



Intimacy [as] and Pedagogy: A Narrative Inquiry of Experiences of Teaching Theatre Performance in Higher Education.

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DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*, in the Graduate Programme in the *School of Education* University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

I, *Ayanda Kabelo Khala-Phiri*, declare that

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“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord...” Jeremiah 29:11.

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Abstract

This study positions teaching theatre performance in higher education as intimacy-producing pedagogy and examines its effect on four teacher-artists and their work. This is given the background of sexual harassment within the South African performing arts industry (Yende, 2021), outlined explicitly within the teaching and learning context of higher education through the autobiographical lens of the primary researcher. Consequently, the research questions focus on the understanding and experiences of intimacy's relationship to theatre pedagogy of research participants in four higher education institutions.

The research participants are referred to as teacher-artists to highlight the merging of the roles of teacher and artist in theatre pedagogy. This convergence of roles is further evidenced as significant in the intersecting of intimacy with pedagogy. Theatre pedagogy is theorised as simultaneously engaged, critical, and embodied. Additionally, intimacy is conceptualised as constructed through teaching [and learning] processes that consistently invoke vulnerability, interaction, self-disclosure, emotional connection, partner responsiveness, and physical contact. In its centring on the engaged, critical, and embodied knowledge of the teacher-artists, the study is necessarily interdisciplinary and qualitative. Narrative inquiry is the qualitative approach used to center story as data (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Throughout the research design, vulnerability is utilised as the expressive mode of presenting the research to the reader. This vulnerability translates into highly subjective storytelling, the use of poetry, extractions from journal writing, and dramatic devices to share and intentionally organise data. These creative devices are also used as signposts for the reader. This strategy is explicit as both an ever-present illustration of the 'intimacy-in-pedagogy' that the study explores and a disavowal of the systemic tradition (in academia) of separating the academic researcher from the artist.

Supported by a review of literature on higher education, black women in higher education, and performance studies, the study provides an in-depth discussion pointing to factors that emerge as relevant within a greater socio-political context. These factors include racial and economic politics of inequality, a deliberate state agenda towards the transformation of the higher education sector, the significant prevalence of gender-based violence (shown particularly at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic) as well as the agenda of HIV/Aids as a primary focus of national health interventions from the end of Apartheid well into the transitioning of South Africa into a democratic republic.

The purpose of the study, in the first instance, was to understand how a specific sample of teacher-artists understand and manage intimacy as a part of their teaching practice. The criteria for identifying the initial participants of the study was that the participants themselves (before becoming teacher-artists) had been university theatre students who had experienced or witnessed a violation of intimacy within theatre practice. However, the focus shifted due to a lengthy delay and the Covid-19 pandemic interruptions to the research. Consequently, the research findings yield a thesis on intimacy and theatre performance pedagogy that reflects higher education as a context. Accordingly, this study argues that teacher-artists are partners with higher education in delivering intimacy-producing pedagogy to student-performers. Teacher-artists' experiences in higher education reveal a challenging and fragmented environment that hinders intimacy and growth and requires urgent reform. Intimacy is evidenced on three levels in the practice of theatre pedagogy: Namely, between teacher-artists and their practice of theatre pedagogy, between teacher-artists and student-performers, and between teacher-artists and their institutions.

The study validates the ability inherent in theatre pedagogy to innovate social interactions in learning spaces where socio-economic inequalities and asymmetrical power relations are pervasive. The study evidences the continued need for inquiry on the consequences of gendered and raced experiences on knowledge within the field of theatre performance in higher education and argues that caregiving, transference, intimate partner violence, and institutional gaslighting are the intimacy-related issues produced for teacher-artists. The study argues that institutional attitudes towards theatre pedagogy are ambiguous, positioning the discipline and staff as persistently vulnerable in the overall politics of higher education. Finally, the study demonstrates that teacher-artists experience distrust and reluctance to participate in the transformation agenda of the higher education sector, particularly in response to the ongoing call to decolonize higher education curricula.

Keywords: Intimacy, theatre pedagogy, intimate-partner violence, caregiving, higher education, transformation.

Thesis terminology

Act- A section or segment of dramatic action within a screenplay or stage play structure (Field, 1982). The section typically contains scenes, dramatic tension and a climax (Leach, 2013). In this study, the academic convention of using the term *chapter* is replaced with the term *Act*. This is further explained in Act 1.

Black - Within the confines of this study, black refers to the racial identity of people in South Africa whom the apartheid government previously classified as such. In recent years, this term has been contested and justifiably so (Kenyon & Madlingozi, 2022), with other terms used to replace it in some contexts. However, part of the point made in this thesis is that females who would have been thought of as 'belonging' within that apartheid stratification and, as a consequence, remain affected by social ills designed to plague that demographic are faced with particular gender and race-related problems in contemporary South Africa. The research will demonstrate that this is particular to the higher education sector (Ngema et al., 2022).

Drama and performance- This term is dated and refers to what is presently termed theatre studies. (Leach, 2013).

Movement- In theatre jargon, this term refers to all theatrical embodied play involving or resulting in physical movement (Orgs et al., 2013). Typically, when curriculum designers are reluctant to use the term 'Choreography' (due to its direct reference to dance) or 'Physical theatre' (which also refers to a particular and stylised theatre genre), they use the term movement.

Narrative- This term refers to the method utilised in qualitative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). The methodology prioritises story as a medium of meaning-making.

Performance studies- The term describes the discipline of dramatic arts and theatre studies in academic institutions. (Schechner, 2002).

Play- Within the confines of this study, this term refers to the methodology used in theatre pedagogy (Leach, 2013).

Play text- Interchangeable with 'theatre text', this term refers to the script or stage play that actors read and learn to perform.

Scene- This term typically refers to a unit of dramatic action. On stage, a scene is separated from one to the next by a change in dramatic focus or intention. For example, a character might enter or exit, and the time or location may change. (Tourelle & McNamara, 1998) In this study, what is conventionally recognized as chapter *sub-sections* are referred to as *scenes*. This is further explained in Act 1.

Stage directions- This term describes the notes (usually hyphenated or written in italics) typically situated at the start of a scene or at moments that mark scene action changes within the script (Tourelle & McNamara, 1998). Written by the playwright for use by stage directors and performers, stage directions give instructions about character movement on stage, setting, lighting, and other relevant details purposed to assist actors in performing the script.

Story- In Act 3 of the study and further, this term refers to data (Bleakley, 2005).

Student performer- This term, constructed for this research, refers to a student of theatre and performance in higher education.

Teacher director- This term, constructed for this research, refers to a research participant who is both a teacher of theatre studies and a practicing director of theatre productions. While the term is used in Act 1 and Act 2, it is later changed to teacher-artist at the request of the research participants.

Teacher performer- This term, constructed for this research, refers to a research participant who is both a teacher of theatre studies and a practicing performer in theatre productions. While the term is used in Act 1 and Act 2, it is later changed to teacher-artist at the request of the research participants.

Theatre performance- For purposes of this study, this term refers to a dance, movement or acting presentation or recital (Leach, 2013). The same term is used whether the presentation is prepared for an audience or studio (classroom) purposes.

Theatre production- This term refers to a performance staged for a public audience.

Ubuntu- This term is described as “an internal state of being which concerns values that contribute to the well-being of others and of community” (Munyaku & Motlhabi, 2009, p.77)

Theatre studies- Interchangeable with the term 'theatre performance pedagogy', this term refers to the teaching and learning of the theory and practice of theatre movement, dance, acting, playmaking, and applied theatre.

LGBTIQ+ -This term refers to "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual" persons (Vera et al., 2020, p. 3)

** Research participants approved the use of pronouns and the terms female/ woman/ women in the data analysis.*

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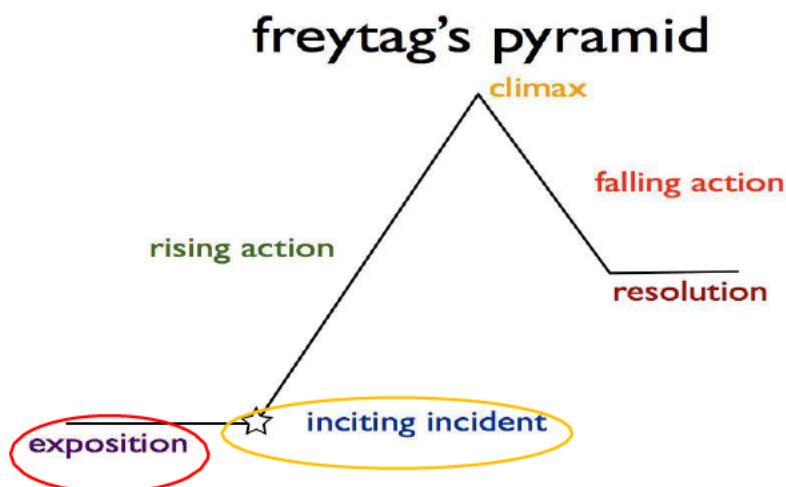
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Prologue

In African theatre studies, the telling and performance of a story is seen as an act endowed with the presence of "...the life-giving force" (Chinyowa, 2014, p. 88) that makes the sharing of art an act of "...art for life's sake" (p. 88). It is also argued that "The instinct to recreate and express the hopes and fears, desires and aspirations of what lies at the heart of the African people's world-view is largely realised (sic) through the art of theatrical performance" (p.96).

In light of this approach- that theatrical performance is a vehicle for communicating one's inner thoughts with an external, willing audience- and because this has been evidenced in the various ways the embodied experiences of theatre pedagogy have occurred in my work as an artist, a student, and as a teacher, I wish to make the following two-part proposal. The proposal aims to create... "an ethically steadfast identity" (Cox, 2008, p. 43) as a researcher and scholar going forward. I propose to present my research as a story and as art. This is to build my research argument, not just as a place where ideas converge but also as a creative space where heart, soul, and spirit emerge as participants in the life-giving production of knowledge. I aim to create an intimate encounter even when that means walking on the edge of academic convention- for art's sake. Below is a diagram included to assist in explaining my intention.

Figure 2. Freytag's (1895) pyramid. A depiction of the Literary Elements of Drama



Widely referenced in film work but unpopular for his political beliefs and consequently generally erased from Western theatre history studies, German dramatist, politician, and philosopher Gustav Freytag (1895) provides an accessible albeit rigid and linear structure for dramatic narrative development. In his conceptualisation of the development of dramatic conflict, noting an inciting incident is most useful for the introduction of this research endeavour. Freytag (1895) also names the beginning of the dramatic narrative as “exposition”. This connotes the setting, characters, and present circumstances shared to orient the audience to the story’s world. The main characters, as well as the style and genre of the narrative, are also introduced at this stage to provide a detailed context from which an inciting incident marks the commencement of dramatic action. In line with this thinking, I frame the pursuit of this research as dramatic action and begin by discussing the research’s context and motivation. However, unlike Freytag’s linear narrative structure suggests, the account of my research disrupts uniformity. For example, the story I construct starts with an inciting incident that precedes the given circumstances (Stanislavski, 1989) or exposition of the research.

While I recognise the inherent possibility and problem of an interpretation of my “real” research as “fiction”, my response as an artist and as a scholar of theatre performance is to expose this false binary - at least in the context of my research and in the genre of artmaking. Consequently, my language of choice is theatre and its storytelling devices. My thesis is pedagogy activated and documented through several creative techniques, including storytelling (enabled by my choice of methodology - narrative inquiry), theatre playwriting, and poetry (where I position myself as a narrator, making explicit the autobiographical aspects of the knowledge generated here), stage directions (to provide the context where additional background information is required for meaning-making), characters (representing the anonymity of research participants), conflict (the tension that drives dramatic action), and dialogue.

Furthermore, in the same spirit, the knowledge sources consulted to support the research are a combination of book chapters, journal articles, social and news media, videos, and podcasts. Most literature is peer-reviewed, however, to meet the criteria necessary for academic assessment.

During the assessment of this work, I was asked to explain why I had not decided to explicitly frame the research as decolonial despite its obvious leaning towards that school of thought. My response is shared here in anticipation that this question may also arise for the reader. Despite much celebration of the revival of epistemic decolonization as a movement across higher education in the global south, most pronounced in South Africa since the FeesMustFall protests of 2016, I have moved through its varied interventions with much mistrust. This perspective is largely informed by my experiences of seeing articulations of decolonization too often and too easily co-opted into seemingly similar political agendas in the academy that habitually did not produce a material impact on the lives of students of colour. Therefore, my personal response is an aversion to framing my academic work in that term.

Most significantly, however, I understand that theatre studies within educational spaces have long been consistent in disrupting the status quo. Yet their contribution to the overall academic project of undergraduate studies is still viewed as marginally important (Kendalan, 2004, p. 48). As Bala (2017) states:

“...The question of ‘decolonising’ the discipline of Theatre and Performance Studies has been ongoing for decades and has been formational to the field in many ways, even if not always employing the term. The shifts from ‘drama’ to ‘theatre’ and subsequently from ‘theatre’ to ‘performance’, often referred to as the performative turn in the field, indicate profound epistemological shifts that strike at the core of knowledge production and formation.

After all, to be able to recognise that the embodied practices of an actress are also worthy of being valued as 'knowledge' is not simply a minor adjustment or helpful supplement to a body of text-oriented scholarship but also, if taken seriously, a deep rupturing of the ways in which knowledge is conceived and authorised." (2017, p. 333).

As such, teaching and theorising theatre studies, informed imagination (Kindelan, 2009), and embodied ways of knowing in higher education is to actively disrupt a system of knowledge construction and dissemination that would otherwise ignore, if not completely delegitimise, the visceral, emotional, ephemeral, and spiritual aspects of learning. Additionally, this thinking has motivated my inclusion of an in-depth description and repeated reference to my original research design. This is despite having been advised, again in the evaluation of the research, to focus only on what "actually happened". Once again, I explain my response in anticipation that it may matter. I interpret the suggestion as a request to privilege one form of knowledge over another, as the erasure of a significant aspect of my journey, and as a silencing for academic decorum. As previously stated, one of my intentions in presenting this project is to advocate for recognising the fullness of the human (academic) experience that informs the struggle towards finding and making knowledge. Incidentally, Bala (2017, p. 341) asks, "Does bodily experience [anxiety, confusion, stress, despair] become recognised as knowledge only when elevated to the conceptual, i.e., non-corporeal realm?" Certainly, in the text-obsessed space that is academic research, if I do not write about it, then it never happened. And while I recognise "the deeply colonial heritage of this problem" (Bala, 2017, p. 341), I remain embedded within the very thing I am to contest.

Three theatre academics conceptualise redemptive theatre in contesting simplistic narratives of right and wrong (Khutsoane et al., 2021). They describe the genre as that which "...tells stories of people struggling with a mistake, a burden of guilt, or an experience of being wronged." (2021, p. 163).

The authors explain how they created this type of theatrical investigation of privilege, shame, and guilt in a South African context, as a way to “...ask the whole community to own the voices that they silence and accept them as part of our collective reality.” (2021, p. 165). My plea to the academic community is to collectively acknowledge and own the administrative injustices that form part of my lived reality [and that of many, many black female artist academics] working within the higher education sector. The 18-month delay in receiving the ethical clearance required to begin this research “actually happened”, with irreversible consequences to my research design and its trajectory. In sharing what was originally conceptualised, I deliberately make explicit the gap between my initial epistemic intentions and the work I created (as artists often do) from the remaining pieces of the dream. I include what I had imagined in hopes that other scholars might consider how, by engaging with this work and attempting in action what was conceptualised but not completed here, we may continue to build a canon for our community of practice.

I begin this Act by explaining my history as a scholar and then as a theatre studies teacher to provide a background of the research problem and the phenomenon explored: how theatre performance pedagogy naturally leans all involved towards intimacy with self and others. Finally, I propose a researcher-reader agreement. On my part, the reader can expect I will engage honestly. My feelings and thoughts will be revealed, as will my biases due to the nature of the research design. I expect that the reader will inevitably also see my blind spots in my interpretation and harvesting of data into poetry despite my earnest search for answers to complex questions. I will come as naked (a cognitive and emotional openness) as I can as a way to purposefully facilitate an intimate pedagogical encounter. I am hopeful that this will mirror the overall purpose of my study. I humbly request that the reader kindly accepts and critically engages with this way of articulating myself and my research. This voluntary act of vulnerability, as well as the title of the first Act (Introduction), is inspired by an idea introduced by vulnerability, courage, and shame researcher Professor Brene Brown (Brown, 2010), to whom I am grateful for inspiring me to be authentically myself, especially in my academic career.

ACT 1

“Listening to Shame (Brown, 2012)”

NARRATOR: Dumela. My name is Ayanda Khala. Sometimes, I am called Ayanda Khala-Phiri. During the write-up of my thesis, the most significant journey I embarked on was the final phase of a divorce process that had begun long before the inception of my research, consequently dropping my last name. For years, I felt my name had a fabulously feminist ring because it explicitly combined my maiden and married names rather than erasing the former. Like losing my hyphenated surname, writing this thesis has felt like a kind of shedding of things attached to notions of who I am and was expected to be that no longer serve me. In the time taken to write this thesis, other life-changing things have happened- I gave birth to a little girl who is as astute and strong-willed as I am. And it is that she was born female that I have found most frightening.

With my eldest child, a son, I changed my attitude to “giving hidings” at home. I opted for the more challenging journey of engaging in dialogue with my toddler to create a more intimate relationship. I also sat alone on the court benches of a magistrate who would grant me a protection order against someone I had considered my best friend for just under a decade. I came to understand the profound impact of physical and psychological violence. More painfully and significantly, during this academic project, I learned that I did not yet know how to handle power in relationships fairly- that too often, I was complicit in enabling situations where power could be used against me. Furthermore, in instances where I inadvertently participated in unjustly wielding power against others, I failed to trust in vulnerability as a place from which to engage. That has been very difficult to accept, forgive, and then attempt to understand.

All the above is significant in stating explicitly that this work is of my heart, where a myriad of other personal matters reside and connect, and that I write my thesis as a full human being: fully intellectual, fully a mother, fully a teacher-artist, fully a student researcher, fully a uniquely raced and gendered body, fully at risk, fully possessing power. This is important to state because many times in my process, I felt that I was expected to be only an academic and an intellectual- as if being human is not ambiguous and complex. I now understand that the requirement for a singularity of purpose greatly undermines how all of my “identities” interconnect, translating into the poignancy of this research. Thus, my decision to be human is a political action- a transgressive act in a system I have interpreted as attempting to police and tame the human and the dramatic artist to make space for the development of an academic. Thus, I present my thesis as both, and for ease of reference here, in recognising that the narrative style of the research imposes lengthy pauses between iterations of the below, I briefly shared the key research questions of the study:

- How do teacher-artists (TAs) understand intimacy and pedagogy within Performance Studies?
- What are TAs’ experiences of intimacy and pedagogy in rehearsal and teaching theatre performance?
- Why do TAs experience intimacy and pedagogy in the ways that they do?

In the following section, the study's background is discussed through projected play - characters and stage directions in a playscript representing myself and the details of a traumatic memory I share. This is partly because I aim to highlight theatre as a method of holding and representing traumatic events and ultimately because framing the event in an abstract and distant way is necessary. In drama therapy, imagination is termed a “transitional space” (Lewis & Johnson, 2007, p. 459), allowing exploration of the traumatic without the dangers of reality. Projected play, specifically, is promoted as a strategy that simultaneously facilitates the expression and regulation of intense emotions.

Jones (2015, p. 11) tells us: "Playing makes the traumatic event accessible: it can be represented directly, or through metaphors...it is a safe way to reproduce and create connections meaningful to [the client], whilst allowing enough distance to admit to painful experience". The scene begins with stage directions describing the present-day context within which the scene was written and then, through a flashback, replays the traumatic event. All but Lorraine Hansberry's name among the characters are fictitious to protect the identity of witnesses to the real event.

Act 1. Scene 1: The inciting incident CHARACTERS

NARRATOR	A black South African female. A PhD candidate.
LORRAINE HANSBERRY	An African-American woman playwright.
TEACHER-DIRECTOR	A tall dark figure, ominous in presence. His face is masked, in part.
MAN IN BLUE SHIRT	A man in a blue shirt, Motswana. A theatre performance teacher.
WOMAN IN YELLOW	A woman in a yellow blouse, American. A teacher.
MAN IN BROWN	A man in a brown Golf T-shirt, Nigerian. A teacher
WOMAN IN PURPLE	A female in a purple dress, British. A teacher.

The stage is dimly lit. It is the year 2020. The NARRATOR looks out of a window into a plush garden in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In the background, the sounds of a sultry voice can be heard singing the lyrics to a song “...to be young, gifted and black!” (Simone, 1969). A young, gifted, and black female university lecturer, her swollen feet elevated and resting on the window sill in front of her, shifts the silver HP computer on her lap and sits more comfortably as she continues to type. On the laptop cover is a sticker of a fisted hand that reads, “Unite against racism!”. A large orange bowl of popcorn and a bottle of wine are placed against the wall below her feet. She is enthralled in writing up a chapter of her PhD study. The study focuses on intimacy as a significant part of theatre pedagogy in the university classroom. Outside, it is DAY 89 of the national lockdown, a government response to the outbreak of a worldwide pandemic, COVID-19. There is economic and social unrest globally. Most significant is the revival of the global political movement, Black Lives Matter, which has resulted in escalating protest action in the United States of America and other parts of the world.

At home, South Africans are doing their best to cope with unprecedented job and business losses, anxiety, distress, grief, and grave uncertainty. Here, the Narrator finds herself drifting from her chapter writing to Lorraine Hansberry's (1970) biographical piece and classic theatre play, To Be Young, Gifted, and Black. On stage, a ghostlike silhouette of Hansberry appears, as if a figment of the Narrator's imagination, and recites what the Narrator is reading.

HANSBERRY: Write if you will but write about the world as it is and as you think it ought to be and must be if there is to be a world. Write about all the things that men have written about since the beginning of writing and talking- but write to a point. Work hard at it, care about it. Write about our people: tell their story. You have something glorious to draw on, begging for attention. Don't pass it up. Use it. (Lorraine Hansberry Literary Trust, n.d.)

The figure disappears just as mysteriously as she appeared.

NARRATOR: (using direct address to the reader, the PhD candidate begins to narrate the background, context, and rationale of her study) One day, in 2007, as a post-graduate student walking through my university campus, I was approached by a theatre lecturer whom I had known since his days as a student at the same university. We had dated briefly when we were both students, even though he was a few years older than I. Though it had seemed sweet and promising at first, our romantic relationship had ended abruptly and on very bad terms - terms that had necessitated my keeping a professional distance from him over the years that followed. As fate would have it, the interruption of my walk was entirely unexpected and in direct contrast to how we had conducted ourselves around each other before. I don't recall the conversation verbatim. This rendition of the conversation, assisted in part by my imagination, covers the key discussion points as they occurred on that day:

Stage lights change to indicate a shift in time. The Narrator arises from her seat by the window and steps into the light on stage. Through the use of lighting and shadows, the setting is transformed. It is 2007, daylight, and the Narrator stands at the foot of a massive oak tree, her feet on a thick tree root forcefully piercing through the surface of the earth. Enter stage left. TEACHER-DIRECTOR walks across the stage to the Narrator, who takes a step back in apprehension.

TEACHER-DIRECTOR: Hi. Listen, can we talk? It's been a long while since we did. NARRATOR: (startled and uncomfortable, tapping the root below her foot) Yes, it's been a while...and with good reason.

TEACHER-DIRECTOR: (ignores the insinuated discomfort) How have you been?

NARRATOR: (Eager to resolve her discomfort) What is this about?

TEACHER-DIRECTOR: You always were a straight shooter! Okay. Listen, I've written a play and would like it...very much... if you could play the lead role.

NARRATOR: (*suspicious*) You want me to audition for the lead role in your play? That you're directing?

TEACHER-DIRECTOR: No, I don't want you to audition. I'm asking you to play the role. Yes, I will be directing, and I think you would fit this role perfectly.

NARRATOR: (still apprehensive) That's not what I expected you to say. (pauses) Why me?

TEACHER-DIRECTOR: I'm looking for a mature actress, you know. Most of the people I have auditioned are in their first year - the role needs something stronger and more grounded.

NARRATOR: May I see the script?

The teacher-director reveals a thick document that he has held in his hands behind his back since his entrance on stage.

NARRATOR: (*Back to direct audience address, to the reader*) I remember feeling impressed by the contents of the first few pages I read. Regrettably, I agreed to meet with him and the rest of the cast at his first rehearsal. I remember walking away feeling both flattered and nervous. It was time to let bygones be bygones and put what had happened between us in the past.

Lighting changes again to indicate the passing of time. The Narrator takes a step forward into a spotlight, centre stage.

NARRATOR: A few days later, I arrived at rehearsal on time. I was careful not to arrive too early for fear of being alone with the director before the rest of the cast arrived. Luckily, When I arrived, a few cast members were already there, chatting excitedly as actors do when a new production is underway. The anticipation of making theatrical work was tangible. As more of the cast arrived, I noticed apprehensively that the other actors were predominantly first-year students, most of whom I tutored in an acting course during teaching hours. I recall acutely observing and being quite annoyed that most of the girls were incorrectly dressed for rehearsal. I passed a judgment under my breath - something disapproving and wise in my own eyes of what I interpreted to be their attention-seeking attempts because the teacher-director was young and good-looking - by my standards, at least. Some students wore very tight jeans, while others wore knee-high fashion boots - all of which would prove impractical for rehearsal. I remember noting this as quite significant since, in my experience, each of them understood what participating in rehearsal practice would entail and how crucial it was to dress in a way that allowed free movement and play on the floor. I reminded myself that I was attending this rehearsal as a fellow student and performer - a role entirely different from the tutor who engaged with them during teaching hours. I resolved to allow the teacher-director to address the issue. To my satisfaction, it was the first thing the teacher-director addressed upon stepping into the space. Again, I will use my imagination to activate parts of that moment in my memory.

The teacher-director steps into the same spotlight and slowly walks around the edge of the circle of light reflected on the stage floor. His figure steps in and out of the light as he walks, casting a shadow and distorting the face of the Narrator.

TEACHER DIRECTOR: I'm disappointed that some of you have not come prepared for rehearsal. Rehearsal is a space that needs you to be as comfortable as possible when you work. You can't come in your skinny jeans and knee-high boots and expect to do work on the floor.

The teacher-director continues to walk intentionally around the edge of the light as the Narrator speaks.

NARRATOR: What happened next could not be scripted as conceivable in any part of my imagination. Walking slowly around the circle, he edged towards me, still instructing the younger cast members on the importance of dressing appropriately. Then, very swiftly- like the hiss of a boiling kettle- he reached out his hand, drew back the elastic waist of the pants I was wearing, and slid his arm past my belly to the meeting of my thighs, where his had just rested for several seconds. Then, he lowered his arm further inside and rubbed the flesh of my right thigh, then crossed over to rub the flesh of my left thigh. He did this, brushing across one thigh to another repeatedly in full view of every watching eye in the room while babbling something I heard as incoherent. No, to be perfectly accurate, I do remember him saying the words, *loose-fitting pants*. But I was frozen.

Teacher-director stops behind the Narrator, facing the audience. His face should be in silhouette.

This intrusion of my personal space- this sexual harassment- happened just as slowly as it happened quickly. It felt like time had momentarily stopped as I tried to make sense of what he was doing, if it was really happening, and why I was standing there. Just as suddenly, he removed his arm from inside my pants and continued walking around the inside of the human circle, still calmly articulating his very rational argument on rehearsal decorum. As if nothing of significance had just happened. I would have believed his nonchalant performance were it not for the wide eyes on the faces that stared back at me.

NARRATOR: The female students were aghast and still watching as if awaiting my reaction; the male students were embarrassed and shifted their eyes when they met mine. All the while, the director continued to reference what he called his demonstration- using my body- of how one should dress if they are to attend the rehearsal. My face must have expressed my shock and, shortly thereafter, my humiliation as the flushed and awkward faces in the circle became a mirror of how I was feeling on the inside. I asked to be excused and left the room.

Teacher-director exits.

I did not return to the rehearsal. Never again. I could not believe what I had let happen. After years of keeping my distance, I dropped my guard and let him come close enough to hurt and humiliate me again.

Lights fade to black. Narrator exits the stage.

Act 1. Scene 2: Flashback, fast-forward

The recorded voice of the Narrator plays over the dark stage, as the opening of the next scene is underway.

NARRATOR: Three years later, I taught at a high school in a different country. Much had happened after that moment in rehearsal at university, but my life in Gaborone, Botswana, was brand new. Nothing of that memory existed in my new world. Or so I thought.

Slowly, the faint sound of robust conversation and boisterous laughter can be heard on the dark stage through the auditorium speakers. A different part of the stage is slowly lit up. It is a different time, a different place. There is movement on stage as the recorded sound grows softer until the live conversation on stage replaces it. It is lunchtime, and a group of young teachers gather around a table to eat. Some of them are holding plates of food; others are already seated. On the table, there is a jug of iced water and a few glasses. A few meters away, a fan turns furiously, blowing air toward the table. The setting is a staff room at a high school in Gaborone, Botswana.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: *(Motswana accent)* Yeah, guys, this heat isn't going to get better. WOMAN

IN YELLOW BLOUSE: *(American accent)* Back home, people dream of weather like this.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: Like I've always said, if you're visiting Africa and can survive Gaborone's heat, you can travel the rest of the continent with ease.

MAN IN BROWN: *(Nigerian accent)* And we have football on the field after lunch (sighs).

A chorus of groans from the others.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: That's what you get for being a sports coach when you could just settle for the classroom.

WOMAN IN PURPLE: *(British accent)* Anyone got a problem with me turning the air conditioner down a little while we eat?

Incomprehensible murmurs emanate from the table as Woman in Purple walks towards stage left, presumably to get closer to the air conditioner. The Narrator enters, dramatically pretending to be near collapse as she walks and fans herself with a cap. She is wearing a pair of denim shorts and a red blouse.

NARRATOR: Made it! Thank God for the aircon!

Table applauds in mock appreciation of Narrator's performance.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: There she is- our drama queen! Thought you weren't gonna make it after that last bunch of Form 1s (*laughs*). Geez, they were energetic!

NARRATOR: (*laughs and speaks in a South African accent*) I am a warrior! Plus, I'd never miss ¹Mma Olive's spaghetti! Never!

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: It's even better than the one from the cafeteria at varsity, right?

NARRATOR: I wouldn't know. I didn't eat at the campus cafeteria. I lived at home.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: Seriously? You missed out!

WOMAN IN PURPLE: (*Returning to the table*) So, you two went to the same university in South Africa? (*to Narrator*) I saved you some dessert- it's ice cream (*laughs*). It was chaos in here a few minutes ago.

MAN IN BROWN: (*laughs*) Mma Olive should serve two bowls of ice cream a person on a day like this.

WOMAN IN YELLOW: You better tell that to the school bursar. Apparently, he's been complaining about the catering budget. He says Mma Olive has to cut it down. It's costing the school too much to feed us all.

Laughter, murmurs, and groans from the table in response.

MALE IN BLUE SHIRT: Yeah, we went to varsity together. She was just a lot smarter.

NARRATOR: And older, I faintly remember you as a little flirt.

¹ Mma- the colloquial Setswana term used to refer to females. This is a term I came to use in my time in Gaborone, Botswana.

MALE IN BROWN: And you were obviously not interested, my queen?

MALE IN BLUE SHIRT: She didn't know I'd turn out to be this good-looking in the future.

Laughter from the table.

NARRATOR: *(laughs)* Honestly though, I don't remember doing anything with you, like on stage.

Did I tutor you at all?

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: *(pauses awkwardly)* You don't remember?

NARRATOR: Remember what?

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: You tutored me in first year? For like the whole year. NARRATOR: I did?

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: I can't believe you don't remember, seriously? MAN IN BROWN: The Queen was not interested, brother.

More laughter from the table. Man in Blue Shirt is visibly uncomfortable.

NARRATOR: I'm sorry. I don't know why I don't remember.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: Are you telling me all this time, since I started working here with you, you didn't remember?

NARRATOR: Obviously, I know we were at varsity together, but I don't remember tutoring you. I'm sorry; I forget a lot of stuff. Don't take it personally.

WOMAN IN YELLOW: You're forgettable bro.

Awkward laughter. The boisterous energy has simmered as everyone becomes aware of Man in Blue Shirt's increasing discomfort.

NARRATOR: Nah, man, don't listen to her. There's a lot I've forgotten about varsity. WOMAN IN

PURPLE: *(knowingly)* On purpose. Like that awful...

Narrator turns to Woman in Purple and shakes her head, signaling that she should drop the subject.

