

# MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING

resonating embodied memory through performance as research

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With you, all my wanderings are guided. With you, I always walk with many.

# MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING

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Adriana Laurel Rodrigues Jamisse

## ABSTRACT

In this written explication, I articulate a process-based MA journey which, through Practice-as-Research (PaR), has explored how the body remembers knowledge within an intentional cultivation of resonance. The emphasis on the textural and aural experience within my own performance practice, offered an opportunity to engage embodied memory as corporeal traces of sound knowledges that live within and are maintained by, a range of resonant relationships. Inspired by the works of German sociologist Hartmut Rosa and Indian-American political theorist Anita Chari, I use resonance as a theoretical framework that aids in exploring relationality within a performance praxis. Borrowing from the social sciences, literature, somatic studies and performance studies, I unfold an incomplete conceptual discussion around *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING* as interdependent, circular, emergent and integrative motions of my *body-in-relation*. I articulate my re-membering identity by engaging with the interdependence of memory, archive and knowledge through embodied practice. Influenced by South African scholar Uhuru Phalafala's concept of the matriarchive, I understand memory as embodied and relational, and thus expand it towards the notion of matrilineally transmitted sound knowledges. The ritualised practices of wandering through ecology, tracing through materials and integrating *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING* in my performance processes, inform the way that the conceptual discussion unfolds, further revealing the interlinks between body and world, voice and relationality, and memory and knowledge.

**Keywords:** *relationality, resonance, voice, embodied memory, matriarchive, PaR, body, acoustemology, performance.*

# INTRODUCTION

Through ritual we feel and enact resonance  
We enter a space in which we can feel the vibrant pulsing relationship  
with each other  
with nature  
and with what is  
Resonance bridges the intermedial space  
between us,  
the community  
and the cosmos

– Joshua Schrei (2021c)

In his work, American author/mythologist Joshua Schrei recognises the interlinks between people, places and history, highlighting how these relationships can be amplified through resonance and ritual (Schrei, 2021c). Whether through a wide-ranging discussion on the concepts of sound and resonance as modes of relation in an universe that is constructed vibrationally (see Schrei, 2021c, 2023c); or through an intricate understanding of the animate force that governs people’s relationships to things, buildings and lands (see Schrei, 2019b, 2019d, 2021b, 2023, 2023a, 2024); or further through a deep exploration of the connection between myth, memory and knowledge (see Schrei, 2019, 2019a, 2019c, 2020, 2021, 2021a, 2022, 2022a, 2023b, 2023d, 2023e), Schrei’s work brings our attention to the crucial role of relationships for the way that we embody, produce, access and manifest knowledge in our co-creative process with the world.

I use Schrei to introduce my research, because it helps me situate the concepts of relationality and memory within my research process, while his views on ritual, offer the opportunity to ground my discussion within performance practice. In both performance and ritual practices, ‘bodily social memory’ is circulated, encoding and transmitting values through relationships,

and in the process, manifesting ‘how societies remember’ through the body (Connerton, 1989:71).

In this written explication I articulate my research practice which, through the methodology of Practice-as-Research (PaR), explores how the body remembers knowledge through the cultivation of resonance. I explore the emphasis on the textural and aural experience within my own performance practice of *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING*, and engage embodied memory as corporeal traces of sound knowledges that live within and are maintained by, a range of resonant relationships – I also call this relational knowledge. Sound knowledges can be understood as “poetics, narratives, indigenous languages, oral traditions and histories, ceremony, dis/embodiment, dreams, interiority, performance, dance and song” which have been “antidotes to coloniality’s psychic, social and spiritual death” (Phalafala, 2024:167). To deepen my conceptualisation of embodied memory, I use the understanding of acoustemology – “knowing-with and knowing-through the audible” (Feld, 2015:12). This not only links the idea of relational knowledge to resonance theory<sup>1</sup> – since resonance is also an acoustic phenomenon – but it also connects it to South African scholar Uhuru Phalafala’s concept of the matriarchive, as “a living repository of sound knowledges transmitted by matrilineal members of the family” (2024a:6). Through the matriarchive, “[t]hese knowledges are rooted/routed in cosmologies and mythologies of the lineages and are at once intergenerational, communal, relational, and ancestral” (2024a:6).

Central to this explication are various notions from resonance theory and the matriarchive as they emerged through the performance practice within my MA research. Thus, “practice is a key method of inquiry” (Nelson, 2013:9) and all my conceptual discussions are intrinsic to and emerging from my body and my practice as a performance artist. It is important to note that this paper, beyond explicating the research up until this point, provides the conceptual context for the development of my final MA production to be presented in November 2024. This written explication encourages an interactive approach through embedded hyperlinks as well as a curious and non-prescriptive navigation of a [website](#) (password: JMSADR001). This

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<sup>1</sup> Schrei draws from German sociologist Hartmut Rosa, who has termed his sociological and critical theory of human relationships to the world, ‘Resonance Theory’ (Rosa, 2019), though later considered it as “Resonance Conception” (Rosa, 2023:39’48”, 2019a). Indian-American political theorist Anita Chari has similarly engaged resonance, but from a political theory lens (Chari, 2021:205). Thus, my use of the term ‘resonance theory’ is conflating and referencing all three of these engagements.

website is a standalone multimedia collaboration project with South African Performance artist and web-designer Julia de Rosenwerth. It attempts to archive and organise as much of the practical research process as possible, while offering an experiential component to the written conceptualisations.

The flow of this written explication will be punctuated into five sections. In the first section I frame my approach to the research through the methodology of Practice-as-Research (here on referred to as PaR). In this section I clarify my understanding of PaR and my approach within it, as one governed by repetition and resonance – I provisionally call this the *torus*<sup>2</sup> *approach* (or *torus* in short). Composing this approach, are three *torus* motions namely *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING*. I dedicate a section to each of these motions through first elaborating on their conceptual understandings and then reflecting on a particular practice that mostly resonates with the motion discussed. These motions and practices are interdependent and integrative, hence my discussion of them will reflect a constant circularity that leaks them into one another. Finally, the last section will return the overall discussion into the perspective of the whole research, offering an indication of my thinking towards the final MA production.

Link to website: <https://adrianajamisse.com/moving-voicing-remembering/>

Password to website: JMSADR001

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<sup>2</sup> The *torus approach* is the approach I have taken in this research in both practice and conceptual articulation. It is based on the PaR methodology as well as the framework of resonance. The name *torus* is inspired by the geometrical shape of the horn torus as “a surface of revolution generated by revolving a circle in three-dimensional space one full revolution about an axis that is coplanar with the circle” (Wikipedia, 2024). As this explication will articulate, I use the motion of the torus shape in both its creation process as well as the possible motions that sustain it, to illustrate, articulate and explore foundational qualities of my research practice: interdependence, circularity, emergence and integration.

## THE *TORUS* APPROACH

They practise a refusal of silence and inertia in their bodies,  
always sounding out, passing on/down,  
reaching outward towards relation with song  
and the everpresent melodies in their blood  
– Uhuru Phalafala (2024a:78)

Quoted above is Phalafala’s understanding of the many bodies present in the work of South African author Keorapetse Kgosistsile. This brief quote acknowledges the integration of the three motions of *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING* in many bodies from the geopolitical region of Southern Africa. It centralises their agential, dynamic and sounding existence in their “refusal of silence and inertia”. And it grounds them in their relational identities and the “everpresent” ancestral memory that reverberates “in their blood” (Phalafala, 2024a:78). Here the body, its sound (i.e. voice), and the melody in its blood (i.e. memory) is in a constant motion towards self-becoming through its relation to the world. Thus, through Phalafala’s articulation of these *bodies-in-relation*, I find a connection to the *torus*. In this articulation, the *torus* is in motion, and the relational essence of sounding bodies – as “the most intimate contact zone, porous and communal” (2024a:78) – is emphasised. This is a quest to diligently attune<sup>3</sup> to sound knowledges, by engaging the resonance of bodies living in Southern Africa that share geopolitical, socio-cultural and perhaps ancestral identities. These bodies include my own, and through me, those of my family lineages.

A starting point for my MA research, was my interest in challenging and deepening my understanding of the roles of the body, the voice, and memory in my practice. As a mixed-race Mozambican immigrant woman and performance artist with a practice founded in dance, I was curious to explore what the sensorial experience of voice in my body could offer to my movement practice. As I began vocalising, I realised that I was accessing another non-verbal way of expressing nuances of my subjectivity. This process also seemed to heighten my somatic awareness and offer a different impetus for movement development. But as I explored the voice as embodied vibration and as impetus for movement, multisensorial

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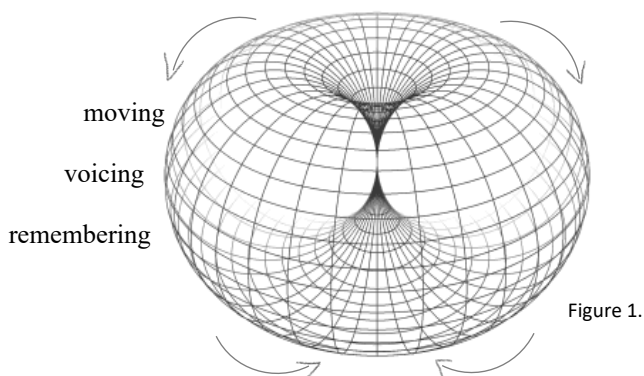
<sup>3</sup> In reference of Phalafala’s *diligently looking* as a practice which “involves a conscientious reading (...) characterized by a multisensorial approach, attended by care and love” (Phalafala, 2024a:9)

images and memories were catalysed. These, when continuing the vocal-movement process, seemed to then inform/influence the quality of both movement and voice through alterations in posture, breath patterns and emotional expression. Hence, through integrating *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING*, I became interested in further exploring the quality of these memories, as well as the process that catalysed these pathways of remembering.

Through PaR, I began developing what I call the *torus approach*. The torus<sup>4</sup> shape – and its intrinsic motion of revolution and circularity – seemed to accurately illustrate the interplays between *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING* that I experienced in my practice. The *torus approach* emerges as I decided to place at the foundation of all my research explorations, the interdependent, circular, emergent and integrative interplays between the body, the voice and memory. On a conceptual level, this means understanding the inherently animate and porous qualities of the body and the breath within the processes of becoming that implicate both society and the more-than-human world. This approach centralises an integrated *body-in-relation* and perceives the in-between spaces of relation as potential for resonance. Elaborating on the *torus approach* will simultaneously offer two engagements: (1) an enquiry of memory as embodied and relational through my performance practice, and (2) an exploration the PaR methodology itself.

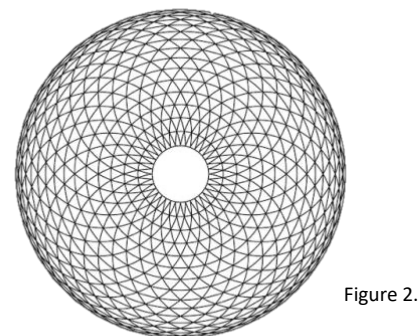
### Illustration of the *torus approach*

Each circle emerging from the top and reaching outwards is a motion:



These motions are then reabsorbed at the bottom, only to emerge again at the top, in a continuous cycle.

From above, the dynamic motions circulate and form a permeable outline of body. All spaces in-between are inhabited and moved by breath and thus are also animate.



The circular motion illustrates a continuous self-becoming through an outwards expansion towards the world. This shape also alludes to the idea of a portal and of creation cycles.

<sup>4</sup> Torus as “a surface of revolution generated by revolving a circle in three-dimensional space one full revolution about an axis that is coplanar with the circle. The main types of toruses include ring toruses, horn toruses, and spindle toruses” (Wikipedia, 2024).

## PaR and the role of Repetition

The *torus* is grounded in the simultaneous engagement of *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING* in my practice (hence the linking of the words into one), which manifested repetition and resonance. This indicates the *torus'* inherent link to the methodology of PaR which places practice and repetition at the foundation of all conceptualisations (Fleishman, 2012). Resonance, on the other hand, expresses the *torus'* emphasis on the relationality between concepts and practices.

