement has a metaphysical aspect in that the image between the performer and the audience adds up to more than the sum of its various parts. (1995:58)

Read's understanding of image in theatre and performance implies that it is time-based and is different from how an image is understood in visual arts where an image is experienced as a static visual form, or in film, where a series of static images are placed in relation to one another. Theatre and performance does not comprise a series of static blocks that are moving so fast that they give the illusion of movement. It is about movement. It moves in time, and it moves with bodies. Damasio's reference to the "movie-in-the-brain" alludes to the notion of image as it occurs in film. Given this understanding, Damasio's notion of image may appear incongruous and limited when applied to theatre and performance, where the concept of image is not obvious, but rather as Read notes, "metaphysical".

For the purposes of this study, I am not concerned with how images are read in performance, but rather with how they appear to a performer through the method of performance making I am proposing. Damasio's definition of image and how the bodymind generates and makes sense of images, is useful when applied to the process of generating images for performance making that this study proposes. My understanding of the process of the way in which images are produced, in Damasio's terms, is that they happen in quick succession. The neurological processes are impossible to comprehend in a physical, time-based structure. The shift from felt sensation in the body to image, as it appears in the brain ("movie-in-the-brain"), to an articulation of that image through words (whether in thought or through written or vocal verbalisations), happens extremely rapidly. My understanding is that breath is a key facilitating mechanism in this regard; in other words, for both image generation and image processing.

Breath-Body-Mind and Image Generation

Breath as a key contributor and major component of this study not only functions as the bridge that connects mind, brain and body, but is also the element that initiates

the connection between mind, brain and body and facilitates the cyclical process of image generation that Damasio proposes. Boston and Cook further note “that breath in and of itself is a contributor ... to self-knowledge as presence” (2009:69). Self-knowledge is arguably extended to include knowledge of what images, memories, and stories live in the body.

There is a plausible connection between breath and what Rhonda Blair refers to as “imaginative immediacy and presence” (2009:102). In my experience, presence implies having an acute awareness of the sensation of breath in the body. The sensation is made tangible by a connection with breath. If I observe my breath, I become acutely aware of the felt sensations in my body. If this is the case, then breath awareness is a justifiable way of experiencing felt resonance in the body. Breath awareness arguably assists in responding to Shusterman’s appeal to develop a heightened state of somatic awareness but, however, requires dedicated daily practice.

The cyclical pattern of breath is akin to the feedback loop in communication. The breath moves beyond the soma of the self to the soma of others and to things, in a cyclical fashion. The breath is what connects the self to others and the self to things, thus enabling “imaginative immediacy and presence” (Blair, 2009:102). Blackman’s view on the concept of becoming which, “like the paradigm of embodiment, refuses the idea of separation; in this case, between the self and other [...]” (2008:41) is appropriate. The concept of ‘becoming’ relates to the proposed method of performance making that in many ways “refuses the idea of separation”. She further asserts that “the mixing and interconnection between self and other does not reveal an authentic separate realm but rather the capacity we all have for being affected and affecting the other” (2008:44) and that “permeability and connectedness rather than separation and self-contained individualism are what defines our encounters with others” (2008:87).

Image to Image Streams

Blair uses the term “image streams” (2006:117) to explain the process whereby actors create a stream of images that produce felt perceptions and sensations in the

body. My understanding of Blair's process is that actors generate images that connect with the words of the text. These images are then visualised and 'seen' in the 'mind's eye', which equates with Damasio's notion of the "movie-in-the-brain". The actor pays attention to bodily responses connected to the images, and in this way the images are experienced through the body as felt perceptions. The actor, in a manner of speaking, generates, through wayfaring, a map of bodily responses that equate with the words and images in the written text. Each time the actor performs the text, she revisits this body map of felt sensations as a way of accessing and connecting with the text. The idea of experiencing and seeing these images in what Damasio terms "the-movie-in-the-brain" (2003:210), enables the actor to experience the images in her body, and vice versa. In other words, the experience of images as felt sensations in her body facilitate seeing the images as a "movie-in-the-brain".

My study adapts Blair's idea of image streams to apply it to the context of performance making. The notion of image streams offers a useful development of Damasio's interpretation of image in that it provides a bridge between a neuroscientific perception, where the image seems to be a static 'thing' that has a frame around it, and that of the image in theatre and performance, where the image manifests in and through movement. The notion of streams implies that the process involves the idea of movement.

A key interrogation in my study centres around whether sensations in the body can give rise to images, which are seen as a "movie-in-the-brain", identified and named through words, which in turn give rise to further felt sensations in the body, and which sequentially generate further images, thus engaging a cyclical process. The cyclical nature of the process suggests that images (as defined by Damasio) are engaged in a cyclical stream of movement, which arguably encompasses Blair's concept of image streams.

Conceptual Blending, the Imagination, Metaphor and Meaning-Making

The idea of the image revealing itself in the progression of movement, which combines Damasio's definition of image and Blair's concept of image streams (both of which are ultimately interpreted through and as words), prompted an

investigation into where and at what point along the progression of movement, the meaning of an image reveals itself to the performer. This investigation led to theories of Conceptual Blending, where meaning is made in the blend of two images. According to Fauconnier and Turner, “[c]onceptual blending involves invent[ing] a scenario that draws from ... two analogues but ends up containing more” (2002:20). Placing images, that are encompassed in image streams, in relation to one another, suggests that the performer is able to invent scenarios that draw from two or more images. Fauconnier and Turner additionally assert that “[t]he blend ends up making possible a set of ‘matches’ that seem obvious to us, even though we might never previously have matched [them, and that] ... the creation of meaning is in the blend” (2002:20).

Meaning emerges at the level of “conceptual structure” (2002:22). Fauconnier and Turner maintain that language involves the integration of conceptual structures (2002:143); how we structurally arrange words in relation to one another gives rise to different concepts and meanings. They warn against accepting the “general view that conceptual structure is ‘encoded’ by the speaker into a linguistic structure, and that the linguistic structure is ‘decoded’ by the hearer back into a conceptual structure” (2002:360). They suggest that the challenge lies in “find[ing] the relations between formally integrated linguistic structure on the one hand and conceptually integrated structures built by the speaker or retrieved by the hearer on the other” (2002:360). I suggest that the ability to find these relations lies in the blend between bodily actions or responses and linguistic structures. The conceptual structure lies in this blend and can be found in the feedback loop that forms the basis of communication processes. I include somatic responses, in the form of bodily actions or reactions to words that have been linguistically structured, in the feedback loop. The sender engages the body in conveying a message comprised of sounds, words and emotions and the receiver engages the body in the process of receiving these before feeding back to the sender via sounds, words, and emotions. The body, in this instance, is also engaged in the process of feeding back. The blend between what the words say, how they are linguistically structured, and bodily actions, thus adds further meaning to that which is being encoded and decoded. How the body

responds plays an integral role in what is being conveyed or received through words, and ultimately adds to the conceptual structure of what is being communicated. Vittorio Gallese considers that “[h]umans tend to accompany their understanding of sentences or their imaginative activities with body reactions that simulate real experiences. The triggering stimulus, regardless of its external or internal nature, induces a congruent embodied simulation as a default automatic reaction (2003:525). According to Gallese and George Lakoff, “[f]irst-generation cognitive science was strongly influenced by the analytic tradition of philosophy of language, from which it inherited the propensity to analyse concepts on the basis of formal abstract models, totally unrelated to the life of the body, and of the brain regions governing the body’s functioning in the world (2005:1).

This bears a familiar resonance with the Cartesian view that privileges the analytical thinking processes of the mind over the body’s role in conceptual processes. Gallese and Lakoff provide a counter in that they argue that, “conceptual knowledge is embodied, that is, it is mapped within our sensory-motor system” and “[i]maging and doing use a shared neural substrate” (2005:2). Additionally, they maintain that, “imagination, like perceiving and doing, is embodied, that is, structured by our constant encounter and interaction with the world via our bodies and brains. The result is an interactionist theory of meaning” (2005:2).

Fauconnier and Turner observe that, “[the] activation [and binding of different elements] is the work of the imagination striving to find appropriate integrations [and blends]” (2002:22). Blair maintains that “Blending is a fundamental part of the actor’s and director’s manipulation of language and imagery in order to engage the material on which they are working in as fully felt and specific a way as possible. Living and playing ‘in the blend’ is at the root of originality and creativity (2009:94). I would include performance-makers in Blair’s list.

Fauconnier and Turner incorporate the concept of compression in their discussion of conceptual blending. They associate the two through processes of combining, where “[s]elective projection from different related spaces and integration in the blend provides an exceptionally strong process of compression” (2002:114). My understanding of conceptual blending and compression is the process of blending as

a way of compressing images to give rise to meaning. Two images placed in relation to one another (blended), create a new (compressed) image.

My study explores whether, through utilising images that emerge in the form of image streams generated from the biography of the body, performers are able to cultivate a rich foundation for a performance. Blair notes that conceptual blending “evokes ... images and associations, [as a] ... set of feelings in the body” (2009:95). Fauconnier and Turner support this by stating that, “in the case of sensation and perception, our conscious experience comes entirely from the blend – we ‘live in the blend’, so to speak” (2002:83). Blair connects this notion with Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis that “describes how body-states become linked with our conscious responses to experiences and our interpretations of those experiences” (2009:95). According to Edward Slingerland (2005:564), conceptual blends have the ability to create visceral reactions. His suggestion can be tightly associated with Damasio’s somatic marker hypothesis, where feelings in the body assist us in decision making. Feelings in the body give rise to images that evoke emotions and inform the decisions we make, prompting our actions in the world to flow from these decisions.

Cook observes that “[t]he blended space is like a stage set with props and characters, a commedia scenario awaiting enaction and improvisation” (2010:12). I maintain that this notion provides a fertile foundation for building a performance. This study investigates whether the act of blending images generated through the proposed method, is able to facilitate the process of meaning-making and conceptualisation of a performance piece. Additionally, it investigates whether the blends can be explored through cognitive engagement as well as through physical action in the form of ‘on the floor’ improvisations. Cook further considers that “[c]onceptual blending theory seeks to understand the way in which language creates emergent structure—novel ideas, creative leaps, and powerful associations” (2013:13). The idea of emergent structures appeals to me as a performance maker. The idea that images generated from the body, when blended in a ‘third space’, are able to create emergent structures, speaks to the notion of nascent possibility in performance making processes. ‘Third space’ in this instance refers to the result of

the two blended images, in other words, the compressed image. Cook considers how “[b]lending theory allows us to see meaning as a rich web of spaces that may not always make sense, but seem to help the play to work” (2013:104).

It is evident that associative thought and conceptual blending are linked to processes of generating images and, I would suggest, to metaphor. My study explores what Lutterbie refers to as the “metaphorical relations that evolve in the rehearsal process” (2006:163). I contend that the performers make sense of the relationship between images through metaphor. The metaphors and consequently the meaning can alter according to the arrangement of images in relation to one another, and ultimately facilitate the translation of images into performance. Metaphor enables others to find resonance with the performance. Lutterbie calls for the “need to embrace the fundamental value of associative and metaphorical processes in the complex art of acting” (2006:164). For the purposes of this study, I substitute ‘acting’ for performance making. Lutterbie’s idea of “systems of association [as a way of] ... gain[ing] information that can be later interrogated for its value in the development of performance” (2006:164), was key to the proposed method, where “creativity is an associative process, an interweaving of the affective and the rational” (2006:165).

Gallese and Lakoff’s (2005:19) notion of embodied conceptual metaphors is thought-provoking when one considers the blending of actions located in the sensory motor circuitry of the brain as metaphors. This is evidenced by the example they cite: “they kicked him out of class” (2005:19). The action of ‘kick’ stimulates a sensory motor action simulation. We are able to simulate the feeling of kicking, because we have previously embodied the action of kicking. We know what it feels like to kick and we may even know what it feels like to be kicked.

In contemplating what happens during the process of conceptualisation at the neural level, Gallese and Lakoff theorise that, “the sensory-motor system not only provides structure to conceptual content, but also characterises the semantic content of concepts in terms of the way that we function with our bodies in the world” (2005:2). They assert this by affirming that, “*imagination and doing use a shared neural substrate [and] ... [t]he same neural substrate used in imagining is*

used in understanding" (2005:2, italics in original). As Blair notes, this then means that, "in order to be able to do something, one must be able to imagine it, and in order to understand something, one must be able to imagine it" (2009:95-96). Conceptual knowledge is associated with the idea of conception that leads to giving birth to something; in this case an idea. Performance making is concerned with generating ideas that will eventually be shaped into a performance. These ideas, in the method I am proposing, are inherently images. Images are at the core of ideas that are birthed, and the performer interprets ideas through images as well as between images, and vice versa. Additionally, I suggest that the act of paying attention to breath and the associated sensations experienced in the body, which are linked to the sensory-motor system, is fundamental to the idea of engaging the body as a key site for generating images for the purposes of performance making.

Given that the method of performance making that is being proposed is concerned primarily with the generation of images and images streams, as well as the context in which it locates – that of South Africa, it is necessary to contemplate the work of Harold Scheub, Professor of African Languages and Literature, who spent a great deal of his career travelling through Southern Africa researching oral stories from various countries in the region. Scheub's understanding of image, metaphor and trope are of particular interest to this study. The way oral storytellers compose stories provides a useful analogue for the method my study proposes; one that is very much rooted in the context in which I work. Scheub notes that, "[s]tory is an artful mixing of images by means of pattern. [...] Pattern assures that the diversity of imagery is united in a metaphorical or metonymic relationship that is the core of storytelling" (1998:14). Additionally, Scheub touches on the relationship between image and feeling. He notes that "[t]he ... elements of storytelling exist to rouse, through evocative images, emotions, then to organize these emotions, rhythmically moving to trope which is not so much an intellectual as felt experience" (1998:15). Scheub classifies the images in Southern African storytelling into two distinct categories, that of past and that of present. The past images are usually aligned to fantasy and carry an emotional content. The present images are invariably contemporary and more domestic in nature. From my reading of Scheub, it appears

that meaning is made in the blend between these two categories of images. I am interested in how and whether Scheub's notion of image, metaphor and trope associate with Conceptual Blending theory in the context of performance making, and whether it is possible to categorise the different images that emerge into past and present, in the sense of fantasy and reality.

Summative Thoughts

Through practice I have been drawn to theorists that focus on the body as a central component of their theorising. Shusterman's pragmatic approach and focus on somatic practices and body consciousness resonate with my own practice of FV. My experiences of using the FDS to make a performance piece, discussed in Chapter Four, elicited an interest in how images are generated and, specifically the role that breath plays in these processes. Cognitive Neuroscience, particularly Damasio's focus on the body in processes of meaning-making, provided a necessary bridge to understanding the role of body, breath, brain and mind in image generation. Conceptual Blending Theory added an important layer to my understanding of Cognitive Neuroscience and processes of meaning-making and image generation. Lisa Blackman's Body Theory provided a useful springboard to link Somaesthetics and Cognitive Neuroscience to the field of Theatre and Performance. Her theorising of the body supports my argument for a biography of the body that draws from lived experience rather than cognitive recollections of events or experiences, where the idea of developing tools to access and enhance corporeal or somatic consciousness is key. This falls into line with the impetus behind this study to develop a method for making particular kinds of performances that engage women's experiences in particular kinds of ways to speak back to their social context and to assist them to develop a sense of self that is more visible to themselves. My study proposes a method of performance making that asks women performers to explore who they are and how they relate to the world in which they live. Fundamental is the idea that breath facilitates a process of self-identification and exploration; breath is the catalyst and thread that connects body, brain, mind and the imagination. As a tool, it opens up the space for self-exploration.

CHAPTER THREE – PREPARING THE YARN

This chapter provides a detailed description of each of the tools employed in the proposed method of performance making: FV, KRB patterns, body mapping, and free writing. I have divided the chapter into two sections: (1) tools for developing the relationship between breath, body, mind and imagination, and (2) tools for capturing what emerges during the engagement of breath, body, mind and imagination.

Section One: Tools for Developing the Relationship between Breath, Body, Mind and Imagination

Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV)

In 2010 I took up a post at UCT's Drama Department, where I am currently employed primarily as a teacher of theatre-voice. During that year, I became acutely aware of the need to locate my teaching practice within a particular system of voice training. My predecessor, Elizabeth Mills, who happened to be my teacher at undergraduate and postgraduate levels when I was studying Theatre and Performance at the same institution, had conducted extensive research in the field of theatre-voice, and continues to be recognised as one of the authorities within South Africa as well as internationally. To say that I felt I had 'big shoes to fill' would be a marked understatement. Until then my practice was an amalgamation of what I had learnt as a student and a teacher, and what I had read. It incorporated aspects of Cicely Berry's¹⁵ teachings, as well as the teachings of Patsy Rodenburg,¹⁶ Kristen Linklater,¹⁷ Arthur Lessac¹⁸ and Veenapani Chawla, who I introduced in Chapter One.

¹⁵ Voice instructor at the London Central School of Speech and Drama before she became voice director of the Royal Shakespeare Company from 1969 to 2014. A large part of her method focuses on "the physical connections between the making of the word and the emotional motive of the actor ... (or) the want/need of the character in the scene" (1997).

¹⁶ Head of Voice at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London since 1981. She has a particular focus on theatre-voice and Shakespeare. She encourages actors to find vocal freedom in order to declare their vocal presence.

¹⁷ Scottish born vocal coach, dialect coach, acting teacher, actor, theatre director, and author, currently based in America. Her method focuses on "producing a voice that is in direct contact with emotional impulses, shaped by the intellect but not inhibited by it" (Linklater, 2006:8).

¹⁸ American voice, speech, singing and movement teacher who developed a system called kinesensic training, a creative approach to holistically developing the voice and the body.

Having become conversant with the practice of yoga in India in 1999, I set out to find a theatre-voice system that incorporated practices of yoga with a focus on integrating breath, body, and vocal sound. My experiences with Veenapani Chawla at Adishakti in 2002 generated this idea. After searching the internet and the library for possible compatibility, I came across FV. The initial attraction to the system was that it integrated yoga, shiatsu, bioenergetics and theatre-voice practices (I will elaborate on each of these later in this chapter).

There are prerequisites for doing the FV Teacher Certification Programme and these include various workshops with a certified teacher of the work. Given that at the time there were no certified teachers either in South Africa, or the rest of Africa, I emailed the founder of the practice, Catherine Fitzmaurice, to explore possible ways of registering for the Certification Programme scheduled for Los Angeles in January 2011 and January 2012. Following initial correspondence with Fitzmaurice, she requested an extensive motivation letter and based on this, accepted me onto the 9th Certification Programme that commenced on 1 January 2011. In addition, my acceptance was conditional on my agreement to enrol in three private sessions with Master Teacher, Saul Kotzubei, a few days prior to the commencement of the Certification Programme.

The Certification Programme is divided into two blocks of four weeks each, with tasks in between the blocks. The second block culminates in a practical examination that is divided into two parts: teaching and performance. Candidates are required to fulfil certain tasks in the year between the two programme blocks and undertake to write a final reflective examination in the second block in the second year of study. The practical examinations, reflective written tasks, and final written examination all determine whether candidates are certified or not. I was certified in April 2012.

In January 2012, while preparing for my performance examination, I began to explore the possibility of breath as a catalyst for making performance, and in particular, performance that draws from the biography of the performer. After completing the examination, and once back in South Africa, I further developed the examination piece which I had performed, and travelled to Vancouver in August

2012 where I performed it as part of the second *Freedom and Focus* Conference on FV. I will elaborate on the process of making and performing the work entitled *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, in Chapter Four.

Fitzmaurice, founder of FV, holds an M.A. (Theatre Studies) and B.A. (English Literature) from the University of Michigan. She is a Graduate of the three-year programme at Central School of Speech and Drama, where she studied with contemporaries such as Dame Judi Dench, and is a certified somatics therapist.¹⁹ She teaches voice and text in workshops and to private clients in Los Angeles and New York City, as well as around the United States and internationally. She has taught voice and text at the Yale School of Drama, Harvard/A.R.T./MXAT, the Juilliard School's Drama Division, NYU's Graduate Acting program, A.C.T., UCLA, USC, New York's Actors Center, London University's Goldsmiths College, and the Central School of Speech and Drama, as well as in numerous workshops and seminars, and at theatre and medical conferences for voice professionals as well as at consciousness conferences. Her Teacher Certification Programme is offered in New York City, Los Angeles, London, and Barcelona every two years.

In her forty plus years of working with actors and their voices, Fitzmaurice has principally focused on breath as a key functional component of theatre-voice training. This includes both processes of sound production as well as the role of breath in the expression of creativity. She observes that "inspiration denotes both the physical act of breathing in, and the mental act of creating a thought. The expiration (breathing out) or expression of the thought is likewise both physical and mental" (Fitzmaurice, 1997:248). In her work she has looked to neuroscience as a way of making sense of the relationship between the functionality and pragmatism of breathing, and the less tangible process of inspiring creativity. Through her research into neuroscience, she discovered that there is a synthesis between the two processes, and the balancing of the two is reliant on synchronising the functions of the autonomic nervous system (hereafter referred to as the ANS) and the central nervous system (hereafter referred to as the CNS). The ANS takes care of the

¹⁹ Somatics therapy is an holistic therapy that is concerned with the relationship between the mind and body with regards to the psychological past.

physical functional need for breathing and the CNS oversees the conscious mental processes involved with thinking, creating and expressing. She notes that:

The autonomic [nervous system's response] ... is an unconscious response by the diaphragm to a need for oxygen ... and the central [nervous system] ... can override autonomic respiratory rhythm through conscious motor control [...]. The diaphragm contains both unstriated and striated muscle and is responsive to both the autonomic and central nervous systems. It is therefore uniquely appropriate as a site to create such harmony, so that the healing of the culturally prevalent body/mind split is not merely a metaphysical, but is actually a physical and obtainable goal which brings impulse and thought together as action. (1997:248)

As mentioned above, Fitzmaurice's discoveries emanated from practices that include Euro-American theatre-voice applications, bioenergetics, yoga, and shiatsu (Fitzmaurice, personal communication 2011, January 5). Years of Fitzmaurice practically exploring and adapting these modalities have led to what is now termed FV. I will elaborate on these modalities later in this chapter. I posit that they fall within the field of Somaesthetics, an area I engaged as a conceptual lens for this study.

According to Saul Kotzubei, FV Master Teacher, "[b]y opening up the breathing and becoming aware of a felt sense of the breath travelling throughout the body (which it literally does in the form of red blood cells), we can develop a greater life force, a greater presence [...]" (2010:2). This observation connects with Fitzmaurice's notion that breath has the capacity to make meaning in performance, where "[Destructuring] encourages the breathing (as power source and therefore timing) and the body (as resonator and therefore tone) to respond organically to shifts in mood and idea, thus achieving variety and complexity of meaning and eliminating unintentionally dry, flat delivery" (1997:249). Broadly speaking, FV can be divided into two main components: Destructuring and Restructuring. My proposed method of performance making focuses primarily on the Destructuring aspect of FV, although encompassing aspects of Restructuring.

Fitzmaurice Destructuring Sequence (FDS)

My experience of the FDS has led me to understand it as a process that allows breath to flow through the body in such a way so as to release energetic blockages and habitual patterns that may have formed in the muscles of the body. This frees the body of any tension and in turn enables a more spontaneous breath. Academic and Associate Teacher of FV, Michael Morgan, explores this further in his investigation of the FDS:

[The FDS] ... positions permit energy flow in the body that Fitzmaurice calls 'tremoring'. Tremoring is a vibratory, quivering motion that affects the breathing and also acts as a diagnostic tool that allows for an awareness of where energy flows and where it is blocked. As the tremor influences breathing it also influences the voice. The premise is that vocal resonance will follow where the breath goes, so as the tremor opens up the whole physical field, it also carves a path for sound flow. The tremoring energy encourages the possibility that sound vibration will deeply penetrate the whole body. (2012:138)

I agree with Fitzmaurice who suggests that spontaneous breath allows space for imaginative expression (Fitzmaurice, personal communication 2011, January 5). My understanding of FV is that the notion of Destructuring and Restructuring is explored through breath and body in an attempt to enhance the live sensorial presence of the performer in relation to herself, and ultimately to an audience. Breath is explored as an embodied element that is experienced somatically by the performer and is investigated as the impulse as well as thread that connects body, imagination and language. The spontaneous or 'surprise' breath, as it is sometimes referred to, allows for imagination to be expressed through sound that has its origins in the body. In other words, the sound is in and of the body; it is deeply connected to the body and not seen as something separate. Breath, I argue, is what catalyses the sound and weaves an interactive thread between body, sound, language and imagination. A large part of the FDS involves inducing a tremor in the body. The tremor is a reflexive action in response to something that induces a state of imbalance. It is thus the body's way of bringing itself back to a state of balance (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2005:1). If I cast my mind to situations when my body tremors, I notice that the tremor usually occurs in response to external stimuli, such as cold, hunger, fear, excitement, and the like. According to Fitzmaurice, what

actually happens is that the ANS comes into play by creating a tremor as a reflexive action that brings the body back into a state of balance; it is in a sense the body's way of healing itself. Fitzmaurice elaborates: "The involuntary tremoring does a number of different things. It may speed up the breathing and the heart-beat to oxygenate the blood, it loosens muscles, and it gives you an adrenaline rush, primarily. It does these things to enable you to be alert, with pliable muscles, so you are ready for anything" (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2005:1).

The FDS involves placing the body into certain modified yoga postures to physically induce, in the first instance, a tremor. It is important to note that this is not a yoga practice. The breath used in yoga is very different from the breath used in FV. Fitzmaurice argues that essentially the yoga breath is not conducive to a performer, in that yoga breathing is not functional for performance:

In and of itself, yoga is not useful for the voice. It's useful for the body, and it may make you aware [...]. [A] yoga breath, a breath that is controlled as usually taught in yoga, is not ... [a performer's] breath. [A performer] ... has to be a little more raw, more available, more spontaneous. And the stretches and tremors I use work specifically in physical areas that are impacted by breathing in order to develop that spontaneity. (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2005:1)

In the FDS breath is never held, and breathing happens through an open mouth. Performers do not breathe in through the nose, as is the case with yoga breathing. The argument here is that performers need to be ready to respond with breath, body and sound at any given moment (Fitzmaurice, personal communication 2011, January 13). John Donald Howard supports this claim in his comparison between the notion of 'allowing breath' and 'controlling breath'. He argues that most yoga practices "emphasise manipulating or controlling breath in some way" (2007:156). He notes that the idea of 'allowing breath' is evident in some somatic practices that focus on breath, including the work of Ilse Middendorf (1990), Carola Speads (1992), and Charlotte Selver (Littlewood & Roche 2004). The idea of 'allowing breath' is evident in FV as well as in the voice work of Kristen Linklater (1976). Contrary to this, my experience of theatre-voice work as a student encouraged the notion of breath *control*. On the other hand, the language associated with Speads, Selver, and particularly Middendorf's work (Howard 2007), is similar to that used by

Fitzmaurice, in other words, that of 'letting', 'allowing', 'giving in to', 'releasing' breath.

The idea of 'allowing breath' is most notable in FV through the tremor work. Once the tremor starts, the ANS takes over, and the idea is to allow the spontaneous 'surprise' breath to flow through the body and as a consequence to move the tremor through the entire body (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2005:4). The tremor may be induced and begin in the leg, for example. By giving in to and allowing the breath to flow, the tremor moves freely and spontaneously from the leg through the entire body. In this way it also loosens up the muscles in the body. While this is happening, the performer allows the breath to 'fall' out in the shape of 'fluffy' destructured sound, thus allowing breath to spontaneously move through the body and at the same time connect body and sound; it enables an experience of the voice as vibration in the body (2005:5). In my experience, the tremor also brings the performer to a tangible sense of 'aliveness' in the body. Physiologically the tremor heats up the blood and stimulates the adrenal glands. From personal experience, this has the effect of bringing a tangible sense of being present to, and in the body. Through the FDS, I have also noted that there are perceptible connections between breath and emotions, and where these locate in the body. These observations support Fitzmaurice's explanation of the relationship between Destructuring and the experiencing of emotions:

Emotion is a movement of energy. Emotion is a name we give to various physical sensations in the body because they go beyond the physical and have a psychological component, and we tend to judge them as either good or bad. Sadness, anger, fear, and joy are the four major emotions. Each of these emotions which we sometimes think of as abstraction, in actual fact has a physical component, a specific physical component in the body. And the tremor, when it brings energy into those specific physical areas, activates what feels like the emotion. So our body might cry simply because it wants to and needs to because we've been holding for so long, but we won't necessarily think of ourselves as sad or have a memory of a sad time. (2005:5)

This explanation supports Shreenath Nair's claim that "[b]reath as the fundamental source of energy to all human actions, reactions, emotions and speech, is an inseparable element in the nature of human embodiment" (2007:51). It further resonates with Howard's discoveries in relation to Middendorf breathwork where,

“emotions often arise in attending to bodily sensation, almost as if they have been ‘stored’ in particular places and are stirred by attention there” (2007:54). Fitzmaurice (2011), Howard (2007), and Linklater’s (1976) notions of ‘allowing breath’, I would argue, are intrinsically connected to the relationship between breath and emotions. The process of allowing breath to come and go as it pleases in the FDS, stimulates experiences or the sensation of emotions in the body. Additionally, Fitzmaurice maintains that Deconstructing enables an actor “Through the self-reflexive contact with the autonomic nervous system ... to acquire ... not only a more functional vocal instrument but also gains in autonomy, authenticity, and authority, which affect both personal and social behaviour, as well as aesthetic choices” (1997:249).

Fitzmaurice Restructuring

Although Restructuring is not specifically employed in my proposed method of generating images for performance making, it is useful to clarify how it fits into the overall context of FV. My experience of Restructuring is that it brings intention into the practice while still allowing for spontaneous imaginative expression. According to Kotzubei, “restructuring is about focusing the resultant freedom of breath, energy, musculature, awareness, feeling, imagination and melding it with thought into effective communication” (2010:4). Practically, Restructuring involves breathing into the lower part of the ribs, allowing the belly to release and then engaging the transverse muscle (*transversus abdominus*) in propelling and supporting the sound on the out-breath. The engagement of the transverse muscle automatically lifts the ribs up and out and then allows them to slowly lower as sound is released without them collapsing (Fitzmaurice, personal communication 2011, January 17). Here, the CNS comes into play. Restructuring involves structuring the spontaneous, imaginative sound that is experienced and allowed to flow through the body in the process of Deconstructing (Fitzmaurice, personal communication 2011, January 18). In my experience, once the mechanics are re-learned and re-membered, they are developed and ultimately become second nature, similar to driving a manual car or riding a bicycle. It happens automatically after a while.

The combination of Deconstructing and Restructuring allows for a supported, spontaneous and imaginative performer. Once the physical action of Restructuring is understood by the body, performers start to engage what is termed the 'focus line' in the expression of sound. Instead of focusing on the actual mechanics of breathing in Restructuring, performers start to visualise the energetic movement of sound powered by breath and activated by the engagement of the transverse muscle, moving down from the centre of the body (where the transverse muscle is located), around the groin, up the spine, and through the back of the head and out through the space between the eyes (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2005:7). The focus line engages the spine in the process of speaking, and in my experience makes for vitality, presence and clarity, and assists the performer in connecting to her breath, voice, body and imagination.

Influences

Euro-American Theatre-Voice Applications

Catherine Fitzmaurice began voice training at the age of 3 under the tutelage of Barbara Bunch, who also trained Cicely Berry. At the age of 17 she entered the Central School of Speech and Drama where she received vocal tuition from Alison Milne, Gwynneth Turburn, J Clifford Turner, and Cicely Berry (Fitzmaurice, 1997:249). Her training with these voice practitioners has most notably influenced the Restructuring aspect of FV. Fitzmaurice went back to the Central School of Speech and Drama to teach theatre-voice before moving to the United States in 1968. This experience coupled with her subsequent teaching in the United States aroused her curiosity around how, for the most part, actors who had been trained in the traditional European breathing techniques taught at Central School of Speech and Drama, were unable to "isolate, without undue tension, the breathing actions of the vocally efficient rib swing and abdominal support [...]" (1997:249). Her observation inspired Fitzmaurice "[...] to look for methods of reducing body tension in faster and more radical ways than the voice work or the Alexander Technique which [she]... had experienced at Central School, so that breathing isolations could become effortless and therefore economical, limber, and effective [...]" (1997:250).

Euro-American traditional breathing techniques for acting, to my understanding, encompass developing breath capacity, control and support. This involves opening up the ribs and strengthening the diaphragmatic muscle so as to allow for increased breath intake and control during vocal production. As mentioned earlier, the FDS encourages the experience of ‘allowing’ breath as opposed to ‘controlling’ breath. This shift in languaging begins to open possibilities for integrating the spontaneity of the breath experienced during the FDS with the more controlled breathing experienced during Restructuring.

Fitzmaurice’s search for integrating practices that facilitate the experience of allowing breath into her voice work practice, led her to the exploration of Bioenergetics.

Bioenergetics

Alexander Lowen, founder of bioenergetics, evolved his practice out of the work he experienced as a student of Reichian Therapy with Wilhelm Reich. Reich founded his therapeutic principles in relation to Freudian analysis. My understanding is that whilst Freud’s focus was the analytical and mental aspect of therapy, Reich’s practice emphasised the primacy of the body in therapy. Lowen, on the other hand found a balance between the two. He notes that, “[t]he principles and practice of Bioenergetic Analysis rest upon the concept of a functional identity between the mind and body” (Lowen, 2005:location 1471). Moreover, he emphasises that the functionality of the mind and the body are based on a healthy relationship between breathing and movement (2005: location 1472).

In this study I did not delve into Reich’s theories and principles, but rather concentrated on the work of Lowen and the development of bioenergetics as a somatic practice. I focused specifically on the manner in which it relates to the FDS, given that Fitzmaurice studied bioenergetics with Lowen. Her experiences with bioenergetics directly impacted on the development of the Fitzmaurice system of voice work, in particular the FDS. Morgan notes that Lowen and his colleague, John Pierrakos, developed Reich’s principles into “dynamic physical postures” (Morgan, 2012:23). Lowen viewed the practice of bioenergetics as:

[...] a therapeutic technique to help a person get back together with his²⁰ [sic] body. This emphasis on the body includes sexuality, which is one of its basic functions. But it also includes the even more basic functions of breathing, moving, feeling and self-expression. A person who doesn't breathe deeply reduces the life of his body. If he doesn't move freely, he restricts the life of his [sic] body. If he doesn't feel fully, he narrows the life of his body. And if his self expression is constricted, he limits the life of his body. (1975:43)

Additionally, Lowen notes that:

In his emotional expression, the individual is a unity. It is not the mind which becomes angry nor the body which strikes. It is the individual who expresses himself. So we study how a specific individual expresses himself, what is the range of his emotions and what are his limits. It is a study of the motility of the organism for the emotion is based on an ability to 'move it out'. (1958:xi-xii)

From the above it is clear how and where Fitzmaurice found answers in her quest to find ways of releasing and/or unblocking any energetic blockages and habitual patterns that may have formed in the muscles of the body, as a precursory (and continuous) step in the training of actors in theatre-voice. Fitzmaurice's concern with releasing energetic blockages in the body so as to allow for a spontaneous breath, resonates with Lowen's claim that, "[b]ody motility is the basis of all spontaneity, which is the essential ingredient of both pleasure and creativity" (Lowen, 2004:34) and that spontaneity arises "because motility of ... [the] body is unrestricted" (Lowen, 2005:Location 1759). He emphasises that:

Since the muscle is an elastic tissue, the active stretching of spastic muscles will often set them into vibration ranging all the way from fine fibrillations to gross shaking. The vibration regardless of its quality serves to loosen the chronic spasticity of the muscle (2005:Location 1712-714).