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: *(catching on cautiously)* I know. I was there.

NARRATOR: *(alarmed)* There, where?

MAN IN BLUE SHIRT: *(compassionately)* In Teacher-Director's rehearsal.

NARRATOR: (*Direct address to the audience; people at the table are still present*) And just like that, it all came rushing back- that incident at rehearsal all those years ago. I was in a room full of people who were not supposed to know. Yet one of them didn't just know; he had been there to see my humiliation. Before that moment, I didn't even think I still cared, but just like that, I realised I cared a lot. I put my food down and walked out of the room. I had no idea what they were talking about at the table after I left. I've never asked. I still bump into Man in Blue Shirt. We worked together on many projects after that. But we've never talked about that staffroom table conversation or the rehearsal where I was sexually harassed again. The memory still, somehow, makes me feel so much shame.

The Narrator exits the stage. One by one, the other actors exit the stage in silence.

Lights fade to black.

End scene.

Brene Brown describes shame as “the fear of disconnection” (Brown, n.d.) and personifies shame as an isolating agent whose power is reinforced by silence. In other words, the less people speak about what they are ashamed of, the more influential the feeling of shame distorts their sense of connection to others. In later years, I thought of why that staff room conversation had engendered so much shame. In retrospect, I now understand that agreeing to close the distance, to become open and vulnerable with the teacher-director again, voluntarily, after avoiding him for so long, made his violation somehow seem like something I had agreed to and been complicit in. Years later, when I received a call from a journalist writing an article on “alleged” misconduct in rehearsal, I decided to take the risk of telling my story.

Upon my return to South Africa from Botswana, I worked for the institution where I had been a student. Rumours of the same teacher-director's continued misconduct still circulated in my social circles. I was not prepared for what I would find out. A common thread was that most transgressions were related to rehearsal practice. And so, at first, I wanted to understand what it was about rehearsal that made it an environment that *enabled* this behaviour.

To the credit of the teachers and students of the same institution at the time, when ⁴a national newspaper broke the story, it resulted from an applied theatre classroom intervention that had turned things on its head. Through interactive theatre pedagogy, students had been activated into protestors when they marched from their classroom to the office of the head of the Drama Department to demand that the alleged sexual offender teacher be charged and dismissed. Over time, it became clear that as an individual victim, I had searched from a perspective that made the students in that rehearsal room responsible- in their response- for the gross behaviour of a teacher in authority and whose role it was to guide and protect the students. Consequently, my questions deepened as I became a teacher within the same pedagogical space.

Presently, I seek to understand the workings of the vulnerability and intimacy of rehearsal in the pedagogy of performance that might be used to articulate healthier ways of working with students even within the context that makes their social, political, or economic vulnerability more and more apparent. The hope is, as drama practitioner Reynolds (2020) observed while teaching theatre during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, "... the antidote to helplessness and powerlessness [will be] found in reflection and understanding how we [as teachers] can do better for our students (p. 10). This search is also a result of thinking through- as a teacher- that incident that I experienced as a student and telling that story repeatedly to myself and others, with some audience feeling I overplay the significance of the violation and, even the incident itself.

⁴ The original Sunday Times story by Pearlie Joubert in March 2013 is no longer available online. However, several online publications reference the article as seminal in follow-up articles written in 2013. Joubert also wrote a follow-up article. <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-times-1107/20130310/281831461163045>

Describing his musings on the phenomenon of victims telling their stories in South Africa's TRC hearings, anthropologist Colvin (2018) says the following:

"I wondered how this focus on public displays of individual pain and recovery factored into the delicate political negotiations at work in South Africa...to balance the demands of a newly freed citizenry with the enduring structures and practices of racial and economic inequality" (Colvin, 2018, p. iv). I understand his pondering. My thoughts, up to the production of this thesis, are an example of a story resonating beyond its moment of trauma into the present context of higher education where I- and others, as I will later demonstrate- navigate the challenging political landscape of being black and female within a seemingly transformed higher education sector. Moreover, here, once again, there is a sense of authenticity felt about exposing the 'inciting incident' as a way of deepening the understanding of the context of my work.

Act 1. Scene 3: The exposition and context

As described earlier in the dramatic scene above, I began the write-up of this version of the introduction eighty- nine days into South Africa's national state of disaster lockdown, which began on ⁵March 26th, 2020. It was the fourth time I would attempt to write the opening section of my thesis and also a time that marked an unsettling season when academics in the higher education sector worldwide- especially those whose teaching was practice and contact-based- were forced amidst considerable personal and workplace upheaval to reimagine ways of reaching students. This, pragmatically, translated into engaging with new methods and resources of teaching and learning and reinventing, in some cases barely redeeming, some semblance of the tuition programs that existed before the pandemic. Consequently, while the research is conducted online with research participants located in different institutions of higher education across South Africa, the online nature of the interaction is as a result of the outbreak of the Covid19 Coronavirus and not how the research was initially designed.

Much of the contact interaction between the participants and myself did not occur as designed and intended, and neither were the research participants, the people initially identified as contributors to the research. While what was ideally intended was to generate stories of experience with black female teachers of theatre performance who had themselves been exposed to the ill use of the intimacy generated in theatre rehearsal- either as victims of sexual harassment or as whistleblowers and activists against this malpractice or both.

However, the participants did not have that in common in this final research. Instead, the research participants are all teacher-artists who have had both the experience of studying and teaching theatre pedagogy at universities in South Africa and have done professional theatre work elsewhere. The implications of the shift in categorising the research participants are discussed in detail in *Act 3, Scene 1. Narrative Inquiry*. Furthermore, the context of performance studies teaching also changed to include experiences both inside and outside of rehearsal practice as well as before and during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the focus is predominantly on the work teacher-artists did before the pandemic, as previously planned. Neither the participants nor myself could have foreseen nor planned for this modifying factor within the research process. The details of further changes made to the research design and implications to the overall rigour and purpose of the study are discussed in greater detail in the earlier-mentioned scene, focusing on research design and methodology.

⁵ Gazette 43599, (2020 August 7). *About alert system*, South African Government, www.gov.za, <https://www.gov.za/covid-19/about/about-alert-system>

However, for this section, I return to the critical questions I constructed to guide this research exploration. To investigate my phenomenon, I strived to make the following inquiries:

- What are the experiences of teacher-artists (TAs) of intimacy and pedagogy within performance studies?
- How do TAs understand intimacy and pedagogy within performance studies?
- Why do TAs experience intimacy and pedagogy in the ways that they do?

As evidenced in the questions, the research addresses the intricacies and complications of negotiating the occurrence and meaning of intimate encounters emerging from pedagogical performance work. The research aims to gain knowledge from and construct knowledge with a unique group of South African theatre-making teachers, never before singled out using a categorisation of their nationality, race, gender, and profession within the specified context of higher education. The study also seeks to understand the interweaving of intimacy with theatre pedagogical practice from this selected group's experiential points of view. Intimacy here is framed as non-singular in meaning and experience. As discussed previously, while some attention has historically been placed on the adverse effects of higher education student-teacher relationships in theatre rehearsal where inherent vulnerabilities were exploited, the experiences of female teachers regarding the intersection of Theatre pedagogy and intimate encounters make up the phenomenon under examination here.

The Structure of the Research

Following this section, intimacy is introduced as a universal concept and also specific to South Africa in how it is manifested, understood, and responded to. This is to make known that the thesis will be driven by a conceptual rather than a theoretical framework. A literature review of theatre pedagogy and higher education strengthens the theoretical base upon which the discussion of the generated data will be facilitated.

In the methodology scene, I discuss the rationale and ethical implications of generating data and navigating the research terrain covered through Narrative Inquiry. As mentioned earlier, I make specific references to the merits of qualitative research, specifically theatre research, and give an in-depth explanation of the changes made to the research design before and during the Covid-19 lockdown. A scene presenting each participant's data (stories) provides a three-dimensional view of each teacher-artist's experience by focusing on the elements of interaction, continuity, and situation. I begin with stories introducing the characters, providing a background for each teacher-artist's journey into theatre pedagogy, and discussing their experiences of the higher education theatre curriculum as students-performers and teachers.

In the analysis, I interpret and explain the experiences of the research participants through the lens of my understanding, a subjectivity I highlight by enlisting meaning-making in Sesotho and isiZulu since both languages form part of my lived experiences and culture. I am explicit in revealing the influence of my linguistic subjectivity in understanding the spoken words of the research participants, which in all instances involve the use of their native tongues- IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, and Setswana. These languages are not only a means of communication but also carry cultural and historical significance, shaping the way the participants express their experiences in the context of theatre pedagogy. Additionally, I reference what they have shared to build the trajectory of the argument of my analysis. As a narrative ethnographer, I believe the research participants tell stories of their own experiences, and I value these stories as they provide unique insights into the world of theatre pedagogy in higher education. Furthermore, I engage in an interpretive reading of their stories, pointing out and attempting to understand patterns, differences, and contradictions. However, I do not analyse the stories (data) for accuracy and legitimacy. Instead, I allow the stories of the teacher-artists to give me insight into how they perceive the world of theatre pedagogy and where intimacy relates to pedagogy for them. This approach values the world of theatre pedagogy as the research participants experience and understand it, focusing on the trustworthiness of the accounts shared rather than the 'validity'.

In the end, I argue that not only is it reasonable to understand theatre pedagogy as intimacy-producing, but that, additionally, the context of higher education within the political climate of post-democracy South Africa makes the workings of intimacy and theatre pedagogy unique to the categorised group of embodied knowledge makers and their pedagogy. Transference, caregiving, intimate partner violence, and gaslighting form a part of the thesis's original contribution to understanding the intersection of theatre pedagogy with intimacy through the eyes and experiences of black female teacher-artists.

Act 1. Scene 4: Thinking Conceptually about Intimacy

In discussing intimacy, the intention is to frame the focus of the research by thinking through and working with varied meanings of the term. To begin with, a few key terms that come up in academic discourse will be expanded upon. The terms include self-disclosure and partner responsiveness (Reis & Shaver, 1988; Gray et al., 2015; Joinson & Carine, 2006), emotional expression and interaction (Jansen et al., 2017; Fishbach et al., 2017), connectedness (Brown, 2015; Spirit, 2020), physical closeness (Rossmannith, 2008; Jansen, 2016), embodiment (Guest Pryal, 2010), power (Xiao, 2018; Jansen, 2016), transference (Richo, 2007), and vulnerability (Seton, 2004; Rossmannith, 2008; Brown, 2010, 2015, 2019). In addition, each of these ideas, although some are called by different names, forms part of regular practice terminology in theatre rehearsal, providing a distinct and diverse framework for analysing the relationship of intimacy to theatre performance in a teaching and learning space, which is the focus and purpose of the study.

Consequently, in this section, intimacy is initially discussed as a concept, considering various working definitions in many settings, including higher education. This is to demonstrate first that context determines the meanings and consequences of intimacy and intimate interactions. Secondly, this is done so intimacy is considered within a South African context, thus making the study's focus clearer. I argue that intimacy is conceptualised, understood, and experienced in ways that are influenced by apartheid history, gender-based violence, HIV/ Aids, and most recently, the outbreak of COVID-19. This results in the insertion of the terms intimate partner violence (Thaler, 2012; Kaukinen, 2020; Moffitt et al., 2020), gaslighting (Graves & Spencer, 2021), ubuntu (Chigangaidze et al., 2000,) and caregiving (Collins & Ford, 2010) as characteristics of intimacy as a conceptual framework for the research, given its broader socio-political context.

From that point, the discussion narrows down to a focus on intimacy as pedagogical activity, highlighting how- in intimate pedagogy (Guest Pryal, 2010)- experiences of intimacy deviate from theory. Most significantly, the Act's discourse assists in my building an argument for a closer look at the inner workings of intimacy and pedagogy within the context of the theatre education classroom, including rehearsal, in higher education. I advocate for an analysis of the construction of meaning at the level of experience when theatre pedagogy is taught and embodied at an intersection with the construction of intimacy. The motivation is that theatre performance education does not happen without forms of intimacy. However, instead, intimate interaction is an integral part of theatre-making and, by extension, the *teaching* of theatre knowledge, thus evidencing theatre education as an intimacy-producing practice.

Intimacy: Self-disclosures and Vulnerability

From a sociological perspective, Intimacy does not just happen. It is created, and vulnerability is fundamental in generating intimacy within the theatre rehearsal classroom. Vulnerability is identified by rehearsal scholars (Rossmanith, 2008; Seton, 2004) as having a significant role to play in facilitating intimacy in the rehearsal process. In this study, rehearsal refers to actor training in a studio or performance studies classroom. In this environment, rehearsal is geared towards producing a performance, which is how students' learning of performance is facilitated and assessed. Seton (2004) argues that the achievement and outward demonstration of vulnerability is... "what signifies affectivity in training and subsequently in performance practice." (p. 4). The scholar argues that the required vulnerability is co-created by teachers and students as "an ongoing, intercorporeal accomplishment" (Seton, 2004, p. 244) between bodies participating in the rehearsal process. Seton (2004) also argues that "...interactive embodied vulnerable manifestations...intertwine [in rehearsal] to produce further complex, embodied and interdependent relationships" (p. 4).

In other words, this vulnerability produces intimacy in the learning relationships- between students with each other and with teachers of rehearsal. Regarding human interaction and relationships, shame researcher Brene Brown (2015) argues that vulnerability is viewed as weakness far too often. The scholar offers a contrary perspective on vulnerability and defines it as the "...emotional risk, exposure and uncertainty that fuels daily life (sic.)" (Brown, 2015). Furthermore, Brown (2019) boldly claims that... "vulnerability is the path back to each other", suggesting that vulnerability should be viewed as an essential means of making connections and building relationships between one person and another.

Brown (2019) argues that the essence of vulnerability is allowing oneself to be seen by others- that is, embracing vulnerability as a means through which others may be permitted access to one's thoughts, feelings, and being. Brown (2019) argues that while significant challenges exist for people seeking to engage with each other in the way she proposes, the inevitable presence of vulnerability in all relationships makes engaging openly worthwhile. How people choose to engage with vulnerability, she claims, sets the tone for the establishment of healthy connections or the lack thereof. In a similar trajectory, both David (2018) and Pilat (2017) use the isiZulu greeting *Sawubona* (We see you) to support a call for *seeing-ness* as the starting place of meaningful human-to-human relations. While David's area of specialisation is emotional agility- a term created to explain the opposite of a polarised classification of emotions as either good or bad- she also suggests that to achieve healthy emotional expression, one must see (acknowledge, value) themselves as a means to enable their ability to see others. This *seeing* connotes exposing your most authentic self to others to establish a genuine human connection. Similarly, in an interview with film director James Cameron, Oprah Winfrey (2011) highlights the notion propagated in the scripted "I see you" greeting of the Navi characters of the motion picture *Avatar* (Cameron, 2010). In the film, the term is used to highlight the connectedness of all beings through accepting the vulnerability that comes with being seen.

As Winfrey (2011) suggests, the very act of being seen by another in the fictitious world of Pandora brings each person and creature into existence. Repeatedly, the idea of acknowledging another's humanness as a starting point for relationship building is echoed. This *seeing*, I argue, *occurs when students and teachers accept mutual vulnerability* in performance practice.

As a method of *allowing oneself to be seen* (Brown, 2010), self-disclosure is identified as intimacy-generating when it is voluntary. Shelton et al. (2010) argue, "People are more likely to disclose to others who disclose to them". This is according to a study conducted on the effects of racial identity on the process of self-disclosure and intimacy building. The study follows the trajectory of Reis and Shavers' (1998) seminal theory of developing intimacy, which is that self-disclosure requires a positive, empathetic response from a partner for the interactive exchange to flow and for two people to build intimacy. In other words, how one responds to a partner's personal information affects how much more open the partner will be moving forward. Self-disclosure is described by Joinson and Piane (2006) as "the process of making the self-known to others" (p. 235) and is arguably an increasingly expanding phenomenon with the advent of twenty-first-century technology and how people share information on online platforms like social media. While it is presently positioned as debatable whether people reveal their authentic selves on social media platforms or if people "...present an idealised or socially appropriate version of themselves." (Schlosser, 2020), the exercise of self-disclosure is still present since to represent oneself in a scripted or well-crafted way, is still to reveal one's desires of how people should see them. This posting, or "coming out", as it were, reveals details of oneself that would otherwise remain hidden. In a study conducted by Shelton et al. (2010), foregrounding a critical race perspective, introducing racial identity as a variant indicates that people tend to be most comfortable disclosing to people of a similar racial and ethnic identity to themselves.

Additionally, disclosure has the potential to "legitimise group membership and strengthening group identity." (Joinson & Paine, 2006, p. 235). When building intimacy goes hand in hand with building pedagogy, knowledge is generated and shared for purposes dependent on the context. In rehearsal, the purpose may range from building ensemble and group cohesion to explicit attempts to create emotional bonds between actors required to portray intimate relationships on stage. Finally, in a sociological and performance theory turn, disclosure is posited as a means by which one's claim to one's own identity can be authenticated. In an example taken from theatre rehearsal, the process of getting out of a role (de-rolling) is used to allow actors the opportunity to shed off the identity of the character and, in a sense, resume life as their authentic selves, a teacher-director might employ the technique of asking each actor to disclose a piece of information about themselves used to differentiate them from their character. This would create the required distancing effect between the actor and the character.

Intimacy: Functional, negotiated, and imposed

Intimacy, when viewed from an educational psychology perspective, can be thought of as primarily functional (Gray et al., 2017). In rehearsal practice within an educational context, the closeness (emotional and otherwise) experienced by participants is not always preferred, but it is required as a mandatory part of the learning experience. This functional aspect of intimacy is crucial, as it serves the purposes of teaching and learning, generating a sense of cohesion and collegiality within the rehearsal class. However, when functional intimacy occurs, it inevitably manifests in the process of negotiating various other forms of intimacy, some perhaps initially undesired. Consequently, while functional intimacy may be viewed as necessary, it inevitably results in a type of tension scholars of intimacy describe as "approach-avoidance" (Fishbach et al., 2017). This term denotes what typically occurs when recipients of intimate interaction experience internal conflict caused by the very fact that they are placed within situations that require intimate interaction.

An example within performance studies teaching and learning space may be one where a student desires the outcome of being part of a close-knit cast of performers whilst simultaneously feeling anxious about making mistakes in front of others. In deciding to endure close encounters- physical closeness, touch, and eye contact, for example- with their peers to achieve their desired goal, the student meets the challenge of the inner struggle of learning in an intimate environment. It is arguable, therefore, that for the student who feels discomfort at participating in any of these activities, the intimacy is both functional- that is, aimed at assisting them to achieve their goal of group intimacy- and equally undesired- at least in the initial stages where they feel discomfort. Furthermore, if intimacy is worked into class activities and rehearsal games, intimacy is also imposed (Fishbach et al., 2017) since it is offered as a prescribed curriculum activity that works to achieve a learning objective decided upon by the teacher-director. As a result, students must participate in intimate encounters to achieve curriculum-related goals, thus making the intimacy generated in the rehearsal classroom possibly functional, negotiated, and imposed at different points and throughout the performance studies class.

Speaking as a scholar of Theatre studies, Rossmanith (2008) states that while physical intimacy is taken for granted to be something that is “negotiated” and “managed” in theatre rehearsal- for instance- to make sense of how actors understand touch [and intimacy], one must consider how actors understand notions of “bodies, selves and intersubjectivity”. (Rossmanith, 2008, p. 2). The author argues that while physical touch is predominantly used to communicate various forms of intimate meaning in theatre performance, physical intimacy as a rehearsal phenomenon independent of what it may signify to an audience is not quite as widely studied. Actors can arguably be considered providers of intimate services like attendants, nurses, and house cleaners (Schroeder et al., 2017) since staging a performance can be emotionally and spiritually fulfilling for an audience.

In addition, it is helpful to consider how "objectification" (Schroeder et al., 2017) is possible in the higher education classroom. This is when "functional providers [of intimacy] are seen as mere tools for goal fulfilment rather than as fully developed humans" (2017, p. 911). An example is an instance where a teacher may select a play that is aesthetically pleasing and well-liked by faculty executives but, in creating the work, neglects to adequately address individual concerns that students may have in staging the play, thus ignoring the intersections of power and pedagogy.

Intimate Inequalities: Power and Pedagogy

A scholar of higher education studies, Pryal (2010), suggests that teachers should treat all students "...with ethical asymmetry- [each] as an equally valuable human being that is radically different from everyone else and therefore entitled to unique treatment." (p. 73). The author (Pryal, 2010) goes on to further propose that the best way to achieve this kind of teacher-learner relationship is if "...a certain level of intimacy" (p. 74) within the teacher-student relationship is deemed legitimate and necessary, instead of frowned upon or viewed as a threat to professionalism. If we are to consider what goes on in a theatre education class- acting, movement, mime skills, boisterous political and philosophical debates, as well as the emotional exploration of human experiences through character development, to cite a few examples- it is evident that a level of intimacy is not just unavoidable but intrinsically necessary for pedagogical development. In rehearsal, students may find intimacy functional at first and desire to create distance once they are outside the rehearsal space. Typically, however, and depending on the nature of the production, students will find the intimacy builds and occurs even outside the space so that, in instances, it develops from functional to relational intimacy over time. Therefore, Intimacy in rehearsal is simultaneously imposed, functional and relational.

Since intimacy in rehearsal practice is also dependent on the nature of relationships between all the people participating- that is, between students and other students, as well as between students and teachers, it is plausible to state that the quality of intimacy generated is dependent on socio-economic, gender and identity differences and politics and how these are negotiated amongst rehearsal participants.

Jansen (2016) discusses the complexity of intimacy when it is produced in spaces of disproportionate power relations, which he terms “space[s] of intimate inequalities” (p. 64). This term describes spaces- domestic, social, industrial- in which intimate interactions and relationships exist between people with unequal political, social, and economic statuses. Jansen’s (2016) context is apartheid South Africa, and in analysing various forms of intimate encounters between white masters and black servants, he argues that there exist “...contradictions embedded in the tangle of deep intimacy and positional inequality” (p. 64). In other words, how humans choose to relate in terms of intimacy may often contradict the seemingly rigid rules of social order. Jansen (2016) contends that single, hegemonic narratives about intimate relationships in contexts of inequality [for example, narratives of servants subjugated by oppressive masters] conceal stories of complex negotiations of intimacy and genuine affection that persistently transgressed restrictive legislature and social norms. The author (Jansen, 2016) argues that... “Intimacy carries the power to transform the very relationship[s] that produce it...” (p. 69)

Pryal (2010) describes the pedagogical intimacy between teachers and their students within a university context as “individual knowledge of, even friendship with, each student...” (p. 74). The author (Pryal, 2010) describes intimacy as a setting aside of the fear of the vulnerability of coming before our students as embodied beings and argues that engaging with students in ways that explicitly make us gendered, raced, and sexed bodies make room for necessary though uncomfortable conversations about the relationship of ethics and power, for example.

Expressing a similar thought, Brown (2019) argues that when we support work cultures that do not tolerate or accommodate vulnerability, we create environments that do not allow space for uncomfortable yet critical academic conversations. Brown (2019) writes from a shame resilience theory perspective (Brown, 2006) and argues that to effectively hold conversations about race, gender, and class that typically create tension [a key component in the producing and understanding of dramatic work], students learning in educational spaces need to feel safe to be vulnerable in expressing their views, even while the views expressed may not be deemed popular.

Another aspect of intimacy present in the teacher-student relationship is trust. While it is expected that there may be variations in how far and how much some students may place trust in their teachers and vice versa, some level of trust is required to make the educational relationship meaningful. Trust is described as "...fundamental for maintaining cooperation, vital to any exchange, and necessary for even the most routine of everyday interactions." (Costa, 2004, p. 611). Furthermore, in the case of student-teacher relations, there are two kinds of trust simultaneously in operation: 'interpersonal trust', which denotes the trust shared by people as a result of interacting and working with each other, and 'institutional trust', which people place in the operations of "...institutional and social systems" (p. 611.) Therefore, it can be argued that in any theatre classroom in higher education, where students and a teacher are present, two kinds of trust are in operation, albeit unpredictably and in different ways.

Interestingly trust is also articulated as something “one not only thinks but also feels...” (Costa, 2004, p. 612) and as a “behavioral choice” (Hurley, 2006, p. 56) suggesting an invoking, or at least bringing to awareness, of one’s feelings and agency with regards to how they relate with others. While this notion is derived from an organisational psychology perspective, in a theatre classroom where the requirement may be that students work in groups for lengthy periods (which happens more often than not), trust is necessarily a valuable component that students are compelled to accept and actively cultivate. In that sense, trust involves an openness to vulnerability and a willingness to take risks (Harley, 2006). While it is always possible that some students may resist the obligation to learn and be taught in this way, most students generally oblige to be able to participate and partake in the learning, placing trust as a key factor in the intimate interactions developed in the theatre performance class, whether by implicit design or overt consent. Finally, trust is also a “...psychological state” (Costa, 2004, p. 611), responsible for the decision to engage in activities or relations that involve risk and motivated by “...beliefs and expectations about the treatment [to be] received from others” (p. 612.) This notion aligns with the earlier-mentioned conception of the relationship between self-disclosure and partner responsiveness as a mitigating factor in how deeply intimate relations are developed.

Moreover, trust highlights vulnerability and intimacy in the classroom as a relational phenomenon. Indeed, that which is intimate is simultaneously always vulnerable since intimacy (unable to mediate or manage itself) relies on the intentions and actions of human beings. Paradoxically, intimacy’s effects are not limited to the purposes of those who generate it. Intimacy, very literally, has a life of its own. As explained by Berlant (1998):

“intimacy builds worlds; it creates spaces and usurps places meant for other kinds of relations. Its potential failure to stabilise closeness always haunts its persistent activity”

(p. 282)

Unpredictable by nature, intimacy is a kind of conundrum in the classroom, a puzzle and riddle that, if paid attention to, can be both carefully yielded to and directed to enhance engagement in the classroom and to make more effective other pedagogical strategies. Perhaps more poignant is how intimacy reveals to both student and teacher how the knowledge that positions a clear divide between public and private is inaccurate and not reflective of reality. Eloquently put by Berlant (1998), "...how can we think about the ways attachments make people public, producing transpersonal identities and subjectivities?" (p. 283) The answers to these questions point to how "...intimacy links the instability of individual lives to the trajectories of the collective." (p. 283)

Intimacy and South African nuances

I have already discussed that it is important to think of intimacy as a context-specific conceptualisation and experience when "...constructing the realms of intimacy" (Zengin & Sehlirkoglu, 2016, p. 139). Furthermore, I argue that how people understand intimacy, embodied, enacted, and experienced, is unquestionably linked to their geographic and socio-economic place [or the perception thereof] and related events in the everchanging worlds that people live within. Writing from the perspective of studying intimacies as experienced by women in the Middle East, anthropologists Zengin and Sehlirkoglu's (2016) views assist in developing this line of thinking since they argue that "how bodies and objects meet and [therefore] the zones of contact that they create in the everyday life of public institutions and families are critical issues to further examine" (p. 139). To put it differently, in the South African context, the seemingly mundane, taken-for-granted corridors in the workplace or the long queues in a taxi rank as well as the intimate couple's therapy room, for example, all qualify as places where people connect and come into contact with each other in their daily living. Therefore, all these encounters and spaces are worthy of the attention of researchers.

We can also expect that studying context-specific sites of intimacy will reveal different information about the nature of human connection. While this is so, the same pair of social scientists point us to thinking more critically by arguing that while intimacy has "multiple domains" (Zengin & Sehlkoglu, 2016, p. 139) that are no doubt socially and culturally understood in ways specific to the people participating in them, intimacy should be understood in ways that reach beyond contemporary and 'local' communities to include "intimate state power" (p. 140) as an agent facilitating national and global agendas. On this interesting notion, they argue as follows:

"With the implementation of legal strategies and regulatory practices, the so-called sphere of the private emerges as a locus of evolving forms of state power that determines the intimacies (sexual, domestic, and family relations) that are legitimate." (p.140)

This point is exciting in how it assists me in constructing and presenting, for the following part of this conversation, the idea that intimacy in South Africa is unique to the country's history and contemporary politics. This could be said of intimacy in all contexts- that social relations and how intimate behaviour is understood and manifest in a given society depends very much on the cultural specifics of that context. However, in this instance, the connection between conceptualising intimacy and the South African context is essential to establish because of the bearing I expect it will have on analysing the experiences of intimacy converging with pedagogy in the performance studies classrooms of black female teacher-directors in South African universities. I argue in the following section that there exists a complex history of understanding, manifesting, and policing intimacy- for reasons that are political, educational, and health-related- by South Africans and the South African state.

Whilst there is evidence of state interference in intimate relations of ordinary citizens sooner, in 1957's racially segregated South Africa, the Immorality Act No 23 (1957. Immorality Act No 23 - the O'Malley Archives, n.d.) served as an amendment and extension of an impactful law first legislated in 1927, significant for its forbidding of sexual relations between Europeans (white) and non-Europeans (non-whites). The term *impactful* is used deliberately to allude to how the prohibitory ethos of the law continues to play out in the everyday struggles of intimate interracial coupling in present-day South Africa. In a study (Claire, 2010) exploring the influence of family attitudes on intimate relationships between people of different race groups in post-Apartheid South Africa, a young middle-class, university-educated research participant is cited as stating that her "only problem with dating a white guy is... [her] concern that a white partner's parents would not accept her..." (2010, p. 404) indicating a persistent legacy of the perceived illegitimacy of intimate relations of lovers across race groups.

Furthermore, the penalty for disobedience to the Immorality Act was imprisonment. Thus, once upon a difficult time, to be politically *deviant* in intimate relations as a racially categorised South African was also to choose to be deemed a criminal involuntarily. It is noteworthy that Intimacy was tortuously linked to criminality, which is not unique to South Africa, nor is it a new phenomenon in research. That said, the criminalisation of intimacy across racial groups remains incredibly significant in the ways South Africans view the *how* and the *why* of intimacy in contemporary times. Ironically, in the interests of the democratic agenda, the shift away from the criminalisation of non-traditional intimacies serves as evidence of the strides made to allow freedom in the intimate choices people can make, as in the example of the Civil Union Bill (Brand South Africa, 2017), passed in stark contrast to other African countries where same-sex relationships remain prohibited by law. Thus, for my argument, I mark this as the first characteristic of the context-specific nature of intimacy in South Africa. That is to say, how citizens understand relationships of love, connection, and closeness is menacingly related to apartheid history and its social consequences, making intimacy a very precarious thing to negotiate for those most vulnerable to social and political forces.

Given that South Africa is ranked as “the most unequal country in the world” (Al Jazeera, 2022), with race identified as a critical factor, those for whom the conceptualisation and experiencing of intimacy is fraught with risk and danger are black persons with disabilities, women, children and LGBTIQ+ people. An example of the vulnerability of LGBTIQ+ persons, in the argument of a specifically South African conceptualisation of intimacy, is evidenced in 1982 when the first reported case of HIV infection [a disease contracted primarily through sexually intimate contact] was recorded. Public opinion- predominantly constructed through the work of the media and state- was that the sexually transmitted disease was “limited to the Gay community” (Abdool Karim & Abdool Karim, 2002, p. 38).

HIV/AIDS infection was thus insidiously framed [and for many years] as divine retribution on those who did not conform to heterosexuality. Thus, concurrently with the state, conservative and religious institutions found a voice for their agendas of control around issues of intimacy in the emergence of HIV. This, however, was one of the various socio-political ways in which sexual intimacy came to be synonymous with threat and control.

To further complicate matters, the 'arrival' of HIV/Aids is reported to have also been shrouded by intense suspicion by those in the ranks of the anti-apartheid movement. Here, the disease was seen as a part of the South African government's "population control programme, which targeted black communities" (Abdool Karim & Abdool Karim, 2002, p. 38). The former commander of uMkhonto weSizwe, Chris Hani, is reported to have stated, "Those of us in exile are in the unfortunate situation of being in the areas where the [HIV epidemic] prevalence is high. We cannot afford to allow the AIDS epidemic to ruin the realisation of our dreams." (p. 39). We can reasonably expect, therefore, that HIV and, by extension, sexual relations were perceived by many within the secret- and henceforth necessarily intimate- military wing communities living in exile as synonymous with political and health risks. It is not without consequence that many former members of the military wing now serve as high-ranking political leaders responsible for the drawing up and sanctioning of legislature governing social interactions in a country plagued by intimate partner violence. As exposed during the Covid-19 hard lockdown of 2020, South Africa is described as "...generally violent... with a long history of GBV [Gender based violence] and femicide (which) continues to be a warzone for women's bodies (sic)" (Ndlovu, 2021, p.111). The lockdown regulations that restricted people around the country from leaving their homes revealed the battlefield inherent in intimate relationships within domestic spaces.