In my research practice, I engage PaR as “research that is carried out through or by means of performance, using methodologies and specific methods familiar to performance practitioners” (Fleishman, 2012:28). In this sense, PaR treats performance beyond “the illustration of pre-existing philosophical thought” and rather as “its own kind of thinking” (Cull, 2013:3). Through this understanding of PaR, my research practice is deeply process-focused, expressing most of its insights within the creative processes, more so than in the productions alone (Nelson, 2013:27). Hence, I approach the productions as part of the creative process, in which they act as a “perceptual still point” (Fleishman, 2012:35), before more driving questions are re-ignited (Nelson, 2013:24). South African researcher Mark Fleishman understands PaR as “a series of embodied repetitions in time”, which manifest “on both micro (bodies, movements, sounds, improvisations, moments) and macro (events, productions, projects, installations) levels, in search of a series of differences” (Fleishman, 2012:29). On a macro level of repetition, my research practice was punctuated by three performance projects – the MINOR, the MEDIUM and the ONE-PERSON. These performance projects (macro repetitions) were comprised of many different practices, which can be understood as repetitions on a micro level. Throughout all three projects I have identified four main practices that happened concurrently and have been repeated consistently:

1. *Wandering* through ecology
2. Engaging *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING*
3. Tracing through materials
4. Textural and aural world-building

In my writing, the conceptual discussion of each motion of the *torus* will be followed by an analysis of these practices<sup>5</sup>.

### **Resonance within the *torus* approach**

Within the motions of the *torus* lies the framework of resonance as it actively explores the relationships between motions. Resonance is thus an analogy for reciprocal relationality and interconnectedness that explores the conceptual spaces in-between as generative. The *torus* emulates the phenomenon of resonance in which, simply put, an object's vibration or motion can amplify the natural vibration of another object to its maximum amplitude creating a system of vibrations (Zhang et al, 2020:153). This notion of increased amplitude and the interdependence between unit and system, is another way of explaining how the motions of the *torus* relate to each other and co-create the whole. The body as the unit resonates the motions of *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING*, which integrate it in the relational systems of land, resonance and knowledge. The following sections of this explication elaborate conceptually on each motion (unit-VIBRATION-system) of the *torus*<sup>6</sup>, bearing in mind that they cannot be fully grasped in isolation but rather always in relation to and co-creation of each other. Hence the *torus* is a PaR onto-epistemological<sup>7</sup> inquiry into both a mode of existence (as inherently circular and integrative) and a means of generating/accessing/attuning to relational knowledge (as inherently emergent and interdependent).

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<sup>5</sup> For additional experiential context of these practices, I encourage a wandering through the [website](#).

<sup>6</sup> Throughout my writing I use the term 'relational system' to reference the *torus* approach – unit-VIBRATION-system. And the formatting of certain words signals their connection to the *torus* and my practice.

<sup>7</sup> By onto-epistemological I am inspired by Karen Barad's 'ethico-onto-epistemology' within her conception of 'agential realism'. She acknowledges that "[b]eing, knowledge, and coexistence are emergent phenomena, dynamic and vibrant in their iterative unfolding in the world and entangled through their shared intra-active genesis" (Fairbairn, 2022:131). This means that "the ontological, epistemological and ethical facets of our existences are not merely superposed but rather consubstantial" (2022:131).

## *body – MOVING – land*

“The land is older than and will outlive your flesh to mother and father more of you. [...]

You are of the land.”

- Keorapetse Kgositsile (Phalafala, 2024a:67)

From the beginning of this research, I aimed at approaching my own body as inherently knowledgeable. This echoes American philosopher Richard Shusterman’s notion of “a sentient lived body” which places the body as a source of experiential knowledge (Shusterman, 2012:5). This notion of the *lived body* often found in somatic studies, comes from the Greek term *soma* and it emphasizes “[its] alive and changing status as a process, rather than an object” (Eddy, 2017:5). Shusterman argues that our approach to knowledge needs to incorporate the notion that “I both am body and have a body” (Shusterman, 2012:28). Thus, I became interested in conceptually articulating a notion of being body. This was initiated by my experience of somatic awareness in my practice, which was often cultivated as a state of deep-listening where one attunes to somatic cues. Somatic awareness speaks concurrently to the concept of embodiment as an “attunement with self”, that incorporates processes of “knowing how to perceive the body, how to stay aware during daily activities and how to make connections to derive meaning and purpose from these sensations” – it is an awareness of being body (Eddy, 2017:16).

Canadian author Philip Shepherd argues, in his conception of ‘radical wholeness’, for an integrated experience of being, in which thinking and feeling are dynamic and essential parts of the experiential whole (Shepherd, 2017). Notions of somatic awareness and embodiment are expanded towards an integrated ontology of self, heavily inspired by indigenous concepts such as the Anlo-Ewe’s<sup>8</sup> *seselelame* or as Shepherd roughly translates it “feel-feel-at-flesh-inside” (2017:30). Through his focus on the felt experience, Shepherd emphasises the role of the senses in our way of being. He argues that “the senses are what activates our

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<sup>8</sup> Anlo-Ewe is a group of people that inhabits parts of Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Ghana.

intelligence” (2017:23) and that the differences in cultural understanding and experience of the senses might lead to different activations of such intelligence<sup>9</sup> (2017:23).

Shepherd’s discussion stays within a comparative lens that reveals to him how “[p]eople in other cultures recognize different senses”, and how this revelation often “flushes out an oversight” in Western culture (Shepherd, 2017:23-24). When looking at notions of sensate perception as informed by Indian-American political theorist Anita Chari, Shepherd does not engage with the implications that colonialism, capitalism, immigration and such (often violent) cultural encounters may have for the ways in which people embody their sensorial experience of the world. Chari’s take on sensate perception states that “sensation is never just sensation (...) [and so] we cannot speak of sensation in the abstract” (Chari, 2021:203).

“Sensate dissociation”, as Chari calls it, is one way to describe a conflict in sensorial perception that results from cultural domination/oppression (Chari, 2021:198). She interrogates “the relationship between sensate experience and political experience” which is simultaneously an enquiry into “the relationship between sensate domination and political domination in neoliberal society” (2021:198). In my view, Shepherd’s radical wholeness can only be manifested when we critically engage with “the dissociation from bodily sensation [that] is an impediment to the practice of social and political freedom” (2021:198). Chari’s political engagement with the senses is part of a broader discussion about an experience of body that acknowledges the different ways that the body is socialised and conditioned, which in turn affects perception and ontology – e.g. the *racialised soma* by Korean-American practitioner-researcher Amy Mihyang Ginther, which acknowledges the somatic awareness of a body that “is constantly being defined through a white, colonial gaze as *other*” (2021:102); and the *performative body* by American scholar Judith Butler as a body that reiterates a set of social norms, with a particular emphasis on gender norms (Butler, 1993:12). This brings the relational aspect of the body to the forefront without dismissing its inherent politics (e.g. race and gender).

One of the points of tension in my identity has to do with race and immigration. As a mixed-race person in Mozambique I was perceived as white and the presence of my white mother

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<sup>9</sup> In my reading of Shepherd, he understands intelligence as the ability to access, acquire and apply knowledge and skills, in a way that enhances “our engagement with the world and our responsiveness to it” (Shepherd, 2017:102).

informed that perception. But when visiting my maternal family in Portugal I was rather perceived as non-white due to the presence of my black father. The racial politics between these two countries were similar in the sense of race being perceived by association and enculturation. When immigrating to South Africa, I encountered different racial politics, in which whiteness was no longer socially accessible to me regardless of association, but blackness was separated into multiple categories none of which I seemed to fit due to being a mixed-race immigrant. These tensions are part of the racialised soma, which is dominated by an ocular-centred perception affecting the experience of my body navigating the world. The engagement of the senses in my practice, highlighted and complicated my understanding of sensate perception as intrinsic to my socio-political conditioning as a mixed-race Mozambican immigrant woman.

Deepening my understanding of sensate perception, I use Phalafala's discussion around hearing and feeling in Southern African onto-epistemologies, in which "listening is trusted as a primary mode of perception which activates both *hearing* and *feeling*, as well as knowledge acquisition" (Phalafala, 2024a:17). In this understanding of a sensate perception (that is culturally specific), Phalafala acknowledges its onto-epistemological nature through her notion of sound knowledges, while simultaneously using it to critique Euro-Enlightenment-era's ocular domination. She recognises that "[s]ound knowledges destabilize the supremacy of seeing or the ocular (Oyewùmí 1997) as a way of knowing the world in differentiating, hierarchical, anthropocentric, racializing, gendering, and dehumanizing models that underpin colonial modernity" (2024a:17).

In this engagement of sensate perception, being body is expanded into its inherently relational and political aspects. *Hearing/Feeling*, according to Phalafala, offers an alternative to dominant and often oppressive engagements with sensate perception by "finding relationalities, congruencies, and solidarities within the multisensorial self" in which "the border collapses between the head and the body, the cognitive and embodied, and the rational and sensuous" (2024a:17). *Hearing/Feeling* also gives me an opportunity to ground both my conceptualisations and my practice in the geopolitical region that I inhabit. My experience of deep-listening as a practice is aptly articulated by Phalafala's methodology of "deep hearing" which "attunes the body to hearing/feeling and intuiting the always already-

there accompaniment of the living dead and not-yet-born, but also frequencies and vibrations of the living environment that entangle the collective becoming of all” (2024a:17).

This approach to the body, moves my understanding towards an integrated sense of self that is intrinsically relational. The emphasis on felt perception echoes British scholar Lisa Blackman’s conceptualisation of the “affective body”, as a body “permeable to the ‘outside’ so that the very distinction between the inside and the outside as fixed and absolute is put into question” (Blackman, 2008:10). Understanding the body in its felt ontology, acknowledges its inherent sensory (and political) relation with the world and its capacity to “affect and be affected by others: human and non-human” (2008:55).

These principles of integration and relationality seem to be foundational in many indigenous knowledge systems from Southern African, North America, India and Australia (see Phalafala, 2024a; Kimmerer, 2013; Srinivas, 2018; Yunkaporta, 2019). Shepherd’s integrated self – inspired by Anlo-Ewe’s onto-epistemology – is echoed in Yoruba scholar Temitope Adefarakan’s notion of the body as material infused with spirit (2018:233). Adefarakan draws on Yoruba<sup>10</sup> epistemology and encourages an “embodied consciousness that does not fragment the body, mind, spirit and soul—an emotional, cognitive, physical, and spiritual awareness that allows for the integration of all parts of who we are” (2018:230). Both authors emphasise the relational aspect of an integrated self through African onto-epistemologies. Anlo-Ewe’s *seselelame*, emphasises the constant relation of self within itself and with the world through sensate perception (Shepherd, 2017:30). And the Yoruba’s spirit-infused body, highlights being “connected to and anchored in one’s community and cosmology” (Adefarakan, 2018:238).

Phalafala further grounds into the region of Southern Africa, with her discussion of the *onto-triadic*<sup>11</sup> human, which adds to the ontology of body that the “human is understood as a composite of three ontologies, (...) constituted by the living, the living dead, and the not-yet-born” (Phalafala, 2024a:15). This also brings specificity to Adefarakan’s idea of the body as spirit-infused and anchored in community and cosmology (2018:238). Phalafala argues that “the experience and gathering of the onto-triad is not in the domain of the mind and reason

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<sup>10</sup> Yoruba people are a West African ethnic group inhabiting regions in Nigeria, Benin, and Togo.

<sup>11</sup> A notion borrowed from South African Philosopher Mogobe Ramose.

alone; it is active in the body – the blood, the song (...) – and activated through performativity” (Phalafala, 2024a:73).