Morgan observes that, "[b]oth [Fitzmaurice] ... voicework and bioenergetics aim to salvage the involuntary movements from the consciously controlled manipulations that have been imposed upon them" (2012:24). Lowen states further that,

[...] the living organism expresses itself in movement more clearly than in words. But not alone in movement! In pose, in posture, in attitude and in every gesture, the organism speaks a language which antedates and transcends its verbal expression. (Lowen, 1958:xi)

²⁰ I do not share Lowen's gender bias in his writing, as evidenced by his use of the masculine pronoun throughout.

Lowen's ideas resonate with the various postures in the FDS and how as consciously controlled manipulations they invite spontaneous physical expressions that transcend verbal expression, tapping into and activating imagination and creativity.

Lowen, like Fitzmaurice, emphasises the importance of breath in processes of releasing muscular tension in the body. He asserts that:

Bioenergetic therapy starts with breathing, since this provides the energy for movement. Furthermore, the restriction of breathing imposes restraints upon the body's motility. The respiratory waves associated with the movements of breathing are the basic pulsatory waves of the body. As the waves pass through the body, they activate the entire muscular system. Their free movement guarantees the spontaneity for feeling and expression. (2004:34)

It is also evident that Fitzmaurice incorporated principles of Lowen's bioenergetic therapy through the inclusion of the tremor in the FDS. This is evidenced in Lowen's observation that the:

[...] involuntary pattern of respiration...is closely linked to the emotional responsiveness of the individual. The involuntary vibrations of the body...have an immediate effect on the respiratory pattern. [...] When a body is in a state of vibration, breathing deepens spontaneously. This is because the vibratory state of the body is a manifestation of its emotional responsiveness. (2005: Location 1633-1637)

He specifically takes into account that "[b]reathing is also directly involved in voice production, which is another vibratory activity of the body" (2005: Location 1637-1638). He maintains that "[i]n bioenergetic therapy there is a constant emphasis on letting the sounds out. The words are less important [...]. The best sounds are the ones that emerge spontaneously" (Lowen, 1975:274). This explains Fitzmaurice's inclusion of 'fluffy' sound in the FDS. The use of vocalised breath coupled with the tremor assists in spontaneously and effectively releasing muscular tension in the body. Lowen further adds that "[t]he vibrations set the stage for spontaneous expression of feeling" (Lowen, 2005: location 1960). Like Fitzmaurice, I would agree that this is a necessary tool for actors.

Lowen's claim that the increase in motility of the body will heighten the role of feeling, sensing and thinking (2005: location 2473), is of particular interest to me

given that my study investigates the relationship between breath, emotion and imagination.

Yoga and Shiatsu

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the initial pull towards FV was the integration of yoga into the practice. Until then I had intuitively started adapting the yoga postures (*asana*) and breathing exercises (*pranayama*) that I had learnt with the Bihar School of Yoga in India in 1999, into my theatre-voice classes with students of acting. The expectations of what I was going to learn through the FV Certification Programme were very different from what I actually experienced. No amount of research into Fitzmaurice's system of voice work could have prepared me for what I was to meet. I was under the impression that we were going to participate in long sessions of *asana* and *pranayama* practice as part of our training. I could not have been more wrong. As indicated earlier in the chapter, Fitzmaurice makes a clear distinction between the practice of yoga *asana* and *pranayama* and the FDS. The FDS borrows from yoga *asana* practice by incorporating the postures in a modified manner. The majority of the FDS positions can be associated with specific yoga postures, however, the small modifications make for a very different experience of the postures, and in particular, the manner of breathing while in each posture. The breath in the FDS, as indicated earlier, is not controlled, but rather allowed to come and go as it wants to. The idea is to allow impulse to lead, and as the person practising the FDS, to follow the impulse of breath without trying to manipulate or control it. Not at any time during the certification programme did we encounter the practice of yoga *asana* and *pranayama* as I know it. Nonetheless, I maintain that the practice of *asana* and *pranayama* in its standard yogic form is a useful preparation for the method of performance making my study proposes. The method requires performers to observe the self with deep curiosity and awareness, so as to be able to navigate their way in and through the sensory experiences of the body. To this end the standard yoga practices of *asana* and *pranayama* are constructive tools.

Shiatsu is a form of body therapy that originates in Japan with concurrent connections to the Chinese system of *Tao-Yinn*, a form of self-massage and pressure point therapy used to enhance the internal vital energy of the body, known as *Qi*

(Morgan, 2012:121). The literal translation of the term shiatsu means finger pressure. The practice involves applying pressure to particular points on the body using the thumb or fingers. As Morgan notes, “[t]his treatment ... can be extended to include other means of application including the hands, forearms, elbows, knees and feet” (2012:121). Shiatsu is akin to acupressure in that it involves applying pressure to acupressure points on the body. These points are assumed to be situated along lines of energy channels, referred to as meridians, located in the body. The term meridians, as it is used in bodywork, is associated with certain Chinese and Japanese medical practices, and denotes a set of energy pathways in the body along which vital energy is believed to flow. Shiatsu is also similar to acupuncture, but does not include the use of needles in applying pressure to particular acupressure points. It works on the principle of balancing the meridians so as to allow for free flow of energy. According to Sandra Anderson:

These channels are connected to the organs of the body and share the name of the organ. Examples are the Lung Channel, Large Intestine Channel, Stomach Channel, and Spleen Channel. The organs and channels have certain physical, mental, psychological, emotional, and spiritual functions in the body, and the balanced flow of Qi in the channels sustains these functions. (Anderson, 2008:6)

Fitzmaurice incorporates aspects of shiatsu into her voice work system as a means of assisting in the release of habitual patterns and energetic blockages in the body. The notion of a “balanced flow of Qi in the channels or meridians” speaks to a body through which energy, powered by breath and sound, flows with ease, thereby cultivating a healthy, vital and present performer able to “develop a greater life force, [and] ... a greater presence [...]” (Kotzubei, 2010:2). Morgan views Fitzmaurice’s incorporation of shiatsu into the system as “a way of communicating with the interior” (2012:122). Lowen alludes to the inclusion of practices that sound similar to shiatsu, in his work with Reich:

Prior to leaving for Switzerland, an important development occurred in Reichian therapy – the use of direct contact with the patient’s body to release muscular tensions which block his [sic] ability to give in to his [sic] feelings and allow the orgasm reflex to take place. During his work with me Reich occasionally applied pressure with his hands to some of the tense muscles in my body to help them relax. Usually, with me and with others, he applied such pressure to the jaw [...]. As a result, the breathing becomes freer and

deeper, and often involuntary tremors occur in the body and legs. (Lowen, 1975:26)

Fitzmaurice's idea of accessing the interiority of the performer is a notion which I was especially interested in investigating through the proposed method of performance making. I was curious to discover what stories, memories, experiences and images reside in the interior spaces of muscles, bones, and blood, as well as in the less tangible locales of energy channels. Additionally, the inclusion of shiatsu relates to Fitzmaurice's quest to balance the ANS and CNS through the practices of Destructuring and Restructuring in pursuit of developing performers who are technically adept, present and spontaneous; performers who are able to cultivate a profound awareness of sensation in the body so as to be receptive and responsive to the experience of affect. The idea of affective bodies is one that I introduced in Chapter Two and further unpack in Chapter Four. The connection between the practice of shiatsu and the notion of presence, spontaneity and affect, is evident if one considers Saul Goodman's observation:

When shiatsu is given, stimulation at the skin surface triggers a response of the nervous system. This effects a reaction and change in the meridians and chakras.²¹ Together these changes create adjustments of the body chemistry, systems and organs. The changing, adjusting meridian and chakra energy conversely influences the nervous system which in turn alters the skin response to stimulus. (1990:22-23)

Goodman's observation further connects with the synergy between yoga and shiatsu and how these are synthesised in the FV practice. Goodman equates the meridian system with that of the yogic *chakra* system. The *chakra* system similar to the meridian system, is based on energy channels that according to Jade McCutcheon "have been seen as doors to the inner worlds and, therefore, to inner states of consciousness" (McCutcheon, 2008:41). The notion of "doors to the inner worlds" further facilitates the process of accessing the interiority of the body. Nair indirectly supports the connection between the *chakra* system and the meridian system in his framing of the kinetic energy associated with the *chakra* system as

²¹ A Sanskrit word meaning 'spinning wheel'. In yogic philosophy, there are said to be seven *chakra* points of physical and spiritual energy in the human body.

being vital energy. “The basic concept of *Cakra*²² suggests kinetic energy situated in the body, which can be aroused and properly cultivated throughout the body. This kinetic energy is said to be the vital energy called *Kundalini* in *yogic* terms” (2007:84, italics in original).

In FV, shiatsu is used as a practice on its own, to support and supplement the Deconstructing and Restructuring processes, and it is also used in conjunction with Deconstructing when pressure is applied to particular points on the body while the person is Deconstructing. With reference to the supplementary use of the practice Morgan recognises that:

Shiatsu is readily assimilated into the Voicework. Its theories are generally porous and conversant. Shiatsu is priming the actor through touch toward self-understanding and self-integrative processes. Nevertheless, shiatsu is primarily a therapeutic modality and nonperformative. [...] As such, shiatsu remains, even when integrated into the Voicework, as an adjunct to the more active engagements of the actor when tremoring and restructuring. (2012:130-131)

I concur with Morgan who maintains that the relationship between yoga and FV is less clear (2012: 131). It is evident that the postures used in the FDS are inspired by traditional yoga postures. However, the emphasis on allowing breath to surrender to the experiences that are engendered in the body during the FDS, contrasts considerably with the emphasis placed on controlling breath in yoga *asana* and *pranayama* practices that are designed to inspire a sense of calmness and tranquillity in the body and mind. Arya Madhavan, when observing the management and control of breath in *siddha* yoga, a school of yoga which according to Nair has a specific focus on breath-related practice and meditation (2007:179), states that: “[a] disturbing movement of breath causes a disturbance of the mind and hence the manipulation and control of breathing (which in turn controls the mind) is what is cardinal to the meditation practice” (Madhavan, 2010:46). Madhavan is clearly pointing towards the importance of a controlled and managed breath in yoga *asana*, *pranayama*, and meditation practices. Despite the seemingly obscure connection between yoga and the FDS, I suggest that the practice of *asana* and *pranayama* as preparation for my proposed method of generating images provides in the first

²² Alternate spelling of *chakra*.

instance, a holding space for the feelings (or disturbances, as articulated by Madhavan) that may spontaneously be generated during the FDS. In the second instance it assists in developing performers that are fit, flexible, and agile, and more somatically aware and thus more readily able to experience both overt and subtle sensations generated in the body during the FDS.

Experiments with generating material for autobiographical performance making via explorations into the function of breath in FV inspired a return to what I had studied while at Adishakti in 2002. This revisit involved an investigation into the potential KRB patterns hold as catalysts for generating material. Whilst experimenting on myself with FV, I noticed that during the FDS, I would often experience somatic sensations akin to what I experience when I employ the KRB patterns. This observation encouraged further somatic reflections. My perception of these reflections was that while doing the FDS, my body automatically engaged the breath patterns associated with the different *Koodiyattam rasas*. The FDS, appeared to be catalysing emotional experiences or sensations in the body, and these experiences or sensations were in turn being catalysed by breath patterns.

I discovered that the Restructuring aspect of the work connected with the movement of energy in the body associated with different KRB patterns. Both Restructuring and KRB patterns involve an acute awareness and engagement of the spine; both practices work with intention in this regard. Different KRB patterns involve the movement of energy, powered by breath, either down the spine or up the spine. This in turn, involves sensations of expansion and contraction in the body. The movement of energy powered by breath, up and down the spine, is closely connected to Fitzmaurice's concept of the 'focus line'. I will unpack this further in the next section.

Koodiyattam Rasa Breath Patterns (KRB) and the Theory of Rasa

Koodiyattam

From 2003 to 2006 I taught an academic component for first year students of Drama at UCT that included *Koodiyattam* as part of a module on Indian Theatre traditions.

A considerable amount of what is written here is based on memory of those particular lectures as well as from discussions with Chawla over time.

According to Madhavan:

*Kudiyattam*²³ is a form of Sanskrit theatre that is performed in Kerala; it is considered as the oldest existing Sanskrit theatre in India and also perhaps the oldest of the still existing forms of the world. Its origin is dated back to the 2nd century BC, thus *Kudiyattam* could claim more than 2000 years of continued existence. (2010:19)

Traditionally *Koodiyattam* performances take place in Hindu temples, and are only performed by a specific community in Kerala, namely the *Chakyar*²⁴ and the *Nambyar*.²⁵ *Koodiyattam*, in contemporary contexts is performed outside of temples and is not limited to performers from the *Chakyar* and *Nambyar* community. The first performance outside a Hindu temple took place in 1949 (Madhavan, 2010:23). This led to the first performance outside of India. *Koodiyattam* performance was traditionally an inherited profession. Madhavan notes that:

Traditionally, a Chakyar boy and a Nangyar girl are initiated to training at the very early age of 7 or 8 and an actor becomes an actor by birth in the sense that they are not offered a choice to decide otherwise; according to the duties and rites of their caste, acting is thought to be mandatory, i.e., you had to be born into the community of performers. (2010:80)

In addition, spectators had to be of a higher caste to watch the performances. In 1965 *Koodiyattam* began to be taught at the Kalamandalam,²⁶ which meant that the training became accessible to students from all castes. This soon led to students from outside of India studying the form. Traditionally, performances would last up to 45 or more nights. Currently some *Koodiyattam* performances are condensed to fit into one hour. However, traditional *Koodiyattam* performances do still take place in their original forms in certain Hindu temple theatres. According to Madhavan, “[k]udiyattam started declining during the 19th and early 20th centuries” (2010:22). One of the factors to which she attributes this decline is the rise in popularity of *Kathakali*, a form of dance drama that was less restrictive in terms of who was

²³ The spelling of *Koodiyattam* is interchangeable between *Koodiyattam* and *Kudiyattam*. I have chosen to use the former, but when quoting scholars that use the latter, I have used their spelling.

²⁴ Male performers belonging to this community of temple performers.

²⁵ Female performers belonging to this community of temple performers.

²⁶ Kalamandalam is a major centre for learning Indian performing arts in the State of Kerala.

allowed to perform in it and who was allowed to watch it. Madhavan also attributes the decline to the emergence of *Ottan Tullal*, a satirical solo performance form (2010:22). The satirical quality of the form thus made it more accessible to all castes. Despite its supposed decline in popularity, *Koodiyattam* remains a practiced form in India today. A key aspect of *Koodiyattam* training involves the understanding and application of the theory and practice of *rasa*. My particular interest in *Koodiyattam* lies in its application of the theory and practice of *rasa*, which is covered in the following section.

Rasa

Rasa is associated with the over 2000-year-old Sanskrit treatise on acting, namely the *Natyasastra*, in that it is the core premise of the aesthetic theory presented in the text. According to Marchand “[r]asas are the essences of our emotions that exist in both body and mind” (2006:1). *Rasa* in the context of performance can be translated as “the ‘theatrical pleasure’ emerging from any performance experienced by the audience” (Madhavan, 2010:71). There are a total of nine *rasas*, namely:

Shringara (love/eroticism)

Hasya (joy/laughter)

Adbhuta (wonder)

Veerya (courage/bravery)

Raudra (anger/fury)

Karuna (sadness/melancholy)

Bhayanaka (fear)

Vibhatsa (disgust)

Shanta (calmness/peace)

I have used the English translations as they were given to me by Vinay Kumar, performer and teacher at Adishakti (Kumar, personal communication 2002, March 10 and 2012, September 12-17).

The Sanskrit term, *bhava* can be translated to mean emotion (Schechner, 2001; Marchand, 2006; Nair, 2007; Higgins, 2007). The distinction between *rasa* and *bhava*, according to 10th and 11th Century Indian philosopher theologian and mystic,

Abhinavagupta, is that *bhava* is an expression of emotion as it is portrayed by the performer in performance and *rasa* is the audience's aesthetic experience of the emotion portrayed (cited in Higgins, 2007:44). Zarrilli maintains that “[*b*]hava is a term commonly used to refer to the actor's psychophysiological embodiment of a character's states of being/doing (emotions) [...]” (2009:69). My perception is that *bhava* is a concept, whereas *rasa* is a feeling; the felt resonance of the *bhava*. In other words, the *bhava* is the name we give to the expression of the felt resonance of the *rasa*.

I have found Marchand's table useful in assimilating the meaning of each *rasa* and its corresponding emotion:

The Nine Rasas

Sanskrit Term	Principal Meaning	Further Meanings and Related Emotions
Shringara	Love	Beauty, Aesthetic Sentiment, Devotion
Hasya	Joy	Humor, Laughter, Sarcasm
Adbhuta	Wonder	Curiosity, Astonishment, Mystery
Shanta	Calmness	Peace, Relaxation, Rest
Raudra	Anger	Violence, Irritation, Stress
Veerya	Courage	Heroism, Determinism, Confidence
Karuna	Sadness	Compassion, Pity, Sympathy
Bhayanaka	Fear	Terror, Anxiety, Nervousness, Worry
Vibhatsa	Disgust	Depression, Dissatisfaction, Self-Pity

(Marchand, 2006:6-7).

Marchand further notes that “[w]hile the Rasas themselves are clearly defined energies, the resulting emotions (Bhavas) manifest in many varieties and their understanding is affected by personal and cultural backgrounds” (2006:7).

If *rasa*, as I contend, is akin to the felt resonance of the associated *bhava*, it is conceivable that in order for the audience to achieve the experience of *rasa*, the performer, too, has to experience the state of *rasa*. Madhavan observes that “histrionics is what causes *rasa* ... in the actor. He [sic] experiences *rasa* directly by means of his [sic] own physical actions” (2010:166). In this way, a “contagion of

consciousness”, as Chawla indicates (in Ghandi, 2014:75), is created between performer and audience. My supposition is that breath is key to creating this contagion. The focus line, as referred to by Fitzmaurice, powered by breath, is what enables the transference of the state of *rasa* from the body of the performer to the body of the audience.

My understanding of the relationship between breath, *rasa* and *bhava* is based on my studies with Chawla and Kumar at Adishakti in 2002 and 2012, as explained in Chapter One. In my experience of the work, the principle behind it is that each KRB pattern has a basic emotion or *bhava* that connects to it. The *rasa* (felt sensation) gives rise to the *bhava* (emotional expression). The means to accessing, generating, and expressing the emotion (*bhava*), which is first experienced in the body as felt sensation (*rasa*), is through breath. The breath here is arguably a physical action that gives rise to an experience of *rasa* in both the performer and the audience. If one closely observes one’s breathing during particular emotional states, very specific physiological patterns or structures connected to the breathing pattern may be noticed.

The only published description of breath patterns associated with each specific *rasa* that I came across in the course of my research, is in Sreenath Nair’s *Restoration of Breath: Consciousness and Performance* (2007:127-128). Nair based his documentation on his conversations with *Koodiyattam* performer Usha Nangyar, with whom Chawla also worked closely while researching the relationship between structures of breath and emotion. My observation is that there are similarities between Nair’s descriptions and my own, particularly when it comes to directionality and placement of breath.

In the practice of KRB patterns, I have found it useful to begin with breath and allow the pattern of breath to inform the body posture and facial expression of each *rasa*. The experience is that of a seamless transition from one to the other, in other words, breath, posture, face. The breath in this practice is the catalyst as well as the thread that energetically informs postural shifts and changes in facial expression. The energy of breath in the body, created by the pattern, generates a tangible felt sensation in the body (*rasa*). Thus body and face respond to the sensation in the

body and the associated emotion (*bhava*) is expressed. This experience echoes Lowen's idea that breath begets energy in the body which produces motility, which leads to spontaneity, and ultimately self-expression (Lowen, 2005: Location 1937).

This work (KRB patterns), in my view, is similar to the work of neuroscientist, Susana Bloch, who developed what has come to be termed Alba Emoting in Europe or Alba Method for Emoting in America. According to Jessica Beck, "Alba Emoting is a tool for actors to summon emotion at will through respiratory-facial-postural actions that trigger the physiological components of emotion" (2010:141). Zarrilli supports my claim, "[t]he description by Bloch and her associates of the psychophysiological process of breath control and muscular contractions basic to inducing each effector pattern is strikingly similar to that of the interior psychophysiological processes of some traditional Asian actors [...]" (2002:98).

At their core, both systems employ a psychophysiological, somatic approach to accessing emotions, where the body is engaged "as a locus of sensoryaesthetic appreciation (*aesthesis*) and creative self-fashioning" (Shusterman, 2006:2). In addition, Shusterman characterises the body as "the basic instrument of all human performance, our tool of tools, a necessity for all our perception, action, and even thought" (2006:2).

Bloch defines emotions as "*distinct and dynamic functional states of the entire organism, comprising particular groups of effector systems (visceral, endocrine, muscular) and particular corresponding subjective states (feelings)*" (1993:123, italics in original). The subjective states to which Bloch refers can be equated with the experience of *rasa* in the performer as well as in the audience. Bloch was arguably impacted by William James's theories of emotion, which reveal that emotions are the primary result of changes felt in the body (Bloch 1993: 122). In his thesis James states that:

Our natural way of thinking about these standard emotions is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. [...] My thesis on the contrary is that *the bodily changes follow directly the PERCEPTION of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion.* (James, 1884:189-190, italics and capital emphasis in original)

From the above it is evident how James's early theories conceivably inspired Shusterman's philosophical theories, as well as Bloch's neuroscientific approach to considering the relationship between mind/body/emotion.

Alba Emoting is becoming widely accepted as a tool for accessing emotions and is being incorporated into numerous acting programmes at universities and colleges in America and Europe. The system of KRB patterns, on the other hand, is less known outside of India, particularly South India. I therefore, feel it necessary to include a section on the parallels between the two systems, as a way of locating the system of KRB patterns within my context, which is largely influenced by American and European traditions of teaching and practice. Additionally, the comparison provides insight into the triadic relationship between breath, posture and facial expressions as a means of accessing emotion, that the two systems share.

KRB in relation to Alba Emoting

Roxanne Rix describes Alba Emoting as "a scientifically devised system for generating emotional states through precise physical patterning [...]" (2002:205). She provides an effective springboard from which to discuss the similarities between Alba Emoting and KRB patterns as taught to me by Chawla and Kumar:

[Alba Emoting is] ... the first method to identify specific, universal patterns in ... reproducible aspects of emotional expression, and systematize them into a technique to produce and express emotion at will [...]. In taking on the physical characteristics of an emotion, the body begins to feel that emotion: the limbic system, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems etc., begin to respond as if there were a stimulus creating the response [...]. (Rix, 2002:207)

Rix's observations echo Chawla's reflections on her research with Adishakti:

We discovered that all three: psychological/*satvika*, vocal/*vachika* and bodily/*angina* expressions are indeed united by a common breath [...]. And this stands to reason when one accepts that breath is really the physical expression of thought and emotion. A particular kind of breath to express one *bhava*/emotion in the face will express the same emotion in the voice, in the mind and in the body. [...] Adishakti was therefore able to creatively extend the breath patterns used in Koodiyattam for facial expression, into bodily and vocal expression. (2001:7-8)

Bloch's proposition that "acting can be characterised as a particular form of behavior produced at will by an actor in order to transmit gnostic and emotional

information to an audience by word, gesture and posture [...]” (Bloch et al., 2002:219) resonates with Chawla’s findings.

The major difference, in my opinion, between Alba Emoting and Chawla and Kumar’s approach, is that the former has been formalised into a method of actor training that has been trademarked. In order to teach the work, it is necessary to undergo certification training. The KRB patterns (and by association postural and facial patterns) have not to my knowledge been officially recorded (apart from the brief descriptions provided by Nair) (2007:127-128). The method, by implication, lives in the bodies of those who have learnt it and are thus able to pass it on through embodied practice.

I first encountered Alba Emoting in theory when reading about Bloch’s research that she conducted in 1970 with neurophysiologist, Guy Santibañez, and theatre director, Pedro Orthous. The aim of their study was to “relate some of the physiological and expressive activations present during an emotion with the corresponding subjective experience” (Bloch, 1993:124). The study revealed that there was indeed a connection between emotions and particular breath patterns, facial expressions and physical postures. On first reading, the system that Bloch was proposing resonated with the work I had experienced at Adishakti in 2002, and what I subsequently explored with performers in The Mothertongue Project. The most obvious connection was the relationship between breath, facial expression and body posture. The second noticeable connection was Bloch’s list of emotions that the method engages, and how they correlated with the nine *rasas*. Bloch identifies six emotions: joy, anger, sadness, fear, eroticism, and tenderness. According to Anne Schilling, Alba Emoting instructor and Associate teacher of FV from Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas, disgust is being considered as a seventh emotion (Schilling, personal communication 2013, March 8). I would equate tenderness with the *Shanta*/compassion *rasa*. Arguably Alba Emoting omits two of the emotions associated with *rasa* (if we are to take that disgust is being developed for inclusion), in other words, *Veerya*/bravery/courage, and *Adbhuta*/wonder.

Nine years after reading about Bloch’s method, I practically explored the work with Schilling. Schilling came to UCT on a research visit in March 2013 and again in March

2014. One of the primary aims of our collaboration was to explore through practice whether there was a connection between KRB patterns, as taught to me by Chawla and Kumar, and Alba Emoting. Before I delve into what Schilling and I discovered, I outline the premise of what Bloch has termed the effector patterns which, in my understanding, form the basis of Alba Emoting. The effector patterns are based on three somatic elements that are associated with emotions:

1. a breathing pattern, characterized by amplitude and frequency modulation.
2. a muscular activation characterized by a set of contracting and/or relaxing groups of muscles, defined in a particular posture.
3. a facial expression or mimicry characterized by the activation of different facial muscle patterns. (Bloch et al., 2002:221)

Bloch based her findings on the way in which the body responds during emotional experiences (Rix, 2002:209) and defines effector patterns as “a particular configuration of neurovegetative, hormonal and neuromuscular reactions” (Bloch et al., 2002:221).

Breathing Patterns

Artaud alluded to the relation between breath and emotion by suggesting that “[b]reath accompanies feeling, and the actor can penetrate into this feeling by means of breath provided he [sic] knows how to select among the different kinds the one appropriate to the feeling” (Artaud, 1958:137). At the time of Bloch, Santibañez, and Orthous’s experiments in the 1970s, there did not seem to have been much published scientific literature on the relationship between emotions and specific respiratory patterns (Bloch, 1993:127). This is not to say that there was not any published research into the correlation between breath and emotions, particularly in relation to clinical observation as well as the relation between breath and relaxation where breathing is viewed as the foundation of many relaxation techniques, such as the practice of *pranayama* in yoga studies. Bloch and her co-researchers discovered that breath patterns produced the most explicit differentiation between different emotions (1993:127).

Subsequent research corroborates the findings of Bloch et al. For example, Frans Boiten, Nico Frijda and Cornelis Wientjes propose a distinct difference between the seven emotions (they include ‘normal’ in their list of emotions) they were

investigating, and their corresponding respiratory patterns (1994:116). Their research is based on specific qualities of respiratory patterns such as breathing rate, and whether the breath intake is deep or shallow, rather than on detailed respiratory patterns. Pierre Philippot notes that, “specific and rather intense emotions have resulted from the explicit instruction to produce emotion by manipulating respiration” (2002:617). Philippot’s research appears to resonate more with the research of Bloch et al. than that of Boiten et al. in that he maintains that emotions can be induced by specific respiratory patterns. His research details the specifics of the respiratory patterns of joy, anger, fear and sadness (2002:619-620), albeit not as extensively and in as much detail as Bloch’s descriptions. Perhaps the lack of detail lies in the omission of associated facial expressions and body postures.

Chawla, through her research with *Koodiyattam* master Ammanur Madhava Chakyar, discovered a clear link between breath patterns and emotions and that the *Koodiyattam* form had to some extent codified these patterns into a system of accessing emotions, based on what actually happens to the breath during daily experiences of emotional states (Ghandi, 2014 82-83). Although Ammanur Madhava Chakyar theoretically explained the connection between breath and emotion to Chawla, he would not impart the specifics of the breath patterns because he felt that they were potentially dangerous (Joseph, 2014: 56). It was later through her experimental work with Usha Nangyar that Chawla was able to access and record the specific breath patterns (Joseph, 2014:56-57).

Posture

According to Bloch “[t]he six basic emotions ... can be situated within two axes: *tension/relaxation*, i.e. degree of muscular tonicity involved, and *approach/withdrawal*, i.e. the tendency to go forwards or to retreat as a basic attitude” (Bloch, 1993:126, italics in original). James’s early research into emotion and his reference to flexors and extensors (1884:192), foreshadows Bloch’s focus on *tension/relaxation* and *approach/withdrawal*, signalling that his theories were somewhat revolutionary considering the time in which he was theorising. Damasio also notes that changes in emotional states are reflected in changes in the body (2000). Lowen’s practice of bioenergetics alludes to the relation between body

posture and emotion. He asserts that emotions are dependent on muscular co-ordination for their expression (2005: Location 2288). Additionally, he notes that “[t]he body of a person tells us much about his personality. His posture, the look in his eyes, the set of his jaw, the carriage of his head, and the position of his shoulders are only few of the many indices of character to which we unconsciously react” (2005: Location 1467). My assumption is that by referencing personality, Lowen is implying a set of dominant emotions that inform personality.

Like Bloch and Chawla, I posit that if specific emotions are reflected in body postures, then performers, who are required to access emotions as a key component of their craft, are able to learn how to use specific body postures as a means of accessing and inducing emotions at will. Although research into how body postures can induce emotional states exists, it certainly does not match the extent of research into how facial expressions (see below) can initiate particular emotions. Some theorists who have delved into the relationship between body postures and emotions are John Riskind and Caroline Gotay (1982), Sandra Duclos et al. (1989), and Sabine Stepper and Fritz Strack (1993). Their respective studies have demonstrated that body postures influence the experience of emotions and feelings in the body. More recently, the importance of understanding body postures and how they can affect emotional shifts, has entered into the domain of organisational and life coaching, in the form of Ontological Coaching, an approach that engages language, moods/emotions, and physiology/body posture in an attempt to understand and guide human interaction. According to Alan Sieler, “[t]he coaching methodology contains a set of tools for observing and shifting ways of being. These can be divided into the three ‘tool kits’ of language, emotions and body” (Sieler, n.d.).

With reference to the study of acting and performance, the idea that body posture has the potential to affect emotion is also found in Michael Chekov’s psychophysical approach to acting. His concept of psychological gesture involves activating bodily gestures as a means of accessing the emotional, feeling and psychological life of a character (Chekov, 2002:63-64). Chawla stresses the importance of posture in relation to accessing emotions. She spent a few years in Kerala, India where she

engaged with the practices of *Koodiyattam* and *Kalaripayattu*, the Indian martial art form that originated in the state of Kerala. Chawla reflects on her experiences in Kerala:

I could see that, when a performer got into specific body postures and structures, she was using them to enable specific emotions to emerge [...]. For instance, when the body's posture is determined by concentrating in the middle of the chest, the emotional experience of the practitioner is very different from when it is determined by the point around the navel. This kind of physicality, leading to a change in emotion, is not ephemeral. It is concrete. (in Ghandi, 2014:80)

Facial Expression

Research into the relationship between facial expressions and emotions is not novel. Most notable are the theories of Carroll Izard (1971), Paul Ekman (2003), and Silvan Tomkins (2008). I will not delve into their theories suffice to say that they have clearly influenced Bloch's system. However, Bloch's addition of breathing patterns and body postures to construct the triad of respiratory-postural-facial patterns that inform the effector patterns, seems to add a more complex layer to how emotions are expressed. Ekman, Tomkins and Izard seem to have focused primarily on facial expressions without paying much attention to respiratory patterns. They did, however allude to the connection between facial and postural patterns. I share Bloch's view that facial patterns/masks on their own, without the other two (body posture and breath patterns) could appear fake and less effective in terms of how they are experienced by an actor and by implication, read by an audience (1993:125).

Bloch garnered information on the way in which the body responds to emotional stimuli in everyday life and inverted the process to assist performers to access emotions at will. Her combination of breathing patterns, body postures and facial expressions conceivably assist performers to generate emotions by mobilising parts of the soma, in other words, breath, face, and the skeletal structure.

My interest lay in how Bloch's effector patterns intersected with my experience of the KRB patterns. I came to understand that Bloch's emphasis on effector patterns resonated with the attention that is placed on the importance of expressions in the

Natyasastra. The concept of *Abhinaya*, which loosely translated means the art of expression, can be divided into four categories, namely:

Angika Abhinaya – physical (facial, postural and gestural expressions)

Vachika Abhinaya – verbal (vocal expression)

Aharya Abhinaya – visual (set and costume)

Sattvika Abhinaya – subtle emotions (psychological expression).

(Madhavan, 2010:11)

The *abhinaya* is the means of expressing or communicating the *bhava* to evoke the experience of *rasa* in the performers and audience. My understanding is that *Sattvika Abhinaya* is closely connected to the experience of *rasa*, and that the other three *Abhinaya* facilitate this experience. The tangibility of the first three assist in realising the more imperceptible experience of *Sattvika Abhinaya*. If I were to draw direct comparisons, I suggest that Bloch utilises *Angika Abhinaya* and *Sattvika Abhinaya* in her approach. My experience of *KRB* patterns has been such that when I activate the breath patterns, I experience sensations in my body. These sensations can vary in subtlety according to the intensity I exert in my practice. I maintain that the experience of sensations is akin to *Sattvika Abhinaya* in that they communicate subtle psychological expressions of emotion.

An Experimental Collaboration

On her first visit to the University of Cape Town in March 2013, Anne Schilling ran a two-hour workshop with me and one of my colleagues in the Department of Drama. Schilling took us through the process of accessing two effector patterns. We began with a brief discussion around the principles behind Alba Emoting. Thereafter we learned the 'step-out' procedure. Bloch devised a way of 'stepping out' of an emotion as a counter to the process of 'stepping in', as it were. Bloch noticed that actors who were engaging the effector patterns often carried the residue of what the patterns evoked into their lives outside of rehearsal, class or performance. She termed these experiences "Emotional Hangovers" (1993:128). The 'step-out' according to Bloch, involves. "[...] ending each emotional reproduction by at least three slow, regular, and deep, full breathing cycles followed by a total relaxation of the facial muscles and change in posture" (1993:128). It is understood that this

procedure is able to assist the actor in restoring a neutral state in body and mind. After learning the 'step-out' procedure, Schilling taught us the two effector patterns independently. We first learnt the body posture, followed by the facial expression and finally we included the breath pattern.