Indeed, an alarming increase in intimate partner violence (Kaukinen, 2020) was recorded in many parts of the world (Mofit et al., 2020), which I will continue to discuss later. Furthermore, scholars argue, "There is an intimate relationship between capitalism, violence, and gender harm that was further exposed by the (re)structuring of the economy during the 'hard lockdown' period" (Aguero, 2021, p. 111). Returning to the response to the emerging HIV pandemic in the early eighties, historians report that "...the apartheid regime saw the HIV epidemic as a problem in blacks or gays and saw neither as a priority deserving of serious attention." (Abdool Karim & Abdool Karim, 2002, p. 38) As such, it becomes clear that the disease came to be recognised as a political weapon that, among other things, served to aid a separatist ruling party in policing- even if through its punitive inaction- the political actions, as well as issues of safety in the intimate political connections people could have with one another. This is important since safety, vulnerability, and trust are essential components of healthy expressions and experiences of intimacy, as earlier established.

Later in the 1990s, when the HIV epidemic became prevalent even in heterosexual women and men, the government of the new dispensation sought to socially regulate the sexual behaviour of ordinary people as a means to stop the alarmingly rapid spread of the disease. Campaigns promoting chastity, condom use during sex, and monogamy formed the most significant part of prevention strategies, encouraging people to make particular choices in intimate relationships and marking yet another overt intrusion of the state in matters of personal intimacy. Expressed concerns about public health legitimised this interference with individual decision-making. Recommendations made, in retrospect, by scientists tasked with assessing how the pandemic might have been better managed in its initial stage were that "...a concerted social movement, which created new norms in sexual behaviour, was needed" (Abdool Karim & Abdool Karim, 2002, p. 39) thus ratifying the explicit influencing of sexual

behaviour choices by the state as a practical step towards curbing the spread of disease. Thus, sexual intimacy continued to be, conceptually and, by extension, in practice, convoluted with personal and public politics, often at odds but constantly impacting each other. While the limiting of physical contact by law has residues in the spacial and geographical political landscape, the recent social distancing regulations demonstrated that so intricately connected to the socio-economic makeup of South Africa is the understanding of the value and risk of intimacy, that scientists reported " measures such as social distancing and avoiding close contact...are practised more by the rich and educated, but not by the low-income respondents." (Kollamparambil & Oyenubi, 2021).

I argue, therefore, that in South Africa specifically- conceptualising intimacy cannot be removed from the racial stratifications of the apartheid past nor the ramifications of social inequalities, gender, and the lack of equity in education.

Intimate Partner Violence, Care, and the Professional Performance Industry

In perhaps the most revealing case of the intricate intersection of intimacy, political history, power, and violence in democratic South Africa (Hassim, 2009) is the story of the rape trial of former president Jacob Zuma, which took place in 2005. This case is important in how it exposed the ambiguous ways in which the South African public- citizens, media, and political leaders- understood and conceptualised intimacy and its relationship to sexual violence. Indeed, with the rise of the #MeToo and #AmInext movements (Mather, 2019) in recent years, the then fiercely contested narrative has notably shifted towards a dominant focus on the perspective of supporters of alleged rape victim Fezekile Ntsukela Khuzwayo (Gqola, 2015). What was demonstrated in the public unfolding of the story was a lack of consistency in how the South African public regards personal privacy, sexual violence, and intimate relationships, particularly when political power is at stake.

First, the unlawful exposure of the identity of the victim by a traditionally Afrikaans (therefore perceived as traditionally white) news publication (Gqola, 2015) that deliberately flaunted the legal requirement of privacy and confidentiality (both components of intimacy) as a means to protect the victim, who was a black female. This is a significant detail the publication authorities would have known before revealing it. Furthermore, being a newspaper publication means the acute vulnerability of black females to sexual violence within the historical and contemporary political South African context is something about which they can be expected to have known. Nonetheless, in an attempt to discredit the denial of the ruling party (traditionally perceived as a black party) that a charge had indeed been laid against the deputy president, an opportunistic decision was made to expose the victim's identity by the media. The social consequences of this decision were far-reaching (this is not to deny the inevitability of the exposure of the victim's identity but rather to acknowledge that how it happened was already laced with racial politics linked to South Africa's political history).

To the social public, Khwezi (as Khuzwayo was known before her identity was revealed) was consequently identified as having had an intimate history with Zuma (Reddy & Potgieter, 2006), whom she was reported to have related to as a family member, specifically as an "uncle", since childhood (Gqola, 2015). This gave both cynics and sexual violence experts in the realms of media, gender, and critical feminism studies the leverage to tell their version of the story as a means to theorise as well as sway public opinion. This made the trial important precisely because both what happened inside the judicial system and what occurred in the court of public opinion and academia were equally crucial in ways never seen before in the democratic era of South Africa (Gqola, 2015). On the one hand, sceptics claimed that powerful forces within the feuding ranks of the ruling party had conjured up a conspiracy, using an intimate family relationship to discredit the deputy president.

On the other hand, anti-sexual violence advocates lamented the age-old adage of rape victims being most vulnerable to perpetrators within their most immediate social connections of family, colleagues, and friends, thereby correctly framing rape as, more often than not, a sexual crime grossly nestled within the complexities of intimate personal relationships. As such, in the court proceedings and the press, Khuzwayo and Zuma were set up as people who had known each other for years. To make matters further complex, the history of friendship between the Zuma and Khuzwayo households was positioned as a relationship entrenched in the complicated loyalties and secrecies of a life lived in exile during the struggle for South Africa's liberation from Apartheid.

Late in the trial, disturbing details of Khuzwayo's life while growing up in exile were revealed. Particularly harmful to her case, witnesses told how she was allegedly raped (Hassim, 2009) by some comrades of the ANC's military wing as a young girl, with none of the reported cases being adequately addressed by the organisation's leadership. This testimony, as well as others by various men who were in close contact with Khuzwayo and her family in exile, were used to position Khuzwayo not only as an aggrieved and vengeful victim of previous, unresolved cases of sexual assault but also as a promiscuous woman who had, in more than one instance, cried wolf about being raped (TMG Digital, 2016). People close to Khuzwayo and her family, for years, were positioned as credible witnesses to her character due to the intimacy of their relationship with her family. The crimes of sexual violence against her were also reportedly enshrined within the confidentiality of a closed, exile community- the closeness here being the most likely reason why the very significant matter of her previous and unresolved sexual violence remained unknown and private until revealed in court as a weapon used against her.

In the end, the court acquitted the former president of the crime, and many significant incidents occurred in the meantime. An example was the duplicitousness of the ANC Women's League stance (Tlabi, 2007)- first in support of the former president during the trial and then in reverence of Khuzwayo when she passed away some years later. Overall, in South Africa, the Zuma -Khuzwayo rape story is a high-profile example of the complex combination of intimacy with violence when intimate violence occurs amidst the elements of race, gender, and political tensions specific to South Africa's story of transition from apartheid to democracy (Tlabi, 2007).

A scholar of sociology at the University of Cape Town in South Africa describes the country as having "one of the highest rates of intimate partner violence [IPV] in the world" (Thaler, 2012, p.1), with black women comprising the overwhelming majority of victims. This is after conducting a study on the perceptions of intimate partner violence amongst men and women of colour living in township urban areas in and around Cape Town. The research concludes that violence is an everyday threat and occurrence in the lives of South Africans.

Most importantly, a substantial amount of violence "takes place between spouses or intimate partners" (Thaler, 2012, p. 16). Furthermore, "...acceptance of IPV [is] highest by far among African women, matching up with previous findings of high rates of IPV acceptance among women in Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe." (Thaler, 2012, p. 16). The high levels of IPV acceptance are due to the level of exposure to violence in people's urban upbringing and other social relationships. Furthermore, studies show that the key reasons for conflict in intimate relationships are "...transgressions of gender norms and failure to fulfil cultural stereotypes of good womanhood..." (Jewkes, 2002, p. 1425). Gaslighting is another form of intimate partner violence specific to women that became important as this study developed.

Gaslighting is derived from a play titled *Gas Light*, written and staged by theatre playwright Patrick Hamilton in Great Britain in 1938 (Tripney, 2019). The play's story is a thriller about a man who uses manipulation tactics and deception to distort his wife's perception of reality and thus convince her that she is losing her mind. The stage play was later developed into a famous screenplay directed by George Cukor, with the roles of wife and husband, respectively, performed by Ingrid Berman and Charles Boyer (Tripney, 2019). Since then, 'Gaslighting' as a term has become featured as domestic psychological abuse within the British domestic violence legislature, first used in a High Court's judgment in 2021 (Oppenheim, 2022). This term has also become popular as a subject of academic studies in sociology, philosophy, and psychology, and it is a phenomenon worth studying primarily because gaslighting is an attack on the human person as a knower.

Academic scholars define gaslighting as "strategic communication that causes others to doubt their sense of reality" (Grave & Spencer, 2021, p. 2). Another description, delving into how the victim of gaslighting is positioned, states the long-term purpose of gaslighting as "...to gradually undermine the victim's confidence in [her] own ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, right from wrong, or reality from appearance, thereby rendering him pathologically dependent on the gaslighter in [her] thinking or feelings." (Duignan, 2017). Given that the aim is to distort the knower's perception of what she knows, this term has grown in popularity within the realm of epistemic injustice. However, to appreciate the implications of this, what must first be illuminated is how knowledge claims are made and justified [in Western epistemologies]—as a means to understand how a person's claim to knowledge can come under attack or be undermined in an intimate relationship

The first thing to understand is how, through rhetoric, specific knowledge claims come to be understood, ratified, and accepted as "truth". Graves and Spencer (2021) describe this process as the "...ethotic and pathemic (sic) aspects of rhetoric work[ing] with and alongside logocentric discourse in making and adjudicating knowledge claims" (p. 2). In other words, knowledge claims are systematically constructed and reinforced as meaningful and legitimate—they are not simply accepted as meaningful because they inherently are.

Furthermore, the authors point to the case of gaslighting as a profound example of rhetoric used to build or distort truth in that the explicit intention of a known and trusted knower is to achieve the complete destabilisation of another knower through their intimate relationship with what is already established as knowledge between the two parties. In this way, the gaslighting is done "...in response to and by way of claims that either accord or do not accord with objective reality." (Graves & Spencer, 2021, p. 2). Sweets (2019), a sociology scholar, suggests that gaslighting should not only be thought of in its relation to knowledge but recognised more significantly as "...rooted in social inequalities, including gender, and [therefore] executed in power-laden intimate relationships." (2019, p. 851). In the author's study, she uses domestic violence as a case study to uncover gaslighting, categorised as an example of "under-recognized, gendered forms of power and their mobilisation in interpersonal relationships." (Sweets, 2019, p.851). It suffices, therefore, at this point to say that intimacy induces and provides an ideal environment for the acting out of particular forms of violence between people and between people and institutions with asymmetrical access to social, political and economic power.

In fact, so intricately connected to the political and socio-economic makeup of South Africa are the risks involved in close contact and intimacy; in the case of the response to COVID-19 amongst ordinary South African citizens, medical scientists reported that "measures such as social distancing, avoiding close contact...are practised more by the rich and educated, but not by the low-income respondents." (Kollamparambil & Oyenubi, 2021, p.17/19) This, according to the study, meant that poor black South Africans with lower education levels and lower income, despite being perceived as the most vulnerable group, were the people who, more often than not, could not and did not practice key preventative strategies related to disconnecting from others (Kollamparambil & Oyenubi, 2021). Studies show that, ironically, intimate engagements provided much-needed support to people who could not afford care during a time of great social and mental difficulty. However, there are scholarly arguments highlighting that intimacy in relationships of difference can work to effectively address the consequences of socio-economic inequalities specific to South Africa.

A case study conducted on an unnamed young business leader in the US is interpreted by a local online daily news publication (Jobson et al., 2022) as revealing the significance of intimate connections on the socio-economic conditions of young people. The Daily Maverick argues that the study's findings can apply to South Africa in unique ways. The authors reported that "...informal ties between people from different socioeconomic backgrounds (social connections) promote economic connectedness. These ties are reported to be so powerful they may even have a stronger impact on outcomes than a person's school, home life, and community." (Jobson et al., 2022). This is particularly interesting- if not seemingly idealistic- should it apply to a historically socio-economically divided context such as South Africa, which the news article correctly describes as having "a long and painful history of racism, segregation, and social injustice" (Jobson et al., 2021) in which the social identities of race and class are paramount.

The article suggests that if ordinary citizens take on the social call to “live in a way that honours and multiplies the power of our individual connections.”, essentially, reinvestment in the principle of Ubuntu, the wealthier South African citizens would thereby create ways to connect and build mentorship relationships with impoverished young people socially. This is a means to care and enable the upliftment of one by another to address, in impactful micro-efforts, the otherwise unimaginably enormous task of effectively confronting historically constructed socio-inequality.

The authors also argue that working to build relationships of closeness across racial and economic divides “...would be truly radical” (Jobson et al., 2022), suggesting that this act of intimate connection for economic upliftment would be special. Indeed, once the bedrock of many South African ethnic societies, Ubuntu is now a radical idea in the globalised face of individualistic values in an increasingly materialistic world. In the everyday isolating effects of the advent of social media on young people, Ubuntu advocates for the intimacy of being, which means we look at society as a collective of individuals intricately bound to each other and intimately affected by each other's actions, including the will to care. In attempting to give a description of the philosophy of Ubuntu, derived from over 100 contesting and similar academic arguments on the notion, Ewuso and Hall (2019) state the following:

“...ubuntu is an essentially relational ethics, which prizes relationships of interdependence, fellowship, reconciliation, relationality, community friendliness, harmonious relationships and other-regarding actions such as compassion and actions that are likely to be good for others, in which actions are morally right to the extent that they honour the capacity to relate communally, reduce discord or promote friendly relationships with others, and in which the physical world and the spiritual world are fundamentally united” (p.93)

Giving care within the context of this research and elsewhere is an act of intimacy. Using the lens of attachment theory, Collins and Ford (2010) argue that caregiving is necessarily intimate since it is primarily a human act of service for the benefit of offspring and because it is derived from the fact that "human beings are born with the capacity to develop behaviours aimed at providing protection and care to others in need." (Collins & Ford, 2010, p. 236) Furthermore, the authors argue that attachment theory explains two important things that are established in intimate relationships characterised by caregiving, as described below:

"Attachment theory postulates that caregiving serves two major functions: (1) to meet the dependent partner's need for security by responding to signals of distress or potential threat (providing a safe haven); and (2) to support the attached person's autonomy and exploration when not distressed- providing a secure base."

(Collins & Ford, 2010, p. 236)

The establishment of a *safe haven* and *secure base* is aligned with the argument made by Collins and Feeney (2004, p. 163) in an earlier study pointing to the fact that caregiving plays a significant role in the kind of intimacies that generate a sense of safety between partners and people. The authors argue that a core element of close relationships is a sense of safety, stating that, ultimately, closeness and intimacy processes are essential for building trust and *security*. Consequently, "care-seeking-care-giving exchanges" (Collins & Feeney, 2004, p. 163) are highlighted as a genre of intimacy. This is significant in a context like South Africa, where caregiving as a concept predominantly denotes palliative care for people living with HIV, orphans, and victims of sexual abuse. However, it is a term used in other contexts. As such, scholars within the field suggest that the "...caregiver burden is an ideal lens through which to assess the caregiver experience" (Kidman & Thurman, 2014, p. 235) due to the myriad of intersecting political and socioeconomic factors affecting caregiving. This is a subject that is explored further later in the research.

However, at this point, I argue that in South Africa specifically- although not exclusively- conceptualising intimacy and its various manifestations cannot be removed from the racial stratifications of the apartheid past nor the ramifications of social and gender inequalities as well as the lack of equity in education. As such, Apartheid, HIV, COVID-19, and gender-based violence colour how South Africans presently understand as well as experience intimacy. Most significant is the explicitly repeated association of intimacy with risk- for women and other economically vulnerable individuals- as well as how individual, institutional, and collective power works to frame, erode or nurture intimacy depending on the perspective from which stories of intimacy are told and to what end they are used. I end this discussion by highlighting how safety is regarded as an imperative in intimate work in the South African film and theatre industry and how transference as a consequence of childhood intimate relationships is relevant here.

Intimacy: Working in South African film and television

Intimacy South Africa, a non-profit film and television organisation, acknowledges that compelling storytelling through the mediums of theatre and film performance often includes scenes of simulated intimacy and sex. Consequently, the organisation's primary function is to work with stakeholders in the industry to ensure the safety of practitioners, performers, and audiences alike, as facilitated by professional intimacy coordinators (IC). According to the organisation, an intimacy coordinator is "...a trained professional who specialises in managing scenes with intimacy, simulated sex, and nudity and can be employed by a production to assist when planning or working on scenes with intimate content, from pre-production, during production, and through postproduction." (Protocols for working with intimate content South Africa, n.d.). The key responsibility of this role is promoting adherence to a set of working protocols that serve as "a framework for working with intimacy." The protocols aim to, among other things, "create an environment for Performers to be 'personally safe so that they can be artistically vulnerable'". (Protocols for working with intimate content South Africa, n.d.). Once again, the need for vulnerability as a state of being that allows artist-performers to create is highlighted, along with a sense of safety.

Indeed, based on the context, safety is a major focus of the organisation. The rationale is that ways of depicting and understanding intimacy within South Africa are unique to its context. In a statement, the organisation asserts the following, "Although performances in these scenes convey strong feelings and powerful emotions to an audience, which can be integral to a storyline, we also recognise the unique vulnerabilities that might arise for Performers, and indeed all Production Team involved when engaged in hyper-exposed work. The high level of sexual violence and trauma in South Africa calls for a responsible approach to this sensitive topic." (Protocols for working with intimate content South Africa, n.d.).

Therefore, understanding intimacy and how performers generate intimate scenes for the screen involves prioritising physical, mental, and emotional safety.

In this industry, specific to the context, conceptualising safety includes articulating ways people are kept safe from harm. Additionally, two articulated protocols are significant to the conceptualisation of intimacy in this study. These are as follows: “Define exit strategies (sic), allowing the performers or crew to step out of the action at times when they do not feel emotionally or physically safe” as well as “...provide the option for facilitated closure, to ensure post-scene emotional safety”. (Protocols for working with intimate content South Africa, n.d.). The enabling and recognition of boundaries, as well as the mechanisms to maintain boundaries, form a significant part of conceptualising healthy intimacy- whether that is to demarcate the end of an intimate scene to allow a performer to safely (emotionally) step outside of it or whether it means film scene is stopped mid-take to ensure performers feel safe. What is ultimately significant is the repeated notion that intimacy within a South African context is conceptualised alongside ways of making intimacy safe.

Finally, transference is an aspect of intimate relationships to consider, which is mirrored in the structure and trajectory of this research. My research journey begins as an act of revisiting the past in order to confront and understand it. Transference is described as “...the carrying across of the past into the present [and] essentially a compulsion to return to our past to clear up emotionally backlogged business” (Richo, 2008, p. 5). A term first coined by the mind behind psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, to refer to the present attempts to confront inadequacies in the mother-child early relationship of intimacy, transference refers to “an unconscious displacement of feelings, attitudes, expectations, perceptions, reactions beliefs, and judgments that were appropriate to former figures in our lives...onto people in the present” (Richo, 2008, p. 7).

This is to say that a person can project onto the present the unresolved qualities of an experience from an intimate relationship with a significant other (predominantly but not necessarily a parental figure) in their past. In the case of my research, the transference is deliberate rather than unconscious. Given my strong need to better understand what happened to me as a student at the hands of a teacher, this research begins as a theorising of that event and its consequences. Freud (n.d) explains transference in the following way:

“It must be understood that each individual, through the combined operation of his innate disposition and the influences brought to bear on him during his early years, has acquired a specific method of his own in his conduct of his erotic life—that is, in the preconditions to falling in love which he lays down, in the instincts he satisfies and the aims he sets himself in the course of it. This produces what might be described as a stereotype plate (or several such), which is constantly repeated— constantly reprinted afresh—in the course of the person's life, so far as external circumstances and the nature of the love-objects accessible to him permit....”

(p. 99-100)

This repetition, ‘reprinted’ in different relationships, is a way to confront an unresolved aspect of the past (Richo, 2007). This unresolved issue can be traced back to childhood or a significant event in one’s past, thus making the present a platform to “make up for the past’ (p. 5). In this Act, I have argued that intimacy can be seen as the intersection of various meanings in relationships between people or between people and institutions like the state or the film industry. Therefore, closeness, connection, emotional expression and interaction, trust, physical contact, power, violence, caregiving, transference, and safety all contribute to this study’s conceptualisation of intimacy. This section is followed by a discussion facilitated by reviewing literature on theatre pedagogy and higher education.

ACT 2

Scene 1. Literature Review

This section presents a hybrid conversation between myself and other performance studies scholars. To articulate and argue for my study, I aim to usher the reader into an ontological understanding of theatre and performance education. A reminder that the purpose of this research is to understand intimacy's relationship to pedagogy within performance studies classrooms in higher education from the nuanced perspective of black female teacher-directors and teacher-performers. The first section defines the parameters within which epistemic and pedagogical aspects of theatrical performance have been explored in literature in ways relevant to this study, beginning with the idea that "...theatre is...socially and politically situated, ideologically grounded, and therefore reflects a perspective, an agenda, and an epistemology" (Perry, 2011, p. 72). The discussion develops to include a literature review on the nature of theatre performance as pedagogy, on higher education in South Africa, and black women teachers of performance studies in higher education. While the tone of this scene leans more towards formality than in previous sections, another dramatisation is used to conclude the scene.

Establishing Theatre and Performance Pedagogy Definitions

How theatre performance practitioners and teachers educate performers and students, even to achieve similar goals, is as varied and as widely subject to preference as there are institutions and practitioners. No single method is exclusively recognised as absolute, and some practices are more readily recognised and used than others. Primarily, this is due to the diverse nature of theatre performance itself. This is also a characteristic that various theatre and performance scholars agree on. In one example, Harry (2017) argues that theatre draws from "...diverse sets of thinking [and] communication skills" and that students who study theatre do so by drawing on the skills they harness in other learning areas.

Primarily, this is due to the diverse nature of theatre performance itself. This is also a characteristic that various theatre and performance scholars agree on. In one example, Harry (2017) argues that theatre draws from "...diverse sets of thinking [and] communication skills" and that students who study theatre do so by drawing on the skills they harness in other learning areas. In other words, the knowledge acquired in applied human sciences, fine arts, and agricultural studies, for example, could all contribute to the skills a theatre student would bring to their theatre-making class. This would make the learning rich in diverse knowledge that would not only serve the students in theatre class but, conversely, and by extension, also impact how they learn outside of the performance space. Once a student-performer, Harry (2017) cites her own learning experience as an example that she admits influences her teaching:

"I learned how to be human in the theatre. My first kiss was a stage kiss... I learned how to view the world by reading plays and my students will tell you they learned more than just theatre pedagogy; they learned about life. This is probably the most important reason why I teach theatre. I find that when I teach theatre concepts, I'm also teaching how to cope with life. What we learn in theatre is a terrific way to interact with a diverse world".

(Harry, 2017)

There is a lovely suggestion in Harry's account that theatre teaching covers many unprescribed and unpredictable learning objectives but perhaps equally as significant as those that are. As Heskins and Van der Walt (2018) accurately argue, when making theatre work and studying it, practitioners are often "...drawing on wellsprings that are deeply rooted in our understanding of, and engagement with, the world, and thus the work seems to emerge from instinct and intuition, attributes which often defy logical explanation" (p.40). It is reasonable then to deduce that to attempt to define theatre studies pedagogy in finite ways or to demarcate the

subject matter belonging to the theatre curriculum is impossible. It would be to try to simplify a deliberately complex phenomenon, including all aspects of human experience, in a way that is personal to each individual who practices performance.

Similarly pointing to the personal and practised nature of theatre knowledge, Chinyowa (2007) and Sidogi and Ndou (2022) discuss the aesthetics of African theatre. The authors (Sidogi & Ndou, 2022) argue that play and performativity demonstrate "...what happens to people in the process of forming, presenting and understanding their reality" (p. 5). In other words, play and performativity are sites of knowledge of how people comprehend and theorise their everyday life experiences. Along the same line of thinking, another performance studies scholar discusses the multimodal nature of performance studies and builds his description on an emphasis on the transdisciplinarity of knowledge. McMahon (1995) describes performance as being in a *liminal state*, which "...allows [the] constant traffic between disciplines, adding and subtracting to make the whole while employing the necessary articulations that serve the work itself, not the discipline. The goal is not fixed; there is no 'text'(sic) to explicate or replicate" (p. 127-128). As Taylor (2004) recognises, due to its "ephemeral and transitory nature" (p. 74), knowledge generated through theatre and performance remains challenging to classify.

Consequently, theatre scholars agree that what forms part of theatre teaching and learning curriculum is strongly influenced by the individual teacher-artists and their epistemic priorities. This is combined with the effects of the context within which teaching and learning take place. Accordingly, the discussion and subsequent conceptualisation of theatre pedagogy that follows will be essentially subjective. More specifically, the discussion is based on the literature and practice methods I have engaged with in my experiences as a student-performer, teacher-director, and performance studies researcher.

First, I wish to frame theatre and performance pedagogy as personal yet hybrid, as born of the mind as well as social interaction, as sourced from spiritual inclinations, and as learning that is experienced viscerally. As a means to build an argument about the need to understand and explore theatre performance pedagogy as an intimate form of pedagogy as well as to make meaning of the relationship between intimacy and pedagogy, I begin by framing the teaching and learning encounter in the theatre and performance classroom as engaged pedagogy. I argue that the T and P classroom is the meeting place of three types of education: engaged, embodied, and critical. Furthermore, I conceptualise theatre pedagogy in higher education as a simultaneously empathic and critical pedagogy in its consistently embodied engagement with an “other.” I argue that, in theory and practice, both students and teachers experience these three different kinds of pedagogy at an intersection, with teacher-directors as crucial decision-makers in the pedagogy trajectory as it manifests in their individual classrooms and teaching approaches.

Performance pedagogy as engaged pedagogy

Building healthy relationships in the classroom is the beginning of engaged pedagogy, according to bell hooks (2010), who argues that increased interaction between students and teachers in the classroom leads to effective teaching and learning. The author (hooks, 2010) suggests that teachers prioritise strategies that assist in building community among the students they work with from the onset of the learning process. hooks (2010) views learning as an exercise involving both “the minds and the hearts of the students” (p. 20), and therefore regards it as essential that educators and learners use every opportunity in the classroom to get to know each other better.

A similar idea is articulated by Conrad (2004), who discusses the significance of the relationship between teachers and students engaging in theatre pedagogy, specifically in educational contexts. Conrad argues that the practice of theatre shifts the roles and, therefore, the relationship between students and teachers from the conventional ways students and teachers may relate in a classroom. The author invokes Paulo Freire's (2005) ethos of education as 'the practice of freedom' (Conrad, 2004, p. 89) as a part of theatre practice, where the focus of education is the establishment of relationships between students and teachers. In this context, these relationships facilitate both parties' learning through questioning and participation as means of problem-solving. Conrad (2004) argues that this promotes the work of making meaning as a mutual partnership. Equally recognising the importance of mutual learning as a characteristic of engaged education, hooks (2010) further states:

“...engaged pedagogy emphasises mutual participation because it is the movement of ideas, exchanged by everyone, that forges a meaningful working relationship between everyone in the classroom.” (p. 21)

Furthermore, as a critical part of making meaning collaboratively, hooks proposes that teachers actively work to acquire an intimate understanding of who their students are on an intellectual and emotional level. The author (hooks, 2010) suggests that an awareness of the level of “emotional intelligence in the classroom” (p. 19) uniquely positions the teacher to see for herself the underlying issues that may hinder or influence engaged learning in the classroom. Both hooks (2010) and Conrad (2004) argue that learning environments that promote sincere participation involve in-depth collaboration between students and teachers and the establishment of meaningful relationships.

Thus far, what has been established as paramount in creating an environment that supports deep engagement in learning is abundantly present in the performance classroom. Taylor (2004) refers to the drama classroom as a place that enables “action, reflection [and] transformation” (p. 112). In performances within educational settings, each student is regarded as both an individual performer and a member of an ensemble, and it is through their interaction with others that each student develops and grows into a professional performer. This necessarily results in acknowledging individual contributions and communal learning experiences through interaction. Furthermore, since performance pedagogy relies on students' physical, intellectual, and emotional input- thus creating a platform for expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings- it engenders both the space for a learning community and the development of learning individuals. This is similar to hooks' (2010) description of engaged pedagogy, as learning that “...highlights the importance of independent thinking [with] each student finding his or her unique voice” (hooks, 2010, p. 21).

Inclusive of the teacher-director's pre-planned activities for the collective class or individuals, much of the pedagogy in performance occurs as spontaneous impulses to participate in conversations generated in response to a prescribed stimulus. hooks (2010) comments on the value of conversation in engaged pedagogy, identifying it as “a vital intervention” (p. 45) in the classroom, significant in how it “...makes room for every voice [and]... also presupposes that all voices can be heard” (p. 45). In a context as diverse as the South African higher education performance classroom, conversation is invaluable in encouraging the appreciation of difference. It is also important within big groups as a way of *allowing for*, rather than opposing, individual thought. Indeed, dialogue is highlighted in performance not only as a key feature and potential tool for promoting democracy, as hooks (2010) suggests, but also as the means to avow differences in language and interpretation.

As a result, learning in performance encourages both open-mindedness and critical thought. This can lead to peer and self-initiated learning, which is yet another attribute of engaged pedagogy, according to hooks (2010).

On this, the author writes:

“engaged pedagogy produces self-directed learners, teachers, and students who are able to participate fully in the production of ideas. Learning and talking together, we break with the notion that our experience of gaining knowledge is private, individualistic and competitive” (p. 43)

Ultimately, hooks (2010) understands the role of engaged learning as primarily being about building critical thinking skills amongst students to achieve “self-actualisation” (p. 21). In a similar trajectory, Conrad (2004) identifies and applauds the same engagement in theatre pedagogy. He argues that “by giving students time, attention and voice, by including their knowledge in the curriculum, [in theatre pedagogy] they are acknowledged and legitimised within the school context” (p. 98). This reinforces a sense of ownership in both teacher and student about the learning process. Finally, Conrad (2004) argues that, historically, theatre pedagogy is learning that promotes self-driven innovation. The author (Conrad, 2004) continues to state that because theatre pedagogy is research *generated through* participation strategies, it is a pedagogy that is necessarily “... legitimised and added to the people’s collective knowledge, empowering them to solve their own problems” (p. 89- 90)

Working with a community resolving their own problems in a theatre project in Melbourne, Australia, Sinclair (2004) embarks on a study of theatre performance practice and describes theatre performance as:

“...an engaged space, where key elements of artistry, agency, pedagogy, pragmatics and critical reflection shape and inform the practice.” (p. pii).

Sinclair’s (2004) referral to performance as the *engaged space* (p. 135) serves, for this research, to resonate with ideas previously articulated by hooks (2010) and Conrad (2004), especially in the supposition that “...those who choose to participate in the collective art-making process become a temporary community of art-makers.” (Sinclair, 2004, p. 135) However, in addition, Sinclair (2004) describes the creative space of rehearsing as that which “...encloses the art making and enables it” (p. 136) and suggests that a key characteristic of this space is the presence of agency. This not only aligns with hooks’ (2010) idea of self-actualisation but is quite significantly identified by Sinclair (2004) as that which maintains “...a balance between the artistic [individual and creative] health and the social [community and material] health of the community-in-formation” (p. 138)

In a turn towards the politics of pedagogy, the notion of balance highlighted here is one Sinclair (2004) identifies as a key consideration in the theatre-making process, in which performance is a prominent component. The author introduces a struggle embedded within the practice of performance, particularly within an institutional pedagogical sense, when performance is also conducted for the purely commercial purposes of public consumption. Sinclair (2004) articulates a “...need to find a balance between the facilitation of artistic practice [performance] and the facilitation of the event [performance] itself” (p.114). And, as a consequence, the author exposes various pedagogical tensions that exist in the struggle to find the balance. This forms a significant part of performance pedagogy.

The artistic practice, in the instance of theatre education, is the practice of performance- the warming up and preparation of the body, the games and strategies utilised to heighten concentration and creativity as well as the preparation of the space within which people will work.