Performativity as used by Phalafala echoes Butler’s *performative body*, in the specificity of an onto-triadic experience of body, that is affirmed through “languages, names, songs, prayers, and rituals practiced in the homeplace” and transmitted by matrilineal members of the family (2024a:6). Hence, through Phalafala, I am resonating all my previous discussion of the body as integrated and, more importantly, deeply relational through processes of embodied communication between the living, the living dead and the not-yet-born. This conception of being body “requires reaching out beyond the assumed encasement of the body and relating beyond individual embodiment” (2024a:73).

My understanding “resonates notions of the body as co-created in relationship with the environment and thus not characterised by stasis” (Brown, 2013:24). It allows the *torus* to be true to the body as intrinsically dynamic in its relational ontology. And infers that the body creates, develops and discovers itself through its movement in the world. In this understanding, “movement is the generative source of our primal sense of aliveness and of our primal capacity for sense-making” (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011:114). Through a somatic awareness of movement, the body not only senses itself but the world around it, which emphasises that “[p]erceiving subtle sensation” is fundamental for sensing the spaces within and in-between moving bodies (Chari, 2021:204). Hence, I employ the use of the verb *MOVING* instead of the noun ‘movement’, to highlight this dynamic and sensorial aspect of being body.

In this research one of the main practices of movement I engaged in was that of walking, which revealed an understanding of the primacy of movement that echoes the notion of “wayfaring”. *Wayfaring*, according to British anthropologist Tim Ingold, is “the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth” (2011:12). By inhabiting, he infers a “join[ing] in the processes of formation” (Ingold, 2010:6) as an “embodied experience of [...] perambulatory movement” (Ingold, 2011:143). We thus expand beyond understanding movement through the world as a motion of simply connecting destinations, towards an understanding of *MOVING* as an experience of immersive sensate perception through/with the world (2011:162).

*Wayfaring* is a human relational mode of being and becoming with the world (Ingold, 2011:148). This, similar to Phalafala's onto-triadic human, emphasises the particular experience of being a human body, or as Ingold would say, the experience of "humaning"<sup>12</sup> (Ingold, 2021:45'19"). One could say that Phalafala understands *humaning* through the onto-triadic motion of *wandering* through the world, which has underpinnings that emerge from hunters and gatherers, and alludes to the sense of being on the road, and being within the ways of the people (2024a:15-16). Phalafala's philosophical concept of *wandering* infers that "to wander is to see" (2024a:15). It is a form of "guided mobility"<sup>13</sup> in which the human – while in "a multisensorial experience saturated with presence" – is "accompanied by the living dead, the ancestors", for "[i]t is only through the ancestor's eyes that one could 'see' and sense as they wander" (2024a:16).

I include this notion of *wandering* in this discussion of *wayfaring*, as a way of emphasising the onto-triadic human. During my research practice, I often referred to my experience of walking through ecology as 'walking with many', because of the sense of being guided within the motion. Hence *wayfaring/wandering* combined best articulate my experience of walking and *MOVING* through the world. They enable a conceptualisation of the body and its dynamic being as an ongoing ontological and relational process. Through the motions of *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING*, the body is in a constant process of sensing and becoming, hence all motions of the *torus* reverberate the *body-in-relation* despite their separate written articulation. The onto-triadic human body is thus "congruent with the principles of interconnectedness, interdependence, and interrelationality that underwrite cosmologies and philosophies of being in Southern Africa" (Phalafala, 2024a:23). This relational ontology of body reverberates the relational system of land, as "all life is internetworked, agential, and intra-active in its collective materialization" (2024a:23).

In this *torus* motion, I situate the *body-in-relation* within the system of ecology. Here the term ecology is in reference to what Canadian anthropologist Eduardo Kohn calls *ecology of selves* (Kohn, 2013:16). Kohn recognises and emphasises that "seeing, representing, and perhaps

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<sup>12</sup> Inspired by Spanish philosopher-mystic Ramon Llull's 'humanifying animal', Ingold discusses that "human is an animal that humans" and thus "humaning is what we humans do; it is a process in which we are continually creating ourselves and one another" (2021:45'19"). It becomes particular to humans because it involves "the peculiar way in which human life is stretched out between a kind of imagination that is always shooting off into the distance and a material engagement that is always holding us back" (Ingold, 2021:45'19").

<sup>13</sup> Phalafala borrows this notion of "guided mobility" from scholar-author Clapperton Mavhunga.

knowing, [and] even thinking, are not exclusively human affairs” (2013:16). In an *ecology of selves* there is a “complex web of relations” between *selves* who in a dynamic of semiosis, make the [ecosystem] their home (2013:16). This echoes Ingold’s process of joining with the world (inhabiting), but simultaneously highlights processes of semiosis inherent to bodies in relation, that do not exclude the more-than-human. I believe Kohn’s term *ecology of selves*, is applicable to any ecosystem that comprises the more-than-human world, which can be, but is not necessarily, inclusive of the human.

I use the term ‘more-than-human’ in this explication quite loosely. Inspired partially by American ecologist/philosopher David Abram’s work, I use ‘more-than-human’ to refer to the animate landscape that humans depend on, which encompasses and goes beyond beings that are conventionally considered ‘alive’ (such as animals and plants) into elemental and animate forces (such as the spirits of rivers, mountains, rain, forests, etc) that comprise the ecological and magical worlds (Abram, 1997:18). I believe Kohn’s *ecology of selves*, to a certain extent speaks to Abram’s *more-than-human*, but though I make use of the latter term, I prefer Kohn’s and Ingold’s engagements (i.e. *selves* or *things* respectively). Critically speaking, these engagements actively counter human-centred categories by understanding that we live in a fluid world in which beings (including but not limited to humans) are in a constant process of formation through joining and “ever-differentiating from one another” (Ingold, 2020:7).

Due to the scope of this explication, I will not further my critical engagement with the term ‘more-than-human’, nor with the specificities of Kohn’s “anthropology beyond the human” (2013) where he presents the notion of *ecology of selves*. But this has made me wonder when or how does one become a *self* in a given *ecology*? This question reverberated in my practice of *wandering* through ecology in Cape Town as an immigrant and sparked my conceptual discussion of the interdependence between body and ecology. *MOVING* through the world in this view, goes beyond a bodily way of sensing the world (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011:114), towards a process of joining with the creation of the world (Ingold, 2010:6) while fostering embodied communication between the living, the living dead and the not-yet-born (Phalafala, 2024a:15). In [walking through ecology](#), I was negotiating the ways that world affected my body, and my body affected world, in an active and embodied exchange of tensions, spaces and territories with the living dead and the more-than-human.

To evoke the onto-triadic human, and the political implications existent in the relational system of *ecology of selves*, I expand the notion of *ecology* towards its more politicised term – land. As a Mozambican immigrant living and practicing in South Africa, my engagement with ecology is underpinned by the geopolitics of the ‘eco’ – from the Greek etymology linked to ‘home’ or ‘household’ (Phalafala, 2024a:62). This aligns with Phalafala’s notion of ‘ecosomatics’ which attends to the responsibility that ties the human body to the ‘eco’, while recuperating it “as interdependent and in relation to other bodies of the living environs” (2024a:62). ‘Land’ allows me to reverberate the sense of “political ecology” which acknowledges approaches to the environment “as inextricable from social, political, and economic forces” (Demos, 2016:7). This brings political awareness to the understanding of ecology, in a way that also reverberates the experience of body. I further understand the importance of the politics of being body through acknowledging the politics of my body’s relation to land. This attempts to honour the *torus*’ underlying preoccupation with the ‘ontological totality’ of colonised and/or indigenous bodies, as a totality that “refers not only to interpersonal relationality but totality, too, with the land and the living environment” (Phalafala, 2024a:68).

When bodies of the land are forcibly removed or denied access to their land, their process of collective self-becoming is significantly compromised, especially due to how this affects ritual practices of placemaking that establish the link between bodies and land. My embodied experience of being a product of the colonial encounter (and by this, I mean my ancestral lineages manifest the encounter of the Portuguese coloniser and the Mozambican colonised), as well as being an immigrant, though it does not directly express this violent removal, made me question what could be remembered through an active cultivation of relationship to land. The onto-triadic human is in many ways inseparable from the ontology of being a body of the land. In Southern African indigenous knowledge systems, the guidance from the living dead, is accessed through an embodied communication that requires ritual with and *wandering* through the land (Phalafala, 2017:46). In this sense, land reverberates ecology in its living and agential qualities. There is continuity between bodies, land and cosmos. Thus, if Shepherd’s embodiment notion of ‘radical wholeness’ is a worthwhile ontological project, and the ‘ontological totality’ of colonised and/or indigenous bodies is to be honoured and achieved, then we need to reclaim, recuperate and cultivate the role of the human in relation to land.

Many authors that engage with indigenous thinking recognise and advocate for the role of the human in relation to land/ecology, as that of stewardship and custodianship (see Phalafala, 2024a; Kimmerer, 2013; Yunkaporta, 2019; Schrei, 2019d). These roles are inherently resonant with the land and the more-than-human<sup>14</sup>. And such resonance can only be cultivated through an acknowledgement and understanding of human bodily relationships to the world (Rosa, 2019:47). Hence, the *torus* when it comes to its motion of *body-MOVING-land*, offers me a challenge and opportunity to develop practices and concepts that actively and critically engage with this specific ontology of body. Such ontology needs to question the role of the human *MOVING* through land, and infer that being *body-in-relation* always implicates and defines the more-than-human world. This questioning of intrinsic relationality has the potential to inform the ways that we cultivate relationships within creative processes and performance encounters.

## PRACTICE: *Wandering* through ecology

### *Ritual | Walking | Deep-Listening*

The concepts of *wayfaring* (Ingold, 2011:12) and *wandering* (Phalafala, 2024a:16) manifested in my consistent practice of [walking through ecology](#), specifically the Newlands Forest and along the Atlantic coast in Cape Town. In this walking practice I use principles from the embodied modalities of Germaine Acogny technique<sup>15</sup>, Qigong<sup>16</sup> and Taichi Ch'uan<sup>17</sup> which enabled a

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<sup>14</sup> I occasionally separate the terms 'land' and 'more-than-human', to highlight all living matter that co-creates land and its link to cosmic bodies. In my practice I engaged the more-than-human in their terrestrial manifestations – trees, soil, water, rocks, snakes and birds – but through the *torus* my awareness of the links of the terrestrial with the cosmic emerged – more specifically the movements of the moon and sky. My use of 'more-than-human' has these experiences at the forefront.

<sup>15</sup> Germaine Acogny Technique (GA Technique) is a modern African dance technique created by Senegalese dancer and choreographer Germaine Acogny as “a method of constructing new forms of dance and new *transtraditional* and *intercultural* corporalities.” (Acogny, 2003:44 *my own translation*). I experienced GA Technique in 2017 and 2018 at *Ecole des Sables* in Senegal as taught by certified teachers, by Germaine Acogny herself as well as by her son Patrick Acogny – who has written about the concepts cultivated through the technique and the traditions that inform it (Acogny, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Qigong is an embodied practice system that combines movement, breathing and meditation in order to cultivate life force, aid in healing processes of the body and enhance awareness of embodied integration of body, mind, spirit in harmonious balance with nature. I have experienced Qigong training for 7 years as taught by South African martial arts teachers/Traditional Chinese Medicine doctors Jeff Lan and Michael Lan, in both classic and modern approaches; and as systematised by the Chinese Qigong Association (CHQA) and the International Health Qigong Federation (IHQF).