The collaboration was part of a larger exchange that involved Schilling and I engaging with our respective uses of FV in theatre-voice classes as well as in practices of performance making. This was therefore the only experience I had of Alba Emoting during Schilling's 2013 visit. When she returned in 2014, Schilling held a workshop with professional actors, where I learnt another two effector patterns in the same manner that I had been taught the previous year. On this visit, Schilling and I also spent time sharing our respective work around Alba Emoting and the KRB patterns. We systematically taught each other the different patterns from each of our practices.

Discoveries

It was evident to both Schilling and I that the triadic relationship between breath, posture and facial expression was present in both sets of systems. KRB patterns, although not seemingly as prescriptive as Alba Emoting, also engage a combination of breath patterns, facial expressions and body postures. A prominent difference is that the KRB patterns start with breath, and follow with simultaneous shifts in facial expressions and body postures. Kumar references the breath as a sculptor that sculpts the face and the body (Kumar, personal communication 2012, September 12). The idea of breath as sculptor indicates the need for the performer to cultivate a deep sense of awareness and an ability to allow the face and body to be affected and to respond accordingly rather than being too prescriptive about the specifics of facial expressions or body postures. There were, however, times during our sessions in 2002 and 2012, when Kumar suggested a postural and or facial shift so as to assist in accessing the *rasa* of the emotion. Chawla views the codification of breath patterns as being "too neat and pat" and that "it doesn't necessarily apply exhaustively to our lives now, which are much more complex" (in Ghandi, 2014:82). Instead, like Kumar, she emphasises the need for the performer to be curious about how breath affects the entire being.

A further major difference between the two practices is the emphasis on the placement of breath in the torso and use of locks or *bandhas* in KRB patterns. In discussions with Schilling, I proposed that this might be due to the relationship between the practice of yoga and the KRB patterns which may have seemed obvious given the context of the KRB patterns. However, a discussion of how the aspects of yoga translate into the learning and execution of KRB patterns is useful in that it likewise relates to the inclusion of yoga as a preparatory practice for the method of image generation my study proposes.

In yoga there is a distinction between four placements of breath: (1) high breathing (clavicular); (2) mid breathing (intercostal/ribs); (3) low breathing (abdominal); and (4) the complete yoga breath (a combination of high, mid and low breathing) (Yogi Ramacharaka, 1903:24-25). The practice of *bandha* entails inhaling slowly and initiating a lock in a specific area in the torso. There are four locks: (1) *Jalandhara Bhanda* (throat lock); (2) *Uddiyana Bandha* (abdominal lock); (3) *Moola Bandha* (perineum lock); and (4) *Maha Bandha* (the great lock that combines all three locks). The correlation between the four breath placements and the four *bandhas* is perceivable, and thus intimates an association between the practice of *pranayama* and the practice of *bandha*. If the practice of *pranayama* engages the breath to influence the flow of *prana*²⁷ in the body (Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1997:363), then the practice of *bandha* involves locking the *prana* in specific areas of the torso. According to Swami Satyananda Saraswati this practice of *bandha* aims to “redirect [the] ... flow [of *prana*] ... into sushumna nadi [the central energy channel that runs from the base *chakra* to the crown *chakra*] ... for the purpose of spiritual awakening” (1997:407).

It is useful to note that the KRB pattern classes with Kumar were always preceded by the practice of yoga (*asana, pranayama and bandha*). There seemed to be a fluid sharing of terminology and languaging between the yoga class and the KRB pattern class. Lessons learnt in the yoga classes were effectively implemented in the sessions with Kumar. The yoga experience was a necessary pre-requisite for the learning of KRB patterns. It afforded me the opportunity of, on the one hand,

²⁷ Vital energy

developing my capacity for specificity around breath placement in the torso, and on the other, it facilitated the development of awareness of sensations in not only the torso, but in the entire body. The experience of breath facilitating the movement of *prana* through the body, coupled with the experience of *bandhas* redirecting the *prana*, appeared to develop my capacity to tangibly experience the sensations of breath and energy in my body.

Schechner's Theory of Rasaesthetics

The full body, visceral encounter elaborated on above, resonates with Schechner's "snout-to-belly-to-bowel" hypothesis (2001:27). In his comparison of Aristotle's *Poetics* and Bharat-muni's *Natyasastra*, Schechner notes that one of the fundamental differences between the two treatises is where they locate theatrically in the body. He maintains that Aristotle emphasised the linear direction of ear and eye, in other words, the experience of theatre and performance through seeing and hearing. Bharat-muni, author of the *Natyasastra*, on the other hand, proposed a circular experience that involves the snout, belly and bowel. By implication the latter engages the enteric nervous system in the process of experiencing performance, thus rendering the experiencing of performance as a whole body encounter and not something that is an exploit of the mind alone.

Perhaps what Schechner is alluding to is the centrality of *rasa* in performances pertaining to the *Natyasastra*. If performance is about using the body (face, gestures, posture), visual semiotics (costume and set) and breath, to express the *bhava* in order to create the experience of *rasa* in the audience (and in the performer), then it makes sense that theatricality locates in the body. The body is the place of sensations. If *rasa*, as I argue, corresponds to the feeling sensations that are experienced in the body when an emotion is expressed, then it is plausible that the body receives and interprets the performance before the mind makes sense of it.

At this point I would like to explain how my engagement with Schechner's Rasaesthetics theory and in particular the Rasabox Exercise influenced my experiments in the use of KRB patterns with actors.

Schechner states that “Rasaesthetics ... is not something that happens in front of the spectator, a vision for the eyes, but ‘in the gut’, an experience that takes place inside the body specifically engaging the enteric nervous system” (2001:35). He developed this theory in response to what he perceived as the linearity of Western theatre practice, as determined by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (2001:27), where theatricality locates primarily in the eyes and ears. He turned to Indian performance traditions and in particular the theory of *rasa*, to advance a theory that combined *rasa* theory with theories of neurobiology and psychology. He was also influenced by Artaud’s call to actors to become “athlete[s] of the heart” (Artaud, 1958:133). As Michele Minnick and Paula Murray Cole point out:

With a closer look, one finds that all three [the *Natyasastra*, Neurobiology and psychology, and Artaud’s theories and practices] are concerned with the same thing: a theory of circular, rather than a binary relationship between emotion and the body, inside and outside, which focuses on a visceral, gut-based mode of perception, rather than a solely visual-auditory one. (Minnick and Cole, 2002:214)

Hence Schechner’s proposal for a theatricality that engages the circular relationship of “snout-to-belly-to-bowel”.

I first encountered the theory of Rasaesthetics in 2007 through the Rasabox Exercise while lecturing at the Division of Dramatic Art at the University of the Witwatersrand. I was co-teaching a course with a colleague who had studied with Schechner at New York University in the mid-1990s, and sharing my ideas and thoughts around how I could implement the KRB patterns in the course that we were co-teaching to third year students of Acting. During this discussion my colleague introduced me to the overall idea of the Rasabox Exercise and pointed me to Schechner’s writings on Rasaesthetics. He additionally suggested that while I taught the KRB patterns to the students, he would engage them in the Rasabox Exercise. I observed some of his Rasabox sessions and was inspired to experiment by including the grid of nine boxes in the teaching of the KRB patterns.

The Rasabox Exercise

Schechner devised a grid made up of nine boxes for each of the *rasas*. He placed *shanta*/peace in the centre, which he views as a neutral box. In the exercise, each of

the other boxes is randomly assigned a *rasa* that is written in the box in Sanskrit. Below is a description of the 12-step exercise as outlined by Schechner. I have chosen to present these steps verbatim as I am aware that my own interpretation of the exercise, given that I have not been trained by a certified Rasabox teacher, may misrepresent the exercises as designed by Schechner:

- 1 Draw or tape a grid of nine rectangular boxes on the floor. All rectangles are the same and each ought to be about 6' x 3'.
- 2 Very roughly “define” each *rasa*. For example, *raudra* means anger, rage, roaring; *bibhasta*²⁸ means disgust, spitting up/out, vomiting.
- 3 In variously colored chalk, write the name of one *rasa* inside each rectangle. Use chance methods to determine which *rasa* goes where. Write the names in Roman alphabetized Sanskrit. Leave the center or ninth box empty or clear.
- 4 Have participants draw and/or describe each *rasa* inside its box. That is, ask each person to interpret the Sanskrit word, to associate feelings and ideas to it. Emphasize that these “definitions” and associations are not for all time, but just “for now.” Emphasize also that drawings, abstract configurations, or words can be used. In moving from one box to another, participants must either “walk the line” at the edge of the boxes or step outside the Rasabox area entirely and walk around to the new box. There is no order of progression from box to box. A person may return to a box as often as she likes, being careful not to overwrite someone else’s contribution. Take as much time as necessary until everyone has drawn her fill. When a participant is finished, she steps to the outside of the Rasabox area. This phase of the exercise is over when everyone is outside the Rasabox area. Sometimes this takes several hours.
- 5 When everyone is standing at the edge of the Rasabox area, time is allowed for all to “take in” what has been drawn/written. Participants walk around the edge of the Rasaboxes. They read to themselves and out loud what is written. They describe what is drawn. But they can’t ask questions; nor can anything be explained.
- 6 Pause. Silence.
- 7 Self-selecting, someone enters a box. The person takes/makes a pose of that *rasa*: for example, the pose of *sringara* or *karuna*...or whatever. The person can do as few as a single *rasa* or as many as all eight named *rasas*. (Remember the ninth or center box is “clear.”) A person can move from box to box either along the edge or on the lines—in which case the movement is “neutral.” But if a person steps into a box, he must take/make a *rasic* pose. This phase continues until everyone has had at least one chance to enter and pose within the Rasaboxes.
- 8 Same as 7, but now the pose is supplemented by a sound.
- 9 Move more rapidly from one box to the next. Quick changes, no time for thinking it out in advance.

²⁸ The spelling of Sanskrit terms varies from author to author.

- 10 Two persons enter, each one in his or her own box. At first, they simply make the *rasas* without paying attention to each other. But then they begin to “dialogue” with the *rasas*—and shift rapidly from one box to another. So, *sringara* confronts *vira* and then *vira* moves to *adbhuta*; after a moment *sringara* rushes along the line to *bibhasta* and *adbhuta* jumps to *bhayanaka*.
- 11 Participants bring in texts—that is, monologues from known plays or stuff written just for the exercise. Scenes from dramas are enacted by two or even three people. The text remains fixed, but the *rasas* shift—with no preplanning. So, for example, Romeo is all *sringara* but Juliet is *karuna*; then suddenly Juliet springs to *bibhasta* and Romeo to *adbhuta*. And so on—the possible combinations are nearly endless. Occasionally, Romeo and Juliet are in the same box.
- 12 Scenes are enacted with one underlying *rasa*, on top of which are bits played in different *rasas*.

(Schechner, 2001:39-44)

Once the performers are familiar with the *rasas* in their ‘pure’ form, a process of layering is added to the exercises. Layering involves the performers choosing a base *rasa* to start off in before moving through the boxes. As they step into the box, they add a percentage of that *rasa* into the base *rasa* so as to create a blend²⁹ of sorts. The percentage can vary according to the needs of the text, character and performer. Once performers are well versed with the process of layering or blending, they are able to combine two or more *rasas* at one time to create a more complex experience.

I have borrowed aspects of Schechner’s Rasabox Exercise as a means of teaching performers the nine KRB patterns. Here is a detailed description of how I do this:

- 1 I involve performers in creating the grid on the floor and writing the different *rasas* in any language of their choice into each box. I do not see the need to only use the Sanskrit words for the *rasas*, as Schechner does, as I have found that this confuses students and creates a sense of awe coupled with fear. I have found it more useful to reveal the origins of the work at the end of the process so as to demystify any essentialist or exotic notions or fears the performers may have about using a system that has its roots in Indian, specifically yogic philosophy and spirituality. I introduce the process as a tool or ‘way in’ to accessing emotions. This echoes the sentiment with which the tools were

²⁹ I chose to use the term ‘blend’ as it relates to theories of conceptual blending incorporated in this study.

handed to me. Chawla and Kumar were adamant that they were sharing these tools as a way of facilitating performers in processes of accessing emotions and felt that as long as I left Adishakti with enough skill and practice, I could adapt and use the work as I saw fit. They did not view my use of the tools as a form of appropriation, but rather saw it as a way of extending and blending the technique with other existing techniques and systems of actor training.

- 2 After mapping out the *rasa* grid on the floor, performers are invited to enter each grid and respond to each of the *rasas* in the boxes. They are asked to notice what happens to their breath, posture and face. After being in a box they are urged to record their specific observations in a notebook. As with Schechner's grid, *Shanta*/peace occupies the centre box in the grid. However, unlike Schechner, I do not view it as a neutral space, but rather encourage performers to use it as a springboard into other boxes. I have also experimented with variations of *Shanta*/peace. By dropping the edges of the mouth to create a more neutral expression, the sensation of numbness seems to emerge. I have discovered that this serves as a helpful bridge into *Karuna*/Sadness and also offers useful complexities when we get to the stage of layering/blending.
- 3 Thereafter everyone shares and compares their written observations.
- 4 We systematically and technically work through each pattern, starting off by learning the breath pattern, then allowing the face and body to respond (using Kumar's analogy of the breath as sculptor sculpting the face and body). If anyone is not able to experience the sensations/*rasa* in their body, I suggest small postural and/or facial expression shifts. We learn three patterns at a time.
- 5 Once the performers are relatively familiar with each pattern I get them to work in pairs and to coach each other through finding the patterns in the breath, face and posture.
- 6 I then invite the pairs to embark on a *rasa* breath improvisation using the three patterns. The idea behind this is for the performers to explore engaging the breath patterns in a performative context, using the basic principles of giving and receiving that form the foundation of any collaborative performance improvisation.

- 7 The patterns are routinely learnt in this way (three at a time)
- 8 After the performers are relatively familiar with each of the patterns, we return to the rasabox grid. It is here that I adapt stages seven and eight of Schechner's exercise. I ask performers to consciously engage the breath pattern of each *rasa* as they enter the box, and allow the posture and face to respond. They are also invited to make vocal sounds. I constantly remind them to be cognisant of and notice what they are feeling in their bodies and where they are feeling what they are feeling.
- 9 Once the performers have experienced each box at least twice, I ask them to start moving more swiftly through the grid (as does Schechner in stage nine of his process). This is to practically explore and develop Artaud's notion of the actor as "an athlete of emotions".
- 10 Thereafter I introduce Schechner's tenth stage, where two people enter the boxes and start to have a conversation through *rasas*. The focus, remains on accessing the breath pattern the moment the performers step into a box.
- 11 We leave the boxes for a while and return to the *rasa* improvisation exercise outside the grid (as in stage six of my process). Performers pair up and start the improvisation using all of the *rasa* breath patterns. At some point I ask them to spontaneously open up the improvisation to the whole group. When I feel the improvisation has gone on long enough I ask the performers to bring it to a close.
- 12 Thereafter we return to the boxes and I initiate the first stage of layering/blending.
- 13 The *rasa* improvisation outside the grid is repeated using layered/blended patterns.
- 14 The second stage of blending is introduced in the boxes, in other words, performers are invited to layer two or more patterns.
- 15 The last stage involves a return to the *rasa* improvisation outside of the boxes, where the layering/blending of two or more patterns is incorporated.

In my version of the Rasabox Exercise, text is only introduced after the performers are fully versed in the *rasa* patterns in their pure as well as blended forms and are

able to seamlessly transition between boxes. Following this process, the grid is used as a warm up before rehearsals or performances, where the performers 'run' the boxes to evoke the experience of *rasa* in their bodies. I have, after collaborating with Schilling, begun to incorporate the Alba 'step-out' procedure into the practice. Performers are invited to 'step out' of the grid at any point and to initiate the 'step-out' procedure as and when they need to.

As can be seen from the above descriptions, my adaptation of Schechner's Rasabox Exercise is largely focused on the introduction of specific breath, postural and facial patterns for each of the *rasas*. During the course of my research I came across the work of Hyrum Conrad (in Baker, 2008:98-105). Conrad combines his training of the Alba Method with aspects of Schechner's Rasabox Exercise and has developed what he terms ArcWork. ArcWork re-organises the Rasabox Exercise around the six Alba Emoting effector patterns. Conrad also includes the Alba 'step-out' procedure. One of the main differences is Conrad's configuration of the grid. He has adapted the square grid to that of a circle, hence the arc in the title, with a 'step-out' box in the centre. My understanding is that Conrad has introduced the breath, posture and facial patterns into the practice. The similarities between our adapted practices is thus evident.

The synergies between the Alba Method, KRB patterns, Schechner's Rasabox Exercise and Conrad's ArcWork, is apparent. All systems have at their core the idea of breath as the initiator and thread that connects body, mind, emotion and imagination. The cultivation of such practices are thus vital for any performer who employs the proposed method of generating images for purposes of performance making.

Section Two: Tools for Capturing What Emerges during the Engagement of Breath, Body, Mind and Imagination.

Body Mapping

This section discusses the second set of tools and techniques, which are about capturing the traces of that which is generated through the first set of tools discussed in the section above. After engaging in the initial set of practices and

experiments that inform this study, I realised I needed to find tangible ways of capturing what was generated through the work with the FDS and KRB pattern explorations. It is this realisation that inspired me to look to previous performance making tools I had used over the years as a maker of performance. Thus, in my attempts to tangibly study breath as a catalyst for generating material for performance making, I first looked to body mapping as a way of making sense of and assimilating the discoveries made through the FDS and the KRB patterns. Body mapping seemed to provide a somatic framework for these practices to collaborate and synthesise, and in so doing furthered my investigation.

My engagement with the practice of body mapping emerged out of The Memory Box Project, a project that was set up at UCT's Centre for Social Science Research in 2001. Director of the Project, Jonathan Morgan, designed the practice of body mapping as a therapeutic tool to assist people to deal with the social complexities associated with HIV/Aids. According to Morgan: "The body is like a museum of one's life. It records the life story through injuries, scars, birthmarks, illnesses, operations etc. Through a creative and visual process, the Body Mapping exercise aims to let people see how their body is affected by their world" (UCT, 2004:12).

The practice of body mapping, as designed by Morgan and his colleagues, is notably affiliated to a combination of Art Therapy and Narrative Therapy practices in its focus on the visual and written as a way of making sense of experiences, stories, and memories. According to Malchiodi "[a]rt therapy is based on the idea that the creative process of art making is healing and life enhancing and is a form of nonverbal communication of thoughts and feelings" (2003:1). Narrative therapy involves translating lived experiences into stories whether through speaking or writing the story. In this instance, the visual representation of the story/memory/event on the body map catalyses the written story/narrative. The concept of restorying in Narrative Therapy implies an act of re-telling that involves selection, editing and amendment. Martin Payne notes that restorying in narrative therapy is "[t]he process of a person's telling such narratives, and of the narratives being gradually amended in conversation with the therapist [...]" (2006:19). In the body mapping process, there is a double process of restorying at play, where the

story is restoried through a visual image in the first instance before it is further restoried in the process of writing it down (as can be seen in the description of the steps involved in the process, later in this chapter). Restorying arguably resonates with processes of reimagining personal narratives.

Body mapping as a tool has been employed predominantly in the field of health as a form of therapy, research and advocacy. Jane Solomon additionally cites the potential of engaging the practice of body mapping as a way of (1) fostering intergenerational dialogue; (2) facilitating team building processes; (3) learning art making principles and techniques; and (4) accessing personal biographies and life stories (2002:3). I am particularly interested in the latter in terms of how the body intersects with lived experiences.

I engaged the process of body mapping in this study as a visual or perhaps iconological approach to performance making and research, in which collaging and concept mapping “involve experiential ways of doing/knowing that help to get at tacit aspects of both understanding a process and to make these more explicit to the researcher[s]” (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010:1). Work with The Mothertongue Project led to initial experiments with body mapping as a performance making tool. I adapted the Body Mapping Manual that was compiled by UCT’s Centre For Social Science Research (2004), to investigate the relationship between space, place, memory and story.

Body mapping, according to Tricia Smith:

[...] facilitates a process of [self] empowerment that combines aspects of storytelling with life-sized representations of the body [...]. Participants experience a collective process of creating and layering a portrait that helps them reflect on their experiences [...]. Body Mapping permits a process through which participants develop an understanding of themselves, their bodies and their social context. (2010:2)

According to Pamela Brett-Maclean, “[b]ody mapping offers both a metaphor and means of recognizing the fluid tracings of the personal, social, geographical, political and emotional experience of journeying ... through life” (2009:40). This echoes Ingold’s idea that “beings do not propel themselves across a ready-made world but

rather issue forth through a world-in-formation, along the lines of their relationships” (2011:63).

I first used the practice of body mapping in 2005, when working on a production that served as a follow up to my MA dissertation in Theatre and Performance at UCT. The study investigated the idea of cross-community professional theatre as a means of dissolving fixed geographical landscapes. Key to this was the synergy between mainstream and community theatre, out of which this idea emerged. I explored the way in which theatre and performance potentially facilitates conversations across differences that encompass questions of geographical, class and racial divides as well as the ideological differences between mainstream and community theatre. I proposed that cross-community professional theatre involves working with people from different communities around specific issues. In this instance, professional actors worked alongside non-professional actors from a specific community to create a piece of theatre. Community members were involved in the process as well as in the performance. Through this work I argued that cross-community referred not only to the exchange between professional actors and non-professional actors, but also to the idea of theatre and performance providing a framework for conversations between different communities.

The production, *We Dream Therefore We Are*, took place in the West Coast town of Darling and explored women’s stories in domestic spaces, specifically their lived experiences in relation to their dreams and aspirations both for themselves and their town. The production addressed the process of translating lived experience into a theatrical performance that serviced the needs of the performers (made up of both non-professional and professional actors) and the audience. In the making process, I introduced the cast to body mapping, as I had encountered it through the Body Mapping Manual. I chose to follow the first seven steps of the process as outlined by Morgan (UCT, 2004):

- In pairs participants outlined each other’s bodies on sheets of 2m x 1.5m pattern-making cardboard.
- They outlined a second shape (that of their partner) in relation to their own body outlines. It was explained that the second body outline would represent

someone or something by which they felt comforted and held (a source of support).

- They used two different colours to define each outline (their own and their source of support's).
- They then drew their own faces onto their body maps.
- This was followed by creating prints, using food dye, of their hands and feet on their maps, where their hands and feet were actually located.
- Thereafter they were invited to mark all their physical markings on their body maps using symbols and colour, and to write the 'story' (in brief) outside the map, with an arrow pointing towards the symbol. Physical markings could range from birth marks to pregnancy stretch marks, to tonsil operations and scars from childhood falls, to name a few.
- The next step involved mapping their emotional experiences onto their bodies in the same manner as the previous step. It was made clear that during the stage of the emotional experiences, memories might give rise to physical markings and vice-versa and that it was permissible to move fluidly between the physical and emotional stages. It was also indicated that certain physical markings could intersect with emotional experiences.

The final stage of my body mapping process is where I deviate from Morgan's process. I asked the cast to map their dreams and aspirations in their bodies, in other words, where their dreams and aspirations located in their bodies. For this I asked them to use materials such as eggshells, wool, cotton, earth, and the like (whatever was available in the art box and the surrounding environment). As with the previous two stages, they were requested to write the brief 'story' of the dream outside the body map with an arrow pointing towards the visual representation on the map. Similarly, it was noted that this stage could evoke memories of physical and emotional experiences, and that they were able to move fluidly between these three stages. This stage of the body mapping process points to a very clear process of restorying of personal narratives.

The body mapping process in *We Dream Therefore We Are* spanned four weeks, with the cast mapping in the afternoons after we had been engaged in more

physical improvisatory work in the mornings. Apart from serving as an effective tool to feed the morning session exercises as well as a way of generating performance material, the body maps proved to be thought-provoking art works in and of themselves. We thus decided to include them in the performance as part of an installation space where audience members were invited to write their dreams for themselves on gold and silver star and heart shapes and to place them anywhere in the installation space, in relation to the body maps.

The subsequent use of body mapping as a performance making tool was employed in the making of *Tseleng: the baggage of bags*, with Mbali Kgosidintsi in 2009 and *Washa Mollo* with Makgathi Mokwena, Mary Manzole and Kiswigu Bernard in 2009 and 2010. Both making processes engaged body mapping in the same way as in *We Dream Therefore We Are*. In 2010 I experimented with combining body mapping and KRB patterns in a production of the *Trojan Women* with second year students of Theatre and Performance at UCT. In 2012 I experimented with combining body mapping and the FDS in the creation of a solo performance entitled *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*. In 2012 I additionally experimented with combining body mapping, the FDS and KRB patterns in the making of *Ngangelizwe*, a solo performance, with a performer who was interning with The Mothertongue Project. The last three experiments are analysed in detail in Chapter Four.

Personal engagement with the practice of breath work has directed me to investigate a possible connection between breath and body mapping, as a way of synthesising and making sense of my discoveries. The practice of tracing breath in the body as a way of recognising and releasing energetic blockages in the body as well as a way of exploring the potential to catalyse images, memories and stories that dwell in the body, arguably relates to body mapping processes of visually locating and restorying lived experiences onto life size maps of the body. This study therefore proposes that body mapping, in tandem with the FDS and the KRB patterns, affords performers the opportunity to visually draw their experiences of breath in these practices, onto life size maps of their own bodies, thereby beginning the process of generating material, and thus serving as a possible alternative process of scripting. Additionally, it serves as a way of facilitating an awareness and

development of a relational self which, I would suggest, enables the women with whom I work to be more visible to themselves. It also provides them with a space in the process to reflect, through art making, on the interrelatedness of the mind, brain and body, in other words, how sensations felt in the body manifest as mental images, and how these in turn produce visual images on the body map. It additionally assists in the process of acknowledging and facing the energetic blocks which have formed in their bodies as result of the fear and violation which characterises their societal context.

To further make sense of somatic experiences and to continue the process of generating material, I experimented with free writing, another tool I had engaged with in varied contexts as a performance maker and educator.

Free Writing

I first encountered the practice of free writing during my Honours year of study at UCT. My supervisor in the Drama Department, Yvonne Banning, introduced me to free writing as a way into writing my dissertation. I had been absent from academia for five years and felt utterly daunted by the thought of having to write an academic dissertation. Banning, similarly to Peter Elbow, believed that “[f]reewriting [was] ... the easiest way to get words on paper” (1998:13). My experience of free writing, as per my encounters with Banning, involved the following principles:

- Write non-stop for a set period of time (10 - 20 minutes);
- Do not make corrections as you write;
- Keep writing, even if you have to write something like, ‘I don’t know what to write’;
- Write whatever comes into your mind. Do not judge or censor what you are writing.

Elbow notes that “[free writing] ... helps you stand out of the way and let words be chosen by the sequence of the words themselves or the thought, not by the conscious self” (1998:16). The idea of words being the stimulus for other words in what I would refer to as a stream of consciousness, opens possible connections that

perhaps otherwise would not have been made. It is a non-linear way of generating ideas and images.

Joel Friedlander observes that “The results are sometimes unpredictable, but the most surprising images, characters, memories and stories ... pour out onto the page [...]. Freewriting is a practice that ... connects you to the vibrant stream of creativity that lies just under the surface of our ordinary thinking (2010:para.:8).

I have found that the faster one writes, the less chance of the critical, editorial voice creeping in, which more often than not tends to prevent innovative, lateral and non-conformist ideas from being articulated. Writing with speed seems to momentarily hold judgement at bay. This can be attributed to Friedlander’s observation that writing fast ensures “that your hand moves faster than your brain can defend itself” (2010, para:7). Friedlander’s idea that free writing assists in accessing the “creativity that lies under the surface” is of particular interest to me, as can be evidenced by my proposal to engage breath as a catalyst to access images and stories that reside in the cells of the body; those that lie under the surface of the skin as well as those that permeate the skin and affect the internal spaces sheathed by the skin.

In addition, Banning introduced me to the practice of free writing as a means of generating material for performance making. From 2000 to 2003 I worked with her on Project Phakama, an international exchange project between young people and arts practitioners based in Southern Africa, the United Kingdom and India. Banning regularly used free writing exercise, as described above, as a way of instigating creative reflections inspired by particular prompts. Prompts took the shape of artworks, music, objects, and the like. Words, phrases and images were extracted from the free writes and incorporated into the performances. These could be in the form of text that would be either spoken or that formed part of the visual design. I have subsequently continued to include the practice of free writing in all my performance making projects and it was therefore an inevitable inclusion in the proposed method of generating images. The prompt, in this instance, is the body, and in particular the breath.

The choice of tools was also considered in relation to developing a method that could be adapted and combined to fit a context that is so suffused with violence; tools that consider the violent society that is South Africa. Part of what the method does is to help women reclaim their bodies that are under threat of violence. On the one hand, it assists them to release the energetic blockages in their bodies which are a consequence of living under a constant threat of violence, and on the other hand, the release of these energetic blockages brings them face to face with the things that are causing the blockages, in other words the societal context in which they live. The next chapter outlines various experiments in which the different tools were combined and adapted.

CHAPTER FOUR – THE WEFT AND THE WARP

Small Experiments

When I set out on the PhD journey, I knew that I wanted to explore the relationship between breath and performance making processes with women who locate in a particular context; one in which women's bodies, predominantly, are being violated. I, however, had no idea of the shape or form this exploration would take. It was only after I started creating the solo performance, *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, for FV certification purposes, that clarity around the specifics of the research question emerged. This process led to a set of additional experiments that assisted in the honing of the question. What follows is a discussion of a series of, what I have termed, 'small experiments' that informed this honing. I have also included two examples from earlier processes that directly informed the proposed method of performance making. These occurred prior to the creation of *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*. At the time, I was not aware that these experiences would influence the shape of this study. The discussion begins with these two processes before moving on to the making of *Breath-Bones-Ancestors* and the subsequent experiments.

I end the chapter with a return to theory. Given the conversational nature of theory and practice, I found that the small experiments further informed the theoretical framework that paved the way for the main case study of this research (covered in Chapter Five).

Experiment One: Trojan Women

In 2010 I experimented with using body mapping as a way of mapping character in a UCT Drama Department production of Gwendolyn McEwen's version of Euripides' play, *The Trojan Women* (McEwen, 2009) with 2nd year students. The particular research focus of this process was on what I had termed somatic mapping as a way in to character and textual analysis. Somatic mapping involved a combination of body mapping and KRB patterns. In this process I substituted the emotional mapping stage with mapping the KRB patterns on to the body maps of the characters. I eliminated the step of outlining the source of support (explained in Chapter Three),

as I felt that this was not necessary when working with an existing text. I also felt that this step was more conducive to therapeutic practices than to the practice of performance making. The processes of body mapping and technically learning the particular pattern of each KRB pattern happened in tandem. The beginning stages of the rehearsal process were divided up between the students learning and exploring the breath patterns, and reflecting on and developing their characters within the context of the text through body mapping. The students were encouraged to draw from their own personal archives as well as their research into the characters they were playing.

Once the students had technically learnt the breath patterns, I encouraged them to work more fluidly with them in *rasa* improvisations (elaborated on in Chapter Three), where the breath patterns became the text as they improvised situations in pairs, groups, and as a whole class. At times, I would allow the context to emerge out of the improvisation, and at other times, I would set the context at the onset of the improvisation. In both situations, the meaning would emerge out of an engagement, in the first instance, with breath and body. I introduced words into the improvisations at a later stage, once I felt the students had fully understood the relationship between breath, body, imagination, and meaning. I further encouraged students to work with blending various breath patterns. The only requirement was that they were to allow for a conversation to happen between breath patterns.

The body mapping process involved students drawing an outline of their bodies onto a large sheet of cardboard paper. Thereafter they created visual symbols, using colour, to mark where their character held particular physical experiences. Once they had created symbolic visual representations of these experiences, they were asked to write the story of the experiences outside the outline of the body. They were then asked to map the emotional journey of the character. I specifically asked them to create visual symbols of the different *rasas* and locate them on the body map before writing the story connected to each *rasa*. The *rasa* body mapping always followed a physical exploration of breath, *rasa*, and body. Once they had mapped the characters' *rasas* onto their body maps, I invited them to physically explore each one while bringing an awareness to the particular part of the body on to which they

had mapped a particular *rasa*. In this way, physical characterisation started to emerge. The final body mapping stage involved mapping the characters' dreams onto their body maps, I invited them to find ways of visually representing where they felt their characters held their dreams in their bodies. The process of body mapping their characters enabled the students to somatically 'dig up' and make sense of their characters in relation to their own lived experiences.

Student Responses

I gathered my data through an interview process with four of the students. I invited volunteers to be part of these interviews and four came forward out of a class of 12. All four were women: two South Africans, one Kenyan and one American spending a semester studying abroad. They ranged between 19 and 20 years of age. I chose to use pseudonyms to protect the identity of the sample of four students I interviewed.

I have grouped their responses under four key questions:

- 1 Where do you think the impulse came from to place a *rasa* in a particular part of the body on the map?
- 2 How do you think the body map defined/influenced your relationship with your character?
- 3 What were the correlations you made between breath patterns and body mapping (if any)?
- 4 What are your reflections on your experience of method acting (particularly the notion of emotional recall) in relation to the psychophysical body mapping and *Koodiyattam rasa* breath approach?

The following is a sample of responses received³⁰:

Where do you think the impulse came from to place a *rasa* in a particular part of the body on the map?

Anele:

It felt like my hand was going there. It was like a physical impulse ...

Eva:

³⁰ I have used Pseudonyms to protect the identity of the students.

Some of the things I had decided because I thought they would be 'cool'. Those didn't work, but the other decisions were made because I felt that that was where they were located. It was like my character felt that way. Those did work. For example, with love, I ... [drew from my] research of Hecuba, knowing that she had had lots of children. I spoke to my Mum, and the first place she could think of was where her caesarean line was. When I put [love] there, even though I haven't had children, it made sense. When my child was leaving [in the play], I focused on feeling it there.

Sasha:

I have to admit, when everyone else was being random about their location, I tried to model the character and I tried to be conscious about it. Most of my choices were calculated. I decided in terms of who the character was and the research that I'd done. For example, the womb was a huge area on my map. This resulted in fear being located in the gut.

How do you think the body map defined/influenced your relationship with your character?

Thandi:

It was interesting, because your body on the map is not how you see yourself at all. It was like looking at a different person. But at the same time I put so much of myself on to the [map]. I don't know where the two quite meet.

Eva:

It was strange to have a visual representation of my body as the character. It was weird to see my body on a piece of paper; it was weird to put someone else into my body. At first it felt a little strange, because I could so clearly see it was me, but after a while, when we were working on the maps, it started to feel like it wasn't me. Because I had the knowledge that the body was me, in my mind I think they started to merge. I gave her my scars as well as scars that I made up for her. I did something random – I put all the scars on the right hand side of my body and then I noticed in performance that a lot of my lines or my actions towards someone where from the right. I wonder if this had to do with the map or if it was pure chance?

Sasha:

Seeing my physical shape on paper made the character more real to me. The map influenced so many of the choices that I made. I didn't necessarily make the connection immediately. I blurred out her face completely initially that was an artistic choice, but later it began to

reflect in the work. Even in the way I made my costume³¹. My map informed my costume design. I had a sceptre in my hand on the map. In the actual performance I had a crutch, which represented the bravery *rasa* in that hand.

What were the correlations you made between the Koodiyattam rasa breath patterns and body mapping (if any)?