On the other hand, the '*event itself*' refers to the performance that will be staged as a result of what is practised. Consequently, what constitutes performance pedagogy is primarily dictated by, and oftentimes subjugated to, the needs and requirements of the theatre production in the sense of the event or *finished product*. What is significant is that the finished product is also assessed for a mark towards a qualification. This renders each pedagogical endeavour of performance unique to its own targeted results but also political in how it lends itself towards learning objectives rather than artistic prowess- two elements that can be altogether different. Furthermore, on a level of disciplinary focus, there is a tension between creating theatre for art's sake [where an audience is left to interpret the work as they will] and theatre created for social commentary and transformation [where the audience is provoked to engage with a social issue that has explicitly been problematised]. As Sinclair (2004) correctly states, "...decisions relating to the achievement of aesthetic outcomes are informed by the need to 'deliver the event' (p. 114).

Generally, in higher education, the dramatic work created in a classroom must be performed before an audience. That eventuality is typically scheduled as a date with a venue and time, which all adds to the specificity of the consumption and interpretation of the event itself. Furthermore, and typically within educational contexts, it is the final performance that serves as the assessment space where the work will be witnessed and marked by an evaluator. This tension, therefore, forms part of theatre performance pedagogy in higher education, admittedly influencing the manners in which students and teachers- as individuals and communities- engage.

The finished play is more often than not prioritised over the process. Paradoxically, theatre performance pedagogy predominantly resides in the journey of creating the theatre production. These tensions are significant in arguing the positioning of performance pedagogy as inundated with individual and collective politics, making critical awareness necessary.

Performance pedagogy as Critical pedagogy

Returning to a Freirean approach to teaching and learning, critical pedagogy is best described in alignment with Freire's (2005) "conscientizacao" (p. 35). This is a term which, according to the translator's notes, denotes "...learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 53). Indeed, in the foreword of the 30th-anniversary edition of Freire's (2005) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Shaull (Freire, 2005) writes the following:

"Freire operates on one basic assumption: that man's ontological vocation is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms his world. This world he relates to is not a static and closed order...rather, it is a problem to be worked on and solved" (p. 32).

Thus, to establish a critical education ascribing to this ethos is to believe in the same idea of *subjectivity* and *context* as drivers motivating people to become change agents that affect their lived realities. Such is the philosophy of performance pedagogy, where a person's lived experience and perspective are highlighted as the springboard upon which further knowledge and inquiry will stem. This ideology also suggests that a person's development is always in direct proportion to their self-direction and passion.

Similarly, a student of Freire (2005) can "become conscious of her perceptions of reality and deal critically with it" (p. 32). This act of taking responsibility for one's ways of

knowing the world, Shaul (Freire, 2005) suggests ushers in a partnership relationship rather than a hierarchical one between teacher and student. This is yet another common characteristic of the making of creative work in the performance classroom. As it were, the critical student- the performance student- takes responsibility for herself and how she responds to the world. In turn, the performance teacher facilitates “self-directed learning” in the student (Rogers, 1969). This is a learning concept held in high regard by universities worldwide (Servant-Miklos & Noordegraaf-Eelens, 2019, p. 1). Furthermore, Pulman (2014) argues that performance pedagogy necessarily requires the use of “informal ways of giving instruction” (p. 302), which changes the focus from the content of the teacher’s instruction to how students are learning [practice]. This point is significant considering that, as argued previously, so much of performance is about the *doing* aspect of the learning. Pulman (2014) argues that this shift from “unidirectional” (p. 302) instructive teaching to using strategies that are informal to encourage students to learn establishes and strengthens a partnership- here between teacher and student. These ideas echo those previously discussed as characterising *engaged pedagogy*. Furthermore, working creativity in critical pedagogy is as much about self-direction in the way one *thinks* as it is about what one is *willing to do* through the embodied and the ephemeral.

However, not all scholars of pedagogy unreservedly support self-direction in learning. For example, Servant-Miklos and Noordegraaf-Eelens (2019, p. 2) critique the overemphasis on the individual in self-directed learning. They argue that the 21st-century global context does not allow individuality to be the way forward in higher education. Instead, the scholars (Servant-Miklos & Noordegraaf-Eelens, 2019) argue that performance pedagogy is unique in how it enables self-directed learning *through* peer learning (Tullis & Goldstone, 2020) since the majority of the work produced by students is done *collaboratively*.

While collaboration is often for pragmatic reasons, such as the sharing of limited and expensive resources, it is also primarily because theatre performance is a collaborative process involving performers, audiences, creatives, and administrators. Servant-Miklos and Noordegraaf-Eelens (2019) argue that... " higher educational methods focused exclusively on individual learners are failing to provide students with the means to analyse the social components of collective problems, to help students to understand their place in collective issues and to empower them to act upon societal problems" (p. 3) and that in the context of higher education, "an alternative rationale for higher education is urgently needed" (p. 3). In a true *ubuntu* ethos (Sidogi & Ndou, 2022)- that human beings exist through and because of one another - such is the paradox in the ethos of performance studies. The individual's artistry exists as a result of the collective, which will observe it. The collective exists because individual artists choose to live and acknowledge life through art. This stimulates critical thinking within knowledge production processes amongst peers and the community.

In line with critical epistemology and the principles of peer learning, performance pedagogy involves the consistent praxis of *action upon reflection* and *reflection upon imagination and action*. This is because in performance, "the knowing is in the doing" (Meskin & Van der Walt, 2018, p. 37). This idea is universally accepted across a plethora of specializations in performative arts. To know [in performance pedagogy] is in the same instance, to know *how* and also to know *about*. It is to understand knowledge as dynamic and shifting even as it stays grounded in certain aspects. It is to both self-affirm and self-question *reflexively* while simultaneously understanding the authentic expression of self as both representing and interrogating social norms. It is to have faith in the intrinsic value of exploring the seemingly paradoxical dance of the private and the public, which is an integral part of critical pedagogy.

As Meskin and Van de Walt (2018) noted, art is always the expression of the individual artist's relationship to the world. In addition, performance education is critical pedagogy because it embraces contradictions and unanswered questions, making the imperfect as valuable as the exquisite. Art educators (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) understand that efforts to isolate human behaviour into distinct, observable chunks do not capture the complexity of what it is to produce knowledge. As such, arts education provides the students with the tools, not only by which to probe the complex, intersecting, and multiple issues born of the human condition but also to frame an understanding of complexity as well. Guilherme (2010) argues that performance as critical pedagogy serves to "...provide students and teachers with the skills and knowledge to expand their capacities to both question and to take responsibility for intervening in the world" (p. 168).

Writing on the value of reflexive writing- a method of writing used in theatre studies to encourage self-observation and self-critique-Sutherland (2007) submits that the world we currently live in is one where we cannot count on what we used to count on anymore, making the foundations of human understanding vulnerable. The author (Sutherland, 2007) suggests that dramatic arts inherently and consistently "...[provide] opportunities for students to reflect on and process the improvisatory, risk-taking and uncertainty principles" (p. 110). This connotes a set of skills required to navigate a world where challenges and lived experiences are diverse and often completely unpredictable. The author (Sutherland, 2007) writes using the idea of super-complexity as conceptualised by Ronald Barnett (2000)- an idea that communicates a sustained vulnerability of traditional human knowledge as humans continue to develop. Sutherland (2007) argues that theatre education- in such a context- prepares students for life and that in theatre studies, the "journal writing process opens possibilities for negotiating uncertainty, difference, self and other (p. 107).

Conducting a study on the consequences of journal writing on higher education theatre curriculum, Sutherland (2007) finds narrative, through storytelling, to be "...an appropriate organising principle to link drama, research and education" (p. 111) and further argues that requiring students to reflect through writing as they learn, serves to legitimise their own experiences and consequently the "situated knowledge" (Haraway, 2013) born of individual experience. It is this inherent call to self-reflexivity that marks performance pedagogy as critical. This characteristic is coupled with the "...providing [of] an important space to understand and learn from the immediacy and ephemerality of the performance act" (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004, p. 20). The combination endows performance pedagogy with life-altering potential for the student who thrives in critical engagement, potential that moves beyond dialogue that is either written or spoken. Ironically, this potential is what makes performance pedagogy- indeed, one might argue all critical pedagogy- a threat in certain organised spaces of learning.

In the words of Henry Giroux in an interview with Guilherme (2010), critical pedagogy asks "...often ignored questions such as: why do we do what we do the way we do it? Whose interests does schooling serve?" (p. 167). These kinds of questions- that point to complexity, to functions of power, to the socio-economics- are explored in depth in live performance [and by extension, live performance education] even in platforms of the ever-extending reach of electronic and social media. As Dalrymple (2005, p. 161) argues, the seemingly present threat posed by electronic media to live theatre performance presents an opportunity for the development of the critical awareness of performance scholars and audiences to expand performance disciplines beyond a focus on live stage performances. The author postulates that the idea of theorising dramatic work on television and theatre comes with the necessity to "evaluate the efficacy of entertainment-education projects" (p. 165), which is argued as ushering in a broader spectrum of research in educational drama contexts.

This also serves to increase the performance studies' student's capacity to think and to write- since writing is an integral part of research and of performance- effectively and critically.

There is further evidence of how performance pedagogy reveals the intersection between the performative and the critical. Kindelan (2004) theorises that theatre pedagogy is an essential strategy in "address[ing] the educational needs of students who face the realities of a complex and pluralistic world". Furthermore, the author argues that it is through "the study of playscripts and the performance of plays [that] students explore and critically examine diverse cultures and historical and contemporary social issues." (2004, p.48). Writing as a theatre scholar based in India, Bala (2017) suggests that the critical thinking value of theatre pedagogy is inherent in the fact that knowledge is derived from imagination. The author proposes that the potential for learning "lies in the order of the '*as if*', the training of the imagination not only to make sense of the present but also to generate the ferment, from which knowledge that does not yet exist may emerge" (2017, p.343). South African authors Khutsoane et al. (2021) argue that theatre creates "...a frame wherein that which exists in silence can be foregrounded...draw[ing] attention to the idea of silence having body and presence, and compel[ling] audience and characters [performers] alike to listen to their thoughts in response to what has just been said out loud." (Khutsoane et al., 2021, p 169-170)

Ravengai (2015) argues that "Theatre is a memory machine, capable of drawing from the archive and recycling stories, material, bodies [aesthetic techniques] and spaces for posterity" (p. 219). This highlights theatre pedagogy as a tool for investigating and reimagining history for future generations, a capability that is invaluable as a resource for critically thinking about human beings and their existence across time. In another instance, Kabwe (2007) focuses on 'the Afropolitan experience when making theatre work to "...create a particular aesthetic that might speak to Afropolitan experiences as they are articulated across various socially constructed categories" (p. 62).

For this African theatre scholar, highlighting the Afro-hybrid experiences of human life on the continent is an important aspect of learning how to grapple with, as well as authentically represent, issues of displacement and contemporary diasporic identity through theatre. As wisely noted by Fleishman (2009), in Africa, theatre performance is a kind of epistemology where feelings, imaginations, and memory interconnect with a material world of objects and space, highlighting the integral aspect of the presence of the human body.

Whether the teaching and learning point to body shape, form, or function, the body is evidence of the embodied nature of theatre and performance pedagogy.

Performance pedagogy as Embodied pedagogy

A scholar of embodied knowledge makes the following statement, "To be human implies to be a continuous and constant bodied being situated within an environment" (Munro, 2018, p. 5). Having already established that theatre and performance pedagogy is both engaged and critical, the work of embodiment becomes the next key aspect to understanding teaching and learning in this field. Finding out exactly why embodiment in learning is special requires a deeper excavation of the nature and workings of knowledge when it is embodied. Munro (2018) explains by stating that an interchanging relationship between "...the bodied being and the environment culminates in a multimodal body-mind" (p. 5), which, as the scholar argues, describes a merging of body and mind into a new entity that is neither singularly body nor mind but equally both. The author argues that it is this emerging "body-mindedness" (Munro, 2018) that begs for inquiry and articulation. Munro (2018) provides a succinct definition of this inquiry through the body as follows: "...the deliberate use and recognition of multimodal body-mind activities and strategies to facilitate shifts in perspectives, perceptions, paradigms, behaviour, and actions" (p.5). What is implied in Munro's (2018) ideas is a conscious awareness of the ability of embodied work to facilitate tangible change in people.

Indeed, Butterwick and Selman (2012) suggest that practitioners of embodied performance pedagogy must be cognisant of the effective ability of these practices to utilise them appropriately. The authors continue to suggest that theatre practitioners ensure to "create conditions that enable safety as we [theatre practitioners] encourage courageous exploration [of participants]" (p. 68). They (Butterwick & Selman, 2012) argue that theatrical embodied work can come as both a benefit and a risk to those participating since embodied theatre and performance processes, at their most basic yet potent level, "connect mind, body and emotions" (p. 61) and therefore also open up space for transformation that can "...lead to self-revelation beyond a comfort zone" (p. 68).

Munro (2018) establishes the embodied "manifestation of a self" (p. 68) as well as any bodily expressed articulation of individual identity as examples of embodied knowledge in its most basic and undeniable form. Furthermore, the author argues that beyond the exploration and expression of oneself, all other forms of interaction and the consequences of the interaction of a person with their environment are facilitated *through* and *in* the body, making embodied knowledge unparalleled in its usefulness. Coetzee (2018) makes an argument along a similar train of thought by arguing that "...our bodies, continually in a process of becoming, organise our knowing, feeling and being" (p. 1). However, what I wish to highlight as most significant, to cite a previously articulated notion, is the idea that Munro's (2018) body-mind is "multimodal", suggesting that the process by which the body enables a person to engage with their environment is multifaceted. Munro (2018) argues that this ability of the '*body-mind*' aids the collapse of an ideology of a body-brain hierarchical dichotomy (p. 6) and instead establishes both brain and body as collaboratively contributing to learning [and teaching]. Indeed, while there is some contestation about whether or not a binary exists to collapse (Coetzee, 2018, p.1), this is a notion supported by many embodiment scholars. Munro (2018) maintains that it is precisely the "...bodiness of being" (p. 7) that frames *the body-mind and, therefore*, enables the creation of knowledge from a vantage point of multiplicity. This diversity in learning modes is also articulated by Coetzee (2018) in a description of theatre and performance pedagogies as "...modes of learning that celebrate the experiential, expressive, tacit, visual, visceral, multisensory, spatial, temporal, affective, somatic and unruly." (p. 4)

Interestingly, specifically for this study, the authors (Butterwick & Selman, 2012) point us toward recognising how embodied ways of teaching and learning can disrupt social practices that are violent and therefore "...contribute to decolonization" (p. 64). Since, as the authors argue, "...processes of colonisation separate mind and body— separation necessary for domination and manipulation" (p. 64), *embodied* practices achieve the opposite of separation but rather synergise and create connection. In this way, theatre and embodied activities contribute to identifying, revealing, and challenging oppression. This is demonstrated in embodied work, such as popular theatre artist Augusto Boal's (1979) Theatre of the Oppressed, to cite some examples. Furthermore, these processes may be facilitated in such a way as "...to generate new knowledge that leads to enfranchisement and action" (Butterwick & Selman, 2012, p. 62). As a result, an argument is made that using embodied pedagogy implies some ethical responsibility for educators and theatre practitioners.

Working in embodied theatre processes can also "trigger unremembered and unprocessed stories and memories" (Butterwick & Selman, 2012, p. 62). Moreover, it is for this reason that they argue that working in embodied ways should be understood as powerful and not underestimated in what can be achieved. The authors (Butterwick & Selman, 2012) further argue that embodied work has consequences for theatre audiences as well since audiences form part of the engagement rather than consume the work passively. They identify *witnessing* as having an intrinsic relationship of consequence with embodiment and argue that "...embodied theatre processes need pedagogical and ethical frames or containers so fear and other triggered emotions can be explored in a safe way" (Butterwick & Selman, 2012, p.65). Perhaps through this lens of the embodied nature of theatre and performance pedagogy, the intersection between the intimate and pedagogical is most explicit- and perhaps also where it is most apparent what the possibilities of research in this area might reveal.

Next, I will discuss the place of performance education in higher education, specifically in South Africa. An argument is made that both globally and within the South African context, due to local and historical specificities, the function of theatre studies in higher education is twofold, with the most significant being the active resistance against relegation to the margins. This argument is significant in highlighting the value of understanding the pedagogical experiences of black female teacher-directors in higher education since the combination of their race and gendered position as well as the consistent marginalization of performance studies and the subsequent resistance to academic erasure makes for a nuanced understanding of higher education as a space of pedagogy when this unique population group conducts it under the social, economic and political circumstances of contemporary South Africa.

Higher Education in South Africa

Amin et al. (2014) argue that in the context of decolonization and globalisation, the role of higher education institutions in Africa is to shift negative perspectives of Africa as well as to capacitate African citizens to respond effectively to the continent's social and economic problems. Additionally, the scholars argue that higher education must simultaneously cultivate a culture of appreciating and generating indigenous knowledge as well as respond epistemologically to the historically dominant influence of the West on education at the expense of locally produced knowledge. The authors (Amin et al., 2014) state:

“Higher Education has to be the imaginative source of alternative paradigms, new trends, and directions...what we can and have to do is to produce, through our research endeavours in our journals and elsewhere, the creative and productive alternative narratives of Africa” (p. 1-2).

In South Africa specifically, alternative and new ways of thinking would include strategies to address the historically racially segregated set-up of the higher education system thus highlighting South Africa's post-democracy transformation agenda in institutions of higher learning. This transformation agenda is also a reflection of a global trend- one beginning as far back as the end of the 20th Century. According to Du Preez et al. (2016), the push for change within the South African context should not only be credited to post-apartheid efforts but equally to extended lobbying done before the shift of the political dispensation from Apartheid to democracy.

The authors (Du Preez et al, 2016) cite the example of various student organisations that had long since been calling for educational and political reform within the tertiary education sector. This historical build-up of public resistance to the status quo, the authors (Du Preez et al, 2016) argue, is what culminated, most notably, in the Higher Education White Paper in 1997 (Council on Higher Education, 2023), and subsequently, the National Plan for Higher Education in 2001 (South African Government, n.d.) then finally- as a specific response to racism within a reforming sector- the Ministerial Committee on Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education in 2008 (South African Department of Education, 2018). All of these are state-facilitated initiatives geared towards strengthening policy enabling redress and change in higher education. Du Preez et al (2016) argue that South African higher education institutions (HEI) have since continued on a necessary but rocky trajectory to tackle the complex terrain of transformation and decolonization in various forms, including in research, teaching, and learning.

Quite significantly, teaching and learning approaches that work across knowledge disciplines are reported (Winberg, 2006) to be favourable in the said context because these approaches are perceived as assisting in addressing both the issue of producing highly skilled scholars- to contribute to the economic and social advancement of the country- as well as producing knowledge that aids in achieving the desired changes within the Higher Education sector. Since HEIs in South Africa have historically been characterized by the exclusion and erasure of non-white and working-class populations, these spaces thus require radical academic as well as cultural renovation. Consequently, the purposes of the desired transformation range from equity in the representation of previously disadvantaged groups in school staffing, ease of access for prospective, previously marginalized student population groups as well as the promotion of diversity in the academic and social aspects of campus life.

Interestingly, Kamsteeg (2016) argues that the requirement for diversity does not always translate into cohesion and equal opportunities within the higher education sector. On the contrary, the author suggests that the quest for diversity can work to further exacerbate areas of conflict as well as the marginalization of minority groups, particularly where policies enforcing diversity are state-driven and state-endorsed. Kamsteeg (2016) further describes a trend of extreme resistance from groups within the higher education system with vested interests in maintaining the status quo despite national socio-political reformations and concerted efforts by the state to implement changes. Thus, the higher education sector in South Africa is one of immense complexities, wide-ranging political issues, and contested state interventions. Ndlovu Gatsheni (2017) discusses as a general trait, what he identifies in relationships between states and universities in instances of political revolution in Africa as well as in South Africa, specifically. The scholar (Ndlovu Gatsheni, 2017) argues that while alliances between the higher education sector and the state- or forces working to emancipate people from oppressive states- begin as political emancipation projects, often when regime change is achieved, these relationships shift in ways detrimental to the academic freedom of learning institutions.

This, the author (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2017) argues, has a direct impact on funding, evidenced in the South African context, where universities merged for political purposes from 1994 to 2004, are left heavily reliant on state funding and therefore significantly vulnerable to state agendas.

There is much to criticize about how theatre studies are positioned and subsequently constructed in the organized world of institutionalized knowledge. This is evidenced both on a global as well as local South African level. For instance, renowned performance studies scholar Dwight Conquergood (2002)- whose academic context was the Northwestern University of Illinois, U.S- described the predominant way of knowing within academic institutions of Europe and America [and by extension all presently and previously colonized territory] as “empirical observation and critical analysis from a distanced perspective”. This, he argued, serves to discredit intimate ways of learning, like theatre and performance studies, that are based on human interaction and experience. Similarly, Sutherland (2013)- once a lecturer at Rhodes University in Eastern Cape, South Africa- writes an account of the uniquely effective use of theatre interventions to address racism within a university setting.

Sutherland (2013) is careful to explicitly contextualize the significance of theatre’s contribution within a domain that would sooner disregard the embodied ethos of theatre pedagogy than make room for it. On this, the theatre scholar says the following:

“The way that knowledge is organized, both physically and epistemologically, within most mainstream higher education contexts demands the erasure of the body. For example, students remain trapped behind desks and lecturers behind lecterns or technology, which can also mean a dimming of lights so that a far more explicit erasure of the diverse bodies within the educational space is achieved.” (p. 728)

Furthermore, the performing arts, in general, are amongst the most overlooked areas in academic development initiatives, particularly those funded by state bodies. This serves as an example of what Foucault (1980) refers to as 'subjugated knowledges' (p. 82), by which he means:

"...something which in a sense is altogether different, namely, a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. (1980, p. 82)

So much so is the side-lining of the arts (as subjugated knowledge) that, over two decades ago, McMachon (1995, p. 126) described performing arts education as "...an embarrassing and shabbily dressed orphan whose occasionally amusing antics cannot be relied upon and are thus ignored" (p. 126). Furthermore, McMahan (1995) suggests, "...If we [teacher-artists] do not speak up, other mouths will be fed, whose place is more assured, due to a more traceable pedigree" (p. 127). Sadly, that can still be said of arts education in contemporary times. In the academy, and by extension spheres of the world that value academic knowledge, "knowing about" is placed above "knowing how" (Conquergood, 2002), and unfortunately the latter is that which is performed by and positioned in the body and almost always categorized as performing arts. Fleishman (2009) argues that "performance...resists the hegemony of text in the academy" (p.124). The scholar also argues that performance is thus perceived as a threat to organized text-based knowledge because it presents a paradigm of understanding the world/ reality in ways outside of those preferred and structured via text.

Fleishman (2009) writes about performance as follows:

“It is a transgression that seeks to break down the separation of subject and object, of body and mind, and therefore must be either expunged, silenced or policed by the academy.” (p. 124)

As a result, knowledge that is embodied is consistently relegated to the private and personal realm of the individual, rather than the collectivity of scholarly thinking, creating the political need to affirm the legitimacy of embodied knowledge within institutions of education.

Higher Education and Black female academics

Writing about black women in British academic institutions, over two decades ago, Simmonds (2003) argues that they were positioned as imposters:

"We are watched and watch ourselves for slips, for gaps in our knowledge. Being neither male nor white, we have no visible basis for certain kinds of knowledge...it also means that we are placed in positions where we cannot afford to admit to a lack of knowledge in any area". (p. 52)

The same can be said of present-day black women in academia. In a case study looking at the career journeys of black female professors in present-day South Africa, Zulu (2020) identifies the common themes of institutional racism and gender inequality as experiences shared by all of the research participants. The author cites a participant's experience as an example. In the participant's account, her white subordinates illegitimately and defiantly sign off documents designated to be authorized by the research participant in her leadership role of professor- as a direct rejection of her role as their superior. This is disturbing as a contemporary phenomenon given the socio-political efforts made to change the painful history of racism in South Africa and given, as identified earlier, the role that institutions of higher education are mandated to play in social transformation and addressing the structural education problems prevailing since the Apartheid era.

As a consequence, even while the higher education context in contemporary South Africa is one where the agenda of transformation is seemingly paramount, it is rife with contradictions. For example, Phakeng (2015) argues that affective transformation is yet to be seen rather than *assumed to be achieved* since "...black African women are invisible in leadership" (para. 1) within academic institutions. The author argues that the increasing number of black females in faculties across the sector masks the complexities involved in activating agency within this population group. Phakeng (2015) cites the example of how projects aimed at regenerating perceptions of *Africanness* as a dignified, legitimate identity within academia often and by default, exalt patriarchal tropes that position women in "subject roles" (para. 8). Phakeng (2015) makes the argument that the "masculinity of power" (para.14) within institutions remains effective in sidelining black female academics, even while the presence of black females is on the increase.

In contrast, Ramohai (2019) highlights the activity of individual female academics of colour as playing a deciding role in how, generally, female academics navigate the hostile university environment. Taking into account the grave systemic forces of oppression at work, including the difficulties inherent in nuanced, context-specific "institutional dynamics" (Ramohai, 2019, p. 7), the author identifies taking a sense of ownership of the transformation process, as a means of resistance and agency. The argument made is that women of colour ought... "to use negative experiences as a power base and springboard to build resilience and move forward towards successful transformation." (p. 9). The implication here, within a specifically South African framework, is twofold. On one hand, there is the acknowledgement that black females may be resourceful and well-versed in methods of resisting the violence inherent in systemic, historical, and intersectional modes of oppression.

On the other hand, and rather problematically, Ramohai (2019) normalizes resilience against oppression by black females. This is done in how the author applauds efforts made against *negative experiences* set up as inevitable rather than highlighting the negative experiences as deliberately constructed. There are social and political mechanisms at work in constructing institutional environments that make it near impossible for some to flourish whilst perpetuating privileges unjustly afforded to others based on gender and race. Here the author depicts (Ramohai, 2019) black females as well accustomed and able to survive these harsh spaces, if they so choose, mirroring Fanon's (1963) assertion that "...in the process [of averting and detecting cues of racist oppression], the colonized acquire a peculiar visceral intelligence dedicated to the survival of body and spirit." (p. ix)

A gap identified in the literature documenting the survival of black females in hostile academic environments is the absence of research revealing the experiences of the same group within predominantly black institutions (Brown & Davis, 2017). In other words, universities whose staff and students are historically and predominantly black are spaces less explored for the racism and sexism that female academics of colour are presumed to encounter at 'white' institutions. This lack of visibility and understanding of the intricacies of the black female experience in that kind of context is reported to be particularly important in light of the fact, as Bonner (2001) explains, that female academics of colour in most institutions of higher education "...must often set aside the struggle for gender equality to fight the larger issue of racial discrimination" (p. 89) Furthermore, within historically black institutions, it is reported that the issue of gender discrimination is- more often than not- subjugated in light of the greater needs to provide "...social, economic, and political advances for the Black community" (Brown & Davis, 2017).

It is of value therefore, to produce knowledge highlighting nuances specific to spaces where a strong black staff presence and student population is the norm and the intersectional issues of gender and race might be presumed to be inconsequential or worse, disregarded in favour of other political agendas.

Higher Education, Black female academics, and Performance Studies

In South Africa, it is possibly the most important time for black female academics in theatre education since the birth of democracy. The urgent need for the perspectives this population group makes visible has never been more apparent. According to theatre scholar Lekalake Plaaitjie (2020), while there are plenty of female theatre makers [to which I add the category of teacher-directors] country-wide, the problem is their visibility on mainstream stages and mainstream research platforms. Plaaitjie (2020) suggests that black theatre makers have a responsibility to make known the indigenous knowledge, history, and culture of people marginalized in the arts by a separatist regime. The author believes females play a vital role in this endeavour and argues that plays written, staged, and performed by black women serve to make women in theatre more visible in ways that are authentic since women are the owners of the stories, even as they direct, and perform them.

Plaaitjie (2020) argues that in the present time of ongoing transition, South African educators are "forced to review methodologies and curricula" (p. 43) thus creating an opportunity for black female theatre educators '*ukuthi baziveze*' (to show themselves). Hence, to contribute to this research gap, I use the articulation of the reflective thoughts of black female academics about their teaching experiences within performance studies. I argue this population group navigates *intersectional marginalizations* that are unique: on the level of culture and language, race and gender as well as on the level of teaching within a relegated discipline in the academic institution.

Indeed, in contemporary South Africa, how research is framed within the academy results in a legacy of the persistent marginalisation of creative, embodied, and indigenous ways of knowing. On the other hand, what is documented through research on performance studies is particularly insufficient in revealing the nuances of the lived experiences of black female performance studies teacher-directors. Matete (2017), a teacher-performer at a South African institution of higher learning, writes the following about her use of stage acting and language to assert herself within the university space:

“By accessing English with significant fluency as a second language speaker, I entered a performative space in which my blackness and femaleness became socially and politically further removed from disenfranchisement, exclusion, and a subaltern status”

(p. 39)

What must be noted is that marginalisation here is not in the sense of physical visibility but by how institutions are designed to culturally *appear* and *feel* as though naturally ill-suited for persons of colour. In this context, it is of little help that state funding for performance studies is almost negligible compared to interventions geared towards advancing the scientific and commerce fields in the higher education sector (Styger et al., 2015). This historical unequal attention has created a legacy of neglect and underappreciation in performance studies. The result is that a lack of visibility characterises performance studies within the higher education sector, thereby rendering the black female academic within the field the status equivalent to that of a non-being, a myth, and a victim of circumstance.

Given the context and judging by the data generated in interviews conducted with the study's research participants, the present literature on performance studies is underwhelming as it reflects what is presently playing out as pedagogy in the theatre classroom.

Specifically, the classroom experiences of black female academics, who also participate in and are knowledgeable about work within the South African arts industry, are under-researched and, therefore, unique in the perspective on theatre pedagogy it offers.

This Act closes in the spirit of poetic inquiry, awakening the audience to the sensory aftermath of lived experience as only poetry captures. This is done as a salute to myself- having here completed the writing of the most challenging segment of my journey. Twenty-nine pages that took three years to write. The following poem reflects my grappling with why academia is so challenging at times. The introduction provides the context from which the poem entitled *Rage* was written and how the related love-hate relationship with my university and degree painfully emerged. The poem reflects on events between 2015, when the #FeesMustFall protests ensued, and 2022, when the completion of this research journey seemed attainable for the first time.

(Part 1)

It was June 2022

Shame, despair and secrecy loomed

In every crevice of my broken dream

Failing

It was October 7th, 2019.

Seventeen months had passed since I had been

Waiting

It was May 2017 when I stood

Proposal presented to expert scholars of the hood

Hoping

It was gatekeepers and signatures

Perhaps just my ethics application in the open cracks of the system

Slipping.

Falling

It was forfeited funds they promised to pay

Same hand gave the forfeit.

Same hand caused the delay

Gaslight!

*It was when I remembered
 my parents smuggling me into Model C
 Fighting each other to raise who I needed to be
 Struggling
 It was when I lost participants, lost a husband, lost the research plot
 The ethics office a den of complete rot
 The activist performer walked up to an open mic...
 Rage*

(Part 2)

*University
 That word in my mouth now so filthy
 Once privilege
 Once position
 At once the promise.
 And I the fool
 Waiting
 expecting
 Someone will say
 Someone will show
 Someone will care
 That I don't know
 How to walk these corridors
 That ask that I be less than I came to be
 Violence that takes so much of me
 I can't breathe
 Yet for bread in my children's mouth
 I wield
 water into wine
 profanity into rhyme
 30 percent to 60
 Toilet paper to degree
 I wonder, anginyi?
 Perhaps.
 Your ticked boxes
 Your filed reports
 Your do not reply emails
 Point the finger at me
 I am underprepared
 I am fraud
 I am incapacity
 I am plagiarism*

*I don't do belong
I don't do English
I don't do conform and die
But I set buildings on fire.*

*A brilliant black beauty
Ablaze by her own design
to be more
Than the product of your lies
Sarafina of the falling fees
Burn
Burn
Burn
You cannot make them see
But your flames they will feel
Flaming to ashes
Their mediocrity
For your audacity*

*Burn to nothing
The shadow they would have me mistake for me
Your disregard is nothing
Your disqualifying 'no' at every door is nothing
Your racist surprise at my prowess is nothing
Your delay tactics to keep me from success, nothing
Your measly apologies sent to keep me kneeling,
My shame, my vulnerability, my hunger nothing*

*I will burn
Until I am the sun
Blazing hot red
Centre on your stage
Wearing that gown
You insist will be my crown
I will be my crown!*

I was always my crown.