<sup>17</sup> Taichi Ch'uan is an ancient Chinese internal martial art, that is founded in principles of Yin/Yang and five elements philosophy. I have 7 years of experience of this modality within the Cheng Man Ch'ing lineage as taught to me by second generation lineage holder Jeff Lan.

practical inquiry of ways of relating that resonate land and the more-than-human. The following principles<sup>18</sup> permeated my practice:

1. Walking as a ritual and preparation: an awareness of rhythm; connection of physical and mental sensations; creation of body availability; and activation of the spine (Acogny, 2003:14-16).
2. Walking as a game of gravitational contagion: an affectation of bodily states through visual and experiential input; a cultivation of relationship to other bodies; an exchange of territory, space and tensions specific to the experience of being affected while walking<sup>19</sup> (Acogny, 2003:14-16).
3. A slowing down of “deliberate movements performed in conjunction with deep breathing and focused mind-intention” (Bisio, 2012:9).
4. A cultivation of a relaxed and empathetic mind (Bisio, 2012:11-12).
5. Swimming on land: cultivating “the inherent continuity [between] the concentration of *ch’i* [read breath energy] and the embodiment of suppleness” (Cheng, 1985:36-39).
6. Earth level: “breathing down to the heels” (Cheng, 1985:78) and rooting by connecting foot to earth (1985:217).

Integrated in these principles is my practice of deep-listening, which is intrinsic to *wandering* and means cultivating sensorial immersion by actively tuning into the sounds, motions and rhythms of the environment while paying attention to my own physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual signals/responses. This is supported by the practice of breath awareness<sup>20</sup>, which is to intentionally become aware of the movement of breath in the body and all around oneself. This practice “addresses [an] expansion into the present moment during wandering (...) and deliberately listens to the onto-triad” (Phalafala, 2024a:17).

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<sup>18</sup> These principles do not necessarily spread across all three modalities, but are rather being integrated in my practice of walking as a personal research choice. I still honour the practice of these modalities separately and believe their principles should be respected according to the teachings and lineages that they belong to.

<sup>19</sup> I also personally include in the principle of gravitational contagion, the more literal interpretation that includes the relation to the earth via the gravitational pull. This is a playful engagement of balance through “the felt relationship between [my] center of gravity and that of the earth” (Shepherd, 2017:25).

<sup>20</sup> This is a technique from Breathwork - “the practice of breathing with awareness, intention and attention to our inner experience, in the present moment” (Breathwork Africa, n.d.) and “a precise science which provides methods to understand the essence of prana [read: breath, life-force, vitality, animate force, *uMoya*] and to guide it within oneself as well as the rest of creation” (Saraswati, 2009:106).

In the [MINOR](#) this wandering through ecology catalysed a remembering of my paternal family lineage, specifically of my grandmother and her language Xitswa (which I do not speak or understand but have experienced through song, prayer and play in my upbringing). This evokes Phalafala's notions of 'ecosomatics' and 'guided mobility' discussed earlier. Wandering clarified aspects that I personally associate with ritual: verbal or gestural acknowledgement of the place and the beings present in it; cultivation of presence and relationship; sensorial immersion; emphasis on beginning and ending procedures or at least on spatial thresholds; navigation of liminal or unknown paths; circulation of *things*, offerings or gifts; and singing or vocalising. These associations are based on my upbringing experience with different church services as well as other spiritual ceremonies from Southern African cosmologies in both Mozambique and South Africa. But above all, they were communicated to me through the remembering of my grandmother.

When I extended my wanderings to the ocean, it highlighted the experience of sound as immersive and deeply connected to movement. This expanded my understanding and experience of *wandering* by walking, towards a form of [wandering by sounding](#) – a significant insight for the [ONE-PERSON](#). To me, the movements of the ocean waters through time create a living memory and are inherent to my identity. It was through the ocean navigation of my Portuguese colonial ancestors, that my Portuguese maternal lineage encountered my Mozambican paternal lineage. Hence memories relating to my Portuguese maternal lineage are often invoked in my wanderings with the ocean. The ocean waters carry meaning in both an internal sense of self – due to my relationship with my mother – and a historical sense of self – through the experience of the colonial encounter that to me reverberates a historical distancing from the matriarchive<sup>21</sup> of my paternal family.

In the [MEDIUM](#), wandering highlighted notions of interdependence and integration, through the engagement with the webs of reciprocity and responsibility in the ecologies. My practice of walking incorporated following and gathering traces to then offer them back to the forest in the form of little altars. This developed to include sonic traces and song offerings which

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<sup>21</sup> Additional Context: I grew up in Mozambique, but my upbringing was highly influenced by my mother's presence in the household. Though my paternal family was always around, my mother in the household passed down values associated with white Portuguese culture as well as colonial settler culture. This made it hard for me to be present in processes of values transmission with my paternal family in the household (associated with Phalafala's matriarchive). Including, those of language (i.e Xitswa), cultural roles and etiquettes, as well as other family traditions. Most of my access to these happened within family gatherings in my family members' households and not necessarily in my own everyday household dynamics.

honoured more literally the idea of relating through resonance. Later I shared and facilitated the practice of wandering with other people, inspired by my own experience. This informed the construction of our [sonic relationship](#) within the creative process for the performance.

Wandering through ecology made use of principles of embodied practices from movement modalities, ritual aspects drawn from personal memories of sound knowledges, and the cultivation of presence, somatic awareness and relational attunement through the practices of deep-listening and song offering. Through the shared wandering, I echoed Indian anthropologist Tulasi Srinivas' question of "[h]ow does one construct the context of ritual so that the possibility of wonder can take effect?" (Srinivas, 2018:74). *MOVING* through ecology in ritualised manner, accompanied by my memories and ancestors, while attuning to the frequencies of the land, created a felt-experience of wonder. Wonder in this case can be understood as "a state of consciousness deliberately architected through creative ritual"; a state that acts as "a bridge from the ordinary to the extraordinary"; a state of enchantment (Schrei, 2019). I describe this state of wonder as a relational attunement achieved through cultivating vocal resonance with the land while being guided by my ancestors through memory.

## *body – VOICING – resonance*

“My voice touched places I could not venture before”

- Amy Mihyang Ginther (2021:107)

My conceptualisation of voice is influenced by American scholars Ann J. Cahill and Christine Hamel (2022), who argue that the “voice always necessarily sounds a body” (2022:19) partially echoing French philosopher Roland Barthes’ notion of ‘the grain of the voice’ (Thomaidis, 2013:86). Cahill and Hamel understand voice “as (...) irreducibly bodily and political” (2022:15), and reverberate my previous discussion of the body when acknowledging that “human beings are (...) ontologically relational” (2022:16) – emphasising the voice’s inherent socio-political identity. They conceptualise voice as “a bodily emanation that, in contrast to other bodily fluids (Kristeva 1982), does not become abject as it leaves the body, but rather only comes to belong to the voiced person in the releasing act” (2022:33-34).

Drawing from American Scholar Martha Eddy’s *soma* which acknowledges “the voice as part of the living body” (Ginther, 2021:100), Ginther discusses the *vocal soma* as “intrinsically linked to individual identity that is influenced by enculturation” (2021:99). In their understanding of the *vocal soma*, “the theorised, political voice (as a means of liberation) is collapsed with the somatic voice” (2021:100). It is this collapse between political and somatic voice, that allows me to engage simultaneously in a phenomenological and sociological conceptualisation of voice. Ginther’s acknowledgement of the influence of enculturation speaks directly to Cahill and Hamel’s understanding that “[h]uman voices (...) bear the sonic marks of how those voices have been heard, received, and responded to” (2022:26).

This speaks to another point of tension in my identity with regards to language and enculturation. My mother-tongue is Portuguese which, in the first years of my life, was influenced by the sound of my Portuguese mother speaking. As the school years arrived my Portuguese *VOICING* (in terms of tone and accent) was actively and aggressively criticised or ridiculed. This led me to shift the way I voice my mother-tongue away from the sound of my

mother's voice. Additionally, my paternal family's language Xitswa was not taught to me or spoken in the household (hence I am not able to speak it or fully understand it on a linguistic level), but it was always present through song, prayer and play through my constant interactions with my paternal aunts and grandmothers, as well as through church ceremonies. Hence in my practice, I often experience the tonalities and bodily sensations associated with a *VOICING* that is influenced by this linguistic enculturation. In their concept of "intervocality", Cahill and Hamel emphasise the need to always consider the voice as intrinsic to the *body-in-relation*. With *intervocality*, they place at the forefront the notion that the voice "is never self-contained or self-defined" (2022:27). Instead, voice is "always enacted within a context of social relations" and its "sonorous qualities (...) are shaped by those social relations, including how [voice is] received and interpreted" (2022:26).

Physiologically speaking, implicated in *VOICING* are "[i]nteractions of anatomy throughout the entire body" which "at its most basic level, [is] the physical conversion of 'slow-moving breath (gas) into rapid sound wave motion'" (Cahill&Hamel, 2022:17). This interdependent link – in which breath is "the source of [our] vocal sound" (Linklater, 2006:43) – has been mentioned and argued for by most voice practitioner-scholars (see Lessac, 1978; Fitzmaurice, 2015; Matchett, 2016; Rodenburg in Leavitt, 2020; Kapadocha, 2021). Cahill and Hamel also recognise this intrinsic relationship, in which *VOICING* cannot happen without the breath (2022:16). In my performance practice, I amplify the movement of breath in order to experience the voice as vibration in my body, which simultaneously emphasises the tactile sense.

*VOICING* implicates the sensate perception of the movement of breath and voice in the body. In Chari's discussion of the potential of the somatic voice for embodied democracy, she follows Ginther in collapsing the political and somatic voice into each other. For Chari, in engaging the voice somatically, one understands how the *VOICING*'s "resonant vibrations (...) channeled through various tonalities and breaths, begin to potentiate subtle movement within one's physical body" (Chari, 2021:199). Through this experience, the perception of "vocal resonance then becomes a simultaneous perception of somatic resonance" (2021:199), which creates a continuity between the two. Chari's concept of 'intercorporeality' emerges in this perception of continuity, by extending it to the space between bodies "which is not delimited by an individualized form of consciousness or

perception” (2021:201). While drawing from American somatics pioneer Emilie Conrad’s notion of the *somatic field*, Chari understands *intercorporeality* as “a matrix of non-linguistic, resonant, embodied communication that happens in the interstitial tissue between bodies moving in space” (2021:202). Thus, through Chari’s *intercorporeality*, I understand how vocal resonance always implicates the *body-MOVING-land*. This infers in *VOICING* both concepts of *intercorporeality* (in-between spaces of moving bodies) and *intervocality* (the voice’s intrinsic relational elements).

My practice of deep-listening tuned into *intercorporeal* spaces and cultivated presence through breath awareness. This awareness simultaneously enabled the process of offering through singing and song, while bringing my attention to the central role of the breath in processes of *VOICING*. Present in PaR and many performance and somatic modalities is the engagement of breath as a vehicle through which to sense and affect the *intercorporeal* space. This potential for breath (and by extension voice) to affect the space in-between, is significantly explored through the concept of *rasa*. The theory of *rasa* stems from Indian ritual modalities and Sanskrit performance traditions (Srinivas, 2018:72; Matchett, 2016:2), in which felt perception moderates resonant relationships within performance encounters (Srinivas, 2018:72).

In Western theatre practices, the concept of *rasa* has been vastly explored through the theory of Rasaesthetics<sup>22</sup>. In this theory, *rasa* is a sensation experienced in the bodies of both the performer and the audience, and involves nine emotional states<sup>23</sup> (Matchett, 2016:4). Here the engagement of breath in performance is a *rasic* methodology, that perceives it as a catalyst for a “contagion of consciousness” between performer and audience (Chawla in Gandhi, 2014:75). Hence in my practice of walking, the principles of engaging my breathing and of ‘gravitational contagion’ (Acogny, 2003:14-16), are amplified through the understanding of breath as a medium for exchange of affect and felt-sensation between bodies. South African practitioner-scholar Sara Matchett, understands that “[t]he *rasa* (felt sensation) gives rise to the *bhava* (emotional expression)” through the engagement of breath (2016:62). Thus the

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<sup>22</sup> American performance studies scholar Richard Schechner, has systematised the rasas in Western theatre practices through his theory of Rasaesthetics, which combines *rasa* theory with theories of neurobiology and psychology (Matchett, 2016:74). Schechner’s Rasaesthetics includes practices such as the Rasabox exercise, which I came in contact with through my training at UCT Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies in Cape Town, as well as through a residency at the Forgotten Angle Theatre Collective in Mpumalanga.