Anele:

The body mapping was like a hit and miss experience. Like pin the tail on the donkey. I wasn't one hundred percent sure why I was drawing [the *rasa*] in a particular spot. By the time I started getting up and moving around and working, for example, with fear specifically in my knees (because that is where I drew it on the body map), then suddenly it made a lot of sense. Once I could make sense of [the *rasas*] through my body, it was awesome.

Eva:

I found myself doing things with my body that I wouldn't have done before the awareness of the *rasa* in my body. You can draw [a *rasa*] and look at it, but that doesn't make the character. You have to put it in practice on the floor and feel it in your body. That's when you find it.

Sasha:

Emotional recall is a mental impulse whereas my experience of the *rasas* is that they are physical impulses. In real life we apply the *rasa* breathing patterns and, as a result, feel them physically in the body. I didn't give the body enough credit when I first came to Drama School. I didn't know exactly how essential it is as a performance tool and as a conveyor of story.

What are your reflections on your experience of method acting (particularly the notion of emotional recall) in relation to the psychophysical body mapping and Koodiyattam rasa breath approach?

Anele:

I'm normally the kind of actor whose life outside of the rehearsal room or performance space is affected by the experience of emotions in a scene or in a play. For example, if I was doing a scene where I was devastated because my child had died, I would usually recall an experience of loss (loss of a dog, for example). What I experienced was that at the end of the day, I didn't think about the character's child that had died, I thought about and felt sad about my dog that had died. I don't always feel the same way about my dog dying. Some nights I may have felt 'thank God that dog died'. It is like you live in this

³¹ The process involved students designing and making their costumes out of recyclable materials.

alternate cognitive reality, when you really should be concentrating on what's happening around you in the play.

Thandi:

Sometimes life experience fails me. I feel like the emotional level that I reached in this production was far more complex than anything I have ever done before. Finally, I was able to layer emotions that were interchangeable. I was aware of this concept before we started the process, but I wasn't capable of doing it. A cognitive story doesn't translate; you can't think it and then it happens.

Eva:

With emotional recall I struggle to come out of [myself] while remembering [my] memories. Whereas the *rasas* didn't present this problem [...]. Sometimes it feels that the minute I start to remember something from my life, as part of emotional recall during performance or rehearsal, it's difficult to come out of the mood in my head. I think it's because it's [me] remembering it. Initially it might be useful to remember a time I was really sad, but when it comes to later rehearsals and performances, I'd rather be able to access the sadness without thinking about why I was sad at the time, which is why, if I go through the body and breath patterns, I can carry on with acting. Accessing emotion through the body, breath and the voice (as a starting point) allows for much more freedom.

Sasha:

In the two years that we've been here [at Drama School] I've often had to go into my personal bank of memories to inform my character choices. Often what would happen would be that I'd get it right in rehearsal, but maybe due to performance energy or tension or just being in front of an audience, I would lose any emotion that I'd found. For the first time, using the *rasa* breath patterns and body mapping, I was able to access real and authentic emotions in my body, without necessarily pointing it at a specific event. So I was able to access wonder, or fear, without having any reason why. I breathed in, switched on the brain then breathed out. [...] [Emotional recall feels] like it's a push, whereas working with the *rasas* is more of a release. I think that with the *rasas* it's a technical thing, whereas with emotional recall you have to prepare yourself 'ok now, I'm going to think about the time when this and this happened'. With emotional recall it's a mental impulse, whereas with the *rasas*, it's a physical impulse. I enjoyed using these techniques to access emotions, because you could see the results and I wasn't just a talking head any more.

Analysis

From the interviews I conducted it was clear that the somatic mapping approach to character and textual analysis provided an alternative to techniques associated with method acting.

The students manifestly experienced the process as a somatic and embodied approach that unified body and mind. In this way, the body and mind were seen as connected entities that challenged Cartesian dualistic thinking that privileges mind over body. The predominant finding that emerged from this experiment had to do with the correlation between KRB patterns and body mapping as a methodological approach to character and textual analysis.

This exercise was largely experimental in bringing these two processes together. I had previously used them independently, but never in relation to one another. I had an idea, however, that they might complement each other. My overall sense, on completion of the project, was that they did work well together and in fact, when practised in tandem, enhanced their individual effectiveness.

Locating each *rasa* in a particular area of the body on the body map enabled the performers to combine the KRB pattern with a sensation and awareness of that part of the body, which gave rise to postural actions that activated physiological components of the particular emotion associated with the *rasa*. These actions resonated with Alba Emoting's respiratory-facial-postural actions (Beck, 2010:141). The process of mapping the *rasas* on the body map provided a structure for the phase of mapping the character's emotional journey. In the past, when using body mapping in rehearsal processes that were geared mainly towards autobiographical performance making, I would invite performers to create/draw symbols using colour to mark where they held particular emotional experiences in their bodies (from birth to present). The *rasas*, however, gave the performers a clearer guide or map with which to work when mapping the emotional experiences of their characters onto their body maps. Learning and exploring the KRB patterns physically prior to body mapping, afforded the performers a tangible experience off which to reflect. It also provided the performers with the means of transferring analytical reflection back

into their bodies. In this way the KRB patterns operated in two directions: 1) as a tool for reflection and 2) as a tool for embodying reflections.

The process of combining KRB patterns and body mapping, in particular this experience with second year students, greatly influenced (in hindsight) the proposed method of performance making, and will be expanded on in Chapter Five. As mentioned above, I had no idea at the time of conducting this experiment that it would play a pivotal role in developing the method.

Experiment Two: Class Experiment

In 2011, the year between the two periods of the FV Certification, I engaged first year students of theatre-voice from UCT's Drama Department in an investigation into the relationship between the FDS, breath, body, emotions, and meaning. Aspects of this investigation have been previously published in a journal article entitled "Deconstruct to Reconstruct: A proposal for the inclusion of Fitzmaurice Voicework in the training of dancers" (Matchett, 2012a).

Until then the research had focused on my own somatic observations. I chose to focus on this group of students, as they were the first group in the Drama Department at UCT to engage with this approach to voice work. I taught a total of 26 90-minute classes to 30 students over the course of a semester (two classes per week with 15 students in each class). I gathered my data by setting the students a written task in which they were required to reflect on their understanding of the FDS and then reflect on their experience. They submitted their tasks via *Vula*, the University's online collaboration and learning platform. The task was voluntary, as the students were aware that this would form part of my research. 17 out of 30 submitted the task. From the 17 submissions, I selected a sample of 14 that reflected a range of responses. The reason for omitting three responses is due to the lack of self-reflexivity in their reflections. Their responses merely repeated information provided in class hand-outs.

When analysing the responses from a sample of 14 students, I noticed that their responses could fit into five key areas, namely:

- Awareness of self, others and surroundings.
- Breath as a tool for identifying and releasing tension in the body.
- Breath as a means of accessing emotions.
- Breath as a tool for somatic discovery and meaning-making.
- Challenges, discomforts, difficulties and frustrations.

I have used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the sample of 14 students.

Below is an outline of what I discovered under each of the identified areas:

Awareness of self, others and surroundings

The majority of the students reflected on the process of the FDS as giving them a greater sense of awareness of themselves:

Cindy:

[...] Destructuring opened a whole new world of self-awareness [...]. It felt like I became aware of each muscle in my body, each sensation. This [process] should help me to become a better performer who is able to communicate through a released body and organic voice, to any audience.

Zola:

I am learning to release control over my breath, to listen and be aware of things. The awareness also seemed to include an awareness of how breath and physiology are connected.

James:

In my own process of Destructuring, I became more conscious of myself – noticing physiological features of myself that I had not been aware of before [...]. I became aware of significant and, in some cases, drastic physiological changes [...]. My breath was much deeper, reaching further down in to my body. Every time I did the sequence, my breath felt like it reached deeper than it did before, travelling further into the extremities of my body and flowing through my body with more ease.

The process of Destructuring seemed also to have assisted in extending this awareness to spatiality:

Brandon:

I simultaneously gained increased physical and spatial awareness of my body.

This was further extended to an awareness of surroundings as can be deduced from the following:

Craig:

My self-awareness and awareness of my surroundings improved [...]. Sometimes I had a sense of internal energy and felt more responsive to my surroundings [...]. I felt like I experienced an honest state of focus for the first time [...]. I got a 'sense' of my body as a whole: each part of my body felt awake, alert and connected to the ground [...]. I additionally noticed that during and after doing the Deconstructing exercise, I felt much more present and aware of myself and my surroundings, and my senses felt heightened.

The awareness seemed also to be felt on subtle vibrational levels as noted below:

Taryn:

I felt as though a connection to and awareness of my breath, and how breath related to my body was established. I felt more aware and sensitive to the vibrations occurring within myself.

The following evidenced the notion of vocal and textual embodiment:

Duncan:

One thing I noticed when doing this process is how...[words] feel in your body. After each class I gradually began to feel ... [the words] in my body as if I were embodying them.

The above findings support Fitzmaurice's claim that:

What is fundamentally important is self-awareness, specifically of the breathing, not in controlling it, but in seeing what it is, because it is the dynamic for everything in its function as a bridge between your creative imagination, your mind, who you are as yourself or as the character, and your communication of all of that. That's one of the main things that breathing is. It's the interfacing of your mind, your body, and the audience. It's what puts these all into a single shared moment. (Fitzmaurice & Kotzubei, 2005:5)

This is further support for my argument that breath is the thread that connects the performer to her own body and to the bodies and breath of fellow performers and to the audience. It is a means of communication that contributes to a feedback loop and process of co-making of meaning that is vital to the process of performance. The

notion of experiencing breath as felt-resonance connected to the idea of bringing oneself to a tangible sense of being present to one's self, to one's fellow performers, and to the audience.

Breath as a tool for identifying and releasing tension in the body

A number of students reflected on how, through the process of the FDS, they had been able to identify where they held blocks and tension in their bodies.

Dean:

My own process of Deconstructing increased my ability to detect tension in my body [...]. I regularly found myself tensing certain parts of the body while carrying out everyday activities, which I was not aware of before.

Duncan:

I became aware of which body parts needed more work. For example, which muscles were holding the most tension.

Zola:

I found that the process at times revealed parts where I was holding tension and made me aware of the state my body was in, be it exhaustion, hunger, sadness or joy.

Some of the observations extended to identifying energetic blockages that were held in the body:

Cindy:

With these exercises, I worked through suppressed emotions. I habitually suppress emotions and I realised that I have accumulated immense amounts of tension around my shoulders, neck and lower back because of this [...]. When I realised this, I started doing the exercises every night. I found that I slept better, I had less neck and back pain and, most importantly, my imagination and ability to perform organically improved.

Two other students commented on this:

Sarah:

Not only was Deconstructing focused on a physical release but it was also centred on an emotional and mental release of tension.

Zola:

It is as if these exercises worked in casting off bodily and emotional tension.

These observations extended to how the process of Deconstructing assisted in releasing the tension or blocks the students held in their bodies:

Michael:

The process of Deconstructing was an extremely effective way of alleviating tension associated with the body and consequently the voice. After the Deconstructing process I felt more alert and more supported vocally [...]. Most noticeably I felt the Deconstructing process had a huge impact on my posture. I found myself walking taller, with more awareness of my breath.

These impressions and responses speak to Shusterman's insight into Somaesthetics as a way of breaking negative habitual patterns in the soma and psyche of individuals (2008:20). The observations by the students also support Morgan's assertions that trembling acts as a diagnostic tool (2012:110-111).

Breath as a means of accessing emotions

Some students started to make tangible connections between breath, emotions and where these were held in the body:

Cindy:

I learned that emotional 'blockages' are manifested as muscular blockages and that when I did the exercises, these muscular and emotional blockages were released. My body therefore felt the sadness or any other emotion, without me being sad or angry.

Duncan:

It was interesting to learn how emotion could be generated and how you could become aware of where different emotions came from by performing a simple series of exercises.

Keith:

In retrospect, the process itself taught me a lot about letting go and allowing the body to have a mind of its own. This was particularly challenging, as I like to be in control. Emotionally it released things that I had no idea were a result of my bodily state. This was an extremely refreshing experience for me as an actor.

Nancy:

Through the Destructuring process I experienced first-hand that by activating the Autonomic Nervous System, my body felt more balanced and I accessed emotions [...]. Many times during the sequence I started laughing. In the beginning I didn't understand and was scared I was being disrespectful so I held back, but when I allowed the emotion to express itself freely I discovered many things. Through letting laughter and joy affect how I said my poem³² I found a new joy in my text that I could not access previously, and did not know how to express in the speaking of my text.

These observations support Fitzmaurice's explanation of the relationship between Destructuring and the experiencing of emotions (see Chapter Three). Additionally, they support Nair's claim that "[b]reath as the fundamental source of energy to all human actions, reactions, emotions and speech, is an inseparable element in the nature of human embodiment" (Nair, 2007:51). The findings further resonate with Howard's discoveries in relation to Middendorf breathwork (See Chapter Three). Notions of 'allowing breath' were evidently connected to the relationship between breath and emotions. The process of allowing breath to come and go as it pleases in the FDS, evoked experiences or sensations of emotions in the body, as can be evidenced by the student responses.

Breath as a tool for somatic discovery and meaning-making

Nancy's reflection above began to touch on the idea of breath as a tool for emotionally connecting with the content of a dramatic text and how these discoveries could be made through the body, in the first instance, as a way of understanding the world of the play, before engaging the intellect.

Cindy:

I also realised that sometimes one's body must first experience an idea by being present. Then, suddenly, one's intellectual awareness kicks in.

Michael:

After all these experiences, the Destructuring process really opened my eyes to the fact that breath affects the entire body and from an acting perspective the ability to express.

³² First year students are vocally assessed through the performance of poetry.

James:

I also felt much more creative and full of ideas as my mind was alert and worked in sync with my body [...]. Deconstructing helped me feel more what was happening in my body.

The above findings support Nair's argument that there is an intrinsic connection between breath and meaning (2007:51), as well as Fitzmaurice's assertions that breathing is meaning (1997:247-252). The student reflections further support philosopher, Mark Johnson's, argument that, "any adequate account of meaning and rationality must give central place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding by which we grasp our world" (Johnson, 1987:xiii).

Challenges, discomforts, difficulties and frustrations

Not all the students experienced positive responses to the work. Some reflect on the initial difficulty and challenges they experienced. Others spoke to their frustrations:

Zintle:

In the first few sessions I experienced great difficulty relaxing and giving in to gravity and the floor, which did not produce the results I was expecting or hoping for. I found myself trying too hard to achieve these results, which made doing the process strenuous, and by the end, I was exhausted and agitated. Eventually I learnt how to relax and to give in and in doing so I began to experience what was being spoken of. From this I became aware of how much tension is in the body and how the individual tries to control everything about breath; where it goes and how it moves.

Sarah:

Deconstructing in voice class was a rather intense experience for my body to go through. At first, the different physical positions that I placed my body in caused a lot of discomfort, as they felt like 'foreign' positions. However, after some time, my body began to remember these positions and I became more and more comfortable with them.

Cindy:

At first, I really hated it because I felt tired, irritable and upset after each session.

Brandon:

When our class began the Deconstructing routine, it was initially quite difficult for me to complete. Some exercises required more flexibility than I could offer and others were difficult to sustain over long periods

of time. However, as the semester progressed the exercises became easier and easier. Certain positions within the sequence were frustrating, as they were difficult to sustain.

Gary:

The first time we started with the exercise I thought, 'this is weird' and that this cannot be a way of strengthening the breath. To me voice class was all about vocal warm ups, tongue twisters, and articulation exercises. As time went on and my body became more used to the sequence of Deconstructing, I became more aware, internally, that my voice was stronger and my breath was more supported.

Keith:

I initially found the process as a whole to be extremely painful. I would leave class feeling exhausted with tremendous back pain. However, as the semester progressed there seemed to be an improvement in my body's physical capabilities and the exercises no longer pained as much. They still made me feel extremely fatigued. Emotionally I found that this process took a huge toll on me. At the latter stages of the semester I found many of the positions assisted me to access emotions and I often found that I would laugh for no apparent reason. Once my emotions began to be affected, the aforementioned pain and tiredness I initially experienced, disappeared.

Taryn:

My personal response to the exercises varied on different days. In the beginning, my body felt drained, but totally connected to the ground. After the third Deconstructing session, however, my reaction was almost the opposite. I could still feel a strong connection to the ground, but my body felt totally energised and focused; ready for performance.

The above reflections suggest that not all students responded positively, in the first instance, to the FDS. However, their observations suggest a depth of understanding in terms of what the process elicited from them and how it shifted over the course of the semester. The reflections of the students also point to the need for performers to develop their physical, emotional and mental capacities in terms of agility, ability and flexibility. Only then can the body as a site for generating images be effectively engaged.

Experiment Three: Breath-Bones-Ancestors

As part of the assessment for FV certification, students are required to create a 20-minute solo performance that reflects how they have personally engaged with the principles of the method and in what way, if at all, it has impacted on their lives. The task is given four weeks prior to the assessment and students are required to make the work in the evenings after regular class sessions. The idea is not to create a polished product, but rather to allow the performance (in process) to reflect how students have understood FV in relation to their lived selves.

Prior to leaving for Los Angeles in December 2011, I experienced a thought-provoking encounter with a *Sangoma*³³ in Johannesburg. I had asked her to shed light on a personal experience. On 8 March 2009, I broke my right fifth metatarsal and on 8 March 2011 I broke the left fifth metatarsal. I found this to be somewhat uncanny. The first question she asked was who in my ancestral line had problems with their feet and who had either been born or had died on 8 March. When I arrived in Los Angeles, I sent my mother a text message asking her these questions. It turned out that my grandmother on my father's side was born on 8 March and apparently she had a recurring problem with her feet. This experience pointed me in the direction of what I was going to create for my solo performance. Since 2010, I had become increasingly interested in making a work inspired by T.S. Elliot's *The Wasteland*. I thus decided that the solo performance would take the shape of a conversation between myself, my grandmother, and T.S. Elliot. It was only later, once it had been developed into a more comprehensive performance piece, that I decided to title the work *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*.

Since 2006, I had been experimenting with body mapping as a performance making tool with other performers. I had, however, not engaged the practice directly, in other words, mapping my own experiences. In Los Angeles, each evening after class I would take myself through the various body mapping steps (outlined in Chapter Three). A week into the process I realised there was a step missing. It became apparent that I needed to find a way of incorporating the FDS into the process of

³³ Southern African traditional healer.

generating material, given that the assessment exercise was about how the principles of FV had been integrated into my lived experiences. It was then that I started to experiment with doing the FDS followed by body mapping; mapping where I felt particular sensations in my body and the emotions, events and stories from my life these evoked. For the emotional mapping step of the process, I had intended to map where I held particular *rasas* in my body, as per the experiment with the *Trojan Women* project. I discovered that I was able to extend this process once I introduced the FDS into the practice. I found that being aware of KRB patterns that emerged during the sequence and observing and/or following them with curiosity, assisted in honing the specific location of where I experienced the associated sensation/s of each *rasa* in my body, and thus facilitated where I placed them on my body map. Given that time was limited, I decided to omit the dream mapping step and instead focused on combining the autobiographical material I had generated through the FDS and body mapping process together with extracts from *The Wasteland* and memories I had of my grandmother, to create an initial 20-minute performance piece.

On my return to South Africa, I committed to developing the piece and began working with a friend who is a performance maker. Once we started work on developing the piece, I decided to give some of the key images from the original piece to my friend and asked her to verbally 'feed' them back to me while I did the FDS. As she was 'feeding' them back to me, I had the impulse to speak out loud what I was experiencing and, in particular, what images were emerging. She intuitively started to write these down. And thus the method I am proposing started to take shape.

Observations

Below is a direct transcript of the images that my performance-maker friend recorded during one of our sessions on 26 March 2012:

I sense that I need to get somewhere. I'm chasing someone. There's a blue light and a horse waiting to be ridden, with a bridle and a saddle. It's quite passive. My left side is not as anxious as my right. Something is moving, it's dislodging, it's coming out of my back. It's stuck in my throat. The breath is

going to my back now. I have the same sense of urgency. There's a thing in my belly that is blocking me. If it would open up I would be able to fly.

I'm waiting, longing for something, and having it.

It's more exciting to be chasing it.

Deep sadness from my base chakra. It travels up and gets stuck in my throat. I'm yearning for a family connection.

My warrior-self. It's energising. I can do this.

There's an image of a spear. It's yellow. It's like an arrow from a bow and arrow. It's very bright. I'm whole with this arrow. It's like I send it off in the direction of the sun. The light is too bright. I can't see it anymore.

There's a long road, a dirt road. There's a solitary person walking. It's very hot and very yellow. The sky is very blue. There's a mountain in front of him. He's walking to the mountain. I am the man. I'm climbing the mountain. It's tough. Hot, hot, hot. I am tired. I'm determined to get to the top. There's something waiting at the top. I need to create a path for myself; my own path up this mountain. It's hard hey? Whew! My right foot; the metal is still in it. It interferes. I've got to get to the top of the mountain. High-heeled shoes. I can't walk. I don't like torturing myself. I must get up the mountain on all fours. I'm crawling.

My overall experience was that the process of verbal 'feeding' of images resulted in an ease of flow when it came to image generation. It felt as though I was engaging in a verbal stream of consciousness akin to the stream of consciousness of words experienced in free writing. However, due to the difference between the speed of writing and the speed of talking, the verbal stream of consciousness seemed to occur at a more rapid pace and thus felt less effortful. Additionally, the process felt less cognitively controlled than the process of free writing.

Many of the images quoted above wove themselves into the reworking of the piece that was performed at a FV Conference in Vancouver in June 2012. The last image of the dirt road, a mountain and me climbing it, recurred each time we did this exercise. It seemed also to associate with a specific sound.

Pamela Woods's notion of the Resonant body and her idea of "sensory feedback in the body" (2013:60) is of interest in this regard. She notes in an analysis of one of her performances that "a deep sound rumbled within me to which I gave utterance, disturbing in its power and emotional resonance for me as a performer. I was not sure whether I uttered the sound or the sound uttered itself through me" (2013:60).

This resonated with my experience of developing *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*. While doing certain positions in the FDS, the dirt road and mountain image would repeatedly emerge, coupled with a vocal sound with which I was not familiar. Like Woods's sound, it rumbled out. It felt almost primal. Like Woods, I was not sure I made the sound or it made itself through me. This sound became key to the performance, as a recurring sonic device. What I was feeling in my body on a sensory level seemed to awaken a sound in the body. I found that this happened more in certain FDS positions than in others, for example, in the arch positions that do not necessarily invoke a tremor in the body but rather engage the spine in inverted arches designed to open up the chest and back areas. Perhaps these particular FDS positions, coupled with breath, facilitated an experience of sensory feedback that awoke a sensation that found expression through sound and image. This process could be viewed as cyclical. My experience was that the somatic sensations and images instigated by vocality while in the physical postures gave rise to further vocal sounds and images, which created additional somatic sensations.

The overall tone of *Breath-Bones-Ancestors* took on a quality which could be defined as the primal feminine, particularly with reference to the sonic landscape that was woven into the telling of the stories and memories of my grandmother, and excerpts from Elliot's *The Wasteland*. The overarching drive of the piece was my journeying from one place to another, with a sense of urgency; a need to get somewhere. On this journey I had to constantly find ways of negotiating the various blockages and interferences that presented themselves to me in various forms.

The process of verbally 'feeding' images while I was doing the FDS, contributed to the texture and quality of images that appeared to me. My experience was that these images, in turn, contributed to the overall layering and development of the piece. They provided a pivotal way to weave aspects of myself, my grandmother, and *The Wasteland* into a cohesive performance piece. Furthermore, the experience of generating images in this way felt less cognitive than somatic; it did not feel as if I was consciously constructing the images, but rather that my body, brain and mind had found synergy, and in that place of meeting between body, brain and mind, the images (visual and sonic) emerged. The breath was what facilitated this meeting.

The experience of developing *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, in particular the process of verbally ‘feeding’ images to the performer doing the FDS, prompted the next experiment outlined in the section below.

Experiment Four: Ngangelizwe

This experiment followed on directly from my own experience of performing *Breath-Bones-Ancestors* as part of the FV certification assessment. It also happened concurrently with the process of developing *Breath-Bones-Ancestors* into a more comprehensive performance. The experiment reflects on making an autobiographical performance piece with a young black South African lesbian who was interning with The Mothertongue Project. Aspects of this investigation have been previously published in a journal article entitled “Breath as impulse, breath as thread: breath as catalyst for making an autobiographical performance in response to ‘corrective rape’ and hate crimes against lesbians” (Matchett, 2012b).

The need to state the performer’s gender, race and sexual orientation derives from the alarmingly high incidence of hate crimes against lesbians in South Africa, particularly black lesbians. These hate crimes entail what is generally termed ‘corrective’/‘curative’ rape. According to Judy Kollapen, ‘corrective rape’ occurs “where men rape women in order to ‘cure’ them of their lesbianism” (in Martin et al, 2009:3). It is difficult to pinpoint the hard statistics around ‘corrective rape’ in South Africa, given that rape is not classified according to sexual orientation. According to a 2011 Human Rights Watch Report: “Between April and July 2007 alone, there were three separate instances of sexual assault and murder of known lesbians; at least eight separate instances of violence against lesbians were recorded in 2008, of which three were cases of sexual assault and murder” (2011:14). In July 2012 five cases of ‘corrective’ rape were reported in South Africa, despite the legalisation of same-sex marriages in 2006. It is important to place ‘corrective’ rape within the context of sexual violence in South Africa. Moffett notes that “[s]ome estimates predict that one woman in three in South Africa can expect to be raped at least once in her lifetime, and one in four will face physical assault by her domestic partner” (2006:2).

My fourth experiment set out to investigate how the process of generating material and making the work enabled the performer (referred to as SK) to somatically make sense of her lived experiences before Restructuring them into a performance, and how the suggested method – somatic mapping, might assist the performer in dealing with, and expressing freedom from, hetero-normative ideas around the body and sexuality. I sought to investigate in what way this method could assist the exploration of the body's story as it intersects with the personal and political body through the notion of Destructuring and Restructuring. The method reflects the idea of 'letting go' in order to rebuild, where the story of the self can be manipulated, changed, reimagined and restoried to mirror the changes experienced in the body.

The process I undertook with SK afforded her the opportunity to visually map her experiences of the FDS onto a life-size map of her own body, thereby beginning the process of remaking, reimagining and restorying. At the same time, I engaged her in processes of creative free writing to further make sense of her somatic experiences. The process included daily Destructuring and body mapping. SK started the process of creating a body map by generating an outline of her body onto a large sheet of cardboard paper and drawing symbols using colours to mark where she held particular physical experiences in her body (from birth to the present). Once she had inserted symbolic visual representations of these experiences on the map, she was asked to write the story of those experiences outside the actual outline of the body. The next stage involved mapping her emotional journey and then mapping her dreams onto her body, in other words, visually representing where she held her dreams in her body. The final stage involved mapping her experiences during the FDS onto her body map. I encouraged her to find visual symbols to represent the particular sensations she felt in her body during the sequence, as well as images and memories that came to her during the sequence. The creative free writing aspect of the process engaged SK in creative writing tasks to do with memory and storytelling. We also experimented with ten minutes of free writing immediately after she had completed the FDS.

Once we had spent approximately six sessions generating material through the exercises mentioned above, I asked SK to sift through the material to identify

patterns, recurring images and themes. Out of this, the structure as well as the form of the performance piece began to emerge. It became evident that we wanted to employ storytelling that drew from Southern African *iintsomi*³⁴ traditions, physical theatre, as well as projected animation. After that we took the material back into the FDS to deepen the images and to develop ideas that would feed into our choices around content and form. In the development phase, SK set out to do the FDS and while she was doing the sequence, I verbally 'fed' her own images from her writing back to her. She then spoke what she saw and/or experienced while doing the sequence. I recorded these, which she took away with her to develop further as script.

SK, incidentally, worked with a film student to create an animation sequence that was based directly on the images that emerged from the second phase of the FDS. She also worked with a choreographer to translate images into a physical text before we wove the animation, physical text and written text together into the performance, entitled *Ngangelizwe*.

SK's reflections

The following is taken from an interview I conducted with SK on 16 July 2012.

I asked her to reflect on the process outlined above:

Destructuring is more about memory. For me it was more about emotions. I felt the emotions in the moment, but I couldn't really explain them when I put them on the body map. I had to put whatever it was and where I was feeling it in the body map. It became a longer and deeper process. Once I had done this, I connected it [the feeling] to an actual event. Destructuring helped with emotions. I would feel a particular emotion when I was doing a particular pose, but I had to put it on the body map to figure out what exactly that pose made me think of. The free writing helped in clarifying what it was I was feeling after Destructuring, because when you're in it, you don't really register most of the things that are happening, until afterwards.

The whole thing worked really well when I Destructured, then wrote about it to make sense of what I was feeling, and then body mapped.

It happened in stages and it was a way I could make sense of what was happening.

³⁴ Nguni folktales

Generating material came from a place I didn't really understand where it came from, I let it happen and then I made sense of it [through free writing and body mapping].

The process generated material; it did a better job than me sitting down and thinking. I think it generated a lot more material that I could use. It generated an archive of images.

It worked much better than sitting down and writing. It was so much richer. I got so much more imagery, so much more content. It made the work much bigger than autobiography. I found that relationships between image and metaphor emerged. My life became a reference, rather than about me. It stopped being about me when I started generating images. It took it to another world; almost 'other-worldly'.

On 12 November 2012 I followed up with email correspondence in which I asked SK two key questions. The first question was around whether she thought the process of 'somatic mapping' assisted her to deal with and express freedom from hetero-normative ideas around the body and sexuality. The second was around whether she thought the process assisted in the exploration of the body's story as it intersects with the personal and political through the notion of Deconstructing and Restructuring. The following is taken from her email response to me on 13 November 2012:

Not really. I would say it assisted me in breaking away from both hetero and homo-normative ideas around the body. It helped me understand my body as my body, how it moves, how it speaks to me depending on the emotion, outside of hetero-normativity and homo-normativity.

It definitely did assist in exploring and listening to the story that my body was telling. In society's eyes a woman's body does not belong to her. She houses babies. Her body is meant for men to pleasure themselves, and if you are a woman not attracted to men, you must have something wrong with you that needs to be fixed. And what better way to fix these women than to have sex with them, regardless of whether they want to or not. As a person you do absorb these beliefs and you find yourself carrying them with you and they affect the way you relate to your body. In my case, I ended up carrying a lot of negativity on the 'feminine'[left] ... side of my body; all injuries were on that side. I realised I carry my emotions on the 'masculine' side [right]. Unknowingly playing out what happens in society, I was brutalising my feminine. Doing the FDS and then body mapping helped me realise this, and allowed me to begin to change.

Deliberations

My overall sense was that the work had the capacity to tap into a biography of the body – not a cognitive biography, but what I term an image-based, cellular biography. Furthermore, drawing from the biography of the body helped the performer move from individual particularities and she felt that this assisted in making the work less self-indulgent. The autobiographical aspect of this work did raise questions around the potential of it being read as self-indulgent. Yet I agree with Richard Layzell, who argues that, “this dominant concept of autobiographical performance - its supposed self-indulgence - is nothing but a stereotype with which we are stuck until a shift in understanding dislodges it” (1991:4).

Performer Lisa Kron speaks of the relationship between performer and audience: “the goal of autobiographical work should not be to tell stories about yourself but, instead, to use the details of your own life to illuminate or explore something more universal” (2001:xi). Pollock adds, that “[p]erformance is a promissory act. Not because it can only promise possible change, but because it catches its participants - often by surprise - in a contract with possibility: with imagining what might be, could be, should be” (2005:2). An aspect of this experiment focused on realising Layzell’s intent to dislodge stereotypical understandings of autobiographical performance. I set out to prove the potential of the agency involved in telling one’s own story and how this, in turn, could impact on the experience of self-transformation for performers and audience members alike. I was interested in SK’s sense that the process made “the work much bigger than just autobiographical” and that her “life became a reference, rather than about [her]”, and that “[i]t stopped being about [her] when [she] started generating images”.

This experiment directly inspired the development of my current research question, and in particular the proposed method of performance making with women who locate in contexts where their bodies are under threat of violation (elaborated on in Chapter Five).

Experiment Five: National School of Drama (NSD) Workshops

I was granted a research trip to India in September and October 2012. The primary reasons for the visit were to spend time at Adishakti revising the KRB patterns, and to conduct a five-day (three hours a day) workshop with actors in Delhi who had previously attended the NSD. The workshop was organised by Dr. Anuradha Kapur, the then director of the NSD, and took place at the NSD campus. The focus of the workshop was to introduce the participants to FV (Deconstructing and Restructuring). The workshop comprised a total of 25 people ranging in age from 25 to 50. I was assisted by Sadhana Nayak, a Mumbai-based Associate Teacher of FV, who had recently completed the Certification training and felt she would benefit from assisting someone who had more experience in the practice of working with actors. Dr. Nayak also served as a translator for the sessions. Most of the participants were Hindi speaking and were more comfortable in reflecting their responses and observations in Hindi.

On the third day of the workshop, I realised that the participants had assimilated the voice work sooner than I had anticipated. With their verbal consent, I thus decided to spend the last day of the workshop engaging them in an experiment related to this PhD study. Given that I only had three hours, I needed to be selective about what aspects of the proposed method of performance making I would involve them in. I decided to focus on the combination of the FDS, free writing, and verbally 'feeding' images to a partner while they engaged in doing the FDS.

Following an initial physical warm up, I asked the participants to pair up. I asked them to place their journals and their pens close enough so that they could find them easily after doing the FDS. I directed them to do the FDS for ten minutes and clarified that they could engage any of the postures in any order. After ten minutes they were asked to free write for five minutes. Following free writing, I prompted the participants to read what they had written and to underline any words or images that resonated. Thereafter they were asked to write these words and/or images on to a separate piece of paper. Once they had their images, I instructed them to share their images with their partners. Thereafter, one person initiated the FDS while their partner verbally 'fed' their images back to them. The person doing the FDS was

encouraged to verbally articulate what images and experiences emerged during this process in a verbal stream of consciousness (as per my experiment with *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*). The partner doing the 'feeding' recorded the new images and experiences as they were spoken. Each person was given a turn to do the FDS while their partner verbally 'fed' their images back to them. After this process, everyone was given the opportunity to go over the images that had been recorded for them and asked to underline additional images and/or words that resonated. These were added to the original list. The session ended with the partners sharing their lists of images and/or words with each other. This was followed by a group reflection on the process. Below are some of the responses from the participants. I have not used the participants' names, but instead have referred to them as 'participant 1, participant 2' *etcetera*. Dr. Sadhana Nayak translated the responses from Hindi to English:

Participant 1:

My imagination was going in bizarre places.

Participant 2:

Certain images came with certain postures. Today I realised that certain things were there. There were certain associations with certain body positions. There was a similarity in the quality of images [when I did certain postures].

Participant 3:

When I started Deconstructing my body started loosening up and I experienced external stimulus. This was the image. So I went with the image. Mixed with the relaxed state of the body, [it]...awakened all the small incidents which might have been related to that particular moment, which I jotted down [in the free writing]. I was able to recall the smallest moments [through free verbal association]. My grandmother: how she was cooking, how her hand was moving. I was able to visualise this. I think if I had been lying down without Deconstructing, the thinking mind would have started working. [This way]...it was more connected to the body. When the thinking mind was working there was a conscious effort. [With the FDS]... the person who was feeding images to me and recording what I was saying said that it didn't come out as a constructed story, [but rather] ... as a flowing story.