*And at the very moment
You would mark as your triumph
Over my spirit
My mothers will ululate- Spi!*

*My grandmother's halala!
My mother's Voetsek!*

*You have had your time
To wage war on this sanctified mind
To type your murderous thesis on this body*

*But I am birthed from mighty generations
Mthimkhulu
Bhungane
Mazizi*

As'phel'amandla.

And I am here

*For everything you have stolen
The land, the dream, the time*

Everything

that is mine.

Act 2

Scene 2. Narrative Inquiry

Scholars (Clandinin, 2007; Atkinson, 2006; Bell, 2002) argue that the narrative inquirer must make three arguments for the research she conducts. First, there is a requirement for personal justification, explaining both the researcher's positionality to the study as well as explicitly articulating research questions and intentions. This is followed by the requirement of some sort of validation mechanism to demonstrate the practical value of the research for future practice. Finally, the narrative researcher is to articulate a social rationalisation for her study, which "requires a researcher to think about the larger social and educational issues the study might address" (Clandinin, 2007, p. 25). In recalling that the purpose of this study is to understand intimacy as pedagogical practice in performance studies, I position narrative inquiry as "the way in" (Atkinson, 2006) to an otherwise closed encounter - that of the teacher-artist and her student-performers in the performance studies classroom. Here, I remind the reader of the study's research questions in order to better frame the discussion on methodology:

- How do teacher-artists (TAs) understand intimacy and pedagogy within Performance Studies?
- What are TAs' experiences of intimacy and pedagogy in rehearsal and teaching theatre performance?
- Why do TAs experience intimacy and pedagogy in the ways that they do?

As stated by Atkinson (2006), through life story interviews with research participants, researchers can "step inside the personal world of the storyteller and discover larger worlds." (p. 224). Stepping inside to discover larger worlds deliberately denotes access to the intimacy of theatre and rehearsal pedagogy. Therefore, beginning with a poem I wrote to open this scene, I explicitly mark that the reader and I are engaging in a performative pedagogical interaction that opens up a hidden world. What follows the discussion of the poem is a detailed argument and justification for the research approach I have selected.

The articulation of my rationale intentionally intersects with the unfolding of the story describing my research journey, including the complex choices I made in presenting my data. Most importantly, the design of my study is depicted in two diagrams - before and after - to show changes to the design over the seven years that it has taken to complete the thesis write-up. I discuss the resultant shifts in the pedagogical focus of the research in ways important for future investigation. Finally, a detailed description of the strategies devised to analyse the generated data concludes the section. The poem below introduces the motivation for the selection of Narrative Inquiry.

Narrative beginnings: The personal dimension

For my teacher

*Where do I take these feelings that have
no place to go?*

Where does this hurt belong?

*When did my voice
become a ghostly lurking thing real and
present*

*only in the corridors
of my self-esteem?*

*Those paths we built
together
paved with good intentions
avoided confrontations truths
told too late*

or never still.

(July 2016)

In March 2013, investigative journalist Pearlie Joubert published an article in the Sunday Times newspaper titled “Sex Pest Rocks Varsity. Our investigation leads to the suspension of a Drama lecturer” (PressReader.com - Digital Newspaper & Magazine Subscriptions, n.d.). The story described the alleged ongoing sexual assault and harassment of higher education theatre students by their lecturer across an expansive period of six years. Ten students were interviewed, and their testimonies revealed that much of the abuse suffered by the victims occurred during rehearsal and drama class. The article cited the accused lecturer as having said, “...what happens in a rehearsal space is private and confidential,” which remains generally recognised rehearsal etiquette; however, now, with much more awareness of the need for safety within the required privacy.

As previously discussed in the *inciting incident* of Act 1, since the time of the rehearsal in July 2006, I began to question the implications of privacy and confidentiality in rehearsal. At the time the story was published, I was no longer a student performer and had taken part-time employment, teaching an applied theatre module to post-graduate students at a higher education institute. Consequently, my introspection developed to include questions about the intersection of the intimate nature of teacher-student relationships in theatre and theatre pedagogy. I began to wonder if my personal history affected how, as a teacher, I was presently thinking about rehearsal and theatre practice.

⁸ Pearlie Joubert has since left the newspaper, according to an article on CapeTalk 567AM online: <https://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/321406/i-resigned-from-sunday-times-because-i-couldn-t-breathe-pearlie-joubert> While there are traces of the original story online, the full record is no longer available.

Burnier (2006) suggests that the need for including the personal in research is to address questions of how context, lived circumstances, “biographical knowledge” (p. 412), and agency might affect research in ways that the “abstract, detached, objective social scientific voice” (p. 412) may not reveal. In alignment with this idea, I begin the discussion on my choice of methodology with a poem to my teacher.

While I wrote the poem some years after the *inciting incident*, it articulates a retrospective look at my feelings at the time. The poem begins, “*Where do I take these feelings that have no place to go?*” As mentioned before, a widely understood and often explicitly articulated rule amongst directors and their cast members is that what happens in rehearsal is often sacrosanct in its belonging to the rehearsal space alone. This is because some activities in rehearsal are expected to reveal aspects of people’s personalities and histories that otherwise would not be publicly known, and therefore, it is understood as unethical to share with those who did not participate in the specific context of the rehearsal, information about others that became known in rehearsal. As a consequence, however, and particularly in the case of my story, when I felt shame and confusion about what had happened in rehearsal, I struggled to permit myself to share with others what I understood as ambiguous in its placement inside and outside of the rehearsal.

While I knew that what had happened needed to be addressed, somehow, outside of that space, even in retrospect as an emerging teacher-artist and scholar of theatre, I found there was no recognised, safe, and legitimate “other” place (outside of the rehearsal itself) for inappropriate actions or even awkward feelings emerging from rehearsal to be discussed and interrogated. The absence of an obvious and safe place or person to share one’s discomforts in a pedagogical space designed to validate embodied ways of knowing, of which *feeling* is one, made me both sad and eagerly curious.

So, I desired to understand how, a decade later, teacher-artists are framing the activities of the rehearsal space. In my investigations, the scope grew to the wider area of the theatre classroom space as I learned that how teacher-artists frame their work is also a result of their perceptions of theatre pedagogy.

Where does this hurt belong? The hurt described here is the blame and culpability I found myself wrestling with then and later as a teacher-artist. The questions I struggled with and have embraced in this pedagogical investigation include the following: Who is responsible for what happens in rehearsal? What are the repercussions when student performers are hurt psychologically or emotionally in rehearsal? What boundaries are and ought to be set in place when rehearsal power dynamics are definable beyond what is typically expected in a classroom? In a more inward turn, I wondered what, regarding that particular incident in 2006, I could have done differently as a student. This led to me also considering how teacher-artists who were novices could be made to better understand the nature of pedagogy, intimacy, and performance studies in rehearsal in healthy and helpful ways. These questions affect my understanding of pedagogy and also have implications for the wider practice of performance studies. In the end, some of these questions remain unanswered as the journey of the thesis unfolded in ways I could not have anticipated, which directly affected what could be learned from the questions I asked and what could not.

When did my voice become a ghostly lurking thing...? When I chose to express what had happened to me in rehearsal to people who were not in rehearsal, some of the people I trusted did not believe me. Yet other students in the room had witnessed (and years later

would attest to the fact) that my experience had been real. Like a ghost, my experience had been both a concrete existence in one moment and so gross and improbable that it was imperceptible at the moment I spoke of it to others who had not witnessed it. As pointed out by my research supervisor, “We see contemporary articulations of these – the Weinstein saga, Donald Trump, Zuma rape case. The knee-jerk reaction is to always disbelieve the woman” (Amin. Personal communication 2018). The writing up of this thesis, therefore, in some ways, needed to pay tribute to the young woman who found the courage to speak up after being victimized, even in the face of the disbelief of others. Accordingly, the methodology which I selected needed to reflect this honorary acknowledgement of myself as an overcomer of sexual violence in a pedagogical space.

Much like a *‘ghostly lurking voice’*, the intimacy shared in rehearsal is present for the duration of rehearsal and yet rendered somehow invisible once people step outside of that specific context. Furthermore, like what has been rehearsed is expected to be remembered by the student-performer, the residue of what had happened to me stayed with me, in my memory and body, even while the department’s leadership seemed to be in denial of the gravity of the situation for up to five years after I had reported the incident. In the meanwhile, the teacher-director continued to work in the institution and, as we were to later learn, continued to allegedly molest and hurt other student performers in the name and space of artistic pedagogy.

Real and present only in the corridors of my self-esteem? My sense of self-worth, at the time, was deeply interwoven with the relationships I shared with the people I had told and who had not offered the necessary support at the time. And so, when I did not receive the support I had sought out, I treated the incident as peripheral, believing I could continue my pedagogical journey in academia without addressing it. However, in this study, this experience is no longer set aside.

Instead, it is the motivation for seeking to understand how teacher-directors presently engage with intimacy and pedagogy when teaching theatre studies including, but not limited to, rehearsal practice. In so doing, I take responsibility for the telling of my story as well as its effect on my interest in the pedagogy of theatre practice as a presently practising teacher-director myself. As Denzin suggests, "...the pedagogical is always moral and political; by enacting a way of seeing and being, it challenges, contests or endorses the official, hegemonic ways of seeing and representing the other" (2006, p. 422). In referencing Gramsci's (1971) hegemony, Denzin (2006) helps me understand that pedagogy always relates to how societal power and dominance work, as was demonstrated at the time that my research journey began in that rehearsal room.

Positionality: Narrative as a Way of knowing Performance Practice.

How does a teacher-director come to know intimacy has occurred in the rehearsal room? Based on my experience, one source of evidence of intimacy in rehearsal can be found in '*the story the teacher-director tells about rehearsal*'. I share a narrative description of an occurrence that took place in my rehearsal class, to demonstrate one such example of a story about rehearsal. Much like in the auto-ethnographic tradition, my journal as an artist and scholar is "both personal and scholarly, both evocative and analytical and it is both descriptive and theoretical." (Burnier, 2004, p. 414). However, here, I use it to demonstrate the effective presence of the autobiographic write-up in a Narrative search.

A few years ago, I was preparing two male performance students for a stage production at a university. The students worked with me in my capacity as a member of the teaching staff in the discipline as well as a director of the play they were enrolled to perform. The play was intended for a public audience and therefore was marketed publicly, however, performing in

the production was not a requirement for either of the student's studies. The text we rehearsed was a story placed in a South African context (I do not name the play and playwright to protect the identity of the students who performed the roles). As did many South African play texts, the script tackled issues of racial inequality and the consequential tensions between black and white South Africans.

The two students I rehearsed with were of different races and socio-economic groups, which also partly reflected the differences between the characters they played as written in the text. The reality of their differences presented me with an exciting and complicated scenario. It was delightful for the artist in me because there was potential for the exploration of real-life tensions that I was sure if harnessed well, would enhance the quality of believability about the relationship between the two characters on stage. However, it was equally delicate because the reality of racial inequality in our country had the potential to play out in such a way that, at any moment, the real-life feelings I was so eager to explore might grow into something far more complex and uncomfortable. We all understood that the theatre alone could not contain the complexity of these real-life feelings, so we proceeded with caution. One student was an undergraduate with some stage performance experience and moderate confidence in his growing acting capabilities. The other was a seasoned graduate student performer.

As much as I had prepared for rehearsal as a director, I knew that many things born of personal experience, spontaneity, and 'the present moment' would be out of my control, especially given the socio-political issues we were engaging. Consequently, I held both the tension of wanting the genuineness of difference to manifest (so we could harness it for the audience who would see the play) as well as the responsibility (as a teacher) to protect the well-being of each student and my own. The students' personal experiences were crucial in shaping their performance, making the characters they portrayed more relatable and engaging for the audience.

Below I share an excerpt of the autobiographical story in my journal. I have renamed the play “Screams and Silences” and the students are referred to here as Siph0 and Thomas.

Day 17. Screams and Silences.

*So, *Siph0 and *Thomas [male performers] are mirroring each other and then the tears start to flow, like heavy. Like nothing, then boom! Suddenly I am confronted with all this masculine fragility. I was never ready for them to cry! I had no idea how to...anything, I was quarter to freak out! Then I calmed down and just let it happen. I didn't want to make them feel awkward or less 'manly' because ya eish, they cried and I'm there. Just kept thinking normalize, normalize but even that I was saying it to myself was like, oh boy! I got work to do uuuurg. I realized my face probably gave my shock away before all this intellectual shit came through. So, it's there. I've seen them crying but I also don't know what to do or want them to feel less human. I want to scream, 'Keep this! whatever this is, keep it. I want it for the show. Also, I don't think there's anything wrong with you guys crying, you guys just shocked me. I'm intrigued.' So much. I want to ask how they got there because it's just the mirror [exercise]. Oh, wow the mirror! Geez it's f***'d up, I'm so much smarter than I think because I used the mirror and now the mirror is doing the mirror. But who's actually crying? What's going on? Aaah, my gender is a problem right now! Just wished I could step out the room but be in the room, same time- just to hear what it means for them. Even if we did a reflection they wouldn't reflect properly with me in the room. They looked just as surprised as me. I've never not wanted to be a woman like that, so inconvenienced by that one thing. It was like I wanted to know but also, I knew I didn't belong, like it was their moment. So, after some time of just letting it happen, I ask if they want to stop and talk about how they feel. They both kind of laugh awkwardly then go into talking about how it happened. In the end, I think I should have left the room. I should have gotten up and left. But I never wished so much to be a man.”*

(Khala, personal communication, 2017)

The above account occurred between two student performers I considered adequately capable of dealing with the emotional work of the script. I also considered myself capable of assisting them in dealing with the emotional work of the script. I had a very good rapport with each of them and they had been the strongest performers of all the males who auditioned for the role. Yet this intimate moment of witnessing their shared vulnerability in rehearsal momentarily paralysed me, in the figurative sense. Immediately, I was confronted with my own biases and insecurities as evidenced in the journal excerpt above. Instead of vulnerability, I saw fragility which means I was not as adequately prepared to care for an intimate moment between two men as I had believed myself to be. Even in the write-up of this explanation, I notice my use of the term the “strongest” performers as evidence of my gender prejudices affecting pedagogy intimately, here and then. Here, it is Narrative Inquiry that illuminates what both the reader and I now “see”, and what I would not have seen without telling my story. There is, therefore, a reflexivity available for myself in Narrative Inquiry that I make use of in the write-up of my thesis.

Narrative scholars Clandinin & Connelly (2000) write the following:

“Always, for learning to occur, the inquirer in this ambiguous, shifting, participant observation role is meeting difference; allowing difference to challenge assumptions, values, and beliefs; improvising and adapting to the difference; and thereby learning as the narrative anthropologist” (p. 9)

Therefore, I approached my research from the positionality of a narrative anthropologist, who herself is an insider to the pedagogical complexity of the classroom experience she wishes to investigate. I have chosen to focus on the experiences of intimacy in the rehearsal room by black women teaching in higher education because, as the above example demonstrates, this is a phenomenon I have come to understand as both interpretive and deeply complex. Henceforth, in choosing my methodology, I sought one that would assist me in understanding my experiences- as a woman, as a theatre director, and as a teacher of performance studies- as part of my epistemology. Additionally, I required a methodology that would acknowledge the same kind of intersection of various aspects of the lives of each of the teachers with whom I would create my narrative. I sought a 'way of knowing' (Rogers, 2007) that would expect this intersection, indeed presume it without requiring the erasure of any facet but rather embracing the impossible task of bearing witness to and representing our full stories by continuously making room for each individual's full subjectivity (Roger, 2007). Narrative inquiry, in the acceptance of "...a person [as someone who] is at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling and reliving [multiple] stories" (Clandinin & Connelly; 1990, p. 4) is the medium I found to be most appropriate.

The premise upon which Narrative inquiry rests is that narration, specifically telling stories, is how people make sense of their everyday lived experiences (Bell, 2002). Furthermore, in Narrative inquiry, these stories are worthy of analysis because they reveal how individuals relate to each other and make meaning of human interactions and events in society. As articulated by Bell (2002), these stories also allow participants to construct experiences based on how they "interpret themselves" (pg. 2), thereby foregrounding the research participants' perspective of their lives over any external view.

In this way, the methodology allows researchers unique access to people's experiences, as mediated through the people's own eyes, whilst promoting an understanding of people's lives as holistic rather than as products or results of a singular event or circumstance (Bell, 2002). There is a sense that, to study intimacy in the performance studies classroom- or any phenomenon through Narrative inquiry- one has to think of the bigger picture. That is, to think of the whole community and context within which one does her research and within which the research participants emerge. This is also whilst carefully, considering the intricate details of each individual's experience within the broader context. On this 'individual and broader context' relationship, Denzin (2006) writes the following:

“Through our [individual] writing and our [individual] talk, we enact the worlds we study. These performances are messy and pedagogical. They instruct our readers about this world and how we see it.” (p. 333)

In the specific case of theatre performance, the notion of story and “enacting the world” is embedded in the pedagogy. The theme and structure of the beginning, middle, and end of a protagonist's journey in the battle against various antagonistic features and the relationship between cause and effect denote how performance scholars organize meaning through their pedagogical work. And where the pedagogical is also narrative, such as is the case in performance studies, narrative inquiry is important as both “a method for research and... as the phenomenon of the study” (Stefinee & Daynes, 2007, p. 7). In other words, the stories the teacher-artist participants tell about their teaching experiences are just as important an area of exploration as the choice I make in requesting that they share stories to talk about their work. Furthermore, Narrative inquiry in itself is impossible without a kind of intimacy.

As noted by Stefinee and Daynes (2007), “We become narrative inquirers only when we recognize and embrace the interactive quality of the researcher-researched relationships” (p. 7). In fact, one of the key characteristics of Narrative inquiry is described as the moment when the researcher starts to view their relationship to the researched as collaboration (Beets, 2009).

In a study where researchers examine their collaborative work with a dance company, Doberneck et al. (2012) use the term “engagement interface” (p. 57). This is explained to denote “...the dynamic, evolving, co-constructed setting where collaborators...engage each other in communities of inquiry” (p. 57). This term is created to encompass and explain the unpredictable responses and interventions people working together may create in response to the situation of creating work. In my study, I planned to position the rehearsal space as the intimate space where teacher and student collaborate and where pedagogy is transformed and created as and when the participants of rehearsal do the work of theatre-making together. However, through the use of Narrative inquiry, I also create another point of intimate interaction- that which occurs as a result of my collaborative work with the research participants. Researchers (Fear et al., 2006) describe this involved level of engagement as “deep, personal expression *with others* (sic)” (p. 4) rather than *on behalf of* or directed *towards* others.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (1990) to be human is *to be storied*. Elsewhere, the authors (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) describe human experience as “...the stories people *live*” (p. 415). Using a metaphor to follow this thought, we might say that if life was a game in which a pre-requisite condition existed before you could play, it might be said that you must have a story. In this way, the story situates and anchors a player, but it is also the vehicle for the mobility required to progress, advance, and develop in the game.

However, given the social dynamics of the human world, we know that politics of power will soon emerge and require attention in the game, as in life. Indeed, even within qualitative research, "...what counts as 'story' varies within methodological fields" (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007, p. 462). My own experience shows that there are stories that have not yet been told or heard within spaces organized by power. It is these stories that make Narrative inquiry important.

In looking back at my story, first as a student and then as a teacher, I decided to share a better version of the story of theatre and performance studies in higher education- from the teacher's perspective. I believe that the majority of teachers utilizing theatre practices do so in ways far healthier to students than exploitation. Research supports this notion, particularly within tertiary education, as suggested by Weltsek's (2019) observation that "...multiple studies have articulated a strong connection between [student] positive self-perception, motivation, and involvement within drama-based (sic) experiences" (p. 103-104). My supposition, however, is that, as theatre practitioners, very few of us readily categorize our work as *intimate*, nor do we investigate our methods, work, or working relationships through an *intimacy lens*. Furthermore, the good things teaching artists make possible through intimacy in the artistic student-teacher relationship remain largely undocumented except in private spaces similar to my journal writing. When I began my research, I understood this important aspect of the story as yet untold.

I first imagined that the cohort of theatre practitioners who could ideally contribute to this research were people who had been both students and teachers of theatre pedagogy. The professional actors and teachers I thought to contact had been somehow involved in the sexual misconduct case Joubert was investigating.

I had come to know of their identity as whistleblowers and survivors through a few debriefing sessions held after the newspaper article broke. In our conversations, I found the questions we had about how better to protect novice actors and students- as teaching and mentoring professionals- were similar. Some of the people knew of and had been affected by misconduct in other industry spaces and had thus spoken publicly against it. Some had been instrumental in interventions that culminated in the confrontation of the relevant authorities in their respective spaces. Thus, the initial group of participants was to be a combination of industry thought leaders and activist performers. I was keen to know, from the positionality of educators and industry professionals, how each of them reconciled what they knew about rehearsal as students and what they had learned from taking up the role of teacher and director. This was imperative as a perspective, now on the other side of power but still invested in theatre. On the concept of being on the other side of history and telling stories about it, Riessman (2005), a narrative researcher, writes the following:

“Narratives do not mirror, they refract the past. Imagination and strategic interests influence how storytellers choose to connect events and make them meaningful for others. Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was. The “truths” of narrative accounts are not in their faithful representations of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge among past, present, and future. They offer storytellers a way to re-imagine lives”.

(p. 6)

The desire to *refract* the past, to strategically reflect on it from various points of view in order to critically reflect on theatre practice as it presently exists, is what I imagined would be possible through my research. I hoped writing up this project would serve as a strategic

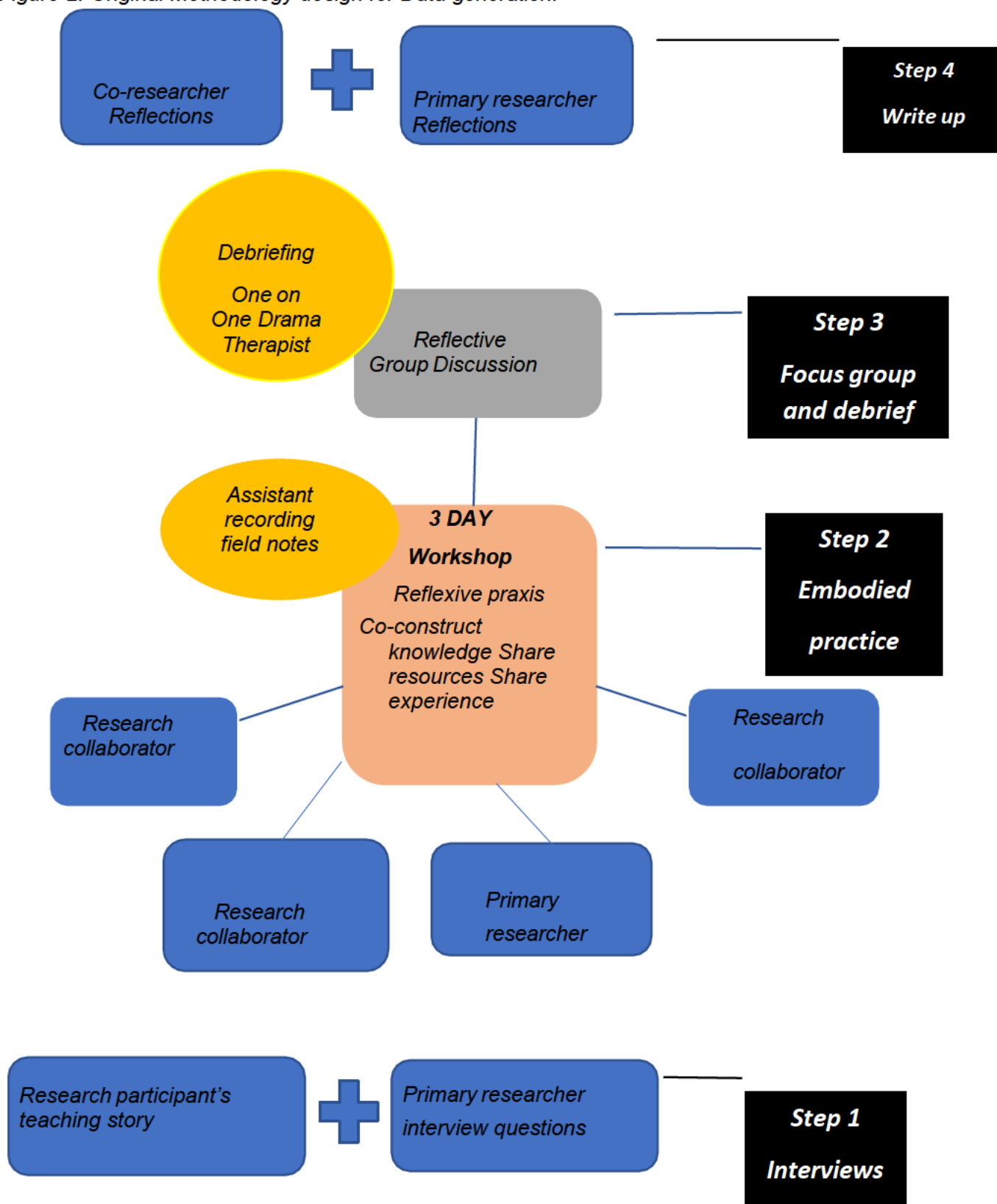
way and platform for the re-interpretation of the relationship between creative exploration, safety, and confidentiality in rehearsal. It seemed reasonable that this would be work about which I would also be required to be transparent about my personal experience as the primary motivation. This presented the danger of *navel-gazing* (Brett, 2013), which leans towards an unjustified preoccupation with self rather than yielding research results beneficial to other scholars.

Riessman (2005) cautions against a kind of narcissism when doing narrative research focusing on oneself and argues that "...narrative research can reify the interior 'self', pretend to offer an 'authentic' voice...and idealize individual agency [posing] a real danger of over-personalizing the personal narrative (sic.)" (p. 6). In other examples of interpretive research, similar concerns are raised, particularly relating to work that is exclusively autobiographical, as is the case in Autoethnography and Self-study. In the case of Auto-ethnography, for example, the caution is against research that is *solipsistic* (Burnier, 2004, p. 414). This is where the researcher sees only their interpretation of an event or reality, ignoring- to the detriment of the research- the vast other perspectives on the same matter. Narrative inquiry is ideal in that it allows both the perspective of the primary researcher and of participant researchers to co-exist in a knowledge-generating partnership that acknowledges both parties (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007) as contributors, albeit unequal.

Upon taking up the project, I also came to learn that doctoral projects are most successful in contributing to disciplinary knowledge when the purpose of a thesis reaches beyond improving teaching practice and rather seeks to understand a phenomenon related to teaching practice. I imagined my research could do both- understand how teacher-artists are generating and managing intimacy in the classroom and rehearsal, to improve how we

(theatre practitioners) use it. I aimed to both facilitate and participate in a collaborative workshop with other theatre educators and to record what we had learned for the benefit of each of us, although the greatest benefit would undeniably be my own. As a consequence of this intention, my initial research design was as depicted on the following page:

Figure 2. Original Methodology design for Data generation.



Below is the script of the above design, as initially designed and proposed to my university's research committee. The intention here is to demonstrate the shift in focus from what was first intended:

Step 1. Semi-structured Interviews. The interview schedule will be used to generate narrated field texts of the past and present experiences of rehearsal of individual teacher-directors/ teacher-performers. The interviews are scheduled to occur first in order will allow for deep, reflective thinking about what each participant would like to share in the following workshop where participation will be at a collective level.

Step 2. Embodied practice workshop. Each teacher-director/ teacher-performer will be asked to construct and share a lesson plan of rehearsal activities and practices they regularly use and have experienced as effective in their teaching. The other participants would participate in the rehearsal activities as part of the session. The aim is for all research participants to reflect on and assess the pedagogical choices they make as well as identify any similarities and contrasts in execution, intention, and context.

Step 3. In the focus group discussion, a working contract that emphasizes respect and confidentiality will be collectively generated.

Debriefing sessions with the on-site Drama therapist will happen on a one-on-one basis- as and when each participant requires during the three-day workshop. Interviews, research text write-ups, and member checking will be conducted on a one-to-one basis.

Stimuli 1: (To be discussed in conjunction with lesson plan analysis)

Let's talk about the motivation guiding each of your rehearsal plans.

Stimuli 2: (To be discussed as a reflection of activities participated in)

Let's talk about physical closeness in rehearsal.

Closure and debriefing facilitated by Drama therapist. (60 minutes)

Stimuli 3: Autobiographical writing

Burnier (2004) suggests that autobiographical writing highlights the explicit intersection between the “personal and [the] scholarly” (p. 414) and, thus, the correlation between the theoretical choices scholars make and their ideals and values. Encouraging the research participants to write in this way greatly increases the level of reflexivity essential to narrative inquiry. The participants will be asked to answer the following questions but will not be required to share their responses with the group unless they wish to. These accounts will be used in assisting to theorize the nature of intimacy’s relationship to pedagogy, as evidenced in the experiences of teacher-directors/ teacher-performers.

(Khala-Phiri’s Thesis Proposal, May 2017)

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the initial design objective was to generate data in a four-step process inclusive of an embodied workshop in which a shared repertoire of rehearsal exercises and practices were to be explored and re-imagined, to make explicit possible inherent intimacy-generating mechanisms. The aim was that the workshop activities would encourage a kind of *consciousness of intimacy* in teachers that would hopefully (given the possibility of individual intervention) translate into theatre pedagogy that allowed students and teachers to practice closeness in ways that are helpful to both, despite the ever-changing and asymmetrical relationships of power in a classroom setting (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004, p. 468). The presence of a Drama therapist was considered essential since we would be working and playing theatrically with closeness and encounters of closeness. I anticipated that, for some research participants, that would result in emerging stories of trauma previously experienced (Jones, 2015, p.4) in rehearsal. In such incidences, the drama therapist would provide a safe space in which any participant could privately debrief.

A research assistant would be present to record (video and audio) each day's events, according to the consent of participants. Where all did not grant consent, the recording would happen in the form of our biographical reflective writing upon the closure of each day's session. The collaborative write-up of each teacher's section in my thesis would also provide further space for a one-on-one reflection of the overall process. The overall process would also be one where the role of teachers would transform from research participants in Step 1 into researcher collaborators through the workshop process (Steps 2 and 3). Unfortunately, however, that is not how the research unfolded in the implementation phase of my doctoral study.

Research shifts: Methodological implications

A nearly two-year delay in the approval of my ethical clearance application [from May 2017-December 2019], as well as the COVID-19 national lockdown in South Africa [9 March 26th, 2020-20th September 2021], resulted in there being only three months, from September to December 2020 to generate data. Furthermore, the pandemic negatively affected the well-being and availability of two potential research participants, and as a consequence of the social distancing imperative legislated through the COVID-19 national protocol, the face-to-face embodied workshop, as well as the focus group discussion scheduled to follow, was canceled. Consequently, the data generated for the project was collected through online one-on-one interviews with four research participants whose selection criteria subsequently gravely relied on participant availability. I managed to maintain the initial purposive sampling requirement of theatre practitioners who had themselves been students of theatre in higher education. However, I could no longer work with people strategically aligned with cases of the violation of intimacy in theatre pedagogy, industry, and higher education, as I had anticipated.

⁹ <https://www.gov.za/Coronavirus>

Despite the changes, I retained the original research questions, and each research participant and I engaged in two to three interviews, amidst juggling working from home with childcare and a myriad of other of Covid-19 related disruptions in our private lives. It was through a combination of emails, video calls, and instant messaging that I was able to conduct interviews and member-checking of my write-ups. Unforeseen shifts in teaching and living locations, poor internet connectivity, ¹⁰load-shedding, and sadly, in one case, even gender-based violence continued to affect the availability, state of mind, and presence of the research participants. As such, depending on the resources and psycho-social constraints the participants were able to negotiate, we met to discuss theatre pedagogy in the higher education classroom.

The reasons for the delay in my ethical clearance application remain dubious to date, largely due to the extent to which the delay occurred. The administrative mishaps included incidents of neglect, outstanding signatures from research authorities, long periods of unanswered follow-up emails, and repeated requests for further documentation. In retrospect, I took too long to react decisively. This was mainly because I was raising a toddler while mitigating the difficult consequences of a divorce. In retrospect, I see that it was easier to stay distracted by certain aspects of my theatre pedagogy work, like the all-engrossing work of producing three theatre productions, and avoid this study that brought me face to face with yet another unresolved incident of trauma in my life.

¹⁰ Term used to describe the process by which the South African state facilitates the nationwide distribution of electricity. This includes scheduled power cuts during times where power demand reportedly supersedes power generation capacity.