<sup>23</sup> Namely: love, laughter, sadness, anger, bravery, fear, disgust, wonder, and peace (Matchett, 2016:4).

theory of *rasa* recognises breath as the relational mode through which to access, sense and navigate *intercorporeal* space.

Cahill and Hamel go deep into the anatomical movement of breath within *VOICING*, in order to emphasise its bodily and material quality (2022:18). This allows my discussion of *VOICING* to also emphasise the material environment that is implicated in the genesis process of the voice. Hence “[v]ocal sound may be experienced acoustically and spatially”, and can be “‘felt’ and ‘heard’ simultaneously in a multisensory integration that aids in gathering consistent environmental information” (Cahill&Hamel, 2022:18). This inherent sensorial integration of hearing and feeling through *VOICING*, echoes Phalafala’s earlier discussion of hearing/feeling as a relational and onto-epistemological mode of sensate perception. The focus on the internal experience of *VOICING* (whether anatomical, somatic or vibrational), is conflated with the discussion of its intrinsically relational quality (whether between breaths, people, environments or cultures). The immanent role of the breath seems to be at the centre of this connection between the internal and the environmental.

In my experience of *VOICING*, there is an ontological correspondence between Phalafala’s onto-triadic notion of guided mobility, and the somatic idea that Matchett, Chari and Ginther allude to, in which *VOICING* is “the art of guiding the body” (Di Matteo, 2015:91). The breath is crucial in many practices that aim to cultivate somatic awareness and the experience of *intercorporeality* (see Sellers-Young, 2021:18; Adams, 2013:71; Matchett, 2016; Zarrilli, 2009:22; Chari, 2021; Ginther, 2021). But the breath, in many indigenous onto-triadic cosmologies, is also intrinsically related with notions of wind, spirit, life force, and consciousness, not only through the concept of *rasa* but also through concepts such as *uMoya* (Phalafala, 2024a:92).

Drawing from Southern African languages/cosmologies, Phalafala’s understanding of *uMoya* encompasses both the life force that courses through living bodies, and the spirit that lives on through the living dead. *uMoya* also manifests as wind which “moves rivers to confluence with oceans”, gathering land with the cosmos while carrying “sounds and echoes beyond geographical and temporal borders”. *uMoya* is thus “the internal structuring logic of the ecosomatics-geopoetics matrix” (Phalafala, 2024a:92). By establishing continuities between body, breath, spirit, land and cosmos, while simultaneously acknowledging their

interconnection with the movement of “sounds and echoes”, Phalafala also encompasses in such continuities the interdependence between voice and breath discussed earlier. The intrinsic motion of the breath in this worldsense, also relates to my earlier mentions of movement being a primal mode of perception. In the conception of the *body-MOVING-land*, breath comes into play through *VOICING*, not simply as movement but as the animate force that connects all life. In centralising practices of *VOICING* with the land in my research, I experienced the *intercorporeal* spaces that connect movements of breath within both body and environment. It is through the discussion of breath as *uMoya* that I amplify *VOICING* towards its relational system of *resonance*.

*Resonance* can be understood “as an experiential state in which the movements of self and other enter a zone of indistinction without altogether erasing the perceptual boundary between self and other” (Chari, 2021:205). Hence, through breath and voice, we are able to enter into resonant relationship with the world. German sociologist Hartmut Rosa acknowledges the breath as “the most fundamental [bodily] process of metabolic exchange between subject and world” (2019:53). But voice, according to him, is how “we enter into responsive relationship with the world” (2019:63). Such responsiveness is fostered by the understanding that “resonance is possible only between two bodies or entities that are at once open enough to enter into a relationship and stable or closed enough to develop their own particular frequency” (Rosa, 2019:184).

In a sense, the world has its own voice to which we respond to by voicing, and our voicing is intrinsically dependent on our processes of becoming through the body and its breath. *Resonance* expresses a specific mode of relationality in which there is an experiential understanding of interconnectedness between self and other, subject and world, and body and land. Rosa affirms that the framework of resonance allows an understanding of “the ways in which body and world are always already intertwined and interwoven” (Rosa, 2019:66) which echoes Chari’s “zone of indistinction” between self and other. This is a dynamic experience of wholeness with the world that can also be articulated through Phalafala’s onto-triadic sense of totality with the living cosmos, “in which the living are governed by responsibility for one another, the living dead, and the not-yet-born” (Phalafala, 2024a:97).

This totality is a process of collective becoming that implies an awareness of *intercorporeal* space and recognises the dynamic quality of *uMoya*.

Considering *resonance* as part of the *torus* motion of *VOICING*, I move towards the engagement of *resonance* as a relational modality of the *body-MOVING-land*. This required the somatic and experiential understanding of resonance through *VOICING* in my practice, and is what allows for the *torus* motion of *body-VOICING-resonance* to emerge. With this said, it is important to mention that both Chari and Rosa, go deeper in their discussion of resonance theory to characterise the different qualities of resonant relationships. The scope of this paper does not allow me to engage further, but I (provisionally) believe that the quality of resonant relationship that aligns with the cosmology of *uMoya*, is what Chari discusses as “receptive resonance” (2021:209). By receptive she means that it “opens subjects up to a perception of intercorporeal space, decentering the bounded, atomized forms of subjectivity predominant in neoliberal society” (Chari, 2021:209). This creates other “forms of collective subjectivity” through its “open[ing] and intensif[ication of the] ‘acknowledgement’ of others” (Chari, 2021:208-209).

Underlying the need for a theory that is based on *resonance*, is a critique of how modernity and capitalism foster a certain conditioning of relationships in/with the world. In this sense, Chari and Rosa’s call for emphasising practices and policies that cultivate resonant relationships, expresses the need for a “re-enchantment of the world” (Garuba, 2003). This re-enchantment acknowledges and challenges “the changes in attitudes and practices occasioned by increasingly secular rationalization of the world brought about by modernity and the rise of capitalism” (Garuba, 2003:266). Nigerian-born poet/scholar Harry Garuba resonates the onto-triad when proposing that re-enchanting the world implicates “a process whereby ‘magical elements of thought’ are not displaced but, on the contrary, continually assimilate new developments in science, technology, and the organization of the world within a basically ‘magical’ worldview” (2003:267).

Garuba’s proposal is grounded in the ways that Eurocentric modernity is manifesting in societies that embody and enact the *animist unconscious*<sup>24</sup> – a notion that is resonant with

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<sup>24</sup> *animist unconscious* “is a form of collective subjectivity that structures being and consciousness in predominantly animist societies and cultures” (Garuba, 2003:269).

Phalafala's onto-triadic conception of being. In this sense, Garuba draws attention to a different response to modernity or "disenchantment" that is grounded in African geopolitical and sociological manifestations. This response entails "a persistent re-enchantment" in which "the rational and scientific are appropriated and transformed into the mystical and magical" (Garuba, 2003:267). I thus situate the *body-VOICING-resonance*, in this worldsense which simultaneously negotiates the rational and the magical, while being grounded in onto-triadic ontologies of the African continent.

Garuba highlights that this re-enchantment is a continual motion that resists and subverts Western modernity paradigms (2003:283-285). This not only evokes my ritualised practice but also speaks to the circular, persistent and atemporal principles present in ritual practices of many societies of the global south. It returns us to Phalafala's transmission mode of the sound knowledges from the matriarchive, mentioned earlier (and further elaborated later). Ritual is thus one of the modes in which re-enchantment is enacted. At the centre of the word enchantment, "is the word *to chant* or *to sing*", hence "[t]o be enchanted is to be in song" (Schrei, 2019d), and to re-enchant suggests a persistent ontology of singing or more broadly, *VOICING*. Hence, there is an implication of the *body-VOICING-resonance* in ritual practices of continual re-enchantment. The potential and effectiveness of ritual is discussed in resonance theory, as a means to amplify resonance in human relationships to other humans, to things or beings, and to a totality that perceives existence "above or beyond the individual, in which the world itself in a way maintains its own voice" (Rosa, 2019:195).

Srinivas emphasises the "durability of ritual" in its creative ethical practices which function as "an anti-alienation strategy to combat the stresses of modern living" (2018:31). Here she speaks directly to Garuba's continual re-enchantment of the world and echoes the onto-triad when stating that "[r]itual makes manifest what exists but usually remains unseen" (Srinivas, 2018:141). Enchantment as I experienced in my practice was evoked through the sense of wonder. Srinivas engages her analysis of ritual through her proposed anthropology of wonder. Hence, wonder becomes an onto-triadic notion in which "[one] suddenly can *see*" and be made "aware of the intersubjective ties of the universe" (Shastri in Srinivas, 2018:151). According to Srinivas, re-enchantment is enacted through rituals of wonderment, as "[w]onder undoes older ontological assumptions of dystopic visions and creates new joy-filled

ways of being that enables localities, to see further, to enjoy more, to experiment repeatedly, to improvise and create” (2018:212).

This allows me to bring the broader notions of re-enchantment deeper into the *body-MOVING-land*, by emphasising the role of ritual as a creative catalyst for wonder. Schrei articulates this implication by linking the relational systems of *land* with *resonance*, in which “enchanted land (...) is land that has been sung to and honoured over many, many years through the repetitive ritual of song. (...) [and] land that has had its own song listened to and sung back to it” (Schrei, 2019d).

Re-enchantment and wonder were simultaneously evoked through the *body-VOICING-resonance* in my practice that combined both deep-listening and *VOICING* in a ritualised manner. Srinivas highlights the role of ritual in providing a space “from which to contemplate [modernity’s] precariousness, and to generate new ways of thinking” (Srinivas, 2018:207). She echoes the need for fostering and validating onto-epistemologies and cosmologies that “fashion wonder, [i]n both discourse and practice, in order to cultivate radical hope” (2018:215). Thus, the *torus* motion of *body-VOICING-resonance*, became a challenge for me to attempt to develop practices and concepts that encourage “a strategic consideration of the possibilit[ies] of creativity and wonder” (2018:36). This for me meant that I needed to further explore the possibilities of *VOICING* in my practice, in ways that resonated the onto-triad and invited wonder.

## PRACTICE: Engaging *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING*

*Fitzmaurice Voicework | Vocal-Movement Meditations (VMM) | Tracing | Loop Station*

As implied in its name, this practice is an inquiry towards the integration of *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING* in my performance practice, which inspired the *torus* conceptualisation. This has involved a continuous expansion of what I call Vocal-Movement Meditations (or VMM). This is a practical exploration of voice and breath as the primary impulses for movement creation that manifests interdependence between *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING*.

Chari best articulates my experience of VMM through the practice of Continuum Movement<sup>25</sup>, in which

dwelling in sensation, one alternates between sounding into the body and into the space, and then pausing in states of open attention, where one listens with receptivity to the sensations that emerge in the body as the echoes of sound (...). [This] allows movement and sensation to emerge (...) from one moment to the next. (Chari, 2021:199-200)

I consider memories part of the sensations that emerge through the body, hence my VMM often involved a kind of vocal remembering through singing, vocal sounds and unintelligible speech patterns. These [vocalisations](#) would then influence my postures, gestures, and quality of walk depending on what I was *REMEMBERING*. VMM explore the body as the medium for sensing our relationship to the world and, through it, accessing and/or generating relational knowledge. This echoes my earlier discussion of sensate perception – intrinsic to the bodily processes of *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING* – while acknowledging the potential for resonance in our relationships to the world.