Participant 4:

Sometimes what came out was close to the words [images] being fed to me, but it was like the word [that was being fed] drove me [my imagination] together with the body, and new images came out.

Participant 5:

When I worked with a partner, I felt that my mind and body were continuously working together and that what came out my mouth was coming from working together.

Participant 6:

When we shared our images, we found that we had many of the same images.

Participant 7:

I didn't concentrate solely on thoughts, or on the body, or on the breath, but rather on all three. I think these three things were connected. They couldn't be alone. When they were alone it was not dynamic.

Participant 8:

In this exercise it helped to have a partner. The partner is like an anchor. It's difficult without a partner because there is no clear stimulus.

Participant 9:

It didn't feel like the partner was physically there, but rather that the words [were there].

Participant 10:

When I did it on my own, I had to consciously follow and create the image, but when I was working with a partner [feeding images back to me] it just happened.

Participant 11:

In free writing, there wasn't as much flow as with the partner [verbally] feeding images.

Participant 12:

When both of us were working together, I wanted to draw the images.

Participant 13:

There was a sequence of images that kept following one another. And the images changed my breath, which affected my body and then it was like a continuous conversation.

Participant 14

Normally when I have to write I have to concentrate a lot. I was surprised that once I did the Deconstructing sequence, the writing just flowed. I kept writing without consciously thinking and I had some strange ideas, but I went on and on. I was writing without judging. After I finished I read [what I had written] and I found a pattern to it and found that I had actually created some serious material.

Observations

From the above, it is apparent that there are a number of synergies in terms of my own observations when I engaged the FDS and the process of verbal image ‘feeding’ in the development of *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, and those of the NSD participants. The reflection about the quality of the images in particular postures, resonated clearly with my observations that certain images recurred in particular postures. The experience of flow associated with the verbal image ‘feeding’ step also echoed my own experiences of ease of flow and image generation during the verbal ‘feeding’ stage of the process. One of the participants indicated that there was not as much flow in the ‘solo’ generation of images as there was in the partner process of having images verbally ‘fed’ to them while doing the FDS. This echoed my observation that the verbal stream of consciousness seemed to occur at a more rapid pace and thus felt less effortful and less cognitively controlled than the process of free writing. It also reflected the sentiments expressed by the participant who noted that he did not have to cognitively concentrate on the process of writing after doing the FDS, but rather that the FDS appeared to facilitate the flow of free writing. Additionally, it echoed SK’s observations where she noted that it worked far better than sitting down and writing, in that more images were generated and thus more material was created.

The idea that ‘fed’ words drove the imagination, and together with the body postures gave rise to new images, connected with my observations that somatic sensations instigated by vocality and image gave rise to further vocal sounds and images, which created additional somatic disturbances.

The reflection that expressed how the mind and body were continuously working together and that the generation of images were linked to this process of working

together, reiterated my observation that the experience of generating images felt less cognitive than somatic. It did not feel as if I was consciously constructing them but rather that my body, brain and mind had found synergy, and in that place of meeting between body, brain and mind, the images (visual and sonic) emerged. This observation was reiterated by the participant who had discovered the dynamic connection between breath, body and thought.

The observation that the partner work prompted a need to draw was interesting in relation to the overall proposed method that includes drawing in the form of body mapping. It served to affirm my choice to include body mapping as a tool in the proposed method of performance making.

Consolidation and preparation for the main case study

The five ‘small experiments’ documented in this chapter are an attempt to track the incremental development of the method of performance making proposed by this study. Additionally, they emphasise the importance of the relationship between practice and research, in that the key research questions that inform this study emerged out of practice. Discoveries made in each of these experiments informed subsequent experiments and collectively these findings make up the method of performance making that is being proposed. This parallels Elaine Aston’s (2007:12) notion of “embodied practice” as opposed to “disembodied observation” (see Chapter Two).

The Conversational Cycle of Practice and Research

As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, the research question(s) that inform my study arose out of my practice as a performance-maker with The Mothertongue Project, and a teacher of theatre and performance (primarily theatre-voice). This practice has informed the choice of theorists with whom I have engaged in the study. The theory in turn informed the series of small experiments I conducted. A reflection on the theory in relation to the small experiments is now offered here; particularly how the main case study was shaped. (discussed in Chapter Five). This suggests a cyclical trajectory akin to the proposed method of performance making,

which is mercurial in nature. The FDS is innately so. Key is the mercuriality of breath which is intrinsically connected to the feeling and thus awareness of sensations in the body. Breath patterns change with changes in sensations in the felt body.

The small experiments revealed the necessity of working with a disciplined somatic practice as a way of preparing the bodies of the performers with whom I worked in the main case study. It became apparent to me through these experiments, that the more physically and mentally prepared and agile the performers, the greater their ability to allow for the emergence of spontaneity required for the proposed method of performance making. The idea of a disciplined somatic practice leading to a limber body and mind connects to Shusterman's seemingly contradictory combination of emancipatory notions of self-transformation and self-surrender with "strict disciplines of somatic self-control (of posture, breathing, ritualized movement, etc.)" (2008:43). This idea is similar to the ideals of the FDS where an element of self-surrender and spontaneity is encouraged and articulated in terms of surrendering to the sensations that may be experienced in the body of the performer. However, the process of surrendering is experienced within the disciplined logic of the sequence itself, through particular postures, which include ritualised movements from one to the other to form a sequence, and an emphasis on letting the breath 'be' or 'allowing' the breath, as opposed to controlling it. Shusterman notes that disciplined somatic practice, "ensures that soaring self-surrender can fall back on a safety net of disciplined self-mastery in preparation for a further leap" (2008:43). This speaks to the relational experience of placing two seemingly contradictory concepts, that of 'allowing' and 'controlling', next to one another. The juxtaposition creates a relational blend that is of interest to this study and offers the space for the emergence of these two concepts as complimentary rather than oppositional.

Blackman's concept of relationality is of interest in terms of choosing to work with a group of South African women in the main case study. In this way, the bodies are connected through commonality of context and a sense of shared space, where "the body is made to relate to itself and others in particular ways through the manner in which it is situated in space" (Blackman 2008 6). The context in this instance is that

of a country where women, regardless of age or culture, live with the constant threat of their bodies being violated. Their bodies are under siege, as it were. Connected to Blackman's notion of relationality is Shusterman's consideration of the impact of the environment on the soma (2008:8). This is pertinent in terms of the context in which I locate. In the main case study, I chose to work with a group of South African women ranging in age from 21 to 46. The statistics around gender violence in South Africa are extreme, as outlined under Experiment Four: *Ngangelizwe*, and form the environmental backdrop that impacts on the bodies of the women. Experiment Four directly influenced the decision to work with a group of South African women in the main case study. This study explores how an environment characterised by violence impacts on the body and the way in which it influences the feelings or sensations experienced in the body, how it affects the breath, and how this in turn affects the images and emotions that are generated through the proposed method of performance making.

Blackman in her interrogation of "*socially constructed bod[ies]*" (2008:21, italics in original) adds that:

The body is not simply a body defined by a fixed human nature, but, rather, bodies can, will and do change and transform given the particular set of historical circumstances within which they are socialized. Thus, talk of the body is always talk of the social context, social practices and ideological processes that produce bodily matters. (2008:17)

This is a thought-provoking concept if viewed in light of how violence plays itself out on the body, manifesting corporeally in the bodies affected by it. Given the extreme statistics of violence against women in South Africa, it would not be far-fetched to assume that the bodies of the women I worked with in the main case study, all of whom are South African, housed traces of fear related to violence. According to Pumla Gqola, "The female fear factory is as theatrical as it is spectacular [...]. Performed regularly in public spaces and mediated forms [...]. What is finally left and what is deeply etched in our minds is the spectacular contest between the powerful and the powerless" (2015:78).

Like Gqola, I maintain that as South African women, we have gone so far as to normalise the feeling of violence in the body as a way of managing our existence.

The act of normalisation enables us to maintain a relatively healthy existence and level of day to day functioning in the world. Continuing her analogy of the “fear factory” as theatrical and spectacular, Gqola maintains that, “[t]o normalise depends on a combination of seemingly contradictory processes: frequent repetition of performance until the performance becomes invisible. [...] when we see and hear something over and over again, we stop seeing and hearing it” (2015:78-79). The cost, however, of normalisation results in the continuation of patriarchal male dominance and unequal power relations between men and women which exacerbates psychophysical effects on women’s bodies. The normalisation of fear affects the healthy functioning of a body in the world. Living with the fear of becoming a victim of gender-based violence is arguably a traumatic experience. The effects of trauma on the body result in bodies in a constant state of brace, causing tautness in the muscles and skeletal system, which ultimately affects posture and restricts motility. Gqola notes that, “[t]he threat of rape [...] is an effective way to keep women in check and often results in women curtailing their movement in a physical and psychological manner” (2015:79). I maintain that the restriction of motility and postural hindrances affect respiratory processes and leads to shallow breathing and a tightening of the diaphragmatic muscle, which creates further tension and tautness in the body and skeletal system. One only has to refer to the KRB pattern of fear to understand how it affects the physical posture and musculoskeletal system.

Psychologist, Peter Levine notes that “[b]y understanding the biological nature of fear, we are able to grasp the very taproot of trauma” (2010:39). Levine suggests that our initial reaction to trauma is through the body before it manifests mentally in the brain (2010:135). He also states that, “[w]hile traumatized humans don't actually remain physically paralyzed, they do get lost in a kind of anxious fog, a chronic partial shutdown, dissociation, lingering depression, and numbness” (2010:52).

Given that the method of performance making this study proposes focuses on accessing the unconscious of the performer, it is conceivable that the fear that has in many ways been repressed or ‘locked’ in the bodies of the women with whom I

work, surfaces through images. Additionally, the release of these energetic blockages that manifest as emotional states, bodily sensations and visual/mental images, provides possibilities for restorying the images and related experiences through performance.

I share Shusterman's view that contemporary bodies (and here I refer specifically to the bodies of the students from the Theatre and Performance programme at UCT who formed part of the first two small experiments) are initially insensitive "to the subtleties of somatic sensibility and reflective body consciousness" (2008:10). He associates this with a state of numbness or desensitisation, if you will. If viewed in relation to the normalisation associated with fear to which I refer above, this too could be applied to the group of women I worked with in the main case study of my research. By electing to include body mapping as a way of visually drawing experiences on to a life sized map of the body, I engaged the women performers in a reflexive process that awakened more awareness and consciousness around the body and "subtleties of somatic sensibility" (Shusterman, 2008:10).

Related to the above is Michael Brown's idea of patterned emotional responses that are held (sometimes dormant) in the body. According to Brown, our initial encounter with emotions is experienced during the first seven years of our lives as feelings/sensations in the body (2010:36-37). In the first seven years of our lives we do not name or know anger as anger. It is only when we start to read and write (usually at age seven) and start to formulate language, that we give a name to the sensation. The feeling thus translates into a concept that can be named as a particular emotion. Brown uses these concepts to explain the patterned emotional responses we carry with us into adult life. He contends that as adults we react to things, people, and events, based on experiences that were encoded in our bodies during the first seven years of life. We may not be responding directly to the actual event in that moment, but rather reacting to a feeling that is aroused in the body that connects to a moment that occurred during the first seven years (Brown, 2010:34-42). This notion associates with Damasio's claim that:

The record we hold of the objects and events that we once perceived include the motor adjustments we made to obtain the perception in the first place

and also include the emotional reactions we had then. They are all co-registered in memory [...]. Consequently, even when we ... think of an object, we tend to reconstruct memories not just of a shape or color but also of the perceptual engagement the object required and of the accompanying emotional reaction. (2000:148)

Brown and Damasio's claims called for an investigation into the relationship between musculoskeletal and emotional responses, and posed the following questions that I hoped to come closer to answering through the main case study:

- What triggers the thought of an object or event and its associated image?
- Can breath that *creates* a sensation/feeling in the body as a result of changes to the state of the viscera or of the bloodstream catalyse the thought of an object or event and subsequent generation of an image or images?
- Does the image associated with the object/event/situation then give rise to an emotional reaction?

Damasio and the connection with the Fitzmaurice Deconstructing Sequence (FDS)

I explored the relationship between the FDS and the generation of images through a series of small experiments. What seemed common among all the participants with whom I worked, myself included, was that the stream of images that emerged was not necessarily logically ordered along a linear timeline and neither did it have a linear narrative construction and more often than not the images in the stream appeared seemingly unrelated. Damasio supports this observation: “[t]he flow [of images] ... moves forward in time, speedily or slowly, orderly or jumpily, and on occasion it moves along not just one sequence but several. Sometimes they are superimposed” (Damasio, 2000:318).

Damasio further notes that, “[i]mages are constructed either when we engage objects ... from the outside of the brain towards its inside ... or when we reconstruct objects from memory, from the inside out” (2000:318-319). What I observed was that when images were verbally fed to the performer during the FDS, the process of image construction started from the outside towards the inside, which then initiated images from the inside of the performer doing the FDS back out to the person

feeding the images. An image conversation occurred between the person doing the FDS and the person 'feeding' the images. In this way images moved between being constructed from the outside in and vice versa.

In terms of the importance placed on the production of 'fluffy' sound during the FDS, I find Damasio's observations worthwhile. He notes that "the face and the skull, as well as the oral cavity, tongue, pharynx, and the larynx – whose combination constitutes the upper portion of the respiratory and digestive tracks as well as most of the vocal system – provide massive input into the brain" (2000:290). This suggests that the process of generating 'fluffy' sounds during the FDS, because of its involvement of the respiratory track and the vocal system, plays a crucial role in the process of generating images. Similarly, the KRB patterns have a part to play in terms of the manipulation of the upper portion of the respiratory track. Damasio further notes that, "most of the emotions express themselves prominently in the changes of the facial musculature, in changes of the musculature of the throat" (2000:290). This observation relates directly to the engagement of facial expressions, body postures and breath patterns employed by the KRB patterns, and emphasised in Alba Emoting patterns.

Conceptual Blending

Gallese and Lakoff's argument that, "conceptual knowledge is embodied, that is, it is mapped within our sensory-motor system" and "[i]magining and doing use a shared neural substrate" (2005:2), was useful in terms of my choice to engage the body through the FDS, which constitutes the physical act of 'doing', in the form of a series of modified yoga postures. My understanding gleaned through Experiments Three, Four and Five was that the FDS created a platform for conceptual blending in the moment of generating images. The seeming random set of images that ensued in the FDS were potentially blended in the moment of Deconstructing. The main case study investigated further whether the images that the blend evoked, were experienced as feelings in the body that generated more images in a cyclical pattern. Implicit in the idea of conceptual blending is the idea of juxtaposition. The small experiments revealed that juxtaposition was prevalent in the images that were

generated. Seemingly unrelated images appeared as image streams. This echoes Lutterbie's idea of "systems of association [as a way of] ... gain[ing] information that can be later interrogated for its value in the development of performance" (2006:164). The body mapping and free writing aspects of the method conceivably served as interrogative processes.

The Soma and the Field of Performance making

Given that this study proposes a method of performance making that emphasises the body as key to generating images, it is necessary that I locate the main case study within various current somatic approaches to performance making.

The process of generating images that emerge from what I have termed a biography of the body is closely connected with Róisín O'Gorman's idea of ontogenesis (2013:10). As evidenced by the small experiments, the images that emerged from the practice were often not related to cognitive memories, but seemed rather to emerge from memories that lived in the body. If, as O'Gorman suggests, ontogenesis is concerned with tracing body and movement patterns back to womb states and following their developmental path into present mature states (2013:11), then the concept of body biographies arguably corresponds with re-memembering states the body has occupied from womb to the present. The states are not necessarily stored as cognitive memories, but rather as somatic patterns that can produce memories or images that are non-cognitive or forgotten. I am of the opinion that the engagement of breath in the FDS has the potential to take the performer back to earlier embodied states. As evidenced by Experiments Two through Five, the breath powered by the tremor, arguably activates memories that are not necessarily connected to actual events but rather to emotional states that are viscerally experienced by and held in the body, in other words, cellular experiences of emotional states that inform the make-up of the participants from embryo to the present.

O'Gorman further asserts that "[p]erformance practices and somatic playfulness offer us avenues to explore the ontogenetic body and in turn that body supports performance and opens up the potentiality of creative impulses" (2013:20). This

two-way relationship alludes to a symbiosis and suggests that the body is indeed a plausible archive for generating images for performance making.

Ann Cooper Albright states that, “[b]y shifting our somatic imagination, we can re-order our cultural notions of selfhood [...]. [T]he self becomes an interdependent part which flows through and with the world” (2001:1). This echoes Elkins’ notion of self that views self in relation to, “...others, nature, and life...” (Elkins et al., 1988:10). A notion that emphasises the interdependence of self that has the ability to reorder/reimagine/restory itself in relation to others and thus reveal many selves of the same person. The idea of “cultural notions of selfhood” speaks directly to my choice to work in a context where multiple cultural notions of selfhood are present. This is evidenced by the group of women research participants in the main case study (See the section in Chapter Five that introduce the research participants). I argue that the method this study proposes, has the potential to shift the somatic imagination in such a way as to allow for cultural differences and similarities to blend, thus opening up the potential for relational meaning to emerge. Meaning that cuts across binaries and polarisations. Additionally, the idea of somatic imagination speaks to the method of performance making this study proposes. Ideas of interdependence and flow could explain the similarity in images that were generated by the performers in Experiment Five (NSD). The FDS emphasises the concept of flow in the sequence. This resonates with the idea of collaborative autobiographies, which is fundamental to the method, which is relational in that it relies on the performer being in relation to someone (whether it be a co-performer or myself as maker and facilitator) and something (be it place/space or object). The relationality of the method is what makes it collaborative. Embodied biographies intersect in processes of co-creation and resonate with Natalie Garret Brown’s notion of inter-subjective bodies that are engaged in corporeal exchanges (2013:23). The permeability of these bodies is what facilitates the exchange.

Pamela Woods’s idea of the resonant body is useful in terms of the autobiographical aspect of this study. According to Woods, “[r]esonance’ ... relates to the interplay between past and present” (2013:54). This is a helpful concept in terms of explaining images that emerged from the body during the FDS in Experiments Two through

Five. The tremoring aspect of the FDS is akin to a tangible experience of resonance in the body. The idea of resonance as an “interplay between past and present” suggests that resonance provides a bridge to the past, which reconstitutes itself in the present through the emergence of images. Woods additionally notes that “[a]s a performer ‘tuning in’ implies a notion of resonance. Opening up to my awareness to that which is within [...]” (2013:55). Woods clarifies that for her “‘awareness’ includes: softening; breathing; opening the senses; a receptive state [...]” (2013:53). This idea of “tuning in” is central to my proposed method of performance making. The FDS, in particular, facilitates ways of tuning in, in that it is intended to encourage softening the body through breathing, in order to catalyse receptivity of the senses. The idea of accessing the biography of the body is thus centred around the notion of “tuning in”.

Woods notes that “the development of perceptual awareness is key to ... [the] process ... [and] that to be in a receptive state is fundamental for improvisation” (2013:56). She asserts that this is a state of “‘being’ rather than ‘doing’” (56). Developing perceptual awareness is key to the method that is being proposed. A “state of ‘being’, rather than ‘doing’” is central to the focus on allowing and responding to inner impulses that Fitzmaurice emphasises in the FDS. The idea of allowing and responding implies that experiences emerge organically rather than being pushed or forced. In this way, images inform the making of a work as opposed to being imposed to aid the process of making. Woods touches on the importance of the performer allowing herself to enter into chaos when engaging in improvisation (2013:60). This has clear resonances with the principles that underpin FDS. Entering into chaos creates a playground for the imagination. Additionally, Woods, in an analysis of one of her performances, reflects on the relationship between image and memory: “[...] image trigger[ed] memory, memory trigger[ed] voice; an interplay between past and present” (2013:63). The process of triggering is cyclical.

Like Woods, I stress the importance of “self-witnessing in maintaining an all-important performer detachment” (2013:64). The performers I worked with needed to maintain the dual role of being both the research material and simultaneously the researcher. The notion of self-witnessing was useful in this regard. It resonated with

the FDS where the vibration of the tremor facilitates the passage of breath through the body. It is plausible that the tremor heightens the process of receptors and neuropeptides finding one another and thus enhancing the triggering of emotional responses/memories and related images.

The Small Experiments assisted me to refine the questions this study asks about a method of working that involves a combination of breath, physical posture, image, body mapping, free writing, and conceptual blending.

They assisted me to arrive at clearer understandings of what I was particularly interested in developing through the method. The main case study, discussed in Chapter Five, put these understandings in to practice in order test them. Chapter Five thus takes on a more documentary tone. The understandings that were gleaned from the small experiments fed directly into this main case study.

CHAPTER FIVE – WEAVING

The Method in Practice

The Creative Project: Main Case Study

At the onset of this study, I had an idea of working in a particular way with an assemblage of practices that combined the FDS, KRB patterns, and processes of body mapping and free writing. These practices were both informed by and informed a set of theories that underpinned my thinking. These practices and theories, in turn informed a series of small experiments that refined and developed various aspects of the tools and practices that make up my proposed method of performance making in the particular context in which I locate. Chapter Five interrogates the application of this method in a creative project that combines all of the tools and practices, and forms the main case study of my research.

From 26 January to 6 February 2015 I set out to test the proposed method of performance making through a two-week creative project. The focus of the project was on process rather than performance and thus did not culminate in a performance product. I chose to work intensely for two weeks rather than on a full rehearsal process that would culminate in a product. The focus of my study is the process of generating images that catalyse the making of a performance product. In other words, it focuses on the generation of images for performance making as opposed to the catalytic function of these images in performance making. The purpose of the creative project was to interrogate the method in process. To this end, I assembled a group of six women performers, inclusive of a research assistant and myself. This selection was based on my personal interactions with each of them over the years either as a lecturer or as a collaborator. Each of the women I approached to be part of the creative project had expressed an interest in knowing more about and experiencing the method of performance making proposed by this study. They had all experienced aspects of it either in class or in performance making processes.

The research participants aged in range from 21 to 46. Included in the six were three Theatre Making³⁵ students from UCT, two third year and one fourth year, the co-founder of The Mothertongue Project, and a recent Theatre Making graduate from UCT (research assistant). We worked for two weeks, Monday to Friday from 10h00 to 17h00 in the Bindery Lab.³⁶ All of the research participants signed participant consent forms. They gave consent for their first names to be published in this study.

It is necessary to include a brief description of each of the research participants so as to situate their various responses to the method and questions posed. To this end, I asked each of them to include a short biography on the blog site³⁷. What follows are the blog posts posted by each of the research participants.

Rehane:

A 45-year old coloured³⁸ South African woman whose mother tongue is English. Rehane is also fluent in Afrikaans and Indonesian. She has worked as a performer, director, playwright and performance-maker in South Africa, the United Kingdom, The United States and Indonesia. She graduated from UCT in 1991 and is the co-founder and co-director of The Mothertongue Project. She recently returned to South Africa after 11 years in Indonesia where she conducted performance research, studied classical Javanese dance at *Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta* (ISI) in Solo, Indonesia, and directed a theatre company 'theatre fireFLY' on Bali, Indonesia. She has returned to UCT to do a Master's Degree that explores embodied cultural memory in her own performance practice.

I have known and worked intermittently with Rehane for 17 years. We co-founded The Mothertongue Project in 2000. Rehane had some experience of the FDS, KRB patterns, body mapping, and free writing prior to this creative project.

³⁵ UCT offers programmes in Theatre Making at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The course focuses on the process of creating theatre in a tradition of collaborative theatre making that is particular to South Africa.

³⁶ The designated Theatre Making studio at UCT.

³⁷ See Annexure: <https://mappingbreathbodyself.wordpress.com/participant-researchers/>

³⁸ A term used for people of mixed ethnic origin in South Africa.

Nwabisa:

A 22-year old black South African woman whose mother tongue is Xhosa. She is also fluent in English. At the time of the project, Nwabisa was in her fourth year of studying Theatre Making at UCT. As a theatre maker she has an interest in exploring the connections between philosophy, psychology and art.

Apart from teaching Nwabisa theatre-voice in her first and second years of study, I engaged with her on an applied theatre project with The Mother tongue Project, where she co-facilitated a week-long project with unemployed youth in the Langeberg³⁹ region. Nwabisa had experience of the FDS and free writing prior to the creative project.

Namisa:

A 21-year old black South African woman whose mother tongue is Zulu. She is also fluent in English and is semi-fluent in Xhosa and Afrikaans.

At the time of this creative project, Namisa was in her third year of studying theatre making at UCT. She is interested in developing her abilities as a performer and in finding her signature as a black woman theatre maker in South Africa.

I taught her theatre-voice in her first and second years of study. Namisa had experience of the FDS, KRB patterns, body mapping and free writing prior to the creative project.

Qondiswa:

A 23-year old black South African woman whose mother tongue is Xhosa. She is also fluent in English.

At the time of this creative project, Qondiswa was in her third year of studying Theatre Making at UCT. She is interested in language in the body before spoken text language, where the memory of verbal language is mapped through the body.

I taught Qondiswa theatre-voice in her first two years of study. Qondiswa had experience of the FDS and free writing prior to the creative project.

³⁹ Langeberg is a rural, farming region that lies outside of Cape Town.

Koleka (research assistant):

A 22-year old black South African woman whose mother tongue is Xhosa. She is also fluent in English.

Koleka is a performance poet, facilitator and theatre practitioner. She graduated with a BA in Theatre and Performance at UCT (majoring in Theatre Making). Her passion lies in telling contemporary stories about and for black women in South African theatre.

I taught Koleka theatre-voice in her first three years of study and supervised her final year research dissertation. Prior to the creative project I collaborated with her on *Walk: South Africa*, a performance piece that responds to rape culture and gender violence in South Africa. I co-curated the work and performed alongside her. Koleka had experience of the FDS and free writing prior to the creative project.

Given the collaborative nature of the research, I have included a short biography of myself.

Sara:

I am a 46-year old white South African woman whose mother tongue is English. I am also semi-fluent in Afrikaans. I am a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Drama at UCT.

My teaching profile centres on practical and academic courses, which include, Theatre-Voice, Acting, Theatre Making, Applied Drama/Theatre, and Performance Analysis. I am especially interested in interdisciplinary modes of creating.

As co-founder and Artistic Director of The Mothertongue Project, I have experience in the field of theatre and performance in South Africa, Singapore, India, Kenya and Indonesia as a performance-maker, performer, and facilitator. Research with The Mothertongue Project focuses on women's theatre with particular reference to cross-community professional theatre as a means of facilitating conversations across differences. I am also an Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework®.

Project Structure

The process was divided into two weeks. Week one served to introduce the research participants to the tools of the proposed method of performance making and week two focused on 'testing' the method. The idea in this second week was to work with different combinations of the various tools that were explored in week one. I emailed each of the research participants a one-page introduction to the study prior to the two-week creative project followed by a verbal introduction to the study on the first day of the project. No further information was shared.

The following tools were introduced to the research participants in week one:

- FDS⁴⁰
- Free writing
- Body mapping
- KRB patterns

The intention was to create a sound 'tool' base with which the research participants could experiment in week two of the process designed to directly explore the proposed method as outlined in this study.

Each day of week one and two commenced with a structured warm up routine that included:

*Surya Namaskar*⁴¹

I introduced the research participants to the version of *surya namaskar* that I learnt from Veenapani Chawla at Adishakti, where emphasis is placed on finding a synergetic flow between breath and body. The idea is for the practitioner to move for as long as they breathe and to breathe for as long as they move. The only time the movement and breath stops is in the 'plank' position. The sequence should be practiced as slowly as possible. The slower the movement, the more extended the breath and vice versa. Focus is also placed on every movement being initiated at the

⁴⁰ Due to copyright reasons I am unable to provide a written description of each of the FDS positions.

⁴¹ Sanskrit for the yoga posture 'salute to the sun'

base of the spine, which also happens to be the geometric centre of the body. Ultimately, the idea is to experience the sequence as a moving meditation.

The motivation for using this version of *surya namaskar* as a warm up, was based on my intent to enable the research participants to start to tangibly experience the connection between breath and body and the way in which breath directly impacts on how we experience the world through our bodies.

Pranayama

The second half of the warm up involved four different *pranayama* exercises:

- *Nadi Shodhana* (alternate nostril breathing)
- *Kapalbhati* (forceful exhalation)
- *Sheetali* (cooling breath)
- *Bhramari* (humming bee breath)

The reason for introducing these four *pranayama* exercises to the research participants was to enable them to start developing an acute awareness of breath in the body and how it directly relates to the experience of sensations in the body. Moreover, I wanted to introduce them to practices that are designed to bring a sense of calmness, clarity and focus to the mind. The purpose of *Nadi Shodhana*, according to Swami Satyananda Saraswati, is to stimulate the brain centres “to work nearer to their optimum capacity”. Additionally, it inspires calmness, “[...] clarity of thought and concentration” (1997:395). Similarly, the purpose of *Kapalbhati* is to “energise the mind for mental work” (1997:399). *Sheetali* is a cooling breath that “cools and reduces mental and emotional excitation, and encourages the free flow of *prana* throughout the body” (1997:387). Likewise, *Bhramari* “relieves stress and cerebral tension” (1997:391). I am of the opinion that *surya namaskar* and *pranayama*, as yogic practices, offered a considered space within which the research participants could experience the relationship between breath, body and sensation. This was in sharp contrast to the FDS work that was introduced after the warm up on the first day. The FDS focuses on inducing a sense of chaos or disturbance in the body. The FDS asks participants to work with curiosity and openness to chaos as a way of experiencing sensations in the body. The practice of *Surya namaskar* and

pranayama, on the other hand, creates a feeling of calmness in the body. By starting with *surya namaskar* and *pranayama*, it was my hope that these practices would provide stability for the chaos that might be experienced during the FDS.

As mentioned above, each day commenced with this warm up. We would spend 15 minutes on the *surya namaskar* routine, followed by ten minutes of *pranayama*. Thereafter we would have a group check-in, where the research participants were given the opportunity to verbally reflect to the whole group on what they were feeling in relation to their experiences of the preceding day, and to ask any questions they may have had around the process.

I have arranged this chapter in such a way as to reflect the progressive nature of the work, where like wayfarers, the path unfolded as we engaged the tools of performance making proposed by this study. In the first week, the tools (outlined in Chapter Three) provided me with a guide. The first two days focused on the FDS, free writing and body mapping. Day three and four focused on the KRB patterns, free writing and body mapping, while day five focused on combining the FDS with the KRB patterns.

The rest of this chapter is structured in such a way as to outline what was covered each day, inclusive of relevant reflections in discussions interspersed throughout each day, as well as reflections captured via the blog posts, and my analyses thereof. I have included the questions that were posed on the blog page. I have not included all the blog responses, but have rather selected those which I found relevant. The entire website, inclusive of the blog can be viewed as an annexure.

The use of the blog provided research participants with the opportunity to immediately reflect on their experiences. Given that the blog reflections usually transpired immediately after an engagement with the various tools and practices my study employs, the tone of the responses often took on a self-reflexive quality resulting in an informal language register. The regular use of free writing and verbal stream of consciousness during the practices added to the self-reflexive and often metaphorical use of language in the blog posts.

Day One– 26 January 2015:

I started off by welcoming the research participants and thanking them for agreeing to be part of this research. I spent ten minutes introducing the study. I deliberately omitted telling them that the method of generating images for performance making that my study proposes, is geared towards working with women whose bodies are under constant threat of violation. I wanted to see if my hunches emerged during the process. Thereafter I gave the research participants time to ask questions. The rest of the session included:

- *Warm Up*

The research participants were systematically guided through the steps of *surya namaskar* and the four *pranayama* exercises. These experiences were interspersed with moments of reflection through free writing.

- *Revision of the FDS*

All the research participants had experienced the FDS at some point over the preceding four years. The purpose of this session was to revisit the sequence in preparation for the explorations that would be undertaken the following week. We managed to revise six of the 13 FDS positions. As with the warm up, the experiences of the six positions were reflected on through free writing.

- *Body Mapping*

Thereafter the research participants worked on creating body maps by drawing the outline of their bodies on body-sized cloths (in pairs they outlined each other's bodies on to their cloths).

Blog Reflections

We ended the day with a self-reflexive blogging session. I posed three guiding questions on the blog page, to which I asked the research participants to respond. I explained my intention of encouraging a reflexive journal conversation with one another and with me, via the blog, over the two-week period. I made it clear that they need not answer each question sequentially, but rather use the questions as a

guide for the process of reflection. Therefore, not all of the responses followed the order of the questions posed, nor did they directly answer them.

Day One – FDS

Questions Posed:

1. General thoughts/comments/observations on today's session.
2. What do you understand by Deconstructing?
3. What are you learning about your own process of Deconstructing?

Rehane:

I am finding that breath opens into musculature interstitially and that consciousness embedded in muscle and fascia opens interstitially too. Like if a muscle fibre were an eye opening. Muscle spindles look like eyes. They are sense organs in the muscle [...]. It is easy to jump into a pattern/map of feeling and emotionally replay a pre-existing network of associations/muscles/breath/thought. It is more interesting to avoid this quick access and follow where the breath and continued relaxation lead. There is discomfort in the unknown. Very often, anatomy is geography – Deconstructing makes my body geography – a coastline, a road, a junction – random geography that builds into complexes of meaning when I write, but start as smell, sense and visual image recalled or called into awareness by the body. I am finding that embodied perception during Deconstructing is synesthetic. Consciousness talks in image and constructs those images of anything at hand. Perhaps my viscera release with the smell of oily fish or the viscosity of viscera translates as oily fish. Can viscera be Deconstructed?

Rehane's question around whether viscera could be Deconstructed seemed to point to the question I had about whether breath could *create* a sensation in the body as a result of changes to the state of the viscera.

Koleka (as an observer)

The texture of the sounds and breathing felt primal and jarringly natural [...]. I started to make the connection between how various body positions whilst breathing brought about an uncontrolled release of what the subconscious wanted to communicate. It made me realise that the body gathers so many experiences and feelings throughout the day or lifetime, and because our minds or human intellect or language or exterior noise(s) do most of the talking/navigating, our bodies rarely get to express themselves or communicate and release (with the help of breathing/ stillness) their own

experiences/stories/memories. My understanding of Deconstructing is that it's a process of undoing.

Koleka's observations were supportive of my argument for tapping into a biography of the body that draws from lived experience rather than cognitive recollections of events or experiences, as a way of generating images for performance making.

Qondiswa:

I think of this as a way back into the body. The body as the body, in its own language, in conversation with itself [...]. I think this emotion is from my pelvis. Today has brought me to a hyper-awareness of the trauma in the pelvis and, specific to my context, the gendered trauma in the pelvis. Or the womb [...]. To stand and shake and remember. Maybe to Deconstruct is just to go back, to map memory [...].