And so, it was only when I lost funding that was approved to cover the costs of the proposed 3-day workshop on two separate occasions that I started to panic. Following that I also lost two key participants who moved on to other projects and were no longer available to participate. Most importantly, I lost the courage to pursue the project as I had intended because I interpreted the delay from my institution to grant me ethical clearance to be an indication that the research was somehow more legally problematic than I had anticipated. I imagined there were fears of more headline news fingering other institutions for sexual harassment, or worse still, my own. With the rise of the #MeToo movement at the time, that argument seemed plausible. While I received funding several times for teaching relief from the university, for which I was grateful, I could not go into the field to generate data without ethical approval.

When my ethical clearance was finally approved, it happened sometime after my supervisor and line manager escalated the issue to a senior leader in our faculty in December 2019. At an impromptu meeting called to address a few of the many transformation policy appointees selected for a special development program, of which I am one, I mentioned to the faculty leader that I had received an offer to teach in a secondary school. I explained, quite frankly, that I was considering resigning since a failure in the university system was the reason I could not meet my key performance indicator of achieving a PhD qualification as a transformation appointee. As it so happened many of the cohort were found to have resigned upon completion of their doctorate studies and taken up positions in other spaces. Incidentally, and quite significantly for this research, the cohort in question was comprised predominantly of black women. The pattern rightfully troubled faculty leadership and so I assumed that is how I finally obtained permission to do the work.

In the lockdown year that followed, when the pressure mounted as it became clear we would not be returning to *normal* classes for the projected future, I was forced to suspend all PhD work and focus on the imperative of teaching students online- it proved to be an enormous challenge to keep teaching and learning activities afloat in that time. Having already done some of the follow-up member-checking of my write-ups, in early 2021, when the opportunity arose to apply for an extension on my ethical clearance (in order to conduct further interviews to include the very significant changes online instruction posed to theatre pedagogy), I was unwilling to risk another delay and chose instead to limit the scope of the research to the data we had already generated.

Fortunately, most of the research participants had only briefly mentioned working under COVID-19 conditions because I did not adjust my research questions to address COVID-19 conditions in the first instance. Furthermore, in response to the repeated feedback from the research participants that the interviews were providing much-needed space to debrief and reflect, I chose to expand the scope beyond rehearsal practice to better reflect the direction the semi-structured interviews had taken. As a result, the research presented is a moving and detailed narrative investigation of the experiences of intimacy's relationship with the theatre pedagogy of teacher-artists creating theatre knowledge both in the classroom and in rehearsal in higher education.

In writing this section, I was so moved by telling the story of the discrepancy between what I had planned and what had transpired in reality that I became physically ill. In fact, even in the time I was to review this work following its examination, I found it incredibly difficult to engage again. I persevered. In so far as it reflects the reality of black women in higher education, my story matters. Moreover, I consider it beneficial (English Standard Version Bible, 2001; James 1. 2-18) that this research demonstrates the effect of memory as embodied knowledge, manifested as a consequence of telling my story.

Thus providing additional evidence for the methodology's [story's] effectiveness as a tool of excavation. Upon review, it is possible that I suffered symptoms of workplace environmental factors (WEFs) related to negative mental health outcomes (NMHOs), which are specific to female academics at my university, according to Cadete's (2022) doctoral thesis. In a study conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the scholar builds a case arguing for increased support in the upkeep of the psychological resilience (PR) of female academics, given that the study found "insightful differences of FAs (female academics) PR experiences based on participants' demographic characteristics" (p. 338). Cadete (2022) also suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic might specifically exacerbate adversities faced by FAs (female academics) (p. 338). These symptoms directly affected the decision-making process in my research and, therefore, form part of the rationale for the changes in the research design.

In another study specific to black female academics at my university, Ngema et al. (2022) tell an academic story that "represents narratives from black women who work at the University of KwaZulu Natal [and] their stories unearth their impossible existence within the institution" (p. 238). While I revisit this idea in greater detail in the concluding Act of this dissertation, it is key to note here, a writing methodology the authors (Ngema et al., 2022) propose in returning to the discussion on the methodology selected for this study. Ngema et al. (2022) argue that as co-authors they work "...within the lexicon of *incoko*'..." (p. 239) as a methodology of excavating and documenting their personal narratives. The authors (Ngema et al., 2022) state:

"We used *incoko* over 'academic writing' as writing methodology on both technical and ideological levels. We adapt the notion of black people as interdisciplinary actors through the concept of sharing tales and stories." (p. 239)

In light of the above-mentioned changes to my research design, as well as the concept of a unique, indigenous articulation of narrative research specific to women of colour in academia, new and difficult considerations of ethics, rigour, and trustworthiness emerge.

Ethics and Trustworthiness

According to Polkinghorne (2007), in the first instance, the virtue of having an interest and commitment to Narrative inquiry makes me a "reformist researcher" (p. 477). This is within the context of the author's notion that, at least in Western-Eurocentric social sciences, there exist two kinds of researchers- those who follow conventional, long-established ways of conducting scientific research and those who do not. Since the reformist researcher intentionally problematizes how the value of research is traditionally defined and, within knowledge-constructing communities, works to make room for "other" epistemological foundations for knowledge classifications, it is understandable that conventionally recognized qualitative measures of rigour and validity come under review. For the narrative researcher particularly, there is the challenge of the paradox in story, which is the *data* (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

Story [as data] is as stable as it is fluid in form and meaning and its interpretation varies as it travels from one teller to another listener and even as those two roles interchange. As stated in scholarly writing (Polkinghorne, 2007), what poses a threat to the credibility of *story as data* is "... the differences in people's experienced meaning and the stories they tell about this meaning and the connections between storied texts and the interpretations of those texts." (p. 471) Thus proving the trustworthiness of the interpretation of data- as it is *re-presented* in the *re-storying* (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 339) process undertaken by narrative researchers- necessitates that how the reliability of the interpretation is evaluated is not reliant upon the transient data but rather the plausibility of the interpretation in a given context.

Creswell and Miller (2000) argue that since 'validity' is specific to the nature and purpose of a study, the process of assessing validity should rely on "lens and paradigm assumptions" (p. 124). In this study, I add context as an additional consideration, given that there is research establishing the university space as an environment requiring a unique slant to the narrative study of the stories of female academics of colour. This rationale, therefore, points directly to notions of who decides what is credible research and on what grounds that decision is made.

Similar to Ngema et al.'s (2022) local '*incoko*', decolonial scholars refer to "relational reflective narratives through *testimonio*" (Silva et al., 2022, p. 338) as an alternative to autobiographical and auto-ethnographic research. Once again, here it is female academics of colour that feel compelled to generate an Indigenous narrative methodology to present stories about the self and, specifically, stories of the self as experienced in community with others within a similar struggle in higher education, this time in the United States of America. In describing *testimonio*, its rationale as well, as its distinction from other narrative methodologies, Silva et al. (2022) argue that there is a "...*shattering of silence* which is fundamentally the key distinction between *testimonio* and other critically reflexive narrative methodologies" (p. 391). The silences to which the authors refer are struggles specific to female academics of colour that they argue are rendered invisible in university spaces. Silva et al. (2022) describe *testimonio* as follows:

“Testimonio, although reflective of a life story interview, differs in that it involves making *connections to history, culture, social, and political lived experiences*. As a narrative methodology, grounded in Indigenous practices and oral traditions characteristic of non-Western Eurocentric communities, testimonio engages with stories, and the spoken word, to produce, cultivate and sustain anti-colonial decolonizing knowledge. The producers of testimonios are the authors, and holders of the implications of such stories. These are testaments to the lived realities of voices that often go without sound in the disciplinary chambers...” (p. 392)

In the write-up on the story of my research about black females in the South African higher education contexts, there is a combination of researcher reflexivity, which belongs to the critical paradigm as well as member checking, which belongs to post-positivism. Both these form part of my lexicon of trustworthiness. While this crossing over across two knowledge paradigms is not ideal, it is reasonable since my positionality is declared and made explicit, and the reasons for the crossover are to accommodate both the implications of the changes to the research as well as the implications of whom and what it is placed as the subject of investigation. Regarding the ethics of representing the voices of participants, the teacher-artists were arguably placed at risk of distress by having to discuss sensitive and emotive material (Crothwer & Llyod-Williams, 2012). However, the use of semi-structured interviews, as well as member-checking of each write-up, provided the flexibility required to both generate data and assert the teacher-artists’ agency in terms of the direction of the interview conversations as well as how deeply we could delve into each topic area. The inclusion of the option for referral to a drama therapist also meant the teacher-artists shared as they did with the knowledge that additional support was available to them should it be required.

The reconfiguration of my research design also includes experiences outside the classroom to make room for the inclusion of diverse experiences of teaching theatre pedagogy (rather than formally limiting the conversations to rehearsal practice) in higher education. Thus, I position my narrative inquiry in ways similar to the ethos to *incoko* and *testimonios*. I do this, also, by including my voice as a researcher within a community of practice of the same discipline, albeit in different universities.

In addition, the application of the three-dimensional analysis approach (Clandinin & Huber, 2010) ensures special attention is given to '*interaction*' and '*situation*' in the interpretation of meaning in re-storying field texts (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). I argue that the methodology utilized here becomes a tool promoting explicit subjectivity as a mark of reliability and as a means to facilitate resistance against silencing as far as it incorporates my own experience as a part of the black female community in higher education that I investigate. As articulated previously,

"the theme of the reform [in research] movement is that there are important aspects of the personal and social realms that cannot be investigated within the limitations of what has been conventionally accepted as evidence and arguments used to justify or validate knowledge claims." (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 472)

Furthermore, as argued by Lather (1986) "...scientific "neutrality" and "objectivity" serve to mystify the inherently ideological nature of research in the human sciences and to legitimate privilege based on class, race, and gender " (p. 64). In other words, unless research is explicit in its intention to disturb power relations as they have come to exist in any society, or institution, scholars can assume the research implicitly supports the status quo.

Lather (1986) suggests that an explicit declaration of an ideological interest does not make research any better or worse, it assists in illuminating the fact that research is never without value ascriptions and trusts the reader to take seriously the knowledge presented in full disclosure of its ideological underpinnings. Another scholar (Polkinghorne, 2007) writes,

“Validity is not inherent in a claim but is a characteristic given to a claim by the ones to whom the claim is addressed. Sometimes people grant validity to a statement simply because of the authority of the person who makes it. However, for judgments about the validity of knowledge claims to have scientific merit, it is required that they are based on the weight of the evidence and argument” (p. 474).

To ensure that the argument I make aligns with the evidence in the field texts, I present the field texts as restructured conversations under the categories of *continuity*, *interaction*, and *situation* (Nguyen & Dao, 2019). Furthermore, there is a combination of researcher reflexivity on my part, which belongs within the critical paradigm as well as member checking, which belongs in post-positivism. This crossing over across two paradigms while not ideal, is also not ineffectual since my positionality is openly declared. And although the focus group was intended to confirm the findings of the (Step 1) interviews and the embodied research did not happen, the filtering process was instead replaced by individual member checking of each write-up.

Riessman (2005) explains that in recent Western academic history, there occurred a time referred to as the "narrative turn" (p. 1), describing a change in how scholars related to master narratives derived from master theories to a focus of the knowledge generated by ordinary people in the act of living out their ordinary lives.

It appears decoloniality presents narrative inquirers with yet another opportunity to turn inwards and reassess how narrative research is presently conducted. This is an idea I revisit in the recommendations following the findings of the study where I also justify my decision for remaining with Narrative inquiry as a methodology when any of the two, decolonial methodologies referenced here (or others) might have better served the purposes of the research, given the context.

Data Analysis

Riessman (2005) argues that by constructing a thematic analysis from elements identified as common across several field notes, one might then be able to identify and "elaborate a developing theory" (p. 3) using the shared themes emerging in different research participants' stories. However, the author (Riessman, 2005) wisely cautions against leaning towards "objectivist modes of inquiry" that keep the influence of the primary researcher hidden and therefore create the impression that common elements suggest common meaning. In my write-up, I include my questions and responses to make it clear the interviews were structured as conversations with colleagues with whom I was transparent about my feeling regarding what I was studying as well as how they were responding to the questions asked.

The overall approach and style of writing is in the first person with the story of the research told by myself as the Narrator, intentionally so, to keep bringing to attention the subjectivity inherent in my interpretation. As is the case in theatrical epistemology, I frame subjectivity as normal- as what I use to connect with the research participants and with the reader. In the initial research design, storytelling was positioned as " a communicative practice that is embodied, situated and material, discursive, and open to legitimation and critique." (Riessman, 2005, p. 5).

The legitimation and critique would have been open not only towards the stories that the teacher artists told about their experiences but also towards the pedagogical tools of rehearsal that each teacher-artist presented through the story they told. In other words, through an embodied assimilation of rehearsal practice, where some workshop collaborators would play the role of students, the presenting teacher-artist would perform the story of their practice by engaging the group in play through their prepared rehearsal activities as a means of understanding rehearsal practice from an embodied and reflective perspective. In that event, I would be engaged in an interactional analysis of the data, which would have focused on my interactions with the teacher artists as "teller and listener creating meaning collaboratively" (Riessman, 2005, p. 4). The ethical objective of narrative inquiry as a partnership would have been better achieved in the gradual progression of participants to collaborators and then to co-researchers.

However, since that is not what happened, the existing research is one where my role leaned far more towards that of a theatre director who arrives on set with a script (set of interview questions) for the performers (research participants) to interpret using their lived experiences rather than as the collaborator I would have preferred. Regrettably, the ethical implication is that there is far more likely an imposition of the primary researcher's interpretation of the constructed narrative of the research participant, cited (Sinclair Bell, p. 210) as a disadvantage of narrative inquiry. While this admission is not a disavowing of the merits of the interpretation of data, since the analysis is administered through the lens of a conceptual framework and the re-storying process is transparent, the research is more credible than not in that the overextension of my presence and the reasons for it are made explicit.

Mncube (2017) reminds us that even in research, storytelling is important because of its subjectivity. The author states, "...storytelling is an elicitation of the story by either the first or second person to the next. It could also involve how the storytellers see the world, who they see themselves as, and what they think matters the most (sic)" (p. 13) In this case, what "*mattered the most*" is arguably captured in my *re-storying* as the primary researcher (or storyteller). I take full advantage of this unique opportunity to tell my story in building the concluding argument of the data analysis, which follows in Act 3.

Act 3.

Scene 1. *Dumelang* - Introducing the research participants. Continuity

The following Act- comprised of four scenes- positions the reader as a critical audience and allows an insider's view of the research interviews I conducted to generate data. The interviews were essential in meeting this research project's key objective: to understand how experiences of teaching theatre pedagogy are influenced by intimacy. I hoped that my ideas about the presence and subsequent reproduction of various forms of intimacy in theatre pedagogy would be evidenced in the stories of the research participants. The questions I sought to answer are reiterated at the end of this scene. Throughout the scenes, I frame my voice as that of the 'narrator' in keeping with an ethic of making my thoughts explicit even as I share the stories of the research participants.

Narrator: As a theatremaker, one of the things I appreciate about doing a narrative study is that the research focus is on people and how people come to construct the meaning of their lives through their own cultural lens of interpretation, "...made up of memories and personal thoughts, articulated in different languages [that] bring forth, as a cultural artefact (sic), memory, personal expression from the cultural milieu in which they are created." (do Carmo Martins, 2012, p. 86) This is similar to how theatre performance is created subjectively and rich with nuances reflecting the artistic contributions of each production member. I especially enjoy that the methodology recognizes the agency of the storyteller (primary researcher and participants alike) to assemble and organize the pieces of information collected from their daily experiences into motivation, purpose, and direction.

The methodology achieves this while simultaneously exposing the idea of “narrative power and questions about whose versions of truth are privileged” (Sikes, 2012, p. 131) as an embedded complication. The ethos is that while a story is invaluable for the person telling the story, and oftentimes for others listening, it is nonetheless a fragment of reality rather than the whole. In addition, Narrative inquiry allows for storytellers (research participants) to own and tell their stories without removing from the audience (primary researcher and reader) the freedom to interpret, cast doubt, and project their meaning onto the stories they hear and witness. So, the methodology holds within it a relationship intrinsic to the theatre, even in the case of the teller witnessing their own story. That is a relationship of connection. In doing this research I set out to understand how teacher-artists experience connection, trust, self-disclosure, and power- amongst other notions collectively conceptualized as intimacy- in their theatre performance pedagogy work. Below, the four teacher-artists I interviewed take centre stage by way of introduction.

Between September and December 2020, four teacher-artists from four universities in South Africa shared stories of their educational backgrounds, personal history, and experiences of teaching theatre performance studies at their respective universities. In alignment with the ethical considerations discussed earlier, the universities must be referred to anonymously, using pseudonyms. Consequently, the universities are listed in no particular order, as follows:

Pentworth University (Pentworth/ PU)- Eastern Cape province, South Africa.

Annikle Campus (Annikle/ AC)- Gauteng province, South Africa.

Belrange University (Belrange / BU)- Gauteng province, South Africa.

Queen Nandi Institute of the Arts (QNI)- KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa.

It is important, at this point, to make some comments about the South African university environment. This is done in a broad sense, rather than describing the above institutions specifically, to avoid the true identity of any institution from being revealed. In providing a historical context for the condition of universities in South Africa at the time of first achieving democracy, Badat (2015) writes the following:

“Colonialism and apartheid, social, political and economic discrimination, and inequalities of a class, “race”, gender, institutional and spatial nature all profoundly shaped South African higher education, establishing patterns of systemic inclusion, exclusion and marginalization of particular social classes and groups.”

(2015, p. 176)

As such, it became necessary to have higher education reformed to reflect the democratic state’s new character as well as the human rights the country’s new constitution afforded all citizens. Hall (2015, p. 145) remarks that making the necessary changes “required comprehensive reconstruction” which included merging some universities. The scholar adds that following the mergers, three situations occurred: mergers that had failed, institutions that had merged successfully as well as “a set of new universities that are still responding to the consequences of the merger.” (p. 145). Eight years later, my research experience reveals that the processes and ramifications of these changes are still present in the higher education space, resulting in dynamic local, and international research collaborations, pedagogy that is highly contested, and the revamped movement to decolonize education as a part of sector transformation. This is to be expected since in the magnanimous attempt to address inequality in education, “...there [has been] a wide array of transformation-oriented initiatives aimed at institutional change.” (Badat, 2015, p. 173)

While many universities offer theatre studies (also known as Drama) as an elective module, seven institutions are recognized as offering prospective students' full qualifications in dance, stage performance, and music. In this study, two of the said institutions (BU and QNI) are categorized as *new* since the countrywide merger "...created 11 new institutions from 26 merger partners" (Hall, 2015, p. 145) between 2002 and 2005, while the remaining two (PU and AC) are part of the group of universities who remained unchanged by the mandated political reform, largely due to their ability to remain financially independent from the state (Hall, 2015). The author argues that much of the lack of success in the overall purpose of mergers and institutional transformation can be accounted to the fact that the merger mandate excluded the country's most elite universities (Hall, 2015) thereby, together with other less significant mitigating factors, rendering the attempt to address inequality insufficient. It is within this context that the learning and working environments of our participants are situated. The institutions referenced in this thesis come under my scholarly microscope only as a result of each institution's affiliation with the research participants selected for the study.

The introductory stories constructed here are derived from each of the research participants and I generating a narrative beginning describing when they first engaged with theatre as a practice and ending with reflections on their present-day work. What I have also done is attempt to frame the selected parts of the interview conversations in ways I believe best reflect the character and personality of each research participant as a teacher-artist, and as far as possible, as best described in their own words. The rationale behind the framing is in alignment with the three-dimensional approach to narrative analysis (Nguyen & Dao, 2019), which attempts to understand a teller through their past and present experiences (continuity), their interactions with others as well as their given circumstances, and context.

Ollerenshaw & Creswell (2002), explain continuity as follows:

“Continuity or temporality is central to narrative research. The researcher analyses the transcript or text for information about the past experiences of the storyteller. In addition, it is analyzed for present experiences illustrated in actions of an event or actions to occur in the future. In this way, the analyst considers the past, present, and future.” (p. 339)

This is done to re-affirm and further demonstrate what I have argued previously- that performance [and performance research] is actioned physically on a platform- screen, stage, or studio- to enable the doer to *learn as they do*. In this instance, the performance is framed as *storytelling*, the action as *engagement through reading*, and the audience is the *reader*. This is because the intrinsic values of the discipline of performance studies are shared experientially. Accordingly, each research participant describes their first experience with performance and the personal meaning derived from the encounter. The research participants also share their experience as higher education student-performers as well as some aspects of their journey to becoming a performance studies teacher. The process of telling the story is non-linear and specific to each teller’s style and context. This translates into an extensive engagement with each person as an *individual* before a more in-depth interpretation of the research participants as a collective interview cohort is presented in the next scene.

The pseudonyms for the research participants are, originally, the names of formidable female lead characters in South African telenovelas. This strategy is used as a dramatic means to anonymize the research participants since the field of performance studies in higher education in the South African context is very close-knit and most teachers are, at the very least, familiar with the names and scholarly reputations of others. This makes the ethic of ensuring the research participants’ identities are hidden all the more important.

I have done this despite repeated commentary from some of the research participants that due to the closeness of the people in the theatre industry, attempting to remain anonymous while disclosing the private stories of their experiences was foolhardy at best. Nonetheless, the pseudonyms were carefully selected and considered in comparison to what the interview content revealed about the personality of each research participant. Where similarities or differences were significant in enabling further disguise and anonymity, the name of a fictitious character was assigned to each research participant. The consent of the research participants to be represented in this way was sought out. In each case, the match was met with some surprise and delight, and full consent.

The first research participant is named *Harriet Khoza*. The name originally belongs to a classy and ruthless lead protagonist drug lord and matriarch on South Africa's DSTV network in a primetime series entitled, *The Queen* (Mzansi Magic, 2016). The character is played by South African media businesswoman and actress Connie Ferguson. In the context of this study, much like her fictitious namesake, Harriet survives a harsh and tumultuous environment in her pursuit to 'get the job done'. Similar to the television characters, the narratives of *Queen Sono* and *Lindiwe Dikana* are reflective of the apartheid era's legacy in present-day South Africa. *Queen Sono* (Netflix, 2020) is a name first made famous by a protagonist secret agent on Africa's first Netflix series titled by the same name. On Netflix, the role is played by South African-born actress, Pearl Thusi. Well-loved local actress Sindi Dlathu, plays *Lindiwe Dikana*, a mining mogul, mother, and wife in *The River* (Tshedza Pictures, 2018). Finally, *Mkabayi "MaNcwane" Zungu* is the name of the award-winning *Isibaya's* (Mzansi Magic, 2013) popular female character. Played by Golden Horn award-winning actress Thembi Nyandeni, the fictitious protagonist is a fierce matriarch and taxi business owner firmly rooted in her family and culture.

Similar to the character, the fourth teacher-artist shares a background story that weaves the place of family within the passionate pursuit of her educational career. Inevitably, each research participant's story reveals an intricate and undeniable connection between pedagogy and South Africa's socio-political climate, a theme that threatens to upstage the key research questions in its prominence. However, this is discussed in-depth in the scene that follows. For the moment, Harriet's journey of pedagogy begins below.

Harriet Khoza- The “Researcher performance maker”.

Harriet is a theatre maverick and academic who best expresses her talent as a freelance performance artist. She describes herself as a “*researcher performance maker*”, which is manifested in the act of persistently endeavoring to create a “*kind of theoretical and thinking space*” in her art-making, rather than “*...to just perform, perform and perform*”.

Harriet’s introduction to performance and theatre, as she tells the tale, is something that happened by chance. Despite her present obvious deep-seated commitment to performance arts, she admits the beginning of her relationship with theatre was facilitated outside of her intention or control, by her primary school teachers in the province of KwaZulu Natal. Her teachers selected Harriet for a speech and drama competition in Grade 3. When Harriet won the competition- seemingly surprising no one but herself- she began to imagine the possibility of a career in performance. On this, she says the following:

“...The first time I was introduced to drama as a thing that one could do was in primary school for a speech and drama competition that our teachers kind of selected good people [to represent the school] and yeah, I won something. I think it was like a little bursary and then I was like, oh, you can do this? And that was pretty much it. I just kept doing it.”

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Indeed, while Harriet’s involvement in theatre practice starts in primary school, the journey continued up to her tertiary education and spanned across three provinces- coastal KwaZulu Natal, the mountainous Eastern Cape, and the country’s economic hub, Gauteng. Upon arriving as a graduate in Gauteng, Harriet continues with her studies at university and taught theatre studies at an arts secondary school. Consequently, Harriet describes a hybrid early career as a teacher, a student, and a freelance theatre reviewer.

This formed the foundation of her development as a theatre practitioner. Harriet shares the following:

Harriet: *So, I started teaching by teaching in high school, is it in my MA or honours? No, it must have been my MA. Yeah and so I started teaching at the *Gifted Arts School (GAS).*

Narrator: *Oh lovely*

Harriet: *I think it was like five years after teaching at GAS, and seeing students go from grade eight to matric then I also felt like I needed to graduate. I resigned from teaching high school, focused on my degree and then I was freelancing for a while. Yeah, so I do a bunch of things. I do sometimes direct plays but I feel like that also for me often intersects with the teaching. And then I make, you know, strange performances.*

Narrator: *Why do you call them strange?*

Harriet: *[Laughs] They are strange. My nephew used to say they're strange. So, he would see something that I've done, he'll be like 'What is this stuff that you're doing?' So, I make these strange things. I like them strange and I also write, I review shows. "*

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

When Harriet reports her nephew as perceiving her performance pieces as strange, I recognize it as pointing to Harriet's expressed love for experimentation in the theatre. This is a style of working Harriet reports to have learned at Pentworth University in the Eastern Cape. It is a style that she found herself having to relinquish when entering teaching in the university sector in Johannesburg, Gauteng. On this, she states the following:

"When you're coming with this experimental mode of working and thinking from Pentworth [Eastern Cape] and Gauteng is very much a product-orientated space- not an experimental environment at all. People want to come out of university and go into the industry and not necessarily make art. I genuinely thought we were gonna make art and

think about art and experiment and conceptualize but Annikle [Campus] students made a lot more “prepare me for the job market” kinds of requests....”

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

The shift from a focus on creating art for art’s sake to a stricter requirement for industry preparedness was not the only difference Harriet had to learn to contend with in her transition from student-performer to artist-teacher. Notably, even while both institutions (PU and AC) were historically elitist, each with student populations made up of predominantly middle to upper-class society and predominantly white staff in the performance studies discipline, there were stark differences in the curriculum. Khoza acknowledges that the nature of social affluence of the institutions gave her a somewhat unbalanced perspective of what to expect as a black female in the higher education sector. On being introduced to the notion of *blackness* as an area of pedagogical engagement, Harriet reflects as follows:

“Coming to Annikle and then seeing, oh, we’re actually studying protest theatre now and we’re actually engaging with black material in a particular way- that was new to me because, I mean, Pentworth was very, very white. At Pentworth, I had one black lecturer in my entire undergrad. And he was a guest lecturer from Congo. I mean, I’m trying to even think about like, what black or African kind of theatre stuff we encountered in the curriculum. I really can’t remember any. So, teaching in the Joburg space became a whole thing of then having to start again and educate myself with things that I wasn’t educated about.”

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Furthermore, being black and female meant being confronted with vulnerability in different ways, from institution to institution. Harriet recognized this initially as well- at her entrance as a graduate student-performer coming into Annikle and interacting with her black, female peers.

When probed further about the differences between the theatre studies institutions she attended as a student, Harriet's response was as follows:

Narrator: *Outside of the exposure to say black lecturers, is there anything else that you found to be particularly interesting in terms of the difference?*

Harriet: *Umm yeah. So, for me at Pentworth I didn't experience the kind of like sexual harassment and stuff like that, that some of my peers had at Annikle because, at Pentworth, it was gay students that experienced kind of more, I would say, predatory lecturers. But as a black woman there, you know, I think it was maybe one white lecture was like into black girls but I was like, 'no' and that was that.*

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Harriet's mention of predatory lecturers was not surprising. Neither was her talk about a kind of 'nuance' to sexual violence within her alma mater. It is and has been common knowledge about Pentworth from stories told amongst black and queer theatre studies colleagues. What is illuminating however- and fundamental to understanding a key aspect of the research- is that Harriet has long been aware, from early on in her experiences as a student-performer and then as a teacher-artist, that race and gender play a significant role in higher education. Incidentally, what further complicated her first year of full-time employment as a black woman and theatre lecturer, was the call to re-conceptualize curriculum across the national higher education sector through the FeesMustFall protest movement (Naiker; 2016, p. 54). Harriet explains that her arrival coincided with the expansion of the protest movement to Annikle, following its first articulation through the #RhodesSoWhite protest action at Rhodes University a few months earlier (Gamela; 2016, p. 35).

Created by students across various (some reports argue all) universities in South Africa, the FeesMustFall movement's primary focus was the demand for more equitable access to higher education by black, poor, and marginalized students. More specifically, it was a call for "free decolonized, Afrocentric education." (BusinessTech, 2016). In our conversation, Harriet expressed that the intense call for the decolonization of the curriculum at Annikle increased the complexity of her overall experience but also made a difficult entrance easier in unexpected ways:

"...because I came in during a strong activist time, I experienced black Educators male and female, specifically female really being very overt and very clear about what the problems were and how they needed certain things to change that I was able to experience what it was like to fight against whatever the expectations were. Rather than entering into, 'this is how I'm expected to behave'. That was helpful for me because I did do a dance trying to figure out what to do [makes gesture] 'Okay, I'm being too loud', 'Okay, being too brash, okay', you know? 'Oh, I can't do timid. It will not work for now.' So, I did very much experience myself having to negotiate how to be in the space"

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Despite an especially disorderly commencement of Harriet's career as a teacher-artist- a story that will continue to unfold in greater detail in Act 3 Scene 4- what is evident in our interview is that she has progressively developed a personalized stance towards the politics of higher education. This includes her own pedagogical identity. As a consequence, Harriet describes her present understanding of her role in theatre practice in the following way:

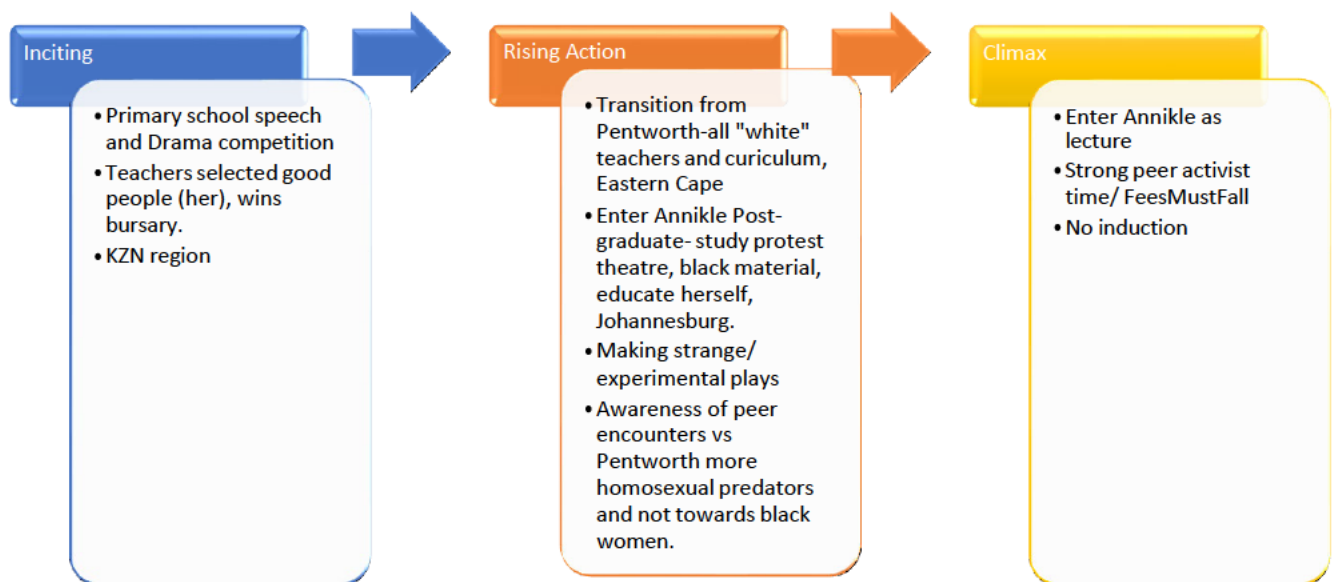
"I've had to navigate what I call myself over the years...currently I identify myself as a performance artist because theatre-making itself has become less prominent as how I put myself forward."