Before engaging in my VMM, I would often warm up using components from Fitzmaurice Voicework® (FV), which is a modality “that unites the body, breath, imagination, and voice for effective and meaningful communication” (The Fitzmaurice Voice Institute, 2018). I use the Fitzmaurice Voicework Deconstructing sequence (FVD)<sup>26</sup> in combination with either listening to audio-recordings of my family ([MINOR](#)) or recordings of me reading a performance text about my mother ([ONE-PERSON](#)). This warm up is inspired by Matchett’s practice of generating images for performance-making. As part of this practice, Matchett uses FVD combined with free-writing and verbal prompting. This practically entails having the person doing the FVD while responding to the verbal prompting of a partner by “verbally articulat[ing] what images and experiences emerg[e]” – what Matchett calls “a verbal stream of consciousness” (Matchett, 2016:112-113).

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<sup>25</sup> A somatic practice created by American somatics pioneer Emily Conrad, that “works directly with vocal resonance and with the materiality of vocal sounds to engage with embodied sensation and to orient practitioners to intercorporeal space” (Chari, 2021:199). Continuum Movement can also be engaged with as a “form of therapeutic practice” and is argued for by Chari to be significant for “a critical vocal-movement practice for conceptualizing embodied democratic practices” (2021:198).

<sup>26</sup> The FV Deconstructing sequence “involves placing the body into certain modified yoga postures to physically induce a tremor” and then “allow the spontaneous ‘surprise’ breath to flow through the body” and “‘fall’ out in the shape of ‘fluffy’ deconstructed sound” (Matchett, 2016:47).

Inspired by this approach, during my practice of FVD I used the recordings as my (verbal and sonic) prompts that would then be vocally articulated and explored through VMM. These VMM in a way could be a process of stream of consciousness, not necessarily verbal, but almost always vocal. Thus, my warm up practice of FVD allowed me to amplify the experience of voice as vibration in the body, and to cultivate a sense of embodied communication or rather, of dialogic *REMEMBERING* through *VOICING* in my VMM. It is this process that manifested in my research Cahill and Hamel's notion of *intervocality*, in which *VOICING* was influenced by my memories of my social context and the ways that I had been enculturated.

Through this exploration of *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING*, my voice seemed to gain consistency through the sounding into and through the space. The VMM cultivated a sense of spaciousness in the body, and the breath expanded the body's resonant spaces<sup>27</sup> in which the voice reverberated sensation. This felt-resonance that was experienced simultaneously in the body and the space, catalysed the understanding of the interdependence of *VOICING* as both a medium for expansion of my individual 'feeling field', as well as a medium for cultivating awareness of *intercorporeal* space.

There was a reoccurrence of textures, things and materials in the memories evoked. Hence I occasionally incorporated the use of Laban's Effort actions<sup>28</sup> in my VMM to explore the materiality of the voice and movement. An example of this was in the ONE-PERSON process, where I used the effort actions of floating, wringing, pressing, gliding and flicking, to support my exploration of the memories of my mother and I [kneading paper-maché](#)<sup>29</sup>. This gave me a tool to integrate a performance text – which made use of movement qualities to describe emotions – with the semi-structured improvisations of my VMM. Here the [text](#) was a kind of tracing that grounded and/or prompted the *REMEMBERING* through VMM; all the while the

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<sup>27</sup> I call this body chambers, which were specific bodily spaces of felt resonance in the body that were activated by breath, voice, and body posture or movement. Improvising with body chambers is another aspect of my practice of VMM.

<sup>28</sup> Laban effort actions are eight specific qualities of movement based on three factors (weight, time and space) systematised by Hungarian dance artist Rudolf von Laban. He identified them as: floating, dabbing, wringing, thrusting, pressing, flicking, slashing and gliding (Ewan & Sagosky, 2019:75-78). This system is also used as a voice work tool in order to expand the dynamic and embodied aspects of voicing (Adrian, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> A composite material that is often comprised of pieces of paper, water and an adhesive or starch substance. In the way I make it, I mainly use water and paper, with a bit of starch-base glue that is diluted in the water. I either knead the mixture with my hands (the reference in this memory), or soak paper strips in the water-glue mixture then layer them on a mold or surface.

VMM expanded the meaning and feeling field of the text into my body and the space through circularity and resonance.

My VMM practice developed a sense of sonic wandering, as it often manifested the motion of walking in the space while being affected by sensations and guided by memories. This, particularly in the [MINOR](#), created spatial pathways of the remembering that approached memories, materials and voices as part of the ecology through which I moved. Later, the sonic wandering was further expanded through my exploration of *VOICING* into and through the space in combination with the use of a loop station<sup>30</sup>. This was inspired by a creative collaboration with South African multidisciplinary artist Sisonke Papu, in which we would vocalise through the task of creating and maintaining what we called '[endless songs](#)'. These endless songs required us to use the loop station to create and stay with one song, by continually adding layers and finding new sonic opportunities within it. This evoked a sense of collective singing similar to the sense of walking with many, while cultivating wonder within the circular repetition of vocal patterns.

This process highlighted a kind of “relational attunement” that “occurs through the medium of vocal resonance” (Chari, 2021:204), which enabled us to wander aurally and sonically through the space. I briefly explored this notion of relational attunement in the *MEDIUM*, by collaborating with South African performance artists Meghan Harris and Cebolenkosi Zuma. In this [collaboration](#) we shared wanderings through forest and ocean ecologies, and used our aural and textural memories of them to construct our sonic relationship in the studio. Through walking and vocal resonance, we attuned and explored the sense of *intercorporeal* space in order to find and communicate with each other sonically.

In the [ONE-PERSON](#), I used the loop station to foster a sense of circularity between memory and imagination, while combining my vocalisations with body movements. Though the text in this performance expressed a relationship to a mother, based on my memories, what the performance explored was the in-betweenness of my identity. In the traces of both of my lineages, are Euro-colonial and African indigenous legacies that are somehow able to converse, converge and transform in my body through *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING*. This has space

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<sup>30</sup> A plug-in device in sound equipment that records sound in tracks and plays them back live in a loop. It also enables the layering of soundtracks on top of each other.

for further exploration of nuance and complexity in my research, but the feeling-field of convergence of ancestral lines demanded an “interweaving of two modalities of being and knowing” (Phalafala, 2024a:19). And this led me to lean into *hearing/feeling* modes of being, to create a performance that prioritised the aural and the textural experience of memory.

Through *VOICING* I seem to re-member<sup>31</sup> pathways that fill the space between perceived dualities, while allowing for guided mobility as living memory, to orient the ways in which I come to know and relate to self, things, others and land. Hence *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING* can be a practical engagement with wonder that allows me “to mine the unknown and invite the mysterious in order to arrive at a different kind of knowing”. (Srinivas, 2018:213). This speaks to re-enchantment as a constant re-articulation of a way of being which implicates the “space between the lost past and envisioned future, as sites for a necessary genesis of wonder” (2018:9).

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<sup>31</sup> My use of the term ‘re-membering’ imbued in *REMEMBERING* is informed by South African practitioner-scholar Rehane Abrahams’ discussion, which entails an interweaving of re-membering as: (1) gathering and restoring the fragmentation of body caused by colonialism; (2) a form of recollection that is not limited to historical facts; and (3) a slow process of self-reconstitution that emerges through ritual (Abrahams, 2017:10).

## *body – REMEMBERING – knowledge*

“longing for a lost time or place implies the possibility of finding it again”

- Tulasi Srinivas (2018:80).

Memory is a catalyst in my research, as it forced me to expand my initial static understandings of body and voice. Hence in elaborating on this motion of the *torus*, I am engaging with a crucial aspect for all my conceptualisations thus far. Memory was at the foundation of approaching the body as inherently knowledgeable in my practice. This conceptual point of departure resonates from an earlier encounter with the work of South African practitioner-scholar Athena Fatseas in 2018. She premises the *body-as-archive* by acknowledging that the body becomes itself through its continuous and dynamic ‘recording’ of its relationships to itself and the world (Fatseas, 2009:51). Through her lenses, the *body-MOVING-land* is simultaneously “an archive, in that it is fundamentally a manifestation of the experiences that have fashioned it” (2009:58). In a similar tone, South African practitioner-scholar Alan Parker engages the *body-as-archive* in his discussion of memory. Parker draws from French philosopher Henri Bergson, when stating that:

memory is understood in phenomenological terms where (...) an interdependency is recognised amongst the mind, body and memory, and between processes of knowing and sensing where a bodily being in the world is understood as a way of knowing and where perception, through the body’s senses, always involves ‘some work of our memory, and consequently, of our consciousness’. (Parker, 2020:113)

Fatseas and Parker’s discussion allows for an expanded understanding of memory, that recognises an onto-epistemology of *body-MOVING-land*. In my practice, there is a correlation between sensate perception, memory and a kind of knowing. Similarly, there are echoes of the notion of *body-as-archive* within Matchett’s research of the body as site for generating images for performance-making. Matchett engages with the somatic experience of memory through her notion of “body biography”. She affirms that the body can access states it has occupied “from womb to the present”, which are stored “as somatic patterns that can produce memories or images that are non-cognitive or forgotten” (Matchett, 2016:123). Informing both Fatseas’ *body-as-archive* and Matchett’s *body biography* is the work of Portuguese

neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. In his somatic marker hypothesis he infers that these “body-states” become references of an archive that “guid[es] our reactions to new situations” (Blair, 2009:95). Through this neuroscientific lens, memory is ingrained in the process of continual becoming of body, in which its archive is “an active and constantly shifting entity” (Fatseas, 2009:49). This discussion affirms my practical understanding of memory as something that goes beyond an exclusively cognitive process, towards a dynamic bodily existence that remembers through its movement and resonance with the world.

### **Memory as experience of song**

I am drawn to describe memory as an experience driven by and filled with sensate perception. Informed by my practice of *VOICING*, I expand on this description of memory by using the analogy of song. A song is an experience that carries in itself sensorial perception, relational motions, material implications and magical elements. Through the analogy of song, memory is inclusive of its bodily processes, without neglecting the magical elements that link it not only to processes of the imagination but, more importantly, to the onto-triadic conception of being. Song enables me to understand memory within the motion of *body-VOICING-resonance* – that entailed ritualised practice – due to its entanglement with temporality. I allude to the process of enchantment as “be[ing] in song” (Schrei, 2019d) to highlight the ways in which memory continuously becomes in the present moment through a body ontology. In this way, the dynamic and relational aspects of *body-VOICING-resonance* implicated in my analogy of memory as song, echo (to a certain extent) the *body-as-archive*. Through recognising that “there is no ‘past’ in somas” (Fatseas, 2009:49), the *body-as-archive* continuously voices an ever-present song that transgresses linear notions of time.

Using song as a means to describe memory, is an open-ended conceptual engagement that I employ here simply to emphasise the possible onto-triadic elements in my experience of memory, while highlighting a point in which different and seemingly opposing paradigms could potentially intersect. Influenced by my practice of [endless songs](#), it suffices to say that a song can often feel timeless; it can also transport us to a perceived past and/or shift our attention towards what is yet to come; all the while grounding us in sensate perception of the present moment. It is this experiential description of song that aptly reverberates in my conceptualisation of memory.

## Memory as experience of Time

The experience of time is central in understanding the ways that continuous and circular indigenous paradigms operate when compared to the more compartmentalizing and linear Euro-colonial modern paradigms (Phalafala, 2017). At the foundation of this temporality is the understanding that “it is through the activity of remembering that memories are *forged*” (Ingold, 2000:148). Phalafala goes deep into onto-triadic notions of *REMEMBERING* through her discussions of Kgositsile’s temporal formations of “NOW, future memory, coil of time, and pastpresentfuture” (Phalafala, 2024a:22). There is much complexity to each of these temporal formations which is beyond my engagement of them in this explication, but relevant to my practices of *REMEMBERING* is Phalafala’s emphasis on a kind of circular continuity. Within this continuity “[t]he future is grounded in the possibilities of recovering the past” (Phalafala, 2017:41), and thus “memory (...) is in all times, enfolding the past with the future in the NOW” (Phalafala, 2020:44). This “co-presence” of past, present and future is what Rosa calls “vibrant time” which underpins resonant experiences (Rosa, 2019a:30’10”).