Both Qondiswa and Rehane reflected on particular parts of the body: Qondiswa referenced the trauma in her pelvis/womb area and Rehane referenced her viscera, which houses the womb. As the two weeks progressed, I discovered that this area was frequently referenced. This plausibly connected with my hunch that high levels of violence directed at women in South Africa would affect the kinds of sensations and related images experienced in the bodies of the research participants.

Namisa:

When I think of the word Deconstruct my reaction is to say undo [...]. It forces you to become acutely aware of yourself therefore allowing you to discover things about yourself. We are such complex human beings. Once you have Deconstructed or undone something you find something else underneath. My body speaks and so often I want to drown my bodily language out by speaking and today it was just great to rely on my intuition. Just being able to listen to my body and to allow. In those moments I found that I was able to create images upon images. It was like tapping into my subconscious.

Rehane and Namisa spoke directly to the experience of image generation during the FDS. Rehane's observations around the relationship between anatomy and geography tended to be a recurring experience for her, as can be observed by her reflections over the two weeks⁴².

⁴² See Rehane's blog posts in Annexure: <https://mappingbreathbodyself.wordpress.com/blog/>

Nwabisa:

My body feels things it remembers [...]. My body remembers. It can associate with these sensations [...]. As a participant, today I was reminded of my past. It reminded me of a time when I was very close to God. I would pray, tremor and speak. Today the tremors reminded me of that [...]. Deconstructing for me means unlearning. I want to unlearn.

Koleka, Namisa and Nwabisa commented on the process of the FDS being akin to undoing or unlearning. These comments allude to a connection between FV and processes of performance making. Both share, at their core, an interaction between notions of unmaking and remaking. The FDS aspect of FV equates with the idea of un-making, which captures ideas of transgression, undoing, moving into new territories, and possibly even spaces of chaos, in the process of performance making. Namisa took the idea of undoing a step further by noticing that the experience of undoing revealed more layers underneath. This alluded to the capacity Deconstructing has for tapping into memory. All five research participants suggested that the FDS provided a way into accessing the subconscious memory, while Rehane referred to the experience of consciousness embedded in muscle and fascia opening up interstitially. All alluded to Nwabisa's realisation that the body remembers.

It is evident from the above reflections that all the research participants concurred with the participants in my Class Experiment One (discussed in Chapter Four), who deduced that breath is a conceivable tool for identifying and releasing tension in the body, and that breath is a plausible means of accessing emotions. These reflections additionally connected with my interest in the relationship between body, breath and feeling and how this impacts on the imagination in processes of generating images for performance making. All five research participants seemed to be alluding to a relationship between body, breath, sensation and imagination, and in what way the FDS facilitates this relationship.

Day Two – 27 January 2015:

The day began with a verbal check-in. Namisa commented on how well she had slept and that although her body felt like it had worked, she was feeling rested and energised. Nwabisa also reflected on how well she had slept and that she felt

energised. Rehane mentioned that her body was sore and that it felt like things that had been lying dormant for a while were being woken up. She also commented on how still her mind felt. I mentioned that I felt it would be useful if I did the warm up with everyone so that I too could be engaged in my position as researcher from a place of embodiment.

Day Two – Warm Up

Questions Posed:

1. How would you define the relationship between the *surya namaskar/pranayama* warm up and the Deconstructing sequence? Do You find that they are connected/disconnected?
2. What are the differences or similarities you feel in your body/breathing after each one?
3. How does the warm up prepare or not prepare/guide you for the Deconstructing sequence?

Key reflections:

Rehane:

The *surya namaskar* begins the conscious process of connecting breath to body. Also it frames the practice of expanding or opening the body through the breath. The *pranayama* puts me in a calm state of awareness – in a space of open equanimity so I am not so easily excitable and am able to go deeper with the Fitzmaurice work. It clears the surface emotional noise so the breath can really delve into my body below an emotionally reactive state I could otherwise be experiencing [...]. After *surya namaskar* I feel stretched, warmed up, attentive, balanced and renewed by the pleasure of the practice. The *pranayama* helps shift my focus to the interior and creates deeper physical awareness.

Namisa:

My mind is still. It's like calm waves before the storm. My mind isn't feeling inactive, it feels present. Calm but ready. The warm ups are always stabilising. The first warm up [*surya namaskar*] is particularly more physically demanding than the others, but it still has the same calming effect in terms of the mind. It wakes up the mind and body and forces me to be present. The Deconstructing sequence and the warm up share common threads, particularly breath, which connects them.

Nwabisa:

The warm ups prepare me for this unlearning [...]. They become like a form of meditation. My mind takes the task of following the movement of my breath. It scans my body, trying to notice where the breath does not reach and as I inhale and exhale it visualises the air passing through my body and moving through every vein and every muscle in me. My mind becomes fully present [...]. My mind is engaged in the present moment [...]. I am unlearning.

All three research participants made similar points about:

- The warm up facilitating a heightened awareness of breath in the body.
- The experience of calmness, stillness and equanimity experienced during and after the warm up.
- The warm up facilitating an experience of being present to the breath, body, and self as well as to the space and to each other.

These responses evidenced the necessary role of the warm up in providing a repository for the chaos and spontaneity that may be generated during the FDS. Additionally, they spoke to my recommendation that those who engage with the method need to cultivate a heightened awareness that makes possible what is being proposed as a process of performance making; in other words, performers who through the practice of yoga are more readily able to experience both overt and subtle sensations generated in the body during the FDS. The observations evidenced that the practice of yoga facilitates the cultivation of a heightened somatic consciousness and also prepares the body for the actual process of making performance in terms of gaining somatic cognisance and skill. As stated in Chapter Two, the method this study proposes is reliant on bodies that are physically, mentally, and emotionally flexible and agile.

Blog Reflections

Day Two – FDS

Questions Posed:

1. What do you think the role of breath/breathing is during Deconstructing?
2. What was your experience of your breath during today's Deconstructing experience?

3. Define or describe your breath's response/relationship to and during the different tremors?

Key Reflections:

Rehane:

To carry oxygenated blood to the area you are breathing in so that area awakens and opens, is one role of breath. Today I realised that breath was the first thing I found in the world. After my mother, I found breath and then I refound my mother in a new post-breath condition. So breath is our first independent action. The first independent action of any animal that is born from a breathless amniotic place into a world of breath. After birth, breath. So it carries separation from the amniosis and then also connection to the whole other heaving mass of breath-based beings. So my experience was that of separation and unification.

Rehane's realisations around breath being the first thing she found in the world, and that breath is a human being's first independent action, was of interest in terms of my hypothesis that breath is the catalyst for generating images. If breath is a human being's first independent action, then it is plausible that it is breath that first responds to external stimuli before giving rise to sensations in the body, which in turn catalyse images in the brain that are interpreted by the bodymind.

Koleka:

I wonder if people in the room, when Destructuring, tap into a collective rhythm of breathing and shared sense of feeling [...]. I also wonder if it's the body or breath that accesses the memory or feeling, or if it is both. I wonder who or what is mostly the accessor and who/what performs the manifestation. And how do they prompt each other? If prompt is the correct word, maybe access is the word, which (breath/body) accesses the memory/feeling first?

Koleka's questions around whether it is body or breath that accesses memory and/or feeling, or whether it is both, as well as her questions around whether the research participants tap into a collective rhythm of breathing and shared sense of feeling speak to the relational aspect of the method that engages a relationship between breath patterns and affect. This is where breath that initiates embodied simulation within the body of a performer extends to and affects the bodies of those that share the space, in other words, fellow collaborators. Her questions echo

Blackman's claims that the affective body has a "generative force" (2008:103) as well as Shusterman's assertion that it is possible to somatically experience what others are feeling in their somata (2008:43).

Qondiswa:

Breath is possibly an erratic something that happens only to itself. Breath exists outside. But inside itself [...]. I feel like something revealed itself to me in the space before words and I don't know how to reconcile that here, with words. The breath moved through me as if it had its own pre-destined pathway. It came into me, and did what it does. But it doesn't belong to me [...]. Breath seems to be seeking through me a way out. It is like the consciousness of breath is its own thing with its own narrative. There is a story that only breath knows, that only she (he? It?) can tell. It feels like it is seeking a telling. And maybe this is the role. Or the role in conversation with my experience of it. Maybe breath is the telling. If there is a place where narrative (specific to an individual, talking specifically to human experience) starts in the body and that is the source of a tremor ... then maybe this is how that tremor ... engages with the telling of itself [...]. What is the conversation between me hearing what happens around me and my own process? [...] What is the reaction when someone is vocally, or violently (as in powerfully), releasing? And how does that, your, reaction, manifest itself in your body during your own releasing? Does it go somewhere to sit and be discovered in other circles, which are similar, where the same work towards release is done?

Qondiswa picked up on Koleka's questions around affect and whether the experiences (particularly expressed through sound, which is the vocalisation of breath), had the capacity to affect other research participants in the room. I argue that this is conceivable, given my own, as well as Blackman and Shusterman's reasoning above. Qondiswa's sense that breath is a storyteller seemed to concur with my perception that breath has the capacity to unlock memories, feelings and images that reside in the body. In other words, breath, in Qondiswa's words, "... seems to be seeking through me a way out", which suggests a release/freeing/liberating impulse.

Namisa:

Breathing serves as a plunger. It's sort of like an instrument used to clean out or rather reveal what was in that space. The breath is used to release [...]. My breathing today was different in the sense that I was more allowing. And that changed my experience of breath. I wanted to explore more. I kept on going back to the same positions because I

would pick up on a sensation and want to go deeper and deeper into understanding it [...]. It's helpful to know the *rasas* because sometimes the body feels a sensation the mind can't articulate at that time and *rasa* breathing patterns help you in understanding the sensation in words.

Namisa's reference to breath as a "plunger" that assists in cleaning out and revealing what lies in the body echoed Qondiswa's reflections. Namisa, having had experience of the KRB patterns in her first year of study at UCT, referenced them in her reflection.

Nwabisa:

Being aware of my own breathing opened up my emotions and my voice [...]. There is turmoil in my stomach. Unease. All my emotions are placed between my stomach and my chest. My throat seems blocked [...].

Nwabisa referred to the breath as an agent for unlocking emotions that are held in the body. Her observation that her stomach area housed turmoil spoke to Rehane and Qondiswa's references to the viscera as being a space where they experienced sensations. It was becoming more apparent to me that the women I worked with all tended to hold tension or experienced energetic blockages in their viscera. This in turn spoke to my hunch that the high levels of violence levelled at women in South Africa could have something to do with this. The vulnerability experienced in the pelvic area could be connected to past experiences of violation or the fear thereof. My understanding is that this physiological area holds the energetic resonance of female experience.

After blogging I gave them ten minutes to move between the FDS postures and suggested that they could be as fluid as possible and that they did not have to stay with the order of the sequence, as they had learnt it. Thereafter they free wrote starting with the words. 'My breath ...'.

In the reflective conversation that followed, the possibility of stories from our ancestral lineage residing in the body was raised. We also spoke about stories and experiences that live in the physical spaces in which we work and how each space holds different narratives. I commented on a potential conceptual blend; how meaning is made in the spaces between the stories and images that reside in the

body and those that reside in the space/s in which we work. Nwabisa commented on how she was unable to remember things that happened to her in her childhood and that her family kept reminding her of things she did or things that happened to her of which she had no recollection.

After this the research participants spent time body mapping the physical markings that were on their bodies and wrote down the accompanying stories.

Blog Reflections

Day Two – Body Mapping

Question Posed:

Reflect on your practice of body mapping after your experiences of the day (warm up and the Deconstructing sequence).

Key Reflections:

Rehane:

My uterus has been a very busy place [...]. My uterus and my mouth can't be shut up – not even I can tell them what to do. I live with pain in my feminine side – only in moments it goes away.

Rehane's observation that she experiences a lot in her uterus once again spoke to my hunch that high levels of violence directed at women in South Africa have something to do with this area being a common anatomical location for accumulating memories, experiences and perhaps even energetic blockages. It was becoming apparent that the two-fold intention of the proposed method was revealing itself. It was clearly assisting the research participants to release the energetic blockages in their bodies that are a result of living under constant threat of violation, and it also seemed to bring them face to face with the causes of these blockages, in other words the violent context in which they live.

Qondiswa:

Strung together this way, this seems like a process of recollection [...]. The tremor is locating, the breath is telling, and the body mapping is showing [...]. The body is remembering.

Qondiswa's observation provides a useful trajectory that locates the proposed method in the field of autobiographical performance making, where the body serves as a site for generating material.

Namisa:

Scars are actually just a bunch of 'once upon a times'. It wasn't too difficult for me to write them down. It was more difficult for me to draw them. I don't know why that is. I guess because drawing is so very personal. It's what you see. Words can be shaped in a way that can be very detached from you.

Namisa's initial experience altered as the process progressed. She later found the process of body mapping to be grounding. Her observation of how drawing is a personal practice or, what I refer to as a personal encounter with the self, supported the claim that the practice of body mapping encompasses a combination of art and narrative therapies where the visual representation of the story on the body map catalyses the written narrative. My perception of drawing experiences onto a body map is that one works from a place of intuition. One allows the image to draw itself, as it were, and then makes sense of it through writing about it. In this way, the image potentially reveals things not consciously thought about when drawing. I can understand how this process could appear daunting, given the potential for revealing or communicating information that has not necessarily been consciously thought about or through.

Nwabisa:

The line keeps echoing in my mind and I've written it down a few times "the body is remembering" [...]. The mapping is making me acknowledge what happens inside of me. By looking at my outside I am immediately drawn to my inside.

Nwabisa's observation that the outline of her body, which at first glance represented her external self and drew her into discovering what constituted her inside, appealed to me. It reflected a process that engages the 'outside' to access the 'inside'. This suggests that in order to express "what happens inside of" her, through visual images and free writing, her body acts as a site of experience that allows for the fluid movement of experience from inside to outside and vice versa.

Day Three – 28 January 2015:

Day Three began with the regular warm up. Thereafter I asked the research participants to do the entire FDS for 20 minutes from beginning to end. This was followed by free writing. Following this, everyone commented on how they felt something had shifted, and possibly lifted, in them. The research participants spent the rest of the time before lunch going over their free writing and selecting some to put on to the site under the free writing page.

Thereafter we explored the KRB patterns. I gave a brief introduction to the theory of *rasa*, which was followed by the research participants drawing the *rasa* boxes on the floor in chalk. Once this was completed, I asked them to systematically work through each of the boxes by stepping into them and noticing what happened to their breath, posture and face and then to record their observations in their notebooks before moving on to the next *rasa* box. Everyone shared what they had written down. The similarities between their observations and between the actual breath patterns were noticeable.

Once this task was completed we technically learnt three KRB patterns:

- Laughter
- Fear
- Wonder

After we had gone through them technically, the research participants paired off and went through each breath pattern in detail before combining the three and exploring the transitions between the patterns.

We then moved on to two more breath patterns:

- Disgust
- Love

They changed partners and went over them technically before combining all five to explore transitioning between the breath patterns.

Blog Reflections

Day Three – KRB Patterns

Questions Posed:

1. What is your understanding of the KRB patterns?
2. What are you learning through the process of engaging the patterns?

Rehane:

They are techniques for accessing feeling states through breath and muscle. Controlled manipulation of breath and body stimulate/simulate a pattern or map of a feeling that can affect the observer so the feeling is shared [...]. Feeling states are incredibly fluid and move easily from one to the other. The feeling can be created without a deep emotional investment. As a performer I don't have to get too involved in the emotion to access the feeling. It just comes through a deployment of muscle and breath [...]. It's more economical energetically than a heavy recall of painful events or imaginative recreation of a given situation [...]. Feelings leave residues that can affect the next feeling. States are transferrable. I am becoming more aware of the subtlety of *rasa* work and how it can be used lightly in a nuanced way. It brings awareness of the small muscle groups in the face and body and how the tiniest of movements can change the dynamic of feeling.

Rehane's comment that feelings leave residues that affect subsequent feelings, is of interest in terms of how the process of free association correlates with processes of body mapping and free writing, where images and words affect and inform subsequent expressions of images and words. The experience of shifting from one breath pattern to the next could be considered a form of emotional free association, particularly in the *rasa* improvisations, where the body and breath respond to other people's bodies and breaths as well as to the residue of the previous pattern experienced by and in the body and breath. Rehane's observations that the KRB patterns were a more energetically economical way in to accessing emotions, evidenced the probability of this method assisting performers to deal with particular kinds of performance issues they may face, primarily when it comes to generating emotions.

Qondiswa:

To taste. That's what keeps coming back to me from the discussion about what *rasa* means. Taste. Touch. Hear. Smell. See. Maybe *rasa* is

the sixth sense. Or the sense that embodies all the senses. Like a third eye into feeling.

Qondiswa's identification of *rasa* as the sixth sense that "embodies all the senses" as a "third eye into feeling", is pertinent in terms of how the KRB patterns are incorporated into the method; in other words, as a way into identifying sensations and associated emotions during the FDS.

Namisa:

The body has very systematic breath patterns attached to feeling/emotion/sensation. Those systems or involuntary reactions can be taught at its very base/simplest form [...]. We can never experience a pattern or a *rasa* in its purest form. We are so complex. There is always an association within each pattern. Some are more difficult to access than others. I can start to see the link between the Deconstructing sequence and the *rasa* patterns.

Namisa's allusion to the possibility of utilising the KRB patterns while doing the FDS reflected my sense that an awareness of the KRB patterns while doing the FDS could assist the experience of accessing images. In my view, this facilitates a deft and less effortful process where the experience is characterised by a sense of ease and flow rather than anguish and hard work.

Nwabisa:

Rasa means sensations. What one feels internally and what happens to breath and posture as the feeling happens. This feeling is evoked by the concepts behind the words of the *rasa* [...]. The process of the *rasa* breath patterns has made me more aware of how I react to concepts such as love, anger, bravery, fear, disgust, laughter, sadness, peace and wonder. I became such a child!

The first three days of the process were typified by an intensity of experience and feeling that I felt was not sustainable over the two-week period. The research participants were demonstrating a commitment and intention to the process that was commendable. However, I realised I needed to find a way of introducing ease and flow into the practice, particularly into the FDS. It struck me that the *rasa* improvisations could possibly provide a way in. This was evidenced in Nwabisa's comment on how the *rasa* work assisted her in accessing her childhood and was particularly notable in relation to her comment on Day Two about not being able to

remember childhood memories. My hunch was that the KRB pattern work could provide a way into this; a bridge of sorts.

Day Four – 29 January 2015:

After the warm up I asked the research participants to be aware of allowing breath to move whatever was being experienced, through the body, whether physical, psychological, emotional or mental while doing the FDS for 20 minutes. Free writing followed.

The experience for most on Day Four was very different from the previous day. Namisa and Qondiswa felt very tired. Nwabisa felt as if it was the first time she was doing the FDS and found herself focusing on her breath. Rehane had what she termed, a *shakti*⁴³ experience. Rehane's experience made me wonder whether this was akin to what I had experienced with the making of *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, where the overall tone took on a quality of what I defined as the primal feminine, particularly with reference to the sonic landscape of the piece.

There seemed to be a shared experience of feminine rage, blood and birth in the room, particularly connected to one of the FDS positions. My sense was that this position when practised, was initially experienced as an extremely vulnerable position to be in, but later offered the possibility of transforming the vulnerability into primal power that was at first experienced as rage.

Blog Reflections

Day Four – The FDS and Vocality

Question Posed:

What are you noticing about the quality of your voice in and outside your body during and after deconstructing?

I decided to pose this question on the blog because Koleka and I both noticed that the session prior to the blogging session was characterised by a similar vocal quality in all four of the research participants. It resonated, as mentioned above, with my

⁴³ The concept, or personification, of divine feminine creative power in Hinduism.

own experience of making *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*, where a primal sound I had never experienced rumbled out of me. Additionally, it reflected how the proposed method draws from and feeds into my practice of teaching theatre-voice.

Rehane:

I feel as though I am finding my voice or another voice/other voices that are also mine. I feel as though life experiences that have caused me to shut down have shut down parts of my body connected with those experiences and then also shut down my voice. So breathing in to the fullness of my somatic self will allow a fullness of my voice. I will have a fuller vocal quality as I retrieve, breathe into and sound more of these places in my body/mind/whole being. The two are concomitant. I am realising what 'block' actually means. It's not psychological – it's actual physical – block of tension in your actual flesh.

Rehane's observations that breath as sound played a crucial role in unblocking parts of the body that had been shut down, echoed Morgan's (2012:138) idea of the tremor opening "up the whole physical field" and carving "a path for sound flow". He maintains that "[t]he tremoring energy encourages the possibility that sound vibration will deeply penetrate the whole body" (2012:138).

Qondiswa:

I am screaming a lot. Round bellied screams that are coming from my uterus [...]. So much war to sit in my womb and, slithering slime of a snake that eats itself, gives birth to itself again.

Namisa:

My voice is sinking deep into my pelvis and out of my birth canal. Giving birth to a black hole. As it sinks in deeper and deeper it's allowing for spaces in my body to be cleansed. [...] I'm noticing the beginnings of the *rasa* breath patterns.

Nwabisa:

I was very aware of the voices of the other participants. Their voices were very primal.

The repeated reference to the uterus, womb, pelvis, and viscera seemed to continue pointing towards a shared experience amongst the women. It seemed that they all experienced energetic blockages of sorts in this anatomical area, which conceivably relates to my ideas around fear being repressed or 'locked' in the bodies of women who live with the constant threat of being violated. It made sense that the area

most affected by this would be the pelvic area. Given that the FDS is designed to unblock energetic blockages and habitual patterns that have formed in the body, the images and vocal sounds that surfaced during the sessions plausibly connected to the process of releasing blockages in this area.

In this particular session, it seemed that breath and sound started to shift the energetic blockages to allow for expression through voice. Qondiswa screamed her shift. The depth of Namisa's voice as it sank deeper seemed to unlock something in her pelvic area until it felt as if she were giving birth to a black hole. Rehane experienced a fuller vocal quality as she released the physical blocks in her body.

The similarity of experiences and textures of images (sonic and visual) points to Blackman's notion of the permeability of the affective body (2008:10). My understanding of affect and permeability is associated with the idea of interiority and exteriority of body with skin as the membrane between the two. This skin is thus both private and public. I argue that breath shares this quality of occupying both interior and exterior spaces of the body. It is experienced internally and shared publically. I breathe in someone else's breath while they breathe in mine. In this way I affect and am affected.

We ended this session with some shiatsu release work over an exercise ball. I noted some interesting observations. Rehane and I seemed to be more held in our midribs with very little flexibility in our ribs. This led me to wonder whether it had something to do with how we were taught to breathe as young actors or whether it had something to do with our age, which leads to a particular kind of muscular rigidity. Nwabisa, Namisa, Qondiswa and Koleka were relatively held in this area, but not to the same extent as Rehane and I. When I was doing the FV Certification in Los Angeles, I noticed that most people were quite malleable in this area. Certainly more so than I was. Nwabisa, Namisa, Qondiswa and Koleka were not, however, as malleable as the people I worked with in Los Angeles. I wondered whether the apparent tension in this area had anything to do with the high levels of violence against women in South Africa and the resultant need to shield our bodies.

Thereafter we did the FDS as a five minute warm up before moving on to learn the remaining four KRB patterns:

- Sadness
- Bravery
- Anger
- Peace

Revising all the breath patterns in the *rasa* boxes followed. The intention was to work towards an agility and ability so as to move easily between the patterns. After spending time in the *rasa* boxes, the research participants did a *rasa* breath improvisation. As an observer it was fascinating to notice how meaning, story and relationships started to emerge without words during the improvisation. A world was created through breath, and as an observer, I was pulled into that world which directed me to the plausibility of Qondiswa's earlier point about the potential of story that lies in the breath and body.

Blog Reflections

Day Four – KRB Patterns

Questions Posed

These were posed after the first *rasa* improvisation:

1. What discoveries have you made through the KRB patterns?
2. What do you notice when observing your partner's experience/process of the breath patterns?

Rehane:

The subtlety of range is surprising me – how many variations there are in one pattern and then how the patterns affect one another [...]. The improvisation with others brought my attention to exactly how contagious these patterns are and how easy they are to go along with and respond to [...]. The feelings are immediate. It was interesting to note what happened when I followed the breath pattern as it changed and didn't consciously decide how to respond, or instinctively respond to someone else's *rasa*. It was a different kind of cognition. I suppose just as we become sensitised to minute shifts in feeling and in bodily sensation, we can become sensitised to minute shifts in breath. This is

intriguing for me – to become that sensitive to minute shifts in breath in performance so I could almost map it [...]. It's very fluid work.

Rehane seemed to be reiterating her observation around how subtle shifts in breath, posture and facial expressions could create shifts of sensations or shifts in the experience of *rasa* in the body. This spoke to my sense that by cultivating an acute awareness of the subtle shifts of breath and sensation in the body, the performer is able to have a tangible experience of what it means to be present. Rehane's observations, however, highlighted the experience of sensation in the body made tangible by a connection with breath. This conceivably offers the performer a practical experience of presence as opposed to a conceptual understanding of it.

Koleka:

Watching the *rasa* breath patterns is a bit weird. I feel inside of the emotion, like it's mine [...]. Observing made me feel like I was on a roller coaster and I could not predict which way it was going to take me. [...] I was able to access the 'performance' of the emotion without feeling like it was taking from me.

Qondiswa:

It is a hard thing to watch the erratic shift of breath. It comes into you. I feel my face shift, a mirror. My breath shifts.

Namisa:

You discover a lot about yourself [...]. The breathing patterns are selfless, less about how you can generate the feeling and more about following the sensation and letting your body/breath follow through. I find that I feel more as an observer than as a participant. [...] I find that as an observer there is a sense of wanting to feel what the participant is feeling.

These observations affirm my supposition that breath is key to creating what Chawla refers to as a "contagion of consciousness" (in Ghandi, 2014:75). Namisa's comments on the experience of following the sensation in the body made me curious to see how these shifts in awareness, while following the sensations in the body, would translate into the experience of doing the FDS when an awareness of KRB patterns was brought into the practice.

Nwabisa:

The beauty about all this work is that at the end you have a greater sense of yourself. You start to understand yourself more. You get to understand your body and your breath and because of that, you can manipulate emotion in whatever way you want to manipulate it. *Rasa* allows me to feel emotion without any backstory, or emotional memory. I learn to be present and generate the emotion through breath.

Nwabisa's reflection confirmed that the KRB patterns could provide a bridge to accessing emotions without having to access particular memories associated with different emotions. Additionally, her observations point towards the method serving as a way of making the self more visible to the self, as it were.

The *rasa* improvisation was followed by a process of body mapping, where the research participants mapped where in their bodies they experienced the *rasa* of each emotion. They used colour and symbols to map these on their body maps.

Day Five – 30 January 2015:

The warm up routine was followed by a revision of the KRB patterns in the *rasa* boxes. Thereafter the research participants went straight into 20 minutes of the FDS. I asked them to be curious about the emergence of KRB patterns while doing the FDS and to follow them and/or consciously manipulate them, and in doing so to observe the difference between following and manipulating.

It seemed to me as an observer that there was a definite shift in energy in the room. There appeared to be a lot of heat and a level of fullness in the room that Koleka and I had not experienced before. This made me wonder whether an awareness of, and conscious engagement with, the KRB patterns while doing the FDS could serve to amplify the experience for the research participants. There appeared to be more shifts between expressions of emotions.

There was a very vivid shift in Qondiswa. She expressed laughter for the first time and also discovered a guttural growl sound I had not heard before.

Blog Reflections

Day Five – FDS and KRB patterns.

Questions Posed

1. Reflect on the relationship between the KRB patterns and the FDS.
2. Is there a difference when you consciously notice/follow the breath patterns during Deconstructing and, when you don't?
3. Did you notice anything different about your vocal quality/the experience of your voice in your body?

Rehane:

I think it is a very interesting synthesis of techniques. I found a wonderful liberation and openness with the two together. Perhaps because of the technical nature of *rasa* work, breath patterns in the poses gave me a more detached, less judgmental approach. I had a definite feeling of being able to play. [...] It seems my breath knows where it is going and then I can play by extending duration, gathering intensity, adding shades of different feeling or breath or sound. [...] Then there were postures where I definitely put a feeling I felt was appropriate. That was a more intense experience. It was very freeing. [...] I felt a vocal and emotional liberation as well as fluidity. I experienced sounds that came from a 'less cognitive place' – that were just sounds. And a total connection of sound to sensation in my body. [...] A lot of the sounds and emotions were related to very physical feelings.

Rehane's observation that the combination of the KRB patterns and the FDS enabled her to play, spoke to my hunch that the breath patterns provide a bridge into finding a quality of ease and lightness in the work. Additionally, her reflections on the connection between vocalised sounds and sensations in the body alluded to an effortlessness in discerning the shifts that occur on the level of sensation as well as on sonic levels, when an awareness of the KRB patterns is brought into the FDS.

Qondiswa:

I am unlocked. Or unlocking. Or unearthing [...]. My voice sounds louder. Or bigger. Or rounder. [...] I am open. [...] Between the *rasa* and Deconstructing is language. I know it in my body, I know it in my breath, I Deconstruct *rasa* and name it: I fear. I rage. I hurt.

Namisa:

I found that between the sensation and the breath pattern was myself trying to identify/decipher what the feeling was and allowing the

breath to follow through. Because we mapped the *rasa* sensations [in our body maps] yesterday it was easier to identify the feeling and then align it with its appropriate breath pattern. [...] The breath pattern/*rasa* explains the sensation. Understanding or naming a sensation is very comforting. My voice was incredibly rooted. It sank deep into the pit of my belly and bellowed out. Bellows turned into sadness shifting from sadness to anger to brave anger. [...] It flowed involuntarily between one *rasa* to another.

Rehane, Qondiswa and Namisa noted that the inclusion or awareness of KRB patterns brought a sense of safety into the process, in that they were able to name sensations and make sense of them according to different *rasas*. The KRB patterns provided a springboard for the experience of emotions, sensations and images reflecting my intuition that the KRB patterns combined with the FDS could play a role in activating and explaining subtle sensations in the body that induce mental images that appear as a “movie-in-the-brain” (Damasio, 2000:9). In so doing “the life of the autobiographical self [that] ... takes place off-screen” (Damasio, 2010:161) is conceivably brought into awareness.

Rehane, Qondiswa and Namisa further commented on how their voices felt more connected to their bodies and had a sense of openness about them. This revealed how the combination of the KRB patterns and the FDS also assists performers of different ages to engage with particular challenges they may face in relation to voice production.

Nwabisa:

Two powerful forces put together lead to an explosion of energy. That is all I can say regarding the relationship between the Deconstructing sequence and the *rasa* breath patterns. I find that when I combine these two things I am taken to a place I would rather not go to. The fear is twice as strong.

Nwabisa’s experience was another reminder that I needed to find a way of consciously bringing a sense of ease, lightness and playfulness in to the process. It was my hope that the inclusion of the KRB patterns into the FDS would do this. Although it seemed to have had this effect on Rehane, and it made the experience more contained for Qondiswa and Namisa, it seemed that Nwabisa had the reverse experience.

After lunch we did five minutes of the FDS to warm up before we revised the KRB patterns in the *rasa* boxes. I asked the research participants to speed up the time spent in each box so as to start to develop an awareness of agility. I then introduced them to the idea of blending, where they were asked to choose a base *rasa* (in this instance I asked them to choose a lighter base *rasa*) and to carry this with them into each box to create percentage blends. I also encouraged them to explore different percentages while in one box. Thereafter we went in to a *rasa* improvisation as we did the previous day. I asked them to listen to and respond to impulse and to open the improvisation to the whole group when they felt the impulse to do so.

The feel of the improvisation was completely different from that of the previous day. All the research participants appeared to tap into a child-like quality. It made me wonder whether the blends had anything to do with it and whether it had anything to do with choosing a light base *rasa* in the *rasa* box 'routine' prior to the improvisation. In the discussion afterwards, Rehane and Namisa both noted that it felt like they were exploring the basis of clowning. I commented on how it occurred to me that this was an interesting way of exploring and understanding status in performance, and how status clearly relates to emotional states as well as energy shifts in the body. This interplay of status is what seemed to give rise to meaning and story in the improvisation. Thereafter I asked them to reflect on the question posed on the blog page.

Blog Reflections

Day Five – KRB patterns and free writing

Question Posed

Reflect on the process of free writing after the experience of the *rasa* improvisation

Qondiswa:

This might possibly be how performance is made: 1) Deconstruct 2) *Rasa* 3) Improvise 4) Write. It's easy to write when you've been given a story. The words came from some-very tangible-where.

Namisa:

I really had fun tapping into childhood in an authentic and unintentional way. [...] I think the *rasa* gave me inspiration to create a story. Another way of creating a narrative that is real for the actors. Instead of imposing a narrative, let them find their own. This could be a possible way of directing/creating/workshopping/ if channelled in the right direction. It's a possibility.

Qondiswa and Namisa both tapped into the emergence of story during the free writing after the *rasa* improvisations. This made sense to me in terms of an earlier observation that watching the *rasa* improvisations gave rise to meaning and story in me as the watcher. Their reflections inspired me to think about how this could be incorporated into the proposed method of performance making. After some contemplation I realised that it would probably come in at a later stage, once the images had been generated and blended through the method I am proposing. It would fit in to the development-of-the material stage of performance making. Their reflections also resonated with my ideas around the method providing a way in to script writing.

Nwabisa:

Emotion is essentially breath. [...] While playing the *rasa* improvisation game I realised that when I am open to how I feel, I tend to know what to do next. By not being attached to any one feeling I allow myself to explore other emotions and thus the game continues. I am learning to be free. I am learning to be present. I am starting to understand the pattern of the *rasa*. I don't think I'm scared of the fear and anger *rasas* anymore.

Nwabisa's reflections evidenced an ability to find joy and a child-like quality when working with the KRB patterns on their own. My challenge remained to find a way of bringing this quality into the combined practice of KRB patterns and the FDS.

Weekend Blog Reflections

Question Posed

Reflect on the experience of free writing after the *rasa* improvisation, and free writing after Deconstructing. Is there a difference or similarity in texture/quality/images/vocal quality? (Consult your free writes for possible insights).

Rehane:

Destructuring produces a fluid, formless, pre-lingual state of consciousness. Images are thick – visual, auditory, smell and taste awaken in a timeless, formless way. It's a fertile imaginative space. There is almost a lapse in cognition where the rational processes catch up to the flow of images. It's unfiltered and the images are the body trying to make sense of what it is experiencing. [...] With *rasa* free writing, the rational mind is already awake. Consciousness is forward and outward directed. It's a less creative, primal soup place than Destructuring. Not as potent, fecund, ripe and rotten. More technical and structured and as result not as unexpected.

Rehane seemed to allude to my hunch that feelings experienced in the body give rise to images. The images are, as she articulates, a way of making sense of what the body experiences.

Namisa:

There is something about the interaction that changes the mood of my free writing. The Destructuring free writing is mostly about finding my story/images whether it be from my mind (consciously or subconsciously) or from my body. After the *rasa* breath work I find that my writing is contemplative, wondering *etcetera*. There is a sense of excitement.