I encompass what I do theatrically within the performance artist kind of paradigm because I'm interested in performance more than in making theatre directly. I'm interested in what we call performance, what performance looks like- whether that is inside, outside of, or around the theatre."

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

In the phases of Freytag's pyramid (a structural decision I explain in the scene that follows), below is Harriet's pyramid of continuity, followed by the introductory story of Queen Sono.

Figure 4. Harriet Khoza's Opening story- Past, Present. Continuity.



Queen Sono- The “Storyteller”

Queen Sono (pseudonym) is a 45-year-old South African female storyteller, actress, poet, and applied theatre practitioner. Born and raised in Bophuthatswana, an area declared an independent homeland designated to South African Batswana under Apartheid law in 1977, Queen believes her love for theatre, storytelling and the arts to have emerged as a result of her place of birth and upbringing. Of this, she speaks proudly:

“...Ke tswa ko Bophuthatswana [I am from Bophuthatswana] and the arts were big hey, very big! We came in numbers to study here in Gauteng. As students of the arts, we were hungry to tell our stories”.

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

Queen fondly recalls the beginning of an intimate relationship with storytelling and says, *“...my aunty would tell us stories every evening, in the typical oral tradition, and she would perform. That’s where my love for storytelling comes from. I used to love mimicking her”.*

Interestingly, Queen’s background in learning about theatre is rooted within a family relationship and domestic space, which later proves significant in her contribution to the exploration of the connections between the intimate and the pedagogical. At the time of the study, Queen works in the Gauteng province at Belrange - an institution offering various arts qualifications including dance, fine arts, and theatre. Of all the studies’ participants, Queen has the most work experience in both the professional arts industry- having worked in both the television and live performance sectors- as well as in institutions of tertiary education for well over a decade. Queen is also mother to a 15year old boy and is devoted to her relationship with her elderly sister, with whom she resides. In her reflections, Queen credits her drive to teach and *heal* through the arts as inspired by a long-held desire, which she describes as *“...combining drama, which is my first love, with psychology”.*

Having been “...*head hunted by the Drama division at [her] university*”, Queen’s unique role in her space of work, her experiences of commitment to ethical practice within theatre education as well as her expressed investment in the value of this research make her a significant contributor to the study. Additionally, a closer look at Queen’s teaching philosophy reveals an alignment with the key objectives of the study. Queen Sono’s comprehension of her role as a “*multi-disciplinary practitioner, mentor and counsellor*” consistently shows a correlation, in ideology and practice, between intimacy and pedagogy. Most prominent is the participant’s sense that pedagogic engagement with students must translate into connecting with full human beings and not simply a reduction of people to their academic prowess or the lack thereof. On this, she is quite intentional:

“The philosophy that I hold in my teaching space...is that I don’t look at students as students, I look at them as human beings and so I also tap into myself when I work with them, when I was their age trying to figure out myself and my career, my life and everything.”

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

The reference to her own past experiences as a young person, when working with students in the present, allows what Queen describes as a more empathetic engagement with students.

She discusses this philosophy in further depth and says:

“You have to step down. Facilitation ea nthusa [the skill of facilitation helps me] because I am able to tap in ke be [I become] counsellor, ke be [I become] teacher or a mother or friend. So, I am able to draw a lot of information from them goitse gore ke mo kae, ba ko kae [to know where I stand, and where they are coming from] without me ke ba kgatella [without oppressing them by imposing myself/ my views on them].

Ke ba tlaloganye, ke ba utlwisise gore ba reng [I seek to understand the students and deeply comprehend what they say and feel]. Our worlds are very different. I'm actually more empathetic to them."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Queen's perspective appears to stem from a sense of personal responsibility towards other humans as well as a responsibility to ensure in-depth learning occurs within the theatre studio (classroom) space. In our conversations, we readily discuss the economic and social conditions of the students she works with. Queen says:

"Our institution is servicing the most challenged students I should say, in the country. I mean hence 90% is on NSFAS- that says a lot. Some of them have children. Some of them support their families with the money from the national study loan that they are getting. They are breadwinners. It's tough. It's really, really tough. It's not easy."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Pointing to the fact that the majority of students are funded by the state through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), Queen also attests to what she perceives as a disconnection between where the students are from and how the university approaches the student. She asks, "...how will the learning happen?" when we discuss a perceived expectation by her institution that she should overlook the *human* problems of students that Queen feels directly impact their learning. This question reveals Queen's strongly held belief that learning is not possible without addressing the basic human needs (food, shelter, safety) of students.

On this, she states,

“...We cannot ignore the challenges that students have. When a student says they are hungry, how do I teach a hungry student? If I’m a director, I won’t allow them to come to rehearsal hungry. Obviously, I will have to put something on the table and make sure that they eat. I spend a lot of money when I do productions because I have to literally feed the students so that they can exist and actually do the work.”

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

For this participant, not only is the work of creating theatre with students not possible until certain basic needs are met, but it is also the moral responsibility of the leader of the theatre production to see to the needs of the students. While we extensively discussed the challenges such a responsibility places on any individual teacher-artist, we also found some similarities in our experience. In one part of the research interview, shared below, she responded exuberantly to my interpretation of her reflections as well as some reflection of my own. I posed a question about her teaching philosophy, which Queen attempted to articulate: **Queen:** *I don’t know if I’m on the right track with regards to the philosophy question but teaching is something that I can do because I am such an empathetic mindful being.*

Narrator: *From what I can hear, you have absolutely understood what the question is about. You’ve spoken about how, for you, that strict teacher role as somebody who doesn’t care in other human ways is not how you perceive yourself, which in my interpretation, is a kind of philosophy. A kind of ethos of how you approach your students. I mean if I can add to your answers, I think any time we’re asked to ignore what we know about our students, when we know that what we know 100 per cent affects their learning, when the systems that are put in place expect that we carry on, business as usual, just focused on the curriculum when what we know about our*

students- it may be personal or about their psychological or physical wellbeing- directly affects how they will participate or how effective they will be in class. For me, any expectations, any guidelines that ask me to not acknowledge, to not respond to what I know hinders the student's learning, that for me I can't do. I don't know how to do that.

Queen: *Thank you Ayanda! Thank you, thank you! Yes, yes! You've said it in the most profound way. Exactly! And I got goosebumps as I was listening to you.*

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Furthermore, Queen Sono states that the expectation that university lecturers continue teaching despite students' problems, is itself dehumanizing. She says:

"The system says I must ignore. How? For me, it's problematic because then I don't feel human I don't think I'll be able to do it because then it will strip the human being in me, the human being that I am"

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

The above comment suggests the participant makes a connection between the way she feels about herself as a teacher and the approach she takes on when working with students. The participant describes a range of emotions arising from her classroom interaction with students- empathy and frustration being the most dominant. The need to eat is just as important to Queen in her teaching as the need for psychological support. While Queen Sono feels displeasure at what she interprets as her institution's approach to students, this teacher-artist also acknowledges that *"there are certain boundaries that we need to adhere to."* (Interview 1, Sono, 2020). In a later segment that focuses on Queen's pedagogy, she further describes how decisively she circumnavigates what she interprets as boundaries governing the teaching space that are too rigid and therefore restrict her teaching style that seeks to address more than just the cognitive needs of students.

Queen Sono's response to teaching is rooted in empathy. She describes her approach to students with sincerity and pride. She states:

"I am able to listen because I am a very empathic person. My love for people and my love for wanting to change young people's lives has always been a priority. I want to develop, I want to change people's lives. I want to liberate people."

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

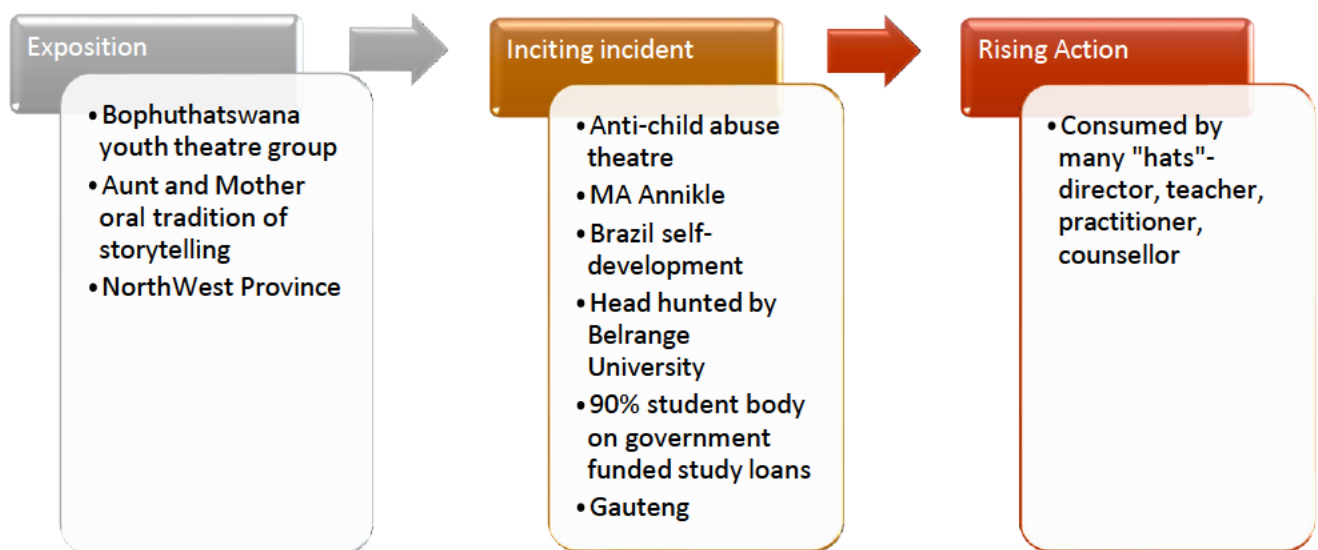
Once again, the sense of personal responsibility towards the well-being of others is prominent in this teacher-artist's understanding of her teaching style. She continues, *"I always have to be mindful ha ke bua le bona gore ke ske kanna kare lona hale tswane le rona [I have to be mindful when I speak to them to not compare and say you guys are not like us] because they are living in extremely different times beyond what we experienced as challenges. They have it so much harder than us."* (Interview 1, Sono, 2020). Queen Sono explains that an empathic approach avoids creating comparisons between the present generation of students to those older because the problems students face in contemporary South Africa are vastly different from the challenges endured by students of previous generations. In response to contemporary issues that pose challenges to learning for students, Queen Sono seems to find it most effective to play multiple roles concerning students and the pedagogical exchange between teacher and student. She attests that the adjustments made to meet her students' needs, which she views as paramount to the quality of the teaching and learning exchange, are both fulfilling and draining. Queen Sono says the following about her predicament in this regard:

"Sometimes it feels like I am consumed where I am working because I have to wear so many hats. I need to be a director and a practitioner in the studio, I need to be a teacher. I tap into many roles and sometimes I feel like it's too much..."

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

While it is evident from Queen's testimony that attempting to address various needs of students as a strategy to improve teaching and learning is both admirable and stressful, this teacher communicates a sense that she feels compelled to do so, as a part of her profession. In the following story, a fellow research participant also shares feeling compelled, in her professional capacity, to address a sense that students are not *awake* to who they are. A circumstance, Lindiwe Dikana views as detrimental to their learning. This story follows the below visual depiction of Queen Sono's continuity story.

Figure 5. Queen Sono's Opening story. Past and Present. Continuity.



Lindiwe Dikana: i-Accomplice ye murder [The murder accomplice]

A highly conscientious dancer and musician, 29-year-old novice teacher, and emerging performance studies philosopher- Lindiwe was born in a busy town in the Eastern Cape. She attended her primary and secondary schools and then proceeded to tertiary education at Pentworth University. Dikana's account of the beginning of her relationship with the performing arts is an interesting story accented with nuances of South Africa's history of complicated racial dynamics:

"I found myself violently within the arts. I started Drama long ago, way back in my community. I started acting there but officially what was recognized [here Dikana gestures inverted commas using her fingers]- is when a 'Mama Dee' came to 'develop' us. We were already doing things at school, traditional dance and whatnot but there is this access of a white woman into a black school that makes things legitimate. So, she wanted to come in and have children to [gestures inverted commas using her fingers] "take away from the streets" so that they can be developed, you know the language. And that was what she wanted us to call her- Mama. So weza uMama Dee [so Mama came] and then we were taught dance by her. That was when I was in grade six. And that's also the first time I knew that I was black. It was in the way she spoke about us and she wrote about us in terms of funding issues and what we would read later in the newspapers about ourselves as people who need to be developed, and using art to discipline us"

(Interview 1, Dikana, 2020)

Admittedly, as a consequence of the above-narrated experience, Dikana is fiercely skeptical of arts as a developmental and transformative tool. She is also careful to construct a relationship of mutual partnership with her students rather than repeat "...a mothering that did not see us as kids" (Interview 1, Dikana, 2020) that Lindiwe says she experienced in the

tutorship of Mama Dee. As a theatre-making teacher, she is instead protective of the experience of freedom as well as the expression of identity as defining characteristics of arts education. She states, *“I always knew that art doesn’t change lives, I always knew that. I was skeptical from the beginning when I kept hearing narratives of how I was “developed”* (Interview 1, Dikana, 2020). Dikana sees this perception of performance studies as central to a grossly misguided agenda on the part of present-day higher arts education. For Dikana, the focus of performance pedagogy should be on the freedom to expand one’s imagination and to allow what may be learned and created from that process to exist free from preemptively scheduled purposes or scripted learning objectives. This is viewed as a method of promoting authenticity and spontaneity in the learning journey of the student-artist. On this, Dikana says the following:

“...once you have been told that you can only imagine from here to there, that is once there is a pedagogical limitation on the work of imagining, that is a fundamental problem because we are people who practice as we learn. That’s what we do- siyenza [we do]. We are connectors of existing theories- in practice. So, it’s a real disjuncture when you come in and they’ve [previous coordinators/ overall department curriculum selectors] already set what we’re meant to be discovering through practice”.

(Interview 1, Dikana, 2020)

For this teacher, learning from the practice of the art is sacred to the integrity of the curriculum as well as to the relationships between the teacher, the student, and the work. With regards to *her* theatre classroom relationship with students and the work, what is evident is an astute promotion of consciousness and self-awareness in students as well as paying attention to politics inclusive of the nature of the discipline of Performance studies itself. Dikana describes how she actively works to resist what she interprets as an insistence of the tertiary education system, that art manifests itself in ways fitting with the conventions of academia rather than to make room for art, and the student artist, to *be* what each *is*, respectively.

On this, she says:

“So, you think let’s teach ¹²umxhentso, as indigenous movement but not realizing that when these things [indigenous practices] enter, they are going to be spoken about and analyzed. They are not going to be dealt with in what they do, really, for us and for our humanity, you know what I mean?”

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Similar to Lindiwe’s dissatisfaction with how indigenous dance practice is perceived in the university space, much of her discomfort about the present state of theatre pedagogy is relatable, which is evidenced by the number of times I nod in agreement when she asks if I know what she means. This resonance deepens our conversation. In sharing some of her experiences as a student-performer, what becomes clearer is that the desire to authentically and respectfully situate indigenous theatre practice as an art form within the academy is not something Lindiwe takes lightly. In taking a stroll down memory lane she tells the story of how she was initially determined to make ¹³is’pantsula visible in ways the academy recognized. On this, she says:

“I was taught at Pentworth and I remember when we were in our Honours year, there was a month where they would bring in practitioners, week by week, and we had like three different practitioners...so one week we did clowning, a week we did some sort of arts business administration with a white woman and then for two days, we had is’pantsula. For two days! So, then we never really had it...then I asked my lecturer, what is this meant to teach us? It was just two days. And my lecturer said, ‘Well, there’s nothing written about is’pantsula’ and then my work was like ‘Okay let’s do is’pantsula and then let’s write.’

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

¹² A traditional dance of the Xhosa people in South Africa.

¹³ A South African township dance that “...came as a response to the [forced] removals by the government” in 1950’s. (Ngwenya, 2018)

Dikana points to a difficult philosophical contradiction inherent in the theatre curriculum within higher education- the fact that students are confined to what Conquergood (2004, p.147) diagnoses as a type of scriptocentrism (William, 1983, p. 309). Conquergood (2004) argues that the scriptocentric tendency (hyperfocus on written research) in academia specifically works against Performance studies as epistemology because performance students come to learn how knowledge is *embodied* rather than *transcribed*. Consequently, as a practicing teacher and performer, Dikana describes the higher education teaching and learning space as a grave. This disturbing metaphor is reflective of her experiences of teaching theatre performance studies at two universities (Pentworth and QNI).

Dikana perceives her role in the tertiary education system as an accomplice to the murder she believes is taking place instead of the expected growth and development of young artists and thinkers. Dikana states:

“It feels like I’m literally doing the same thing I was suffocating from [as a student]- not being able to be ubundim’ [my being] as a human or artist. Even if I try to put 50% of me trying to help students navigate it, it’s still within [gestures a cycle with the hands] part of the same death that happened to me. I’ve become part of the machine of death and very heavily”.

(Interview 3, Dikana, 2020)

The idea of a pedagogical space as one where prospective scholars go to perish, rather than grow, inspired further probing in our interview conversation. The questions we discussed were about how death shows up, in the practical sense, and the ethics of teaching even when one is aware they are part of something that does not produce development. We also observed how the death Lindiwe described seemed to be cyclical- from the experience of being a student of performance studies to her time as a teacher.

This point yielded much discussion about the nature of pedagogy within the context of 'death'. Lindiwe cited examples from both her student life and the experience of being a teacher to elaborate. On being a teacher Lindiwe says the following:

"I think people think teaching drama in institutions at the moment is about the learning, it is about feelings. Other people don't want to teach certain things because of how they feel about certain things. Right? So, feelings and people are holding this curriculum. You've been investing in this for 20 years, and you are feeling like this is your work and I'm threatening your feelings. It's becoming more personal. We've been asked not to be personal but it's personal already."

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

Admittedly, much of Lindiwe's present relationship to theatre and theatre pedagogy is influenced by her experiences in the institution where she teaches at the time of the research interviews. Lindiwe describes how engaging with students is easier than working collaboratively with staff since it is a pedagogical environment in which she does not feel safe to say what she truly feels. She gives an example:

Lindiwe: *Imagine me saying in a staff meeting that I didn't teach that, I did this instead. Imagine how people look at me, who wants that kind of energy? Those are the key things I'm most scared of. I think the thing I'm most scared of right now is being honest with my colleagues rather than the engagement with the students.*

Narrator: *So, would you say in some ways you find engagement with the students safer than your engagement with colleagues?*

Lindiwe: *Yeah, yeah. That's why right now I've been thinking about quitting a lot of time in this Covid time because it just made it too real.*

(Interview 1, Dikana, 2020)

Lindiwe's comments here suggest that the basic work of the artist- free self- expression- is not what Lindiwe experiences as enabled within the academic space of higher education- not as a teacher who is still finding her feet in the sector. Furthermore, Dikana's earlier account suggests that part of the death she is inadvertently recruited to generate, by way of being a teacher in academia, is produced as a result of denial amongst pedagogues that theatre pedagogy as it presently stands is not working. Ironically, Lindiwe believes it is only through frank and open conversation that this issue can be addressed. She states:

"Masibe [let's be] honest guys, masitsho sithi ayikho lento esiteachayo ngoku [let us openly say there is nothing we are teaching now] as performance studies, sihlale sonke sithi ayikho [let's sit down to a frank conversation that admits there is nothing].

Not to say people have not been doing work, no. But if you want an intentional curriculum then into ebeyenzakala izolo [the things of the past] we must come back today and say we don't want to teach that. That is how we should also be dealing with ourselves".

(Interview 3, Dikana, 2020)

In Lindiwe's view, teachers are consciously aware that there is a disconnection between who the students are, what knowledge the students bring into the pedagogical space, and what is taught within the present pedagogy. This is especially evident during the time of teaching online as a result of Covid-19. However, Lindiwe believes that because of the condition of the arts in higher education- the requirement to conform to academic convention or be relegated to the sidelines- the necessary connections are not made and the quality of learning students receive suffers as a consequence.

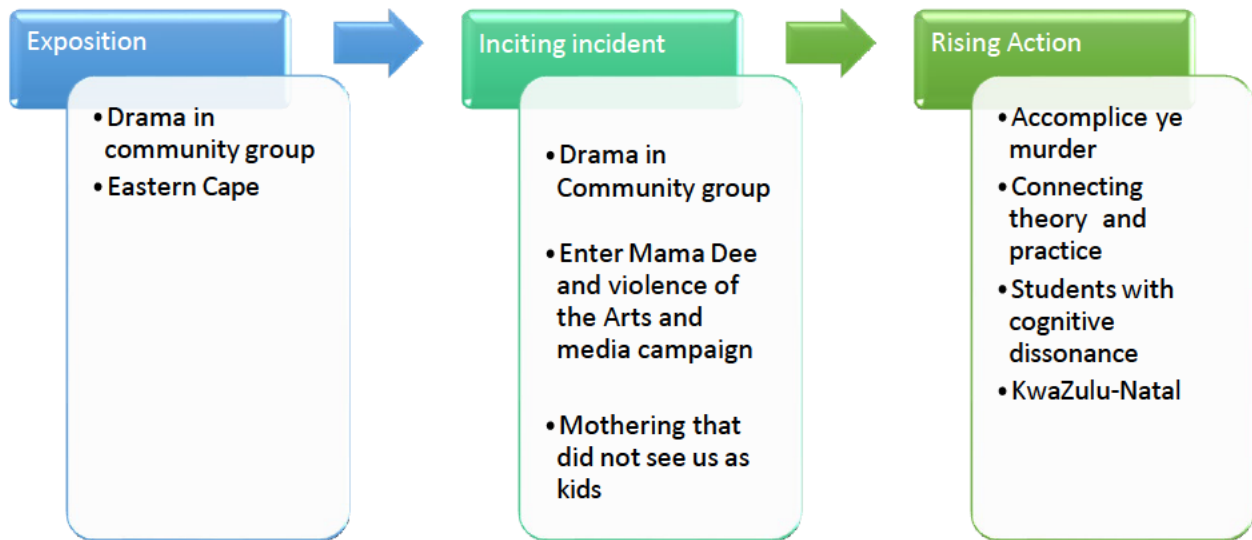
Lindiwe gives an example of this:

“...how they [the students] have learned to analyze a play is through a performance ontology of the west, which means you have to ask for symbolism, for example, which separates the real from the sign in ways that African ontology does not. So even if I have done the work of teaching them that there are other ways to imagine, rooted in their own African experience, that is going against what they have already learned in their foundation knowledge because asithethi [we teachers don't talk]. So, bane cognitive dissonance [So the students have cognitive dissonance].”

(Interview 3, Dikana, 2020)

Lindiwe continues to explain this dissonance in a discussion further describing the teaching and learning context in higher education, specifically at Queen Nandi Institute (QNI), where she currently works. The most interesting parts of that discussion are best suited for the scene that follows, in which the context of higher education is explored in greater detail. As such, the introduction of this research-participant ends here, and the focus shifts to introducing the fourth teacher-artist and research participant of the study, Mkabayi Zungu. Below is a figure depicting Dikana's journey of continuity followed by Mkabayi's story.

Figure 6. Lindiwe Dikana's Opening story. Past and Present. Continuity.



Mkabayi Zungu- The “brilliant teacher”

In her own words, Mkabayi Zungu is a brilliant teacher and artist born in a densely populated township, situated north of Johannesburg in South Africa. A 43-year-old “*talented singer and actress*”, Mkabayi describes her work with performance students rather matter-of-factly. She states, “*I’m magic in a classroom with students, you should see me. I’m a genius in the theatre with students. Students and I, we just flow.*” Indeed, Mkabayi’s focus as a teacher-artist seems significantly more partial towards her role as an educator than that of a theatre maker. This is something she somewhat accredits to the pressures involved in balancing the two roles in the higher education academic setting. On this Mkabayi observes:

“It’s not always easy balancing teaching with practicing your art especially now that we are required to do so much more research and there’s the career benefits that come with having many publications. Many of us wind up being more teachers than artists so you have to fight for the space to do your art.”

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

Certainly, for this teacher, the fight to create space for art-making in her life is one that began some time ago, with the decision to enroll in a Performing arts degree despite some resistance from her immediate family. As the eldest in her family, Mkabayi tells a moving story of having to bargain with her parents to be able to follow a career in the path of performance studies. She says the following:

“My parents wouldn’t let me go directly into acting, it came as a bit of a shock to them because I had always wanted to be a lawyer. So, they insisted I do another diploma first, in human resources. So, I did it and then I continued to do performing arts”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Aspiring for a career in law had previously been a dream since Mkabayi's childhood and this would have been seen as an ascension in social status from that of her parents, both of whom Mkabayi says were teachers working in the local teacher training college at the time. Consequently, the decision to pursue performance studies was one Mkabayi confesses was not planned, and yet one she reports feeling was intuitively correct. Mkabayi believes the theatre seeds, however, had been planted in her mind at an earlier stage. She states:

*"When I was young I remember going to a drama club where *Ukhamba Theatre is now. We went on Saturdays, in a combi situation, we got picked up and then dropped off back at home. My parents must have signed me up or something but at that place, we sang and we danced there. So, I think the interest began there but was always hidden somewhere because I wanted to be a lawyer."*

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Like Harriet, Mkabayi tells a story of being pleasantly surprised by the re-discovery of her talent in theatre acting, quite by accident in her last year of high school. The beginning of her performance journey thus took place amidst an adventurous step outside of her comfort zone, which Mkabayi narrates as follows:

"There are photographs and plenty of memories of little me playing Brenda Fassie at family events and so on so singing has always been my thing, something I knew I could do. But acting took me by surprise. There was this moment in high school when I was performing on stage and then receiving an award for it. I didn't expect the award. It blew my mind. And that was the first time I had even done drama at school. It was a new thing at my school to have a big theatre show...And then for whatever reason, a career I was set on for years and years, that one award, that one evening and the whole journey shifted. I said to myself, okay, I am an actress."

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Following that unexpected decision, Mkabayi's new career trajectory was launched after an audition at Annikle, which incidentally she says was also the only higher education institution offering Performing Arts that the teacher's parents were willing to consider her attending. Mkabayi recalls the earliest years of training as an actress and singer at Annikle, with much nostalgia and admiration. She tells a narrative of an educational and social varsity experience that presented fundamentally, life-altering questions. On this, she says, *"I think now it was the idea of social construction that I was coming across for the first time. It blew my mind. I felt so overwhelmed"* (Interview 1, Mkabayi, 2019)

Interestingly, this teacher identifies the performance studies classroom- her acting class- to have been a place in which she was most able to further explore "really soul and mind shifting" questions safely. Safety is an ongoing theme in conversations with Mkabayi- safety for herself as a performer and teacher as well as safety for her students. It seems foreseeable therefore when she reveals that it is also within the performance classroom, this time in her teaching practice, that Mkabayi feels the most comfortable to explore and most able to excel as a theatre artist. She reports the following about her classroom experiences:

"I prefer the privacy of the classroom with my students. I feel safe to be myself there. I don't feel like I have the space to explore without ridicule or shame or the pressure to be brilliant anywhere else."

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

This admission notably stuns both Mkabayi and I during our interview conversation. Additionally, this moment of self-disclosure highlights even within the interview process, the intimacy that is generated through Mkabayi's sharing of her story with me. The interview takes a distinct shift towards a more personal slant after this confession. The statement reveals a vulnerable interior which this teacher says she understands to be a part of the work of being a performer.

“...Acting, Mkabayi states “... makes a person vulnerable- it’s the nature of the work. Also, the idea that there is to be an audience watching and approving or not approving. That’s why the safety to be vulnerable, safety to be all the things you need to be in order for the work to get done [is important].”

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

Ensuring safety, for Mkabayi, includes the space to make mistakes and this is a principle so sincerely held that as a teacher, she subscribes to this value in governing how she works with students. On this, she says the following:

“I think we don’t give our actors enough space to experiment and fail before we expect them to fly. And others fly immediately but others will take time. Artists need the space to make huge mistakes. There’s a drama game that I’ll use sometimes where we clap and roar when someone makes a mistake. They stop and then they’ll shout out, ‘I made a mistake’ and then everyone shouts and cheers like crazy for that mistake. Because, of course, mistakes are a good way to live...and be present, especially in rehearsal”.

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

Mkabayi’s statement above highlights how performance studies pedagogy becomes a site where learning and intimacy are co-produced, as a by-product of spontaneous and free interaction. This freedom includes the freedom to make mistakes. As identified by scholars of embodied pedagogy in a previous scene, knowledge derived from the ability to experiment and to create in embodied ways, forms part of the overall thesis of performance knowledge, philosophically speaking. In discussing Mkabayi’s personal teaching philosophy, it is clear that as a teacher, she is direct and deliberate in her intentions. For this teacher, teaching is as much about nurturing students and giving guidance as it is about encouraging self-determined discovery in each person.

On this, Mkabayi shares her views as

such:

“...As a theatre and performance teacher, you guide your students into questioning how we look at things, if there are other ways to see and how might things be different if we allowed ourselves or if we gave people the window through which to kind of re-see or maybe see again what they think they already know.”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

This suggests a way in which the work of performance serves as a research method, encouraging a probing of sorts in the ways student- performers and their audiences alike, understand or see themselves and the world around them. Perhaps what is most indicative of the idea of seeing oneself in a new perspective, in terms of the current ways in which Mkabayi positions herself, are her reflections about her journey from student-performer to teacher. In a manner unique from the other research participants, Mkabayi conceptualizes her 15-year career as a journey of teaching and performing, beginning with her final year of study, where she worked as a part-time teacher of drama in another faculty and then as a performer in various educational performance projects and road shows. A project Mkabayi describes in some detail is an HIV-awareness roadshow funded by the Arts Council and targeted at high schools in township areas across South Africa. She describes the work she did in this particular roadshow as rewarding but very often challenging:

“I made a lot of money from that show [but] it was such a tough crowd to play to. And god, I remember those kids were so xenophobic, it was just when all the violence started with attacks on foreign nationals. We had this one cast member and he just couldn’t catch a break, He had this heavy Congolese accent. Sometimes there were like 1000 kids watching us at one time, saying things to him...”

...and we weren't performing on a stage or anything we were just outside in the open and the teachers would disappear so these kids were just left with us so [she laughs] I've been teaching and performing for a long time, long before I made the conscious decision..."

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Consequently, Mkabayi describes how, over time, her work of teaching has led her to further review the purpose of her role as an actress as well as whether or not acting is primarily what she should be focused on. This is instead of what she describes as a more open-ended alternative of teaching students what it means to be responsive to what is happening around them in creative ways. Mkabayi shares her thoughts on this:

"I've been thinking about it and sometimes it's like, it's not small at all that I don't get to only like act, that I also get to teach. I worry that I over-emphasize acting- that we are here to create and it may look like acting in the end or not...So teach and perform because there's something there to address the crazy and the awful things happening [right now]. It's just made me so very aware of what I can do with both".

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

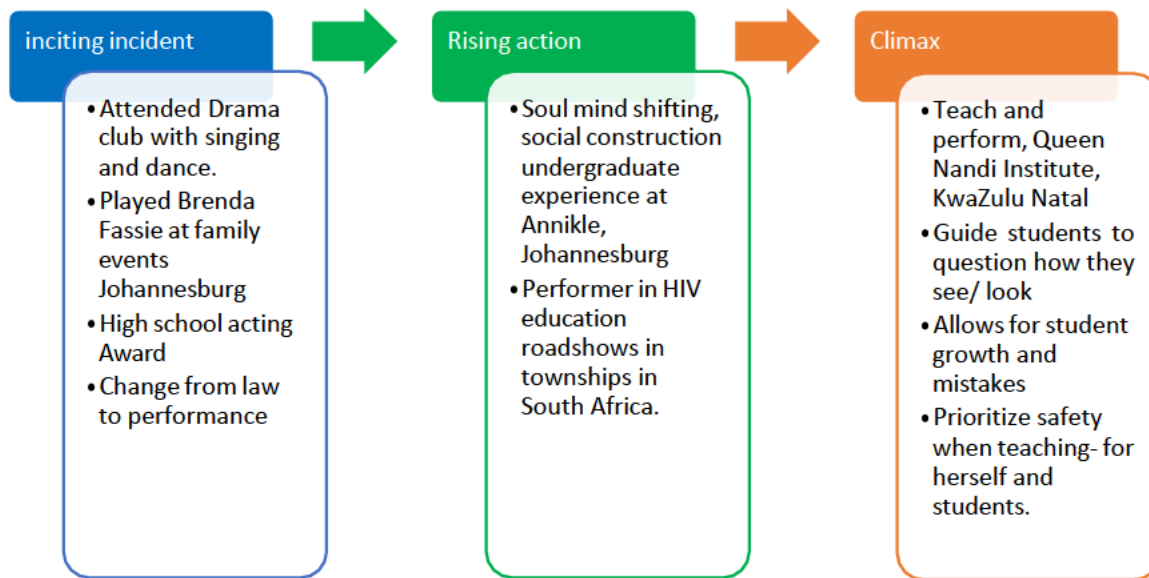
It is fitting, in moving forward, to think of Mkabayi as both a performer and a teacher. This is how the teacher-artist seems to think of herself. One of the most profound ideas that she shares, which I use to conclude, is how she perceives the relationship between performers and the audience of the production work her students produce:

"I remind my students all the time that our job is to activate people's imaginations and to ask people to think beyond what's got us stuck right now and to think beyond me as I am now but me as I would like to be. Actors remind audiences to dream again."