African cosmologies seem to be rooted in the worldsense of circular time<sup>32</sup>, which offers a conceptualisation of *REMEMBERING* that actively engages its *living* quality (Phalafala, 2020:41). Within my attempt to trace remembering pathways in the MINOR, I was confronted by the fluid, messy and evolving qualities of my memories. Memory had a living quality that enabled processes of remembering to be continuously catalysed and transformed through a range of relationships as well as vocal interactions happening in the present moment. This opposes the static and frozen understanding of memory as something that was *lived* in a distant, often unrecoverable, dead past. In their practice of improvising with the vocal soma, Ginther describes a vocal exploration that evoked a dialogue between a memory of their Korean mother and Ginther, and their imagined encounter with her adoptive mother (2021:105). Ginther’s *VOICING* alludes to the notion of *living* memory in its experience of circularity and continuity between past, present, and future. This further echoes the analogy of memory as song, because sound (in this case voice) “facilitates the disordering of time”

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<sup>32</sup> This includes Phalafala’s discussions of Southern African temporalities (2017) as well as the Akan philosophical concept of *Sankofa* – “‘san’ (return), ‘ko’ (go), and ‘fa’ (take)” (Jackson, 2020) often translated as *go back to fetch it*, but the term also forms part of an Akan proverb which roughly translates to “it is not taboo to go back and fetch your past when you forget” (Yeboah, 2021:149).

(Phalafala, 2024a:23). Ginther was able to experience memory in its onto-triadic motion of circularity and continuity, which expresses “[d]esire’ [as] an articulation of a memory of the future” (Phalafala, 2020:44). This creates continuity between processes of memory and imagination.

Matchett actively engages this point of continuity by recognising the potential of *body biography* to generate new images (Matchett, 2016:38). Whether from a somatic point of view or a cosmological point of view, *REMEMBERING* through *VOICING* manifests a distortion of linear time while embracing circular continuity. What the somatic experience of this continuity offers us as beings *hummaning* in the world, is a potential point of access to resonate ourselves as onto-triadic beings. Through *body-VOICING-resonance*, Ginther activated the ontology of *body-MOVING-land* in order to re-member “aspects of [their] embodied transracialized identity that are difficult to reconcile” (Ginther, 2021:108). Ginther’s experience expresses a driving element for my research practice, that continually attempts to reconcile the complexities of my identity.

Resonating in the motion of *REMEMBERING* is the onto-triadic understanding that merges history with possibility. This reverberates the notion that we follow our ancestors into the future. Ingold articulates this *living* memory by connecting the notions of belonging and becoming in relation to our ancestors. He states that

we long for the ancestors, but because of our longing (...) we also belong... And so too, people of the coming generation in following their elders, become the persons they are. There can be no becoming without coming or no belonging without longing. (Ingold, 2023:35’50”)

Ingold touches on an onto-triadic sense which implies that in being guided by our ancestors we become ourselves and through that we come to belong. This echoes Phalafala’s notion of guided mobility, which in my practice is enabled by the motion of *REMEMBERING*. But Ingold’s discussion also expresses my thematic engagement with longing belonging in the [ONE-PERSON](#). Hence, in *REMEMBERING* my mother and grandmother I arrived at explorations of concepts of longing and belonging intrinsic to relational knowledge.

## Memory as experience of Knowledge

Ingold's understanding of how memories are forged, implicates the movement of the body through the world, and a becoming through our ancestors. Embedded in this remembering and becoming is the understanding that we come to a kind of knowing through following others, which will then inform the others who follow us. This implies that "the growth of knowledge is, at one and the same time, the production of memory" (Ingold, 2000:148). Through sensate perception and *VOICING*, my *REMEMBERING* engaged my body's intelligence and inherent relational knowledge.

Aboriginal author Tyson Yunkaporta offers an interesting framework through which to understand *REMEMBERING* (as I experienced in my practice), by connecting to indigenous ways of knowing. I draw primarily from Yunkaporta's notion of the interdependent five minds – namely *kinship-mind*, *story-mind*, *dreaming-mind*, *ancestor-mind* and *pattern-mind* (Yunkaporta, 2019:107). When it comes to an onto-triadic understanding of memory, I first invoke Yunkaporta's notion of *kinship-mind* which implies that "nothing exists outside of a relationship to something else" (2019:107) and thus infers "a way of improving and preserving memory in [the] relationships with others" (2019:106). In this light memory, like voice, is amplified through their relational motions. I also invoke Yunkaporta's *ancestor-mind* which is "characterised by complete concentration, engagement and losing track of linear time" (2019:108). It potentially involves "immersive visualisation and extra-cognitive learning such as revealed knowledge in dreams and inherited knowledge in cellular memory" (2019:108).

With *kinship-mind* and *ancestor-mind* I articulate the relational and onto-triadic aspects of *REMEMBERING*, while acknowledging its potential for *knowledge* transmission – generating the *torus* motion of *body-REMEMBERING-knowledge*. This dynamic and continuous correspondence of memory and *knowledge* through acts of *REMEMBERING*, inhabits a central role in Phalafala's conceptualisation of the matriarchive. It activates the motion of *body-VOICING-resonance* as it "centralizes relationality and dialogic structures of being and becoming in knowledge production" (Phalafala, 2024a:7). The matriarchive also implicates the *body-MOVING-land*, in its acknowledgement of *land* that becomes home, through rituals of placemaking that infer belonging to all ecologies of an "internetworked living world" (2024a:66). Thus, through the matriarchive, "memory is 'living and thinking' in everyday life,

is agential and materializes with the ‘host’ as an enfolding – as opposed to unfolding – agent throughout their becoming” (2024a:66).

Phalafala’s matriarchive is an alternative and resistance to western patrilineal conceptions of the archive. She locates the matriarchive within a Black worldsense and the resonance of “domestically specific matrilineally inherited influences, values, wisdom, relational subjectivities, philosophies and aesthetics.” (Phalafala, 2020:733). This seems to clarify my first catalysing experience of *REMEMBERING* my Mozambican paternal grandmother in my practice of *wandering* through ecology; as well as the mnemonic motif of the Xitswa language in my initial explorations of memory through *VOICING*. My memories seemed to mainly reference aural experiences as well as matrilineal relationships. The primacy that Phalafala gives to Black women, implicates in my critical engagement of *body-REMEMBERING-knowledge*, a practice of “vigilant memory”<sup>33</sup> which “seeks ‘liberation from repetition of the alienation of slavery and colonization’” (Phalafala, 2020:735).

In her deployment of ontologies of *hearing/feeling*, Phalafala emphasizes sound knowledges as the main mode of transmission and manifestation of the matriarchive. In the concept of sound knowledges, the word ‘sound’ is a reference to both the adjective for ‘reliable’ or ‘holding acceptable views’; and the sonic as a realm that “foregrounds feelings and affectivity as legitimate sources of knowledge” (Phalafala, 2024a:17). Within sound knowledge, body onto-epistemologies are in constant interaction with *acoustemologies* in their “knowing-in-action: knowing-with and knowing-through the audible” (Feld, 2015:12). These knowledges “enshrine” indigenous ontologies enacted in the “homeplace” and “materialize in [the matrilineal members’] progenies’ lives and ongoing becoming.” (Phalafala, 2024a:6). Thus, this aspect of the matriarchive orients and defines the *torus* motion of *body-REMEMBERING-knowledge*. Memory here circulates through matrilineal bodies and voices in their resonant and guided processes of *REMEMBERING* and self-formation. They become knowledge not through accumulation nor excavation – which echo Euro-colonial archival practices – but through their ritual re-enchantment and relational living that is oriented towards the future.

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<sup>33</sup> Phalafala borrows this understanding of ‘vigilant memory’ from South African writer Ezekiel Mphahlele.

In considering the implication of *knowledge* in processes of *REMEMBERING*, my practice of using technology and materials, also highlighted the ways in which such processes materialise in society. Hence, I return to Garuba's notion of the *animist unconscious* mentioned earlier, to elucidate the generative power that lies between knowledge and world. In many ways, Phalafala's conception of the matriarchive, manifests the *animist unconscious* – "a form of collective subjectivity that structures being and consciousness in predominantly animist societies and cultures" (Garuba, 2003:269).

This is the way in which animism as a form of thinking and being "spiritualizes the object world"(2003:267), while simultaneously materializing the world through its "fugitive materialist practice[s]" (2003:268). Garuba argues that animist thought gives "the spirit a local habitation" in which "the objects are the physical and material manifestations of the gods and spirits" (2003:267). In this way objects carry and acquire "a social and spiritual meaning within the culture far in excess of their natural properties and their use value" (2003:267). Thus the *animist unconscious* emulates the amplification of resonance and drives the "materiality of cultural production" that affects bodies and impacts culture (2003:268). This is what Garuba calls *animist materialism*, which enables my understanding of *body-REMEMBERING-knowledge* to resonate a relation to the material world.

### **Memory as experience of Materiality**

Garuba's animist "*materialization of ideas*" (2003:273), brings attention to a quality of materiality in my conceptualisation of memory. I use Ingold's discussion of materiality – in which materials are recognised as processes of matter in flow (2010:8) – to articulate the ways that memory is materialised and/or re-membered in my [practice](#). Ingold acknowledges that *things* are form-giving processes of gathering or entanglement of the movement of materials. Hence, creative practices that generate *things* – such as artmaking or cooking – are practices of "join[ing] with and follow[ing] the forces and flows of material" (Ingold, 2010:10). In certain societies, the onto-triadic ontology and *animist unconscious* act subliminally on the materialisation of the world, hence memory and *knowledge* circulate and emerge through their cultural practices of making and relating to *things*. These can be understood as practices of *REMEMBERING*, which affirm that in the process of following the flow of materials, one can

enter into resonant relationship with them and be guided through the memory of *REMEMBERING* knowledge.

This flow between the tangible and the intangible is a quality of indigenous thinking articulated through Yunkaporta's *dreaming-mind* (Yunkaporta, 2019:107). It acknowledges the use of "metaphors to work with knowledge" which through practical action – or *REMEMBERING* – generates "communication between physical and non-physical worlds" (2019:107). *Dreaming-mind* alludes to *kinship-mind* mentioned earlier, in the recognition of life in materials and the knowledge/memory that inhabits our relationship to them. This is illustrated in many practices that embody indigenous cosmologies, such as Aboriginal wood carving traditions (Yunkaporta, 2019:19); or the role of masks in African ritual practices (Phalafala, 2024a:137). These practices "collapse the borders between living and dead, seen and unseen, spirit and material, and past and future, suturing them together" (2024a:137). It is even illustrated in matriarchival practices of the household such as cooking or basket-weaving, that Ingold refers to as a practice of following materials (Ingold, 2010:9). Materials – just like sound – and their form-giving processes of *REMEMBERING*, also become technologies "to facilitate inhabiting the manifold of the onto-triad" (Phalafala, 2024a:137). In this *REMEMBERING*, sound and *things* are onto-triadic technologies that "act as [the] materiality of wonder" in their relentless "acknowledge[ment of] the fluidity of the world" (Srinivas, 2018:150-151).

It is through these technologies that the matriarchive operates and establishes itself as an onto-epistemological force that subverts oppressive and dominating Euro-colonial, Euro-patriarchal, capitalist and ocular-centred epistemic paradigms. Through the motion of *body-VOICING-resonance*, I acknowledge the matriarchival rituals of placemaking that are enacted in the materiality of the *body-REMEMBERING-knowledge*. Cultivating matriarchival practices that maintain a future-oriented *REMEMBERING*, fosters a web of reciprocity through sound and *things*. My engagement with materiality through following and offering traces during wanderings, developed into a consistent practice of [tracing](#) through materials, which complemented the *MOVING* and *VOICING* as a form of *REMEMBERING*. Potawatomi botanist/author Robin Kimmerer discusses reciprocity in her reflection on gift economies, in which "[t]he essence of the gift (...) is that it creates a set of relationships" (2013:28), and "we reciprocate the gift by taking care" of such relationships (2013:21). In this way, gifts come with "a bundle of responsibilities' attached" (2013:28).