My sense is that Namisa's response is related to a feeling of safety she experienced while engaging the KRB patterns, as well as the safety she felt in the recognition of narrative that emerged from the free writing. The technicality and structure of the KRB patterns provided stability and felt less unpredictable for her. This was in contrast to my interest as a performance maker. I am inherently more attracted to the unpredictable. I am intrigued by the experience of the unknown revealing itself as the process unfolds; a place where the process makes sense of and meaning out of unpredictability and unknowingness. Much like the wayfarer who discovers her path as she journeys. Perhaps the difference in our experiences and interests had to do with age and life experience.

Nwabisa:

My free writing after the Destructuring sequence is very different from my free writing after the *rasa* breath patterns. After the Destructuring sequence on Friday I did not want to do anything that involves this project. I was afraid and felt like I had tapped into a place that I did not want to tap in to. The *rasa* breath patterns, however, healed me

totally. It brought me back to my childhood. My heart was that of a child, I allowed myself to just feel the *rasas* and not get attached to any of them. [...] I now think that the Destructuring sequence awakens my demons and the *rasa* breath pattern heals me. I am quite aware though that tomorrow both these sequences will mean something else to me.

Nwabisa's reflections point to the proposed method being a way of revealing energetic blockages that have formed in the bodies of women performers.

Rehane, Namisa and Nwabisa reflected on the difference in quality of the images. Rehane and Nwabisa identified a similar quality in the images after the FDS. However, their responses to this quality were different. Rehane experienced the images as "fecund, ripe and rotten", giving way to a fertile space of imagination. Nwabisa experienced them as dark and demonic. My experience was similar to that of Rehane's when I made *Breath-Bones-Ancestors*. The difference in responses reiterated my question around whether age and life-experience had anything to do with how the 'thickness' and viscosity of the images experienced during the FDS and expressed in the free writing afterwards could influence the reflections and responses. Perhaps with age and life experience, the dark images manifest a sense of pleasure and excitement as opposed to fear and anguish. For Rehane and myself, the fertile space created for the imagination to play in felt as if it drew us into a world of possibility in terms of performance making. It inspired me to consider whether age and lived experience made one less fearful, with the understanding that these 'dark' spaces are transitory and are often filled with creative possibility. Additionally, as one matures, they are more easily accepted as elements of the self and not as something outside of the self.

Day Six – 2 February 2015:

After the warm up routine, I asked the research participants to go into the *rasa* boxes (choosing a lighter base) for three minutes before doing the FDS for five minutes, and to end off with another three minutes in the *rasa* boxes (choosing either a light or a heavy base this time).

In our discussion that followed, Nwabisa and Qondiswa both noted that the heavier base *rasa* they chose, made the experience more nuanced. I was curious to explore

whether we have habitual base *rasas* and whether these change at particular moments in our life trajectory.

Blog Reflections

Day Six – KRB patterns and FDS.

Question Posed

What are the general comments/observations/thoughts on today's session?

Rehane:

Today I felt a new awareness of my skin. [...] On stage there can be very few energetic lies if you are to work with these two modalities [KRB and the FDS...]. I am thinking more and more about sensitisation of the body and psychic instrument and how easy it is to desensitise or twist the natural flow and numb responsiveness [...]. Awareness of *rasa* breath patterns can assist to make the Destructuring process more conscious. To consciously delve deeper into a feeling state through the breath pattern, activating that emotion and then staying with it as it plays itself out. [...] During the process memories subtly surfaced. I explored them, watched them, stayed with them and then slowly moved out. [...] I found it very useful. This release work seems to happen in layers. You tap into a sheath of experience and memory, all the memories associated with that particular neurosomatic pattern surface and reveal themselves as a pattern. When these patterns are formed, emotions are so chaotic, there is so little that I understood at the time they were formed. It was a maelstrom of first time fear and sadnesses that just stuck to my ribs.

Rehane's experience of skin reminded me of Shannon Sullivan's understanding of skin as a "site of transaction between inside and outside the body" (Sullivan, 2001:58). It also resonated with Blackman's reading of the skin as "an instrument of communication that allows us to sense and feel in the world" (Blackman, 2008:86). Rehane seemed to be alluding to her experience of skin as an experience of sensitisation that facilitates a way into accessing the feelings of what lies beneath the skin; the interiority of the body. Rehane also commented on how memory surfaced as a result of the feeling states and sensations in the body that gave rise to the expression of emotions. She viewed the felt sensations as neurosomatic patterns that are accessed through the combination of KRB patterns and the FDS. Her reference to how little she understood at the time in her life when these patterns

were formed echoed my sentiment that age has something to do with how we respond to the sensations and neurosomatic patterns that arise during the work.

Namisa:

Today, because of my lack of sleep last night, I felt myself holding back. [...] Because of the exhaustion I'm finding it hard to concentrate. I wasn't concentrating on my breathing. It took a long time for me to get into the 'hang' of doing the *rasas*. I almost wish we didn't have a weekend because I'm in a bit of a slump today. I am finding that no matter what I am feeling once I do get into the *rasa* I do feel it. It isn't forced.

Namisa's response spoke to the usefulness of the KRB patterns as a way into accessing felt sensations in the body, and consequently as a way of bringing one back into the body; into a present state of being. This is something that I was beginning to understand as necessary for the method to yield any results. It further confirmed that the KRB patterns not only formed a necessary component of the method being proposed, but also acted as a useful tool to prepare the bodies of the performers for engaging the method. It also affirmed its effectiveness as a way into accessing emotions without having to rely on emotional or memory recall conceivably serving to alleviate performance challenges connected with the method acting approach I speak of in Chapter One.

Nwabisa:

The *rasa* breath patterns are teaching me about my own emotional being. I am starting to notice the familiarity in some *rasas* and narratives start to happen automatically [...]. *Rasas* and the Deconstructing sequence have both taught me about my own emotional behavior. A greater sense of awareness is being developed.

Sara:

Do you think we have habitual/particular dominant base *rasas* in our lives that change at different points or with shifts in life experience?

Rehane:

I think they shift with life experience. Become calcified patterns with armour and sit in our soma psyche until we are startled or renewed into a different place [...]. I love physically shifting states. Like walking across mountains or Deconstructing. Using my body to shift states has always been a successful technique for me.

Nwabisa:

Yes. I think at every point in life there is a *rasa* governing a person's life in a very subtle manner. This *rasa* is the base and affects how you respond to every situation that you face. My sense is that as you grow as a person and experience new things this base or dominant *rasa* changes. But it is always there.

Nwabisa's reflections indicate that she was starting to engage with what the work was bringing up for her. It felt like she was starting to be less frightened of what she was experiencing in the process. Her responses prompted me to ask a question around whether there is a dominant base *rasa* at particular age periods in our lives. Rehane and Nwabisa both agreed that this was probably the case. If this is so, it could explain the unpredictable response to the *rasas* experienced during the FDS and how these could be frightening or exhilarating, depending on which *rasa* was dominant at a particular time of life.

Day Seven – 3 February 2015:

My overall intention for the day was to experiment with sequencing. I wanted to see whether different configurations of the tools would affect the kinds of images that emerged, as well as the process of generating images. Additionally, I wanted to explore the difference between the process of free writing on its own, without either the FDS or the body map as a prompt, and the process of free writing after these prompts.

After the warm up we engaged various experiments.

Experiment One involved:

- FDS in pairs (ten minutes)
- Free Writing (five minutes)
- Image selection from Free Writing (five-ten images)
- Sharing of images with a partner (partner was able to ask questions around the images).
- Verbal feeding back of images while the partner did the FDS (person who was doing the FDS's images). Person doing the FDS spoke of what they were

experiencing and seeing (verbal stream of consciousness). Person feeding images recorded what she said.

- Sharing of images and experiences.

This was the first experiment that engaged the method of performance making this study proposes. In other words, it was the first time some of the tools were experienced in a particular sequence. It was also the first time that the partner verbal feedback aspect of the work was introduced.

Blog Reflections

Day Seven – Experiment One

Questions Posed

1. Reflect on today's experiment: on the image streams/sounds/body experiences.
2. Reflect on the experience as the person Deconstructing and as the one recording and feeding back.
3. Is there a difference in the images you experience when Deconstructing on your own and when the images are being 'fed' to you?

Rehane:

This was quite radical work. Very intense [...]. In the free write I write almost in code. When the images are read back to me, I go deeper and the images that are recorded are an unpacking of the code. They are fuller, richer, more fleshed out. An entire story, a depth of detail that still touches me, emerges. The things that the Deconstructing self evokes, my rational mind would never think of retrieving. This feels priceless. Like a whole body of constellated experience has been unlocked through feeding me the symbol/the image.

Rehane's equation of image with code is of interest to me. It inspired a consideration of whether the method this study proposes is akin to a process of decoding the codes that make up who we are as humans, or more specifically, women living in South Africa. Her response illustrates the rapid generation of images during the free writing after the FDS, which deepened during the second FDS process when those images were read back to her. It reflects Damasio's reference to the rapid movement and mercuriality of brain maps that "change from moment to moment" (2010:57). The initial set of images, which appeared to Rehane in code, gave rise to a range of other, more complex images when read to back to her. The

FDS this time, facilitated a process of decoding the codes. The idea of codes as energetic residue of experiences that accumulate in the body over time is brought to mind. The method this study proposes, unpacks these energetic codes/residues to reveal a wealth of images. Furthermore, the codes when decoded do not necessarily reveal themselves as memory in the form of actual life events, but rather emerge as images, that in relation to one another (when blended) produce new meaning. Hence the idea of a biography of the body, as opposed to a cognitive memory-based biography. Rehane's reference to a "body of constellated experience" suggests this. It speaks to the body housing a combination of experiences, memories and events that do not necessarily 'come out' as they 'went in'. The constellation when expressed is what produces new meaning. In this way meaning can alter according to the arrangement of images in relation to one another. The images and the way we associate them, give rise to a biography of the body, and ultimately facilitate the translation of images into performance.

The above connects to the idea of restorying lived experience. Constellated images that span years of experience produce new images and new stories that emerge out of the body providing insight into why some images that emerge during the FDS are not necessarily connected to past events in the performers' lives; they are arguably the "new scenes that were never shot" as referenced by Damasio (2010:161).

Qondiswa:

I don't know the line between the real and the fiction [...]. This is an entire world slipped through the cracks, to her body, coming out her mouth, coming into my ear. I am listening. Quicker and quicker. My neurotransmitters are playing catch-up to the speed of her sound [...]. The story coming. It is slipping off tongues, quicker and quicker [...].

Qondiswa, like Rehane, implies that a process of remythologising/restorying is initiated when images are verbally 'fed' back to the performer doing the FDS. It is evident that the images spontaneously and rapidly appeared to her partner in streams. Her reference to speed attests to the idea that image streams involve the manifestation of images in and through movement.

Namisa:

It was like learning to ride a bike for the first time. It is a slow start but it gains momentum until you exhaust your images and then the exhaustion leads to another thought. It kept going back. It always found its way back and then into another, making a world. A very vivid world. This world had a heartbeat, veins, guts, feelings, emotions, pleasure, pain. It was tangible and intangible. It was a story. Spoken word. It was story [...]. I could go for hours. Maybe days. I could speak because I wasn't embarrassed. There are no mistakes. I didn't want to stop. Stopping meant breaking the flow [...]. Links were made. Not conscious. Maybe I AM a storyteller. It lives within us. [...] When images are fed to me I make a new story. I am the storyteller. I tell my own stories. They are mine but not mine at the same time. I had to record her. Too many images. [...] I couldn't keep up [...]. What is fiction and what is real?

Rehane, Qondiswa and Namisa all reflected on the idea that story emerged through this process. This, in itself, was an affirmation of the effectiveness of the method I am proposing in this study if one considers that story is at the heart of theatre and performance. Here I am not necessarily referring to story in its linear form, but rather to the idea of story as something that produces an experience in the bodies of the doer and the observer; something that keeps them engaged. Story could be a series of images placed in relation to one another, which are made sense of through movement. It is the relationship/blend between the images that creates meaning and story in the bodies of those doing and those observing. All three research participants intimated that this was the case. As the person doing the FDS and the person listening and verbally feeding images back to the person doing the FDS, they made meaning as the images emerged echoing Read's notion of how images are engaged in theatre and performance (1995:58). It also echoes Scheub's idea that story is about the mixing of images (1998:14).

The idea of restorying lived experience is echoed in Qondiswa and Namisa's questions around what was real and what was fiction. Namisa talked about the process of making new stories out of her images. Again this suggested a process of restorying of experiences. She noted that they were hers yet they were not hers. This further suggested that new stories began to emerge out of the residue of constellated experiences. Their observations also alluded to the idea of image conversations occurring between the person doing the FDS and the person 'feeding' the images, and the way in which images moved between being constructed from

the outside in and inside out, thus affirming the permeability of the body as a site for generating images.

Namisa and Qondiswa referred to the experience of listening and verbally feeding and recording images as being rapid. They both commented on how they struggled to keep up with the speed at which images emerged from their partners. Once again, this references Damasio's theorising around the rapidity of image production. The observation also speaks to a non-censored experience of generating material. My past engagement with collective performance making processes has often been characterised by an experience of self-censorship on the part of the rational mind. Namisa references this when she writes: "I could speak because I wasn't embarrassed. There are no mistakes. I didn't want to stop". Rehané's observation that: "[t]he things that the Deconstructing self evokes, my rational mind would never think of retrieving", further supports the idea of non-censorship of the self's ideas.

Nwabisa:

When I was Deconstructing by myself the images I saw were very airy. Very white and blank. They seemed to define the idea of nothingness and what it looks like. But when the images were being given to me they started to have more life. I could trace them. [...] My mind and my body started to work together.

Nwabisa's realisation that the body and mind are not separate felt revelatory in terms of her process. The physical disconnect she felt at the beginning of the process, where the top half and the bottom half of her body felt like they belonged to two different people, seemed to be shifting.

Post lunch we began a second experiment that entailed:

- Free writing starting with the words: 'My body...'
- Image selection from Free Writing (five-ten images)
- FDS (ten minutes)
- Followed by Free writing (five minutes) starting with the words: 'My body...'
- Image selection from Free Writing (five-ten images)
- Discussion around the difference between the two parts of Experiment Two

Thereafter we engaged two experiments that included body mapping. The first involved:

- FDS (ten minutes)
- Body Mapping (ten minutes)
- Free Writing (five minutes)
- Image selection from Free Writing (five-ten images)

The second involved:

- FDS (ten minutes)
- Free Writing (five minutes)
- Body Mapping (ten minutes)
- Image selection from Free Writing (five-ten images)

The research participants seemed to link the two experiments and saw the second part as a continuation of the first in that they commented on the experience of doing the FDS before and after body mapping as an acute visceral experience of images in the body. The images were more focused on and in the body as opposed to the randomness of images experienced without body mapping. Their experience led me to thinking about the possibility of adding another step to the proposed method, which would involve doing the FDS, followed by body mapping, followed by the FDS, followed by free writing. The second round of the FDS would constitute the new addition.

Blog Reflections

Day Seven – Experiment Two

Questions Posed

1. Reflect on the difference in the experience of free writing at the beginning of the session after lunch, and free writing after Deconstructing. What are the differences in images/sounds/body experiences?
2. Reflect on the difference of the free writing experience after the combination of Deconstructing and body mapping. What are the differences, if any, in images/image textures?
3. Reflect on the difference in the experience of free writing before body mapping. What are the differences in images/image textures?

Rehane:

Free writing without Destructuring was very rational and about me. I was in a good mood and feeling good and so this reflected in the free writing...which while very left-brain, was almost egotistical or narcissistic and self-congratulatory. Then we Destructured and the thin membrane separating me from this morning's feelings ripped. All kinds of story flooded through me in an undifferentiated way. I was also aware of how my brain was processing what was happening to it through image and story. Yes, it is my own story but it just as easily isn't. I was aware of where the images sat in my body [...]. I wrote the images and saw how they sat in my body⁴⁴ – painful memories that are almost geographical and so communally shared. [...] The Destructuring after this was very located in my body - images came directly out of my body and constellated around times of life when that area was very open and active. [...] The body mapping made more body sense of the Destructuring - images were less about my body grappling for understanding and more about its bodyness [...]. Destructuring and free writing was an immediate depth experience. A comparative plunge into swirling images, sensations, thoughts and associations. I only manage to retrieve some word sense and connection from this place. The words that hit the page are relics of a strongly transformative experience [...]. Destructuring, body mapping and free writing. Here my body is writing own self and processes, not memory's stories shored up in its tissues but its own processes of release and becoming. I love this work it's like we are open allies and not mysterious to each other. We speak the same language in open dialogue. Finally, on the same page [...]. *Rasa* breath patterns feel like acting. The free write afterwards is rational and reflective.

Rehane's images were once again geographically anatomical, where parts of her body took on the qualities of specific geographical areas she had encountered at different times in her life. The combination of these geographical places seemed to create blends out of which new meaning emerged. Through this the images became less about her and more about shared experiences. Rehane's experience also reflected the idea of my proposed method as cartographic, where the map is drawn/made as the process unfolds.

Rehane's responses reiterated my own observations in Small Experiment Three where the experience of generating images felt less cognitive than somatic, in that it did not feel as if I were consciously constructing the images, but rather that my body

⁴⁴ For details of the images that emerged for Rehane see Annexure:
<https://mappingbreathbodyself.wordpress.com/2015/02/03/day-7-experiment-2-free-writing/>.

and mind found synergy and in that place of meeting between body and mind, the images emerged.

Qondiswa:

I think maybe that all of these things, body mapping, freewriting and Deconstructing, are in conversation with each other outside of me. It is slower to Deconstruct, body-map and then free-write. [...] More in the brain. [...] Images come from somewhere. Somewhere not inside my head. Maybe in my body. [...] It makes more sense the second time: to Deconstruct, to write, to map [...]. *Rasa* is structure and just another story [...]. It triggers the feel of a memory, and the story is written. [...] *Rasa* is more controlled. The free-write is more controlled [...]. Deconstructing feels prophetic. If *rasa* is the past putting itself in prose, Deconstructing might be the story of time meshed into one time, and all places being experienced in this one place. And then the visceral, almost carnal, imagery, which is without control, tells the story. And it comes rushing [...]. Straight free writing comes from somewhere. It feels like me sitting at home doing some writing. Free writing is how I always write. I find myself sometimes too conscious of having to free write.

Namisa:

The first time we free wrote without Deconstructing, it was all about me. All about how I was feeling. Very conscious of how my body was feeling. Words like 'heavy' and 'worn' were coming up. Nothing really visceral. Mostly concepts. The images after Deconstructing were more about the sensations in my body [...]. Straight free writing...was like treading through thick mud. It was forced. Like dragging my pen. Quite self-indulgent. Deconstructing and free writing: It started with the conscious reflection of the experience and how my body felt afterwards. It was highly sensational. I started to make images that I had never thought of before. Like beginning to ride a bike. It's like starting to gain momentum but falling before I can [...]. Deconstructing, body map and free write: Wanting to know. Reaching for clarity. Wanting to talk/write. Reaching for understanding. [...] I saw images whilst I was writing. My mind was running wild. I wrote: "like a hungry horse chasing a moving carrot."

Rehane and Namisa both reflect on how free writing on its own without the FDS or body mapping as prompts, felt very rational and about the self. Rehane states that it felt "almost egotistical or narcissistic and self-congratulatory". This comment speaks to a popular view of autobiographical performance as self-indulgent. I, on the other hand, am interested in discovering ways of accessing a biography of the body that is not wrapped up in the story of the self; that is not all "about me".

Rehane, Qondiswa and Namisa all reflect on the images that emerged after the FDS as feeling more connected to the body on the level of sensation. Rehane comments on how the images were and were not about herself. This supports my hunch that it is possible, through the method this study proposes, to generate autobiographical performance material that is not self-indulgent and narcissistic. This element of autobiography seems to extricate itself out of the ego of the personal and into the world of the relational self. It would appear that making autobiographical work using these tools and the body as the site, is a non-cognitive way of accessing a larger, shared human story. In this case the story of women under threat of violence.

Nwabisa:

When the sensations felt by the body during Deconstructing are strong, I do not think there is a difference between whether you free write before or after you body map. There was just a sexual energy traveling through my body and whether I free wrote first or mapped first made no difference [...] During Deconstructing I feel like an observer scanning my body and trying to understand the different sensations it feels and how these are affected by breath. The free write then is often more descriptive [...]. With the free writing after I body map I feel like I am more of a participant than an observer. I do not scan my body. I do not pay much attention to the sensations felt by my body. I just respond to the *rasas* that the other participants decide to play with. The *rasa* for me encourages continuation [...]. This sense of continuation is very different from the Deconstructing, which is very now. What I am feeling now. It also reflects in the writing. My free write after Deconstructing will make you more aware of what happens to me as I do the sequence. My free write after *rasa* improvisations will probably teach you a thing or two about improvising with *rasas*.

Nwabisa's comment about the experience of sexual energy running through her body serves as added confirmation that the physical disconnect she had felt at the beginning of the process was starting to dissipate. Her experiences over the two weeks confirmed that the proposed method initially brought an awareness of the energetic blockages she experienced in her body as a consequence of what Gqola terms the 'female fear factor' (2015:78). The first week seemed to be characterised by a struggle with what was being evoked through the work. Her persistence, however, allowed her to acknowledge these blockages and the possible causes. This, I argue, is what enabled her to find ease in the process in week two and to start

releasing the energetic blockages and by so doing, to begin the process of reclaiming her body.

The research participants' observations, on the whole, seem to echo those of SK in Small Experiment Four and the NSD participants in Small Experiment Five in that they all experienced the free writing after doing the FDS as a more fluid process where images were generated more rapidly than free writing without the FDS. There seemed to be an obvious relationship between sensations in the body and the images that surfaced during free writing, as well as an understanding of free writing as a way of making sense of or interpreting sensations in the body through images written down as words on paper.

Their responses support my claim that the process of free writing following the FDS is less effortful and less cognitively controlled than without the FDS. Their observations reflect the sentiments expressed by an NSD participant who noted that he did not have to cognitively concentrate on the process of writing after doing the FDS, but rather that the FDS appeared to facilitate the flow of free writing.

The placement of body mapping in the process seemed to elicit different responses. Qondiswa felt that the process of body mapping between the FDS and free writing, disrupted her flow of consciousness. She preferred to do the FDS, free write and then body map. Namisa and Nwabisa did not seem to find a difference in the ordering. There was an overall sense, though, that the introduction of body mapping, whether placed before or after free writing, seemed to locate the images in the body.

Even though I had separated the experiments, the research participants experienced them as one as was evidenced in Rehane's comment about doing the FDS after body mapping, where she discovered that her images were located in her body and that it was more about "bodyness". This reflection inspired another possible configuration of tools:

- FDS
- Body mapping
- FDS

- Free writing

Day Eight – 4 February 2015:

We began the day with our regular *surya namaskar* and *pranayama* warm up.

This was followed by:

- *Rasa* box routine
- *Rasa* improv
- Free writing
- Image selection
- Sharing and discussion of images

I have not included the reflections on the Blog page “Day Eight – KRB patterns – Improvs”, as their responses seemed to repeat what they had expressed in earlier posts. Nothing new was thus revealed.

After lunch we started Experiment Three:

- FDS (ten minutes)
- Body Mapping (ten minutes)
- FDS (ten minutes)
- Free Writing (five minutes)
- Image Selection (between five and ten images)
- Sharing of images
- Verbal feeding back of images while the partner did the FDS (person who was doing the FDS’s images). Person doing the FDS spoke about what they were experiencing seeing (verbal stream of consciousness). Person feeding images recorded what she said.
- Combining images (conceptual blending)
- Brainstorming a concept for a two-hander

Thereafter the pairs shared their images⁴⁵ and their concepts.

Blog Reflections

⁴⁵ See Annexure: <https://mappingbreathbodyself.wordpress.com/generated-images-2/>

Day Eight – Experiment Three

Questions Posed

1. Reflect on this experience
2. Is there a difference between the experience of *rasas* in the *rasa* improvisations and in the Destructuring sequence?
3. Compare the images/texture of images generated after
 - *Rasa* improvisation and free writing and
 - The process of (Destructuring > body mapping > Destructuring > free writing > feeding images.)

Which would you say is more effective in generating images for performance-making, as a 'way in' to/catalyst for performance making? And why?

4. Comment on the process of conceptual blending (process of combining/sharing your images).
5. How much are the blended images/concepts about you?

Rehane:

The experience of *rasa* in the Destructuring is more organic. It originates in the body and is expressive of forces in the body. The *rasa* in the improvisations is generated from the mind. It finds an emotion or feeling; it is the breath seeking out a feeling as opposed to the feeling breathing itself [...]. The second one is more effective for generating material. It gave rise to so much material. An excess. Almost difficult to capture in words in one sitting. Probably more likely to yield to slow investigation and digesting. I love the collision of images generated in the speaking. [...] Conceptual blending was an even further collision of images. A story began itself. The incongruity teased out poignant, sensate images. The combined images are like a new story entirely, a fresh strange window onto a new world. Nothing like I would make by myself or see by myself. Fresh! That's how it felt. Nothing like me but a bit like the things I like. A new symbiosis.

Rehane's observations speak to my intuition that intentionally engaging the KRB patterns during the FDS, where the 'breath seeks out the emotion', has the capacity to simulate an emotion, which conceivably triggers the imagination and gives rise to images that may generate material.

Qondiswa:

Rasa is in the brain. [...] I think the improvisations would need an outside eye to write the story. The improvisations already exist as a kind of performance. They just need a discerning eye to pick and choose. [...] I think the *rasa* work into improvisation is a really organic

way into performance making, but I prefer the Destructuring. [...] After the Destructuring, image generation, and conceptualising, might come the *rasa* improvisation within the context of the story. It felt easy blending the images. There was a conversation between phrases, which immediately went somewhere. Allowing yourself to share ideas, and not be precious about your own. I think this helped in the conceptualising. I found myself excited about the images and how they read together and the potential of a world that might come to exist.

Both Rehane and Qondiswa allude to the experience of *rasa* during the FDS as being a more effective way into generating images. Qondiswa, again, comments on the potential usefulness of the *rasa* improvisations in developing images that are generated during the FDS into material for performance.

Namisa:

In the *rasa* improvisations it was a give and take situation. An interaction. The Destructuring is like a one-man sport. You and your body are leading the game/process. I prefer the interaction. Destructuring is too much in the head. It is too conscious. It's so real. I felt it. I was sinking [...]. I would say that a combination of the two is always better than just one of them [...]. Conceptual blending is always a good start to making a full story. It forces it to be less about you and more about the story. I would use it as a technique to generate a story. It's not forced. It's an easy process. You don't have to wrack your brain to find some inspiration. The story is already there, in your body.

In a conversation after blogging, Namisa and Qondiswa commented that they both experienced a feeling of heaviness during the FDS in this experiment in which they were partnering. Perhaps their shared experiences had something to do with Blackman's claim that the body is able to be affected and to affect due its materiality (2008:103) and Shusterman's assertion that it is possible to somatically experience what others are feeling in their somata (2008:43).

The introduction of conceptual blending into the process seemed to introduce an additional layer of story and meaning-making. Rehane, Qondiswa and Namisa reflect on new stories and images that started to emerge from the blends. Additionally, they comment on the ease with which new images, stories and meaning emerged. Their reflections also speak to Scheub's understanding of the relationship between image and feeling where, "[t]he ... elements of storytelling exist to rouse, through

evocative images, emotions, then to organize these emotions, rhythmically moving to trope which is not so much an intellectual as felt experience” (1998:15).

Nwabisa:

There was a difference between the *rasas* in improvisations and the ones in Deconstructing. I found that in Deconstructing I use the *rasa* as a way of controlling the sensations. When I do not feel comfortable with a certain sensation I just channel the *rasa* of peace or laughter. The images generated after the *rasa* improvisation were light and beautiful and childlike. But the ones generated after the Deconstructing were just dark and intense and frightening.

Rehane and Qondiswa note that the process of generating images after the *rasa* improvisations were more cerebral and rational. Nwabisa alludes to how she used the KRB patterns during Deconstructing to shift a feeling and/or sensation in the body implying a rational and conscious use of the breath patterns during the FDS. Namisa, on the other hand, felt that the experience of generating images during the FDS was more “in the head” than generating images after the *rasa* improvisation. This is in contrast to her blog reflection after Experiment One, where she notes that, “[l]inks were made. Not conscious. Maybe I AM a storyteller. It lives within us [...]. When images are fed to me I make a new story. I am the storyteller. I tell my own stories. They are mine but not mine at the same time”. This prompted me to start the following day’s work with a discussion to find out why her experiences were so different.

Day Nine – 5 February 2015:

We began with a discussion around Experiment One and Experiment Three. This discussion was catalysed by what I felt was revealed in the blog posts that reflected very different experiences. I was curious to unpack why this was so.

Audio reflections

I have included the entire transcript of the audio recording of this discussion below because it consolidates many of the findings over the two-week process. Furthermore, it raises interesting questions around the role of breath in the proposed method. The questions are picked up in the blog reflections on Day Ten and are reflected on at the end of the Chapter. I have not formally analysed these

reflections, given that I include my own voice in the transcript, which offers some analysis, and also given that analysis is provided at the end of the chapter. The transcript also reflects the conversational tone of the collaborative auto-ethnographic research method this study employs.

Sara:

In some instances, the experiences between the experiments we did yesterday morning and the experiments we did in the afternoon seemed quite different. The reflective writing in the blog that came out of the Wednesday morning experiments seemed to be invigorating and had a lighter feel. The responses to the afternoon work were generally heavier. My questions are around reflecting on why you think this is the case. Does the body mapping process have something to do with it? Does the time of day have something to do with it? What do you think it is that shifted the experience for you? I am interested to understand what you think this is about.

Nwabisa:

I think time of day has an effect. We are also reaching the end of the process and it has been a very heavy week.

Qondiswa:

I think it's partially what happens, emotionally, in the time between 5pm the previous day and 10 am the next day, in terms of what happened to me, what I bring into the room. I think this affects the memory space in your body that you tap in to. Yesterday, for me, I came into the space feeling terrible. I felt heavy.

Sara:

So what you are saying is that what happens to you in your life, outside of this space between 5pm and 10am informs how you experience your day. This is interesting to me, because when I first conceptualised this study, I wanted to work in residence,⁴⁶ in other words, have everyone living and working together for a period of two weeks. I wanted to take people away to do this work so that spaces between work time could be kept as uncluttered as possible. My sense is that the idea of living and working together informs the quality and texture of the work that is produced. I was curious as to how this would inform this particular two-week project. Of course what you experience in the time outside of the workspace will inform what you experience in the workspace. I am also aware that this week we haven't had many debriefing sessions where we reflect as a group. Yes, you have been blogging, but that could be quite a solitary experience. I think there is

⁴⁶ Logistics and funding did not allow for this.

value in speaking what you are experiencing, out loud to the group. Perhaps it assists in making sense of what you are experiencing? Someone else's reflections may shed insight on your experiences and may provide you with some answers.

Rehane:

It has been pretty intense going. We dove deep.

Namisa:

Personally, I think it's a combination of exhaustion and time of day. A lot happened this week for me, in the spaces between working. A lot of 'stuff' has happened.

Rehane:

Do you think the work is excavating the 'stuff' for you? Is the work possibly triggering this 'stuff' for you?

Namisa:

Not necessarily. I think the outside 'stuff' is triggering my work.

Nwabisa:

In one of my blogs that was around the *rasa* breath patterns, I asked a question around how the work may affect your outside life. I noticed that when I get home I am lazy to show emotion. It's like I am switched off. I think maybe it's because I feel emotionally drained after our work sessions. Things don't seem to bother me as they usually do.

Rehane:

Which can be a good thing.

Sara:

As long as it's not a numbing of what you are feeling or a process of shutting out?

Nwabisa:

It's more like, 'okay, it's fine. It's happened. Now let me move on'.

Sara:

There's a difference between detachment and non-attachment. Detachment implies that you don't want to deal with something and it builds up in the background until eventually it could explode.

Nwabisa:

I think I am experiencing non-attachment. Detachment is like, 'I'm not going to deal with it now. I'll come back to it'. What I feel, though is,

‘oh well, it’s happened and there is nothing I can do about it. So I may as well let it go and not get upset about it’. I find myself saying ‘breathing in, everything is messy, breathing out, I let go’.

All:

Laugh.

Sara:

I think we all aspire to that state. As long as your non-attachment means you are present and in the world. Not resigned. That’s something else altogether. Going back to my original question. Do you think there are too many steps in this method I am proposing? Is it too much? Is the body mapping necessary?

Qondiswa:

It makes complete sense why it is there.

Sara:

Perhaps the body mapping step is important as part of the preparatory aspect of the work. In other words, what we did last week. However, as part of the method I am proposing to generate images, maybe it isn’t necessary?

Qondiswa:

I find body mapping very detached. The mapping we did last week, the mapping of the *rasas* felt very different. Body mapping seems to work better with the *rasa* work because the *rasa* isn’t from the inside out.

Sara:

You can manipulate your breath to create particular breath patterns?

Qondiswa:

Yes.

Sara:

In order to be aware of the KRB patterns during Deconstructing, my sense is you need to understand how they work. Because once you are aware of them, you can let go of manipulating the breath during Deconstructing and simply be aware of what *rasa* breath patterns are emerging from moment to moment.

Qondiswa:

Yes, that awareness of what is happening is useful. Being aware of the *rasa* narrative during Deconstructing is helpful and that makes sense.

Sara:

In order to understand how the *rasa* breath patterns work and to become familiar with the patterns so that you don't have to work so hard at deciphering them during Destructuring, you have to understand them and practice them. This is where the *rasa* improvisations are useful. You become an 'emotional athlete', to use Artaud's term. Perhaps the body mapping and the *rasa* improvisations are tools to get you fit and ready for the method I am proposing? But when you engage the method, is the body mapping step necessary?

Nwabisa:

There is something about the body mapping that brings you back to self.

Rehane:

Yes.

Nwabisa:

It is necessary, because I believe that if you are aware of yourself and you seek to know yourself deeply, you become a better performer.

Sara:

I am speaking specifically about making and particularly about the generation of images for purposes of performance making.

Nwabisa:

Yes, I think it is necessary.

Qondiswa:

I think the images that you generate on your body map could potentially be a springboard for certain concepts around the work or textures that could come into the work.

Sara:

So you could come back to the body map later in the process to look for patterns?

Qondiswa:

Yes, and refer back to. Everything is in conversation. And it seems like the different aspects are driving towards creating one work. The editing process will assist in making sense of it all.

Sara:

Is the body mapping another way of self-reflecting, like free writing; almost like free drawing? Drawing is another kind of language, isn't it?

Rehane and Namisa:

Yes

Sara:

Some people have said to me it's like a bridge between Deconstructing and free writing, where the experience of Deconstructing is very visceral and chaotic and the experience of free writing is more logical and considered. The jump can therefore be quite discombobulating.

Rehane:

The body mapping engages another level of consciousness. It's quite silent and quiet. I don't know if it is a bridge to free writing? It could be. But free writing after Deconstructing seems to have the same velocity even though the free writing couldn't possibly get close to capturing the speed and stream of images that pour through your body when trembling. Even speaking is not fast enough. It involves a certain amount of censorship. When I was speaking I was still editing what I said. There are different levels of cognition that are engaged in this method: drawing, writing and speaking for recording purposes out in public.

Sara:

Is it too much? Is it too full?

Rehane:

No it's not too full. We have been 'cooking' and we have been inspiring each other to 'cook' more and more and more. Not in a competitive way but in an energising way.

Sara:

It would be interesting to have a break from this once you have the tools and come back later to engage the method. Levels of fatigue may have a role to play.

Qondiswa:

If it's consciously working towards something, like at the end of this month we will have a 40-minute piece, then I think the connection points between all these three levels of cognition start to make more sense. So in that sense, I don't think the method you are proposing has too much in it.

Sara:

That's what I was alluding to yesterday when I asked you to come up with a concept. It was interesting that what you chose for your concept resonated with a conversation Rehane and I had been having

in the morning about migrancy and Cape Town and how the space of Cape Town energetically pulls you in and spits you out at the same time. So what you drew from your images and by implication the biography of your body is relevant. It's socio-politically relevant, but it's coming out of your body. I'm interested in exploring this idea of a biography of the body that is not necessarily based on memory or events. I think that autobiographical performance that draws on the cognitive memory of events tends towards being self-indulgent. However, when you work with a partner and you combine or blend your images, meaning emerges that is not necessarily based on the events in your life. This is where conceptual blending comes into play. I am interested in autobiography of a different kind. When we start to blend our images, it becomes less about the individual. That's why I asked the question, how much of this is about you and how much isn't about you. It is about you, but it's not about you.

Rehane:

It's like a writing process where you're not writing from or about memory, but you are radio transmitting ideas and images, which allows random ideas and words to come in.

Sara:

Yes, that's it. The interest here is in what comes out of the body to write that.

Rehane:

Conceptual blending is very useful for this.

Sara:

So we use all the tools, or levels of cognition, to collect all the ideas and images that are being transmitted from the body. Even though writing is a more right brained activity than Deconstructing, I'm interested in how we use these tools to collect the images. At some point you do consciously bring cognitive thinking processes into the practice. This can be seen in how you came up with a concept yesterday, where together with your partner you blended images, and you consciously made cognitive choices. That's when the mind and body work together.

Rehane:

There is continuity for me with the Deconstructing. Every time I go back to the Deconstructing I pick up where I left off.

Nwabisa:

That happened to me yesterday. But perhaps it was because my mind held on to an idea and my body just decided to continue it.

Qondiswa:

What I'm thinking more and more is that on the first day of this process, and the first position or place where I felt the tremor, is the part of the body that keeps generating images; who's story is being told. Perhaps that's why it feels like a continuous narrative. That's why the body mapping is important. Even though I find it difficult to draw in the moment, when I pull back and have a look at the images, it is clear that the images I have drawn are in conversation with all my experiences over the past two weeks.

Rehane:

It's cumulative.

Qondiswa:

Yes. And in a month or two it may be a different part of the body that is accessed through the tremor. I keep thinking about the possibility of doing a *rasa* improvisation after a concept has emerged out of the process of Deconstructing, body mapping and free writing.

Sara:

I would suggest that that could most definitely come later, once we have a concept, as a way of developing the concept and ultimately the piece. Once you have your concept you can also go back to the body map, which serves as an archive of sorts, to add and expand on your concept. So, both the KRB pattern work and the body mapping exercise form part of the preparation phase before engaging the method I am proposing, and they form part of the tools that make up the method. They additionally serve as tools to develop the concept once it has been arrived at.

Namisa:

There's something grounding about body mapping.

Rehane:

It's comforting.

Sara:

The other thing I wanted to mention is that the experience does not have to be traumatic. Give yourselves permission for it not to be traumatic. I would also like you to observe your breath more consciously in the rest of the work we do. I am interested in the 'third element' that Nwabisa spoke about the other day. What role does breath have to play in all of this?

Rehane:

It's almost like a lot of the images from the Destructuring are about breath and body. There was a series of images I had where my breath and my spirit felt like it was trapped in the women's quarters of my body, in the *zenana*⁴⁷ of my body. It was in *purdah*⁴⁸ walking around the *zenana* of my body. I was thinking after I read that, whether that is the relationship of my breath to my body; actually physically where my body is trapped, translates into those images.

Qondiswa:

If I get lost in narratives, when I tap into my interior awareness of breath, I can follow the narrative. Once I recognise the *rasa* of what I am feeling in my body, I start to understand the narrative.

Sara:

I am asking you to be curious about the role of breath in Destructuring. Imagine if you had to Destructure holding your breath. Does the breath during Destructuring catalyse the sensation which gives rise to an image?

Qondiswa:

The breath is almost like a shaman; how it releases whatever is constricted or trapped in the body. And how it comes out – that conversation where breath finds voice for what's constricted or trapped.

Sara:

For me the image of the breath carving pathways through the body in Destructuring, is a useful one [...]. Observe what happens when you allow the flow of breath to wake up certain areas. It creates sensations in the body. Does the allowing of breath to flow and move through the body give rise to sensations, which we become aware of?

Rehane:

I'm getting a whole wave/particle thing, like in quantum physics, is it a wave or is it a particle? Art is detritus, it's actually leavings; it's actually all waste. Our life passes through and all the images that we generate in this process are like the waste as a result of our breath passing through the body. If you follow the flow of life instead of the waste, then you can't make art; then it's just breathing.

Sara:

⁴⁷ Persian, Urdu and Hindi for 'pertaining to women'

⁴⁸ A religious and social practice of female seclusion prevalent among some Muslim communities.

Flow is important, particularly for an actor, in relation to voice work. In this study, however, I am interested in whether breath wakes up the sensations in the body, which give rise to images. The tremor moves the breath through the body. If you tremor and you don't allow the breath to flow/move through the body, what happens to the rest of the body and can you access the sensations experienced in the body and the resultant images?

Nwabisa:

When I focus on my breath, my mind is silenced and therefore the images are silenced. When you learn to meditate you are told to focus on the breath to still the mind.

Sara:

I think the difference here is that I am not asking you to focus on breath *per se*, but rather to focus on allowing the breath to move through the body and to be aware of what sensations you feel in the body as a result of the breath moving through it. If the tremor moves the breath through the body, it is quite a different experience to sitting quietly in meditation. The tremor evokes chaos. The breath in meditation is characterised by stillness and the breath in Deconstructing is a chaotic breath. It's quite a different experience. In the same way, it is very different to *pranayama*, which focuses on controlling the breath. The breath in Deconstructing is unpredictable; you don't know what it is going to do.

Following this discussion, we practised a shortened version of the usual *surya namaskar* and *pranayama* warm up. Thereafter we started Experiment Four:

- We repeated the sequence we did in Experiment Three, but this time I asked the research participants to give themselves permission to experience lightness during the process.
- Partners continued feeding images back to each other to further generate images.
- This was followed by creating blended images.

I decided to get the pairs to swap blended images and to conceptualise a performance around the other pair's blended images. I also asked them to perform their concepts before explaining them.

Blog Reflections

Day Nine – Experiment Four

Questions posed

1. Reflect on today's process of generating images for performance making.
2. How was it similar/different to yesterday's process and why? (use yesterday's questions from Day Eight - Experiment Three, as a guide).

Rehane:

It was much lighter today [...]. My images were, like others in the room; all of the natural world. [...] Sharing the images took this further. [...] When Nwabisa and I put our images together we made a ritual that was restorative; like a wholesome meal or a nice cuddle and there seemed to be no fear or resistance connected to the images of death and destruction but a delicious sinking into the black welcoming earth.

The permission to be light invited a feeling of ease into the process. Rehane's comment that her images tended to be focused on the natural world and seemed to resonate with the other research participants' images is of interest. It speaks to ideas of somatic relationality, feeling, affect and simulation in that it reflects Cook's proposal for the need "to imagine the implications for theatre and performance studies of a shared neural substrate linking imagination and understanding, doing and feeling, fact and fiction [...]" (2007:589). It also echoes Blackman's consideration of the relationality of bodies as "a return to understandings of the body that are not based upon separation but connection" (2008:77). It further relates to Gallese and Lakoff's notion of "embodied simulation" (2005:4&9) as the immediate feeling and corporeal awareness of what another person is experiencing in their body.

Namisa:

Rasa breath patterns at the beginning of the process really brought in the sense of lightness and play. It was light and fluffy. The images were flavourful, vivid, real. My subconscious was trying to tell me something! Trying to speak to me. [...] It was difficult trying to put our images together because they were so very different. They were from two very separate and secure worlds. Very strong clear images that made complete sense in their own worlds. It was interesting trying to combine the two [...]. I found today was less about me. More about the story in my body than the one in my head. I don't know what created that shift. Probably the time of day and general space that I was in, lack of sleep *et cetera*.

Namisa's reflections could be read as a negation of my observations around relationality and affect. In retrospect, the images that were generated by her and

Qondiswa were not that dissimilar. They were both from the natural world and had a mythical almost fantastical quality. This is clarified later in this chapter in a discussion around the reflective conversation that transpired after blogging. It occurred to me that the seeming difference in images that “were from two very separate ... worlds” could be associated with Scheub’s ideas around image, metaphor and trope, where two different images from different worlds (in Scheub’s case ‘past’ and ‘present’) when combined, generate metaphorical meaning.

Nwabisa:

Today was light and pleasant. The invitation to Destructure with ease helped shape the lightness of the sequences and maybe doing it for the second time also helped the ease of the process. There is something about familiarity that makes things seem lighter and easier. Yesterday’s images were dark and beautiful. Today’s images just felt right. I saw many plants. Everything seemed brown and earthed. I felt connected to nature [...]. Childhood memories also made the experience more pleasant. [...] I really can’t point out what exactly made today’s experience the total opposite of yesterday’s. It could be anything. The conversation we had before doing *surya namaskar* could also be the main trigger.

Nwabisa’s reflection on pleasant childhood memories speaks to a shift in her relationship with these memories. At the start of the process she repeatedly commented on how she could not remember things from her childhood. She explained how her mind protected itself because it wanted to forget things. She also expressed a fear that this work could facilitate the recollection of the memories her mind had chosen to forget. Her reflections above reveal a different experience of childhood memories. By allowing for an experience of lightness, she found a way of combining the practices of KRB patterns and the FDS to access more celebratory memories of childhood.

It is useful at this point to include parts of the audio transcript of the reflective conversation which followed the session, as a way of explaining my understanding of how affect is experienced in the proposed method of generating images for purposes of performance making. The images that are referenced in the conversation conceivably link with Scheub’s notion of past images bearing a fantastical quality (1998:15). The images that were collectively generated were

predominantly natural images, which had a feeling of epicness about them; they seemed similar to images that appear in mythology and point to the possibility, as Scheub suggests, of categorising the different images that emerge into fantasy and reality. The images that were generated during Experiment Four were not necessarily 'past' images *per se*. They did, however, encompass a sense of the fantastical. It is evident through Small Experiments Three and Four as well as Experiment Four in the main case study, that the method was capable of generating images from both categories of past and present. My observation, however is that the fantastical images, although not necessarily connected to a lived past, are dominant. The blend between the fantastical and the more pedestrian images occurred at different stages of the process while doing the FDS (and having images verbally 'fed' back), during free writing and body mapping, as well as during the stage of consciously blending images with a partner. Additionally, the fantastical, mythical elements that emerged carried an emotional content, as suggested by Scheub (1998:15). The act of conceptual blending, allowed the research participants to make meaning and generate story through "an artful mixing of images by means of pattern. [...Where] the diversity of imagery [is]... united in a metaphorical or metonymic relationship" (1998:14).

Nwabisa:

It was very beautiful. My images were beautiful. I saw many trees. It felt like I was one with nature. I felt so much lighter.

Qondiswa:

[...] there was this feeling in my stomach while I was Deconstructing and the feeling felt like a snake. I expressed this on my body map and I drew the feeling as a snake in my stomach. The second Deconstructing was also very conscious. The feeling of snakes, sex and sadness seemed to dominate.

Rehane:

The only image that came up was a mountain. I drew the mountain on my body map, a very high mountain. When I went back to Deconstructing the second time, I felt like the breath was pushing through calcified mountains. It took me back to a time in my life when

I lived close to Mount Shasta.⁴⁹ It felt like I was pushing Mount Shasta. And then I had this distinct image of being high in the Himalayas when the snow was forming. So I decided, while I was Deconstructing, to follow the mountain. This experience was filled with images of mountains and breath, and the feeling of pushing past, breathing past the mountain, and invigorating streams going down the mountain. There were a lot of natural images.

Namisa:

All my images from the free write were organic. My belly was an earthquake and it turned into a monsoon, which turned into a mudslide, then an avalanche. My body was the earth and my blood cells were part of a river. It felt like my blood cells were carrying on as normal, but everything in my body was changing, everything else was affected; like a hurricane affects everything above the sea, but everything in the sea, fishes *etcetera*, carry on as normal.

Sara:

So you were the Earth (to Namisa), you (to Nwabisa) were the trees, and (to Rehane) you were the mountains, and you (to Qondiswa) had images of snakes.

Nwabisa:

It seems like everyone had images from nature.

In addition, a conversation after blogging alluded to potential post-doctoral research that could investigate the role of breath in neural mirroring, simulation and affect in processes of performance making. I have included it as it raises research questions I am curious to pursue. In so doing, it highlights the cyclical nature of my research process. The conversation between theory and practice thus continues.

Sara:

The other day we talked about the collective unconscious that we potentially tap into, but I also think that there could be a process of neural mirroring at play, where our breath patterns mirror one another and therefore catalyse similar *rasas* in our bodies, which in turn evoke images that have similar textures or are of the same ilk. Even though you are not necessarily speaking, there seems to be an unseen mirroring or sharing that is occurring.

Qondiswa:

⁴⁹ Mount Shasta is a potentially active volcano located at the southern end of the Cascade Range in Siskiyou County, California.

It's like you unconsciously mirror someone else's breath, which triggers a neurological process, which triggers sensations and images.

Sara:

Yes, I think there is a mirroring of the unseen that is taking place.

Qondiswa:

Couldn't that possibly be that breath is potentially ideological. Like there is a breath pattern that refers to nature; there is a breath pattern for language that talks about breath pattern. So when you engage a breath pattern or it engages you, and I mirror it, the language that comes to me is related to the language the breath pattern inspires in you. It may not be tree *per se*, but it is a language that references nature, of which tree is a part.

Sara:

Veenapani Chawla speaks about breath as the contagion of consciousness. I understand this to be that the breath is a conduit and in this way has a role to play in the process of affect. The breath is contagious. Breath is ephemeral, yet it's very contagious, very tangible.

Qondiswa:

It's like breath is a discourse in and of itself, where the ways of communicating and the ways of sharing are similar. Like if you think about discourses around Africa, where the words that are used are shared and understood to be connected and related to Africa.

Sara:

That makes me think that perhaps particular countries at particular moments in history have a dominant *rasa* that influences the discourse or the unfolding of events.

Qondiswa:

Maybe it's like inception. The inception of the breath discourse is what triggers this contagion.

Sara:

The breath discourse underpins an experience. It's not language, but it is language, it's pre-lingual and it's lingual.

Qondiswa:

It's in language.

Sara:

Yes, it is in language, and because physiologically what informs what comes out the mouth as expression, is breath. It informs everything. It's the one thing that is both spontaneous and controlled. If you don't breathe spontaneously you run the risk of dying. At the same time, you can consciously shift the way you breathe, the depth, the length *et cetera*. The one is governed by the ANS, and the other by the CNS

Day Ten – 6 February 2015:

We began the day with our regular *surya namaskar* and *pranayama* routine followed by a two-minute *rasa* box 'run' that led directly into five minutes of the FDS. For the first time in the process, I decided to join the group in the *rasa* boxes and in the FDS. I needed some release. It felt as if all the images that had been generated in the room over the week had somehow landed in my body and needed to be dislodged. I experienced a great sense of release and relief after this. It was my first experience of 'running' the *rasa* boxes before doing the FDS. My sense was that the *rasa* experience invigorated the FDS – almost as if release came more quickly – I immediately started to access images when I commenced the FDS.

Blog Reflections

Day Ten – Overall Reflections

Questions posed

1. Reflect on the role of breath in the process of generating images for performance making:
 - What have you noticed about your breath during Deconstructing?
 - Is there a relationship between breath and emotions while Deconstructing?
 - Is there a relationship between breath and sensations in the body during Deconstructing?
 - Is there a relationship between emotions and sensations in the body?
 - Is there a relationship between emotions, sensations in the body, and images that are experienced/generated during Deconstructing?
 - What happens to your breath while body mapping after Deconstructing?
 - What happens to your breath during Free Writing?
2. As a performer would you find this process a useful way in to performance making? Elaborate on why or why not?
3. As a performance-maker would you find this a useful way in to performance making? Elaborate on why or why not?

4. If you were to change/add/omit anything, how would you modify the process?
5. If you were to think of other ways of generating ideas/images at the beginning of a performance making process that you have previously experienced, how is this process similar and/or different?
6. Do you think, as a group of South African women, we hold similar patterns and or/tensions in our bodies? Elaborate on what these may be and why or why not?
7. Reflect on working cross-generationally in this process.
8. Any other comments/observations/thoughts/reflections on the entire process.

I selected sections from the blog responses to reflect on. The responses provide a useful way of consolidating my findings over the two-week period. The responses in their entirety can be found on the blog site and provide added insight into the two-week creative process and the method this thesis proposes.

Rehane:

The breath moves through the body opening up space by moving through blocks in the body. The blocks are experienced as images and emotions which are sometimes directly related to memories from different parts of our life and sometimes concatenations of images which try to create meaning directly about the condition of the body. And then cause emotion [...]. During body mapping and free writing, I was not aware of my breath. Just a feeling of calm during body mapping and a feeling of turmoil during free writing after Deconstructing [...]. I found it incredibly useful to generate material from images. Especially the randomised not exactly about oneself images are useful in creating story and character as well as scenario [...]. As a performer it's invaluable for making emotional connection to material [...]. This process makes image making a lot easier. There is no need to bang your head trying to come up with ideas, or spend hours in laborious discussion. Images are intrinsic and organic – freely moving from the unconscious or body [...]. I was not really aware of cross generationality - it all felt like getting down to primal states and playing. Those states are not generational [...]. I was aware of how my body held more accretions of life lived [...]. I felt like the entire process of Deconstructing ... regressed me to deeper and deeper states every day – from adulthood to childhood to being a toddler to infancy [...]. I am very aware in a new way of patterns of tension in my body and the story it tells.

Qondiswa:

Rasa comes truest into my body after Deconstructing – the minute before free writing. It writes itself. I think there is something about breath and the telling of narrative, of the body's lived history. The tremor locates itself. The body shakes out like hanging dirty linen and the memory is triggered [...]. I have come to find that *rasa* is a much

more effective and less self-indulgent way into emotion in performance. I have come to find that Deconstructing is one of the most effective ways into performance making that I've been taught so far [...]. The autobiography of the body ... holds so much story. [...T]hrough the teasing out of images and the conceptual blending, the ... work becomes something else, something new [...]. [It] becomes histories, becomes narratives of a place that speaks to you through tremor, stories about people you might have known or will never know [...]. So performer and 'director' blend and create through the *rasa* improvisations, the Deconstructing.

Qondiswa echoes Rebecca Cuthbertson-Lane (2009:23) who alludes to the body being a storehouse for information and experiences. This conceivably locates the biography of a person in their body.

Namisa:

I've been trying to figure out what evokes emotion. Is it the breath that comes first, the position second that evokes the sensations, which then evokes the emotion? Breath is involved in all the different stages of the process, in other words, breath, sensation, emotion and the Deconstructing sequence (the positions), are all in conversation with each other [...]. I find that when all of the stages are working simultaneously, images usually (not all the time) come. Sometimes it's just the emotion alone, other times it's emotion and images and other times it the combination of sensation that causes emotion that creates images [...]. Because body mapping is so grounding I find my way back to myself. I'm very conscious of my own breath patterns during body mapping. Slow, deep, and calm. I am focused [...]. It's almost as if I'm drawing my free write. During the free writing my breath is quicker, shorter, excited. As if it was trying to catch up with the speed of my hand [...]. I personally would find more value in it [the proposed method] in my directing style. It's a way into making collaborative work. Using other images and stories to make work instead of it all coming from one place [...]. I think as South African women it is inevitable that we will have similar experiences and images.

Nwabisa:

I found that being aware of your breath makes you more responsive [...]. I think by focusing on breath you allow for release and also allow yourself to let go and stop over-thinking [...] making it easier to tap into your subconscious mind/inner self where most images are stored [...]. In most cases the texture of the sound, which is affected by the breath made me decipher which emotion I was feeling [...]. Emotion sometimes is first triggered by the sensations you feel in your body before it is triggered by sound, then it affects the breathing and the breathing affects the body. Everything is so interlinked and a shift in

either mind, body or breath will affect your experience and the images that come up [...]. I found that body mapping after Deconstructing comforts me and stabilises my emotions [...]. It gave me the sense of looking at my inner self [...]. Free writing was essentially reflection for me [...]. I wrote down ... everything that was happening to me [...]. I was releasing from an objective point of view, so my breath was more open [...]. If I were a performer I would use this process for performance making because I ... think it is more truthful, compared to the other methods that I am familiar with [...]. As a Theatre Maker I would not use the process because it seems time consuming and the stories that come up and the images that come up are very biographic for me. Biographies are not in my line of interest [...]. I think as South African women we definitely hold similar patterns and tensions [...]. Time, place of birth, where you are, the people that you meet, people around you, all these things affect your personal being and your behaviour. So it is only normal to have similar patterns with others who come from the same country [...].

Nwabisa's observation that the texture of the sound made it easier to identify the emotions she was feeling reflect Damasio's claim that "the face and the skull, as well as the oral cavity, tongue, pharynx, and the larynx – whose combination constitutes the upper portion of the respiratory and digestive tracks as well as most of the vocal system - provide massive input into the brain" (2000:290). This assertion supports my idea that the process of generating sounds during the FDS, because of its involvement of the respiratory track and the vocal system, may have a crucial role to play in the process of generating emotions and associated images.

Nwabisa's comments around the method being too cumbersome and too time-consuming a way in to performance making, are, perhaps, indicative of her self 'struggle' as reflected in her responses throughout the two-week process. It is also important to take into consideration that she is an inexperienced performance maker and her perceptions of what might feel cumbersome or not are therefore not based on any real experience of performance making. She also indicates that she is not interested in autobiographical performance making. This, however, seems contrary to her choice in her final fourth year theatre making exam piece, which was autobiographical.

The other three research participants feel that using the body and breath, as a starting point to tap into a biography of the body, and then applying the process of

conceptual blending, is able to, in Rehane's words generate "randomised not exactly about oneself images". It is evident that the process of conceptual blending offers collaborative possibilities. Qondiswa reflects that "[t]he autobiography of the body ... holds so much story. [...T]hrough the teasing out of images and the conceptual blending, the ... work becomes something else". While Namisa notes that it was "a way into making collaborative work [...]. [Where we used] other images and stories to make work instead of it all coming from one place".

The idea of interaction being key to the method of image generation this study proposes, is affirmed by Namisa and Nwabisa who comment on the conversational and cyclical nature of the proposed method. This observation supports the idea that images (as defined by Damasio) are engaged in a cyclical stream of movement.

It is evident from the overall reflections of my research participants, that the proposed method of generating images for purposes of performance making, is feasible. All of them, bar one, comment on it being an effective and immediate way into generating images in the first instance, and generating a conceptual starting point for a work, in the second.

My hypothesis is that breath is the catalyst for generating images in the method this study proposes. All four research participants note a connection between breath and image. All of them infer that breath not only functions as a catalyst, but also as a thread that weaves a connection between body, sensation, emotion, mind and image. They corroborate my sense that breath has the potential to be a key contributor in processes of performance making, where it not only functions as the bridge that connects mind and body, but is also the element that initiates the connection and facilitates the cyclical process of image generation.

My contention that the performer needs to be mindful of the sensations in the body and how these affect the images that are produced in the process, is attested to by the responses of the research participants, who hint at a connection between breath, sensations in the body and the generation of images. This affirms my sense that the act of paying attention to the feelings experienced in the body, which is linked to the sensory-motor system, is indeed fundamental to the idea of engaging

the body as a key site for generating images for the purposes of performance making. The observations of the research participants make it apparent that feelings that constitute emotional states in the body arise during the FDS. This affirms my idea that the FDS provides a context that facilitates a noticing of emotional states as feelings in the body on a detailed scale, thus amplifying the ability to notice what is going on in the body, and thus in the mind.

Three of the research participants agree that as South African women, we hold similar patterns and, energetic blockages and tensions in our bodies. Although they do not elaborate much, their responses in their blog posts as well as my reflections and analyses indicate that this is the case. Associated is whether the women shared bodily sensations and whether these sensations are connected to the context of living with the constant threat of violation, as well as whether these sensations could give rise to similar images during the execution of the proposed method. I contend that this notion played a role in the similarity of images that were generated in the two-week project and supports the argument that a particular group of women who are in a particular social context generate similar images partly because of the context in which they live. Given that in South Africa all women live under the threat of high levels of violence and given that we fear violation in some way, it is possible that similar images emerge in similar ways which conceivably associates with how bodies are encoded in comparable ways as a result of related contexts and experiences.

Admittedly, it is challenging to empirically prove this in a quantitative, measureable way. Instead, the qualitative nature of the research enables me to reliably assume that the shared experiences as women living in a society characterised by gender violence and rape, give rise to similar bodily sensations and images in the processes that this method proposes. This is evidenced by the similarity experienced by Rehane and myself in terms of where we experienced energetic blockages in our bodies, and that we tend to experience more tension in these areas than the younger research participants. This could be attributed to us having experienced more sustained exposure to violence as a result of our age.

Additionally, the study reveals the potential for further study into the contribution of neural mirroring, simulation and affect in processes of performance making, and the role breath plays in facilitating this.

The Two-week creative project was rounded off with a silent walk in Newlands Forest⁵⁰ as a way of reflecting on the process. We returned to the Bindery Lab for a final verbal reflection to close the project. It seemed as if the silent walk was an appropriate way of grounding the process in relation to self in the world outside of the Bindery Lab space; a sort of transitional space to reflect and transit back into the everydayness of our lives.

⁵⁰ Newlands Forest is a conservancy area on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, beside the suburb of Newlands, Cape Town.

CHAPTER SIX - THE CLOTH

With this study I set out to investigate how breath might act as a bridge between body, brain and mind, and more specifically as a catalyst for performance making. I achieved this through:

- a) The combination of the FDS and KRB patterns.
- b) Body mapping and free writing as methods of surfacing what emerged through (a).

My process was a cyclical, iterative one that shifted from practice to theory, back into practice and then back into theory. Through a series of practice-based experiments supported by theoretical input, I discovered:

1. That the combination of the FDS and KRB patterns helps performers to become corporeally aware and assists them to release energetic blockages in the body. It also assists performers to engage vocally, thus contributing to effective theatre-voice practice.
2. When combined with body mapping and free writing in particular sequences, the FDS and KRB patterns produce image streams that can be harnessed for performance making, particularly for autobiographical performance making.

It is my contention, as evidenced by this practice-led study, that the particular social context in which the performers, in this case women performers, locate, produces energetic blockages in parts of the body. This proposed method seems to be efficacious in releasing such blockages, making it possible to speak back to the context.

The Place of Breath

It is apparent that the FDS, through its engagement of breath and physical postures, generates spontaneous bodily feelings, which give rise to emotions, which in turn are felt in the body as sensations. I contend that breath catalyses the bodily feelings and associated emotions. From this study, it is evident that the relationship between mind and body is cyclical. In view of Damasio's theories (1994; 2000; 2003; 2010),

my understanding is that the mind plays a role in the brain's processes and its functions. The brain is a tangible processing organ that forms part of the body; the mind is the intangible place that generates thought. The brain provides a space for thought processes to occur. In the first instance, the body communicates with the brain, signalling changes to the musculoskeletal structure, internal milieu, and internal organs of the body. The body is thus the first to respond. These changes, experienced as bodily feelings are made sense of through thought processes that take place in the mind and are thus registered in and by the brain. These thought processes give rise to mental images, which when projected into the world, give rise to further breath responses. The brain, as a result of the body's response and mind's thought processes, is able to inform the body what to do in response to different situations, thereby transforming bodily states that then evidence how the body landscape can influence the landscape of the brain and vice versa. My hypothesis is that the body's first encounter with external stimuli is through breath, which in turn catalyses feelings in the body. It is thus feasible that breath is able to alter the landscape of the body and consequently the landscape of the brain, and by extension, the mind implying that breath has a role to play in the generation of images.

I suggest that there is a correlation between the felt experience of emotion in the body landscape and the process of generating images in the brain landscape. This speaks to the concept of bodymind that seeks to emphasise the interrelatedness of the body and mind. Breath is a physiological activity indicating that the physiological process of breathing is able to affect neural activation and consequently the generation of images in processes of performance making. I maintain that the various FDS positions coupled with the idea of 'allowing' breath, creates energy in the body, which results in motility, which gives rise to feelings. Feelings catalyse spontaneous self-expression in the form of mental images in the brain. The body responds to these images and so the cycle continues.

Furthermore, from this study, I gleaned that the physical bodies of women in South Africa mirror the social body. The society in which people live determines their social body and the physical body in turn takes on or mirrors that social body and is

therefore constructed by the society; in this case, a society that is characterised by gender violence. This social determinism, however, does present problems when it comes to questions of bodily agency, suggesting that as women in South Africa, we have no power to change the experiences of the body, which is socially constructed. I argue that the FDS brings an aliveness and sense of agency to the body and that it is a way of challenging social constructionism and the manner in which it removes bodily agency. Additionally, the FDS brings the performer into acute awareness of corporeality. It has the capacity to bring awareness and consequently attention to what is transpiring in the body as well as to associated thoughts in the mind. It enables the performer to develop an awareness of the energetic blockages that have formed in her body as a result of the violent context she inhabits, before commencing the process of releasing these blockages. Through the various experiments and case studies undertaken in this study, it is evident that the proposed method, characterised by self-identification and self-exploration, affords women the space to speak back to the social context they inhabit. It assists them to develop a relational sense of self that enables them to be more visible to themselves. Additionally, it provides women with a way of reclaiming their bodies that are under constant threat of violation.

Body mapping serves as a way of cartographically scoring felt somatic experiences of images in the body. The body map in this instance serves as a reminder, something to go back to, to interact with, when developing the images into material on the 'floor' for performance. Body mapping provides a space to reflect on and make sense of the corporeality of the soma through art making processes, thus engaging a relational experience of body, brain and mind. It allows the performer to see the different parts of her body cartographically. The experiences as they are mapped onto different parts of the body, enable her to make sense of them in relation to body parts. This further enables her to make sense of how experiences located in one body part relate to experiences in another body part. In this way, she somatically draws the map of her lived experiences onto the body map.

During body mapping, a process of blending takes place between the words that constitute the image and the visual representation of the image in a particular part

of the body. An act of conceptual blending takes place when the image that has been visually drawn at a particular place in the body (on the body map) is experienced in the performer's actual body through movement. In other words, the performer takes the various images and allows herself to imagine the image occupying that part of the body. The feeling it generates initiates a particular movement. It is evident here that blending occurs at the level of action thus speaking to the notion that conceptual blending also takes place during physical bodily action. The act of placing the image in a particular part of the body is one that is imagined. The image is integrated with that particular body part to create a particular motion that generates a feeling in the body. The feelings are often associated with physical action (given the physical nature of the FDS). Additionally, a process of conceptual blending of images takes place when the images are verbally 'fed' back to the performer during the second stage of my method of generating images for purposes of performance making. It is my understanding that the FDS creates an experience of embodied conceptual thinking that gives rise to conceptual metaphors or blends, if you will.

The engagement of the body in the FDS produces sensations and images in a stream of consciousness much like thoughts and words that affect and produce more thoughts and words in processes of thinking. This study reveals that the process of making sense of these images through free writing and body mapping is a way of consciously reconstructing memories into material that can be used to make performance that draws from the biography of the body. The process of generating images, which emerge out of the experience of somatic sensations, is a process of excavating the soma as a way of generating a biography of the body. This process resonates with the relationship between archaeology and performance making proposed by Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks:

The sites of both performance and archaeology constitute **sensoria**. They are apprehended as a complex manifold of simultaneous impressions – any account will be inevitably embodied, subjective and poetic. For performer and spectator alike, the performance event exists as a locus of experiences ... preserved in the bodies and memories of the ... participants [...]. (original in bold. 2001:54)

From this study I have gleaned that memories tend to surface in a non-linear fashion, and at times memories from different time frames are blended potentially creating a new memory that occupies a third time frame, a mythological time frame, if you will, which may or may not be directly connected to actual lived experience. The process of memory reconstruction is multifarious which explains the seemingly unrelated images activated during the FDS. It is plausible that these memories have remained lodged in the body and therefore do not, on first appearance, make cognitive or logical sense in terms of how they relate to our autobiographical selves.

The idea of interaction is key to the method of performance making this study proposes. It affirms the idea that the process is cyclical. The body mapping and free writing aspects of the method are a means of extending the cyclical feedback loop to include the person experiencing the images during the FDS and the person she is working with, in other words, the person who verbally 'feeds' her the images. Body mapping and free writing are thus a means of sharing images that are usually only available to the person who generates them. Sharing in turn encourages and implies interaction, which stimulates or induces further image maps in both the person sharing and the person receiving (in this case the partner who 'feeds' the images to the person as well as to other performers involved in the process).

This study evidences that the FDS gives rise to what Blair terms image streams (2006:177-179), which I reason are akin to the notion of images that occur as a stream of consciousness. This, when coupled with free writing, further engages the subliminal self through a stream of consciousness. The result is a foundation for performance making wherein the performer has the capacity to actualise and realise possible selves through performance. This, in turn, links to the idea of restorying lived experience. In this way, the lived body as a sentient body is crucial to processes of realising and actualising possibilities.

The findings from the small experiments and the main case study reveal the FDS as a way into digging deep, at times accessing the surface level of the subconscious and at other times reaching deeper into the unconscious. Additionally, the FDS seems able to unearth the unconscious through image streams. When applied to the context of performance making, the process of generating image streams

encompasses Ingold's notion of wayfaring (2007:15-16). The images spontaneously appear to the performer in streams. It seems as if they emerge from the realm of the unconscious in that they are not consciously constructed.

This study evidences the tangible connection between breath, body, sensations, emotions and the imagination. I propose that breath is the impulse that inspires and catalyses felt perception, emotions, thought, imagination, and action. It is also the bridge that connects impulse to the mind, brain, body, imagination, voice, and to other sentient beings. Not only does it connect the different aspects of the self, it also allows for the relationship between these aspects to shift at the subtlest of levels (sometimes not so subtle). When the impulse shifts, or the impulse as a result of a response to stimuli, shifts, the connection alters. Additionally, the different elements alter. In other words, the breath responds, the body responds, the brain responds, the mind responds, and the imagination responds. The imagination, in turn, becomes another source of stimulus. Breath, I suggest, bridges the imposed Cartesian mind-body dualism and also bridges the divide between the body and the imagination.

This study-journey began many years prior to my decision to register for a Ph.D. It has on all levels placed me in the role of wayfarer, where I happened upon numerous tools and raw materials. Through the process of journeying, I was able to mesh and weave the raw materials into something tangible. The discoveries and findings woven together formed the fabric of the method the study proposes.

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