Through the responsibility of the gift, Kimmerer acknowledges the need for continuity that allows reciprocity to expand into the future, echoing Phalafala's onto-triadic responsibility not only towards the living and the living dead, but simultaneously towards the not-yet-born (Phalafala, 2024a:97). Affirming the responsibility within reciprocity, expands the notion of cultivating resonant relationships, not only towards humans and *things*, but also towards place which implicates the materiality of land. Hence place, in rituals of placemaking refers to the notion of "enchanted land", discussed earlier. It resonates the animist subjectivity which not only "spiritualizes" *things*, but is "constructed on a relationship between object world and a self that is mediated by meaning" (Garuba, 2003:279).

This role of meaning returns us to Kohn's *ecology of selves* which is premised on the principle that "[a]ll life is semiotic and all semiosis is alive" (Kohn, 2013:16). The selfhood of the *selves* emerges from "within this semiotic dynamic as the outcome of a process that produces a new sign that interprets a prior one" (2013:75). There is an implication of relationality through the production of meaning within ecology as well as in the way that animist and onto-triadic ontologies navigate the world. This enables the recognition of selfhood beyond the human. In other words, "[t]he world is also 'enchanted' [and t]hanks to this living semiotic dynamic, *meaning* (i.e. means-ends relations, significance, "aboutness," telos) is a constitutive feature of the world and not just something we humans impose on it" (Kohn, 2013:16). 'Meaning' in Kohn's sense is a relational modality that stretches beyond how humans engage in thought-processes of interpretation, and their consequent understanding of significance or aboutness. *Meaning* is thus a vehicle (a means to an end) through which to actualize relationship and generate processes of becoming (Kohn, 2013:72-74). Within *semiotic* processes, *meaning* itself is what enables a remembering that stretches into the future through reciprocity and responsibility.

Imbedded in the *semiotic* processes of meaning-making (which also exist beyond human interpretation), is an aspect of future-oriented *REMEMBERING*. This is another articulation for Yunkaporta's *pattern-mind* in which, through engaging the *body-REMEMBERING-knowledge*, it is possible to perceive "entire systems, and the trends and patterns within them, to make accurate predictions and find solutions to complex problems" (Yunkaporta, 2019:108). Meaning-making processes are crucial in performance practice but also in creative processes that actively engage *REMEMBERING*. By integrating a practice of following materials in my

performance, I could highlight for the audience, the continuities between “planets, ancestry, waters, earth, and existential self” within a “space of universal exchange” (Warona Sèane, personal communication 2023, December 5). Hence *meaning* was the medium through which guided mobility materialised memory and catalysed wonder in the processes of relationship-building in my performance practice.

### **Memory as Embodied experience**

This conception of memory offers an active engagement and acknowledgement of continuity between humans, *things*, sounds, beings and land. Through the matriarchive, it emphasises practices that centralise resonant relationality in their fostering of reciprocity with land and the more-than-human world. It also integrates the collective and the individual, in its explorations of *body biography* as a relational way of being and becoming with/through human society, the material world and the land. This integration invokes Yunkaporta’s *story-mind*, “which is about the role of narrative in memory and knowledge transmission” (2019:107). *Story-mind* is a “powerful tool for memorisation, particularly when connected meaningfully to place”, in which the knowledge is stored in “stories mapped in the land and reflected in the night sky”, providing a medium through which to challenge “[society’s] grand narratives and histories” (Yunkaporta, 2019:107).

## PRACTICE: Tracing through Materials

*Mementos | Altar-making | Sculpture-making | Tracing*

I became interested in the continuity between leaving traces and following traces, as a form of *REMEMBERING*. My practice of tracing materials enabled an active negotiation of tensions present in my identity, while fostering a continuous integration of different ways of being and knowing. In the *MINOR*, this manifested as an altar-making practice which involved the gathering of specific things and materials, to use their placement and spatial relation as a way to express how I experienced a *REMEMBERING* through them. In the ONE-PERSON the presence and creative engagement with my mother’s shirt as a memento, as well as the exploration of memories of making paper-maché with my mother, informed my exploration of

the materiality and physicality of voice. But more relevant to my conceptual discussion of memory, is the process of [sculpture-making](#) in the [MEDIUM](#), which expressed the notion of following materials as a *REMEMBERING* that integrates the experience of *VOICING* and *MOVING* with/through the world.

The sculpture-making practice involved the creation of paper spheres of 90cm in diameter, through the circular layering of paper-maché over a breath-filled ball. Once the paper dried, the breath would be released and the ball removed, leaving the paper sphere as the trace of the breath. This formed the base layer of all five sculptures, which were then further developed to manifest different aspects of my research. They alluded to the reciprocity imbedded in seeds ('Forest Wanderings' sculpture); the relational and playful attunement between humans and the more-than-human ('Breathsongs' and 'To Human' sculptures); the cosmological movements of the moon and its sound ('Ocean Waters' sculpture); and the ancestral echoes of communication and knowledge transmission ('Family Tracing' sculpture).

For the 'Family tracing' sculpture, I made use of material traces from the [MINOR](#) (i.e. the dry grass from the grandmother altar), as well as of the embodied echoes of a family tree drawing process that informed the [altar-making](#) and the [vocal remembering](#) of the MINOR. The result was a paper sculpture that resembled a bird's nest that held inside it the names from my paternal ancestral lineage. This manifestation was not pre-meditated but rather emerged in the process of following material traces and embodied echoes from my VMM. It reverberated the presence of my grandmother as the matriarch of the family, who had a grass weaving practice and whose most remembered song – in the family's voice-recordings that I used for my VMM – is about a dream of becoming a bird <sup>34</sup>.

This *REMEMBERING* of my paternal grandmother, was in active conversation with the practice of making paper-maché spheres which I remember learning from my mother. The paper-maché sphere was a trace itself that had emerged through tracing something else (my breath). And to this trace, more traces were added or put into conversation in an endless process of creation through following and leaving traces, remembering and imagining, listening and voicing. This

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<sup>34</sup> Translation from Xitswa to English

was not necessarily simply a process of collage, but it was rather a form of wandering through the textures and materials that my memories evoked in my processes of *MOVING* and *VOICING*.

This [sculpture](#) expressed a continuity between ancestral and matrilineal knowledge from seemingly opposing identities and/or cosmologies (white European mother and black African grandmother), which reverberated the integrative potential of the sound knowledges from the matriarchive. Phalafala's conception of the matriarchive was inspired by a performance project spearheaded by Italian scholar Silvana Carotenuto called "Matri-Archive of the Mediterranean"<sup>35</sup> (Phalafala, 2020:733). According to Italian scholar Annalisa Piccirillo, this project sought to create space for "corporeal memories of women's creativity" – often repressed or silenced by official patriarchal archives – and "what' they can 'do/become' via their 'subversive' and 'choreopolitical power'" (Phalafala, 2020:734). Hence, I became invested in "fostering matriarchival thinking" as way of considering

the corporeal memories that emerge from the matriarchive as a 'visionary practice, an imaginary place of methodological analysis, a re-figured locus of deposition and transmission within which female agency generates, composes and performs the poetical difference of creativity and the becoming presence of multiple subjectivities'. (Phalafala, 2020:734)

These corporeal memories from the matriarchive are intrinsically connected to bodily motions of following materials and of being guided through their form-giving processes. This is a kind of material re-membering of knowledge transmitted through matrilineal voices and rituals, as well as a form of *wandering* by following materials.

My engagement with materials also includes the use of the loop station and video projection in my practice. This enabled a cultivation of wonder and resonance while aiding in the integration of *MOVING*, *VOICING* and *REMEMBERING*. In my research, this material technology<sup>36</sup> amplified my exploration of "the [embodied] coexistence of multiple ways of knowing" and allowed "for many realities to share the same conceptual space" (Srinivas, 2018:140). Whether through *VOICING* in circularity and continuity with a loop station (e.g. [endless songs](#)); or through projecting images of ecology in the performance space (e.g. [MEDIUM](#)), technology has enabled me to amplify my practical explorations, catalysing my

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<sup>35</sup> Website of the project: <http://www.matriarchiviomediteraneo.org/home-en/>

<sup>36</sup> My reference to technology here is alluding to the role of physical, mechanical and/or artificial apparatuses that perform specific tasks in my practice. I consider the loop station and the use of video projections as part of these apparatuses.

expressions through textural and aural [world-building](#). This echoes Srinivas recognition of the integrative and emergent role of technology within ritual practices of modern societies (2018:140). The conceptual engagement with the implications of my use of technology for the application of the *torus* in my research is not at the forefront of my exploration, but has nevertheless emerged as a possible aspect for further research.

The link between circularity (following and leaving traces) and creation (thinking through the matriarchive) is evident in reciprocal relations that compose the ecologies through which I wandered, as well as in the relational attunement cultivated through vocal resonance. Through aboriginal cosmologies, Yunkaporta refers to the symbol of a circle with a dot in the centre as representative of cycles of creation and symbolic of mother-child relationship (2019:130). Thus the horn torus<sup>37</sup> shape, used to articulate my thinking, manifests a symbolic convergence and interdependence of the spaciousness of the sphere (which speaks to notions of breath and resonance) with the continuous becoming of the circle with a dot (which speak to the matrilineal and its relational knowledges).

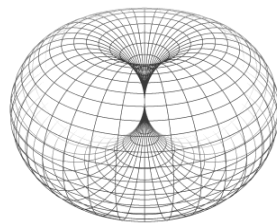


Figure 1.

In this view the torus evokes a sphere shape

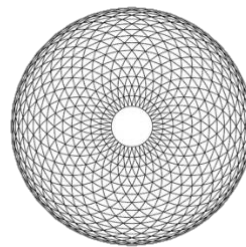


Figure 2.

From an imagined aerial view it resembles a circle with a dot in the centre

In my research, this reveals an interest in a performance practice that is driven by the cultivation of resonant ways of relating and the fostering of a knowing-in-action based on matriarchival sound knowledges.

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<sup>37</sup> Possible etymologies of the word 'torus' are associated with 'a round', or 'swelling', but also with 'to cross', 'go through', 'to spread' and 'to turn' (Wikipedia, 2024a). These etymologies are not all directly traced.

## RETURNING THE WHOLE

Being a mixed-race Mozambican immigrant woman, my embodied experience of the convergence of two seemingly ‘opposing’ ancestral lineages, has placed me in a position where I inhabit the world through embodied negotiation of historical and societal separations/tensions. But as my practice seems to reveal, there is a continuity in these tensions, which can be fostered through an integrative engagement with body, voice and memory as well as their intentional relationship to land and materials. In the articulation of the *torus*, I wish to critically motivate towards “*continuity, not return*” (Phalafala, 2024a:181). I centralise, complicate and integrate the concept of relationality, to perhaps begin uncovering a practice that moves towards “a convergence of worldviews and universals, a coexistence of cosmologies, [and an] interweaving of modalities of being and knowing” (Phalafala, 2024:170).

With the *torus*, I “write what I know, while also, more importantly, I attempt to *write into* what I do not yet know” (Srinivas, 2018:31). The *torus* allows me to perceive and experience relationality through a cultivation of resonance that is orientated by the embodied memory of matrilineal sound knowledges. Within my research practice this fostered interdependence and circularity through the emergence and integration of memory. The *torus* now re-emerges for me as a possibility of becoming an approach through which to integrate *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING* in performance practice.

## GOING FORWARD

For my MA final production – to be showcased in November 2024 – I am interested in the potential of the *torus* to orientate a collaborative creative process with other performers. I aim to collaborate with three other women, who have some form of mixed ancestry as well as a somewhat mixed experience with performance modalities. I am particularly interested in: (1) how to foster a kind of matriarchal thinking in a creative process and (2) how to use resonance as a performance-making tool. I aim to explore these questions, through *MOVING-VOICING-REMEMBERING* and its inherent engagement with ecology, ritualised practice and material traces.

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