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Below is a diagram of Zungu's journey of continuity.

Figure 7. Mkabayi Zungu's Opening story. Past and Present. Continuity.



Having introduced the research participants of this study, and taking careful cognizance of the limitations of each interview conversation [as well as my interpretation of these] with regards to the overall depth and expansiveness of each person's story of the beginning of their theatre pedagogy careers, I pause to take stock of what we have learned thus far. All the participants are practicing theatre makers who have been students of performance studies in higher education and presently teach theatre studies in higher education institutions across South Africa. Queen Sono's journey to pedagogy informs her approach to students. As discussed thus far, Queen's ethos might be argued as well-rounded in that she endeavours to see her students as full human beings and so approaches them as such. However, her experiences are arguably also overwhelming as this approach means she often plays a complex set of roles to meet the needs of students, resulting in her feeling often both depleted and accomplished. Harriet Khoza's journey as a student stands in stark contrast to that of her students in significant ways. The notable differences include the historical absence of curriculum material that recognizes racial politics and social justice as intrinsic to how higher education pedagogy is presently understood.

As such Harriet's journey, as described thus far, has involved considerably difficult adjustments to enable her to consolidate and articulate how she positions herself as a teacher. Lindiwe Dikana's story most reveals a struggle for social justice within her pedagogy of performance, evidenced in her approach towards herself, her students, and the institution within which she works. The roots of this trajectory are evident in the story she tells of how she came to be introduced to the notion of dance performance. Mkabayi's story positions her as a "quite by chance teacher, whose undergraduate background in social constructivism can be seen as influencing her partiality towards student development and human relationships in her approach to teaching and performing.

In the section that follows the attention shifts to understanding the interview data through the lens of the research's primary questions, namely:

- How do TAs understand intimacy and pedagogy within Performance Studies?
- What are TAs' experiences of intimacy and pedagogy in rehearsal and in teaching theatre performance?
- Why do TAs experience intimacy and pedagogy in the ways that they do?

Since the intersection of intimacy with pedagogy is the primary area of investigation, the primary research questions point the investigative discussion towards a pointed alignment with that goal in the following scene.

Act 3. Scene 2: Inside the classroom. Inside rehearsal. Interaction

Narrator: In this scene, I share the experiences of Harriet, Mkabayi, Lindiwe, and Queen exploring pedagogy in their musings, with students in the classroom and rehearsals for stage productions. This theme deliberately places an emphasis on *interaction*, which is the first in the three phases of the three-dimensional space narrative analysis (Nguyen & Dao, 2019. Clandinin & Huber, 2010) of *continuity*, *interaction*, and *situation* (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002) I have selected this analysis to provide a creative, subjective yet in-depth examination of the research data. While I do not adhere to the chronologic order of the phases as described in the literature [I began with the narrating of the research participants' past and present experiences], the study analysis covers all three steps, with a focus on interaction in this segment.

As previously discussed, Narrative inquiry centers story as meaning-making that allows both the researcher and those participating in the research, the liberty to interpret and access nuances to experiences that are uniquely revealed through the imaginative process of storytelling (Maodzwa-Taruvunga & Divala, 2014, p. 1963). Based on Sikander's (2015) discussion of John Dewey's philosophy of learning as an experiential, continual and reflective, this analysis of the field texts [raw interview data] highlights the intersection of people's personal and social worlds. In the next segment (scene), we will concentrate, specifically on the physical environment of the social world of teachers. For now, however, I wish to fix our attention on how the research participants engage with students as a means of understanding and generating knowledge about theatre performance.

On the effectiveness of the three-dimensional analysis, Wang et al. (2015) state: "This approach suggests that to understand people, we need to examine not only their personal experiences but also their interactions with other people. Interaction involves both the personal and the social aspects of the experience" (p. 196).

Furthermore, the authors (Wang et al, 2015) confirm that rather than subscribing to a reductionist perception of narrative methodology as simply *telling stories*, narrative research as a discipline benefits from researchers recognising stories' diverse and far-reaching abilities. On this, Wang et al. (2015) write the following:

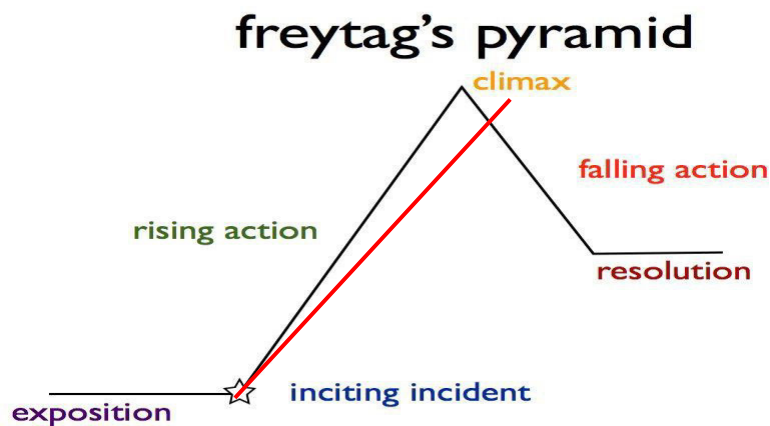
“Stories heal and soothe the body and spirit, provide hope and courage to explore and grow [therefore] the process of storytelling, a fundamental element in narrative inquiry, provides the opportunity for dialogue and reflection, each intertwined and cyclical.”

(p. 196)

Consequently, in my re-storying (Ollenrenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p.330) of the experiences of the research participants, I have further collated their data into narratives that begin with an event or moment. Each moment is significant because it launches further development of action and understanding on the part of the research participants, and their students. This is in line with another narrative analysis approach- the problem-solution approach (Ollenrenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 333)- which, represents the experiences of research participants in a literary style of story, character and plot structure. However, because of the emphasis on a *problem* and consequent *resolution*, problem-solution has not been utilized as the primary approach towards understanding the data here. Instead, the structuring of the findings into a plot like that of Freitag's (1895) pyramid in the research prologue is utilized here. The research is thus structured in a manner that presents the first three steps of Freitag's pyramid as a frame, namely, the *inciting incident*, the *rising action* [which occurs because of the former] and [where it may occur], a *climax*. I end the pyramid at the climax to avoid arriving at a conclusion or resolution. Rather than *conclude* or *resolve*, an emphasis is made on something *that happens*; a decision is made or an opportunity taken or refused, which through a series of consequent actions, culminates into the state of the teacher up to and including where the research stops. The life, teaching and learning experiences of the teachers continue, which is what the overt de-selection of a *resolution* is purposed to imply.

This divergence from presenting a *clean ending* to a plot or a finite resolution to a problem is aligned with an ethos in performance studies of the multifaceted and duplicitous nature of truth and interpretation. To arrive at conclusions and resolutions in the stories of teachers feels disingenuous and rather than risk imposing an academic (positivist) imperative to explain and predict the future actions of the research participants, I stay within the paradigm of the interpretive, leaving room for a myriad of possibilities for how the stories may continue. As such, I have constructed my own way of analysis, supported by literature and also in line with the thinking that innovation is necessary for growing the expertise of narrative research. As stated by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002), “...*With such diverse interdisciplinary applications...those seeking a basic understanding of “narratology” must forge their own construction of the inquiry procedure*” (p. 331). As such my re-storying will appear as the red highlighted trajectory below:

Figure 8. Freytag's (1895) pyramid which focuses on the **inciting incident**, **rising action** and **climax**.



In my pursuit to understand intimacy as generated within the performance studies classroom, I begin my search with what the research participants disclose about their thoughts on the pedagogy of the work they do. The writing is designed to focus the reader's attention on the story of each participant and the experiential merits thereof and therefore the bulk of the work of analysis and comparison to literature is relegated to Act 3 Scene 5. I am both surprised and delighted by the themes that emerge, including intention, authenticity and the relationship of theatre pedagogy to the lived experiences of students. I am also pleased to rename the participants, ¹⁵*teacher-artists*, as per the request of one research participant (and the agreement of others) to have the term *teacher-director* changed. In discussing the findings on teacher-artists' (TAs) understanding of pedagogy, I begin with a narrative of intention, which Lindiwe Dikana describes in her own words below.

¹⁵ Personal communication, Dikana, 2020

Lindiwe Dikana: “I like intention”

*“I’m always in process of thinking about my position and what it is really inside the work. I like intention. I think part of the work we do as artists, it can be frivolous. It can easily be done. Anyone can sing and dance without intention. So, it gives me calm to say, at least *ngine* [I have] intention. At least. It’s that thing where you come back and you meditate with yourself and you reflect. It’s kind of hard to do that when you didn’t even know why you began a thing, you know?”*

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

Intention is about direction, purpose, and motive. It is born of thought and desire, both elements of a person’s inner being. Intention is inwardly nurtured and often concealed unless a person is deliberate in disclosing it or is unable to hide it. In ¹⁶IsiZulu, the most widely spoken language in South Africa, for example, the term *inhloso* [intention] means to have an *aim* or *motive* and is synonym to the word, *isisusa*, commonly used as part of the term *isisusa ndaba*. The latter term denotes “a thing that begins or sparks an event or issue,” which most interestingly, is similar to Freitag’s (1895) *inciting incident*. In my mother tongue, ¹⁷Sesotho, *maikemisetso* suggests an innate awareness and deliberate nature in the definition of intention. It is no surprise therefore, as Lindiwe explains above, that intention plays a vital role in her evaluation of her interactions with students as well as in her privately looking back to see what can still be learned in reflection. In Lindiwe’s description of intention, the research participant identifies a sense of being grounded in one’s spirit as a basic requirement in making theatre work. The language she uses, *at least*, suggests that regardless of what else may be achieved

¹⁶ All IsiZulu terms. (Personal communication, Bloem, 2023)

¹⁷ All Sesotho terms. (Personal communication, Dhlamini Khala, 2022)

through making theatre work, the need for intention as a navigating force is essential. When probed further about her intention, Lindiwe describes “*an intention for living*”, which she explains as follows:

“It is interesting having an intention that is of living and that is for living and having to know that your teaching is coming from that intention. Whether you are teaching drama studies or any other subject, the intention is that of and for living and for me that’s the thing that pushes me into it.”

(Interview 1, Dikana, 2020)

Lindiwe’s intention for living is therefore the *inciting incident* of her pedagogical story. In other words, for Dikana, that is where her teaching begins. Part of the pragmatics of her intention is the induction of her students into a state of awareness, which Lindiwe refers to as ¹⁸*ukuvuka*—a term in IsiXhosa which means, *to be awake*. For Lindiwe a *theatre-artist*, a term she suggests I use instead of teacher-director, must possess mindfulness and an elevated sense of knowing oneself. Lindiwe sees the theatre student as one that must also be trained to become an artist who can achieve a state of being conscious of themselves and the energy they bring into any space. However, Lindiwe admits it is not always easy to lead students into a sense of awareness. On the process of encouraging this sense of alertness in her students, Lindiwe states:

“In the beginning, I felt like I was, what’s that thing when you’re waking someone up [gestures with hands to imitate a resuscitation machine] I was resuscitating them and I found I tired myself up often doing that. Just simply of going [claps her hands] ah, ah vuka! I’m not talking about you passing. I am just wanting you to [finishes sentence with hand gesturing ‘wake up’]. That has been my journey because of the work- if we take seriously the work of the artist.

(Interview 1, Dikana, 2020)

¹⁸ Interview 1, Dikana, 2020

Above, Lindiwe suggests that the rightful role and *serious* work of the teaching artist is to awaken those with whom she makes art- the students. Having established *intention* as the inciting incident in Lindiwe's story of theatre pedagogy, I turn to a conversation about how Lindiwe makes decisions, daily, from the motive of the *intention to live*. At the time of our research conversations, Lindiwe is in a teaching job for just under two years at her institution. The two years include a 10-month national Covid-19 lockdown from March to December 2020. As earlier mentioned, unless probed to do otherwise, Lindiwe is prone to referring to in-contact theatre work that happened *before* Covid-19. The initial questions also pointed to experiences of work that happened before what we experienced in the lockdown. As such, she describes an example of a scenario where she arrives in the classroom and realizes that students are disconnected from the material she has been tasked with teaching.

I use the term *tasked with* because for much of Lindiwe's teaching experience, at the time of our conversation, she is stepping into courses that have already been designed by others at the institution before her arrival. This means, whilst there is some room for creative freedom, much of the set curriculum in the dance and theatre classes is determined outside of her contribution. That is, until the moment she is required to step inside the classroom and teach. Below she states:

Lindiwe: *What I do when I go to the classroom and I realize ukuthi, actually, le situation le [this prescribed material] has nothing to do with the people that are in front of me, it still exists in a desert somewhere, so what can I do here? It's to be as present to what is happening in the now as possible. And I do a lot of revealing of ourselves or moments of learning to talk about ourselves and within ourselves rather than do the work of analysis...*

Narrator: *"[Interrupting] Can you unpack that a little bit? So, learning to talk about ourselves instead of doing analysis- what does that mean?"*

Lindiwe: Usually in Drama we do this thing where we give the students plays or we make them make plays and then we ask them to talk about the plays, in analysis. So, it's always this analytical eye even if in practice we have embodied it already. It's cause these institutions want us to talk about ourselves for us to exist in them, rather than to be ourselves.

Narrator: Wow! Oh, my goodness, wait! So, you say these institutions want us to talk about ourselves as a way of being in them rather than us just being?

Lindiwe: Yes, so what happens is that we keep talking about ourselves instead of being ourselves. And not even talking about ourselves from where we are from...

Narrator: Where we are from as in with a story, a history, an origin, yes?

Lindiwe: Yes, but we keep talking about ourselves from where we are now- now in this space where we don't belong. So, we keep doing this work of dislocating ourselves from ourselves for the institution."

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

By *ourselves*, Lindiwe refers specifically to black people- both students and academics teaching and learning within higher education institutions. Since I have communicated that my research is specifically within a South African context, I assume, that her context is always South Africa and she does not indicate the contrary. And so, naturally, our conversation weaves in and out of issues present in the South African political landscape, one of which is the sense of an ongoing struggle to belong for black women academics (Maodzwa-Taruvunga & Divala, 2014, p.1970), in the traditionally Eurocentric-oriented institutions of higher learning across the country. This is also referenced in the recent history of #FeesMustFall (Hlatshwayo et al., 2022) protests across universities in South Africa. As a consequence, much of Lindiwe's responses are located within that broader political story of education.

In fact, all of the research participants delve quite deeply into the context of higher education as an environment which both enables and inhibits the kind of pedagogical work required in theatre studies. For now, however, the attention remains on stories from within the theatre and performance classroom, specifically.

In the above-extracted segment of the conversation with her, Lindiwe argues that being present as a black person in the academic institution results in a struggle to be authentic in the expression of one's own identity. This is a struggle that Lindiwe suggests is invoked by the academic space itself. Furthermore, what is interesting in Lindiwe's observation is what she suggests is the method through which the institution, as a space, engenders a type of angst within the black student. Lindiwe argues it is through *analysis* and through requiring students *to talk about* themselves rather than *be* themselves. This theatre artist strongly believes that to consistently be distracted with talking about oneself and to be invested, through language, in explaining the legitimacy of one's existence in a space to an invisible audience, is to inadvertently dislocate oneself from the lived and embodied experience of actually being in a place. In simpler terms, it means while a person may be in a place, if their focus is on what others perceive of them being in that place, they cannot fully appreciate being there nor take in the embodied knowledge emerging from their presence in the place.

Lindiwe's distrusting emphasis on language and the audience is not without irony given that in theatre and performance, students are taught to seek out and maintain a relationship with an audience, in the broad but distinct *language* of theatre. This language often involves having a dramatic command of the spoken word (amongst other learning objectives). Nonetheless, what Lindiwe's comments suggest is that the institutional space [university] engenders in the black student, a state of *constantly* performing for an audience and, in essence, never going *off-stage*.

This proposes a sense of hyper-performativity as an element of the lived experiences of students of colour in the university space. This is something, which as an educator, Lindiwe actively chooses to disrupt. Below is her account of what I have come to understand as, Lindiwe's *strategies for disruption*:

Lindiwe: *So, what I do- I minus things. Ndithi [I say] okay, we're not going to deal with that thing. But we're still going to do this. Like for now, we're dealing with post-coloniality... And I was doing Kafka's Ape. But then I did not teach them the reading. I'm not teaching reading as a thing that you need to do to answer another thing.*

Narrator: *Answer a thing like a test or an essay?*

Lindiwe: *Yeah, reading is a process that you encounter as you are also researching. It's a continuous process of knowing. So, what I did is that I said to them, let's look at Kafka's Ape. Let's not then do the analysis, let's think about yourself as a post-colonial subject. So, I'm gonna tell you that you are a post-colonial subject. Tell me about yourself, how do you move? How do you navigate yourself in the world? So, people create things and then say 'Mam, I feel like I don't know. It's as if sometimes I'm hesitant...'. Mna ndithi [I say] 'Okay, so talk about the human condition of someone who is hesitant neh? Beyond analyzing it, what is it? Think about your movement.' So, this is what I do. I get these exercises that are not gonna deal with the student as an object of investigation rather than of them experiencing themselves. Most of the time it means I don't do certain things.*

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

Lindiwe's strategies for disruption involve the excluding or *minus* of things within the curriculum that she identifies as contributing to the dislocation of students as described earlier.

Lindiwe also uses reading as a knowledge-generating strategy and a component of an ongoing process of research rather than as a skill to be tested in a comprehension test. This research participant discourages the *analysis of situations* in learning and instead encourages the experiential *exploration of conditions of being* through embodiment. Lindiwe also works to centre, engage with and reveal the self to the student in the learning process as a means of locating the student within the work- this is again done to oppose dislocation.

The discussion on post-coloniality, above, becomes one in which we also discuss other [Western] historical movements and schools of thought, significant in the conceptualization of what currently exists as theatre studies curriculum at Lindiwe's university. For the most part, Lindiwe is unconvinced that what she and her colleagues offer students is sufficient for the student living in contemporary South Africa. She expands on this and invariably touches on the challenges of working in the higher education environment: Lindiwe states:

"...sometimes I wish we could have this conversation. How do I tell my colleague that lento ondicelayo iviolent [what/how you are asking me to teach is violent]? You are teaching nothing! You are teaching people to do the thing that they know how to do even better than you. You are isolating them so they can feel like they are away from themselves, like they don't already know what ritual and theatre is so that they can have this identity issue that you want them to have constantly in this institution. These are strategies of self-alienation. But I can't say that. I don't know how to say it."

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

The above statement is a comment on how Lindiwe's experience of institutional culture affects her interpersonal relationships with colleagues. Quite alarmingly, this research participant describes the *analytical* way in which she feels required to engage with students as violence.

In addition, for this artist, some parts of the curriculum itself are problematic. She argues that it “...*makes no sense to teach the [South African] black student about postmodernity*” (Interview 2, Dikana, 2020) for example, but she prefers to rather “...*deconstruct the linear narrative structure*” as well as “*deconstruct narratives in terms of form*” (Interview 2, Dikana, 2020). This aligns with the call for the decolonization of the curriculum with the higher education sector- an issue into which we delve in greater detail, in a section following this one. In simpler terms, what is pedagogically more acceptable to Lindiwe is to facilitate a dismantling of the perception that story is limited to a logical structure. This is through experimentation with *how* [form] to create theatre as well as the undermining of any limitations that ideological perceptions present to creativity and innovation.

Lindiwe works to ensure her students search and investigate, “...*like how a dog traces things. It smells the situation to find the things that make its body go, uh, uh, what is this?*” (Interview 2, Dikana, 2020). To create new forms of staging as well as telling their theatrical stories, Lindiwe encourages her students to do tracing investigations, following their intuitive knowledge in a search for source materials from which to begin work. Lindiwe identifies this process of tracing and deconstruction as ¹⁹“*ukufukuza*,” a term she acknowledges as originally framed within academic language by African historian and academic, Nomalanga Mkhize. Lindiwe describes her communication of this concept to students:

“I look at them ndithi [and say]no! Instead of going what is my identity [as a character], let's do the thing that makes you ask what is your identity [as a person]. So, let's fill the gap of that historical consciousness, right? You know certain things so don't feel like you don't know or you don't know yourself or you don't know imvelaphi yakho [your history]. You know.”

(Interview 3, Dikana, 2020)

¹⁹ John L Dube Lecture 2020 – Professor Nomalanga Mkhize, January 7, 2021
<https://www.cihablog.com/john-l-dube-lecture-2020-prof-nomalanga-mkhize/>

Lindiwe sees this approach as invaluable when creating theatre with black bodies. For Lindiwe, the theatre student must “...*not trust being taught*” (Interview 2, Dikana, 2020) but should expand their learning through their intuitive investigation. She perceives the theatre student as the primary investigator using the tools she is provided with in performance training to test and generate knowledge through the process of *ukufukuza*, described above. Lindiwe discusses how she uses performance training for her teaching intention:

“And training for me- now I’m speaking as an artist- training for me does that thing where you learn that. You learn how different things teach you different things about yourself like we do in life when we [hand gestures curve and bend like a snake] navigate. A student may learn, for instance, ‘when I do this [gestures with her right arm reaching across her upper body to touch the bottom of her neck, pointing], I can’t touch my neck,’ for example. Now that is an inquiry. We deal with memory in the body and how you are relating to your own body. And the thing of memory in the body is the thing that allows you to understand, okay, this neck still belongs to...Zwelakhe, a random name, so how can I bring it back to Mna, to me?”

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

For Dikana *ukufukuza*, and therefore the learning, is embodied and is generated completely through the domain of the body. This includes resurrecting memory that yields knowledge in and through the body. The work of making theatre with students in higher education is also a political endeavour in Lindiwe’s eyes, hence her articulation of a vision of ongoing black-on- black engagement.

Lindiwe believes this begins with an acknowledgement that the theatre curriculum in higher education, as it currently stands, needs to realign itself to address what is relevant and life-giving to the demographic of the student body. On this Lindiwe makes the following comment:

“If you want an intentional curriculum then... into ebeyenzakala izolo [What we did in the past] we could come back today and say, we don’t want to teach that... It’s also part of not being comfortable in the thing that you are doing. Isn’t it we also want disciplines to do that? That they are okay to question themselves. For disciplines to think it’s okay to question themselves...it’s that discipline conversation that decolonization is talking about...”

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

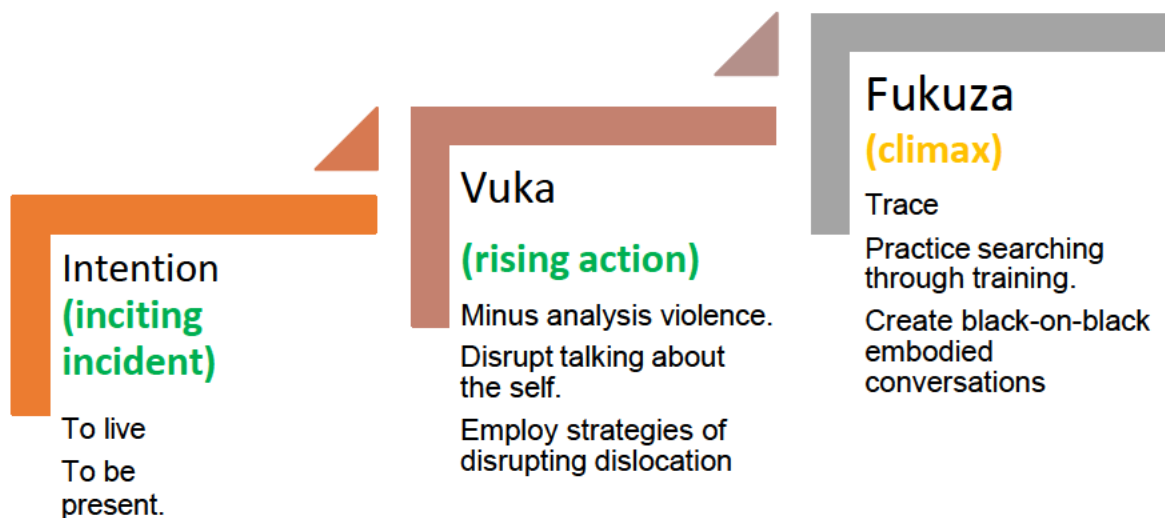
Since decolonization emerges as a common subject in the teaching experiences of three research participants, it is addressed also in the following section. Here, I conclude Lindiwe’s story of pedagogy with this remark she makes:

“I’m in that thing of wanting to have a black-on-black conversation rather than a black-on-black conversation that deals with someone else’s things which then makes us these people who can’t really do umsebenzi ofuneka ubuyenzelwe [the work that needs to be done] for their own communities because they are dealing with justifying themselves in other people’s spaces”

(Interview3, Dikana, 2020)

Below, I construct a diagram of Lindiwe’s pedagogical process, demonstrating the ideas I have identified as key components of her pedagogy.

Figure 9. Dikana's story of Pedagogy. Interaction.



In continuing the discussion on TAs' understanding of pedagogy, I discuss my conversations with Mkabayi Zungu in the following segment.

Mkabayi Zungu- “Create from a space that acknowledges all of you”

“Be your best reviewer, be your own cheerleader- that’s what I try to teach my students. And then create from a space that acknowledges all of you- the good, the bad the beautiful because it’s real and it’s you. Make sure the person you are being, is you.”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Authenticity and self-acceptance are my interpretation of what Mkabayi understands as the genesis of creative pedagogy. The research participant admittedly draws her students towards seeking those two virtues in her teaching. In my own understanding, what is closest to authenticity, in Sesotho is ²⁰*bo nnete*, directly translated as *truthfulness*. This informs my suspicion that Mkabayi’s ethos is as complex to explore as it is simple since truth- in the academic sense- is multifaceted while in other spheres of life, it is less complicated. On the other hand, self-acceptance is something I interpret as involving two terms in Sesotho. The first is acceptance, which in Sesotho is *kamohelo*, and the second is *self*. Again, another word meaning truth is invoked in my Sesotho translation of self, *motho ka sebele*, which directly translates into *a person in their truest sense*. As such, my understanding is that Mkabayi encourages a kind of genuineness in her pedagogical work. In IsiZulu, the term is more interestingly framed as a verb- ²¹*ukuzamukela*, with “uku” denoting action, “to do”. That is especially fitting as a translation since, for Mkabayi, authenticity and self-acceptance are embodied and achieved through actions. Mkabayi believes this is achieved in the determination of students, to be fully human in the making of their theatre work. Most heartening is that Mkabayi advocates for this acknowledgement of authenticity as the starting point of creativity, even for herself. On this, she states the following:

²⁰ All Sesotho terms (Personal communication, Dhlamini Khala, 2022)

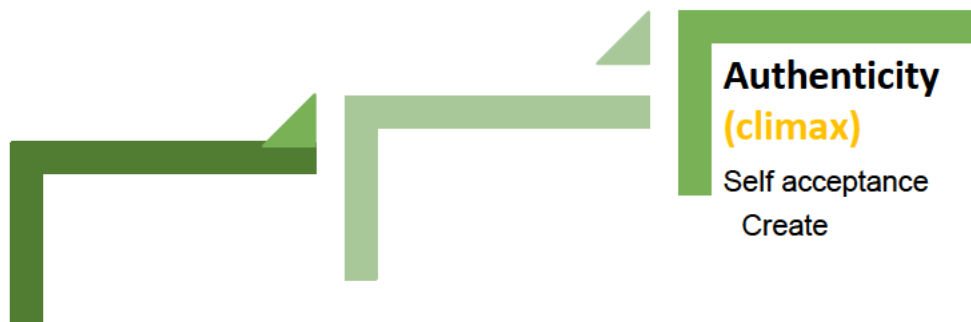
²¹ All IsiZulu terms (Personal communication, Bloem, 2023)

“I think I try to work with the integrity of who I am, my subjectivity, I don’t deny that or hide it. I make it quite plain to be seen by students then when I come from that place then they are not shocked or forced, at least I hope not. I hope they can see it as my stuff even if they feel they can’t openly challenge me which I hope my students can...”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

In the above comment, Zungu points to her perspective on the actions that bring about authenticity. I pause here to remind the reader of my decision to align the stories of the research findings with Freytag’s (1895) narrative structure. Below is a depiction of Mkabayi’s pedagogical pyramid. Since authenticity is what Mkabayi feels students should strive towards, this learning objective is thus structured not as the inciting incident [where things begin] but as the ultimate goal (the climax) as depicted below:

Figure 10. Zungu's pedagogy climax is authenticity and self-acceptance.



Inspired by the inciting incident, the *rising action* usually follows however in this case, we are revealing the pedagogical pyramid story in reverse, beginning with the end. It is also the research participant’s assertion that hiding one’s subjectivity is obstructive to good teaching.

Instead, the explicit revelation to her students of her opinions, political influences and religious inclination, to cite a few examples, is important. Mkabayi believes this openness is necessary so that the teacher's subjectivity becomes *known* within interactions in the classroom. Mkabayi sees this transparency as helpful in developing the students' recognition of the difference between what the teacher, as an individual believes, and the knowledge students are learning. I interpret this as a way to destabilize power in the classroom by positioning the teacher as a person with a subjective opinion rather than as the knower of absolute truth.

In a further step to encourage critical thinking and reflection, Mkabayi supports the transferring of embodied knowledge, acquired through the real lives of students, onto stage scenes and characters. The teacher-artist believes this is essential to enhance the skill of acting and increase the quality of engagement stimulated in theatre audiences by presenting performances that feel real. Mkabayi recognizes this as embedded in the seminal theory and genre of realism according to Constantin Stanislavski, a Russian theatre performance thought leader whose work is featured in theatre pedagogy worldwide. Remarkably, while Mkabayi admits Stanislavski's theory is "*the most regurgitated work in theatre curriculum,*" the TA also declares that it is "*...there for a reason. It works*" (Interview 2, Zungu, 2020). As a result, Mkabayi's pedagogy includes the *borrowing* of the actor's lived experiences to the fictional life of the character they play. This is done to make scenes on stage appear and feel relatable- for both the theatre-maker and the audience. Mkabayi explains the following:

"We borrow from ourselves to let the character live. We borrow from people we know, scenarios we've been a part of that's how we make it look and feel real for the audience and look and feel real to ourselves as actors. It feels real because it comes from real fights, real talk conversations, real love, we constantly borrow for the real and in a way someone else might say that's how we come to question the real."

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

In the same spirit, there are two additional elements of everyday human experience Mkabayi feels students are required to navigate- vulnerability and power. Aligned with my motivation for the study, Mkabayi feels this is specifically about the relationships simultaneously present in the live theatre experience- in both audience and performers. The research participant admits that as a teacher of performance, she holds an alert consciousness of power, which she says is an awareness she brings into any teaching space that she occupies. On this Mkabayi says, *“I am very aware of power and I know that’s what I bring into a space- an awareness of where the power in the space sits”* (Interview 1, Mkabayi, 2019).

When asked what role she understands power to play in the classroom, the teacher artist explains that while power relationships are everchanging, the more consistent hierarchical structure is the teacher-student relationship in higher educational settings. Mkabayi argues this has a significant effect in mediating the intricate process of negotiating power in play-making processes. Mkabayi’s description of her classroom strategies points to the ability of theatrical activities such as song, laughter and play to stimulate cohesion and harmony so that power and vulnerability, seemingly opposite, co-exist in the theatre performance learning space. On this Mkabayi comments:

“I think that’s why I like quietness and singing and jokes. So often in drama prac [practical class] someone will do something funny and that will create a breather or a common humanity moment, an equalizer to say we are in it together...the safety in the place between being vulnerable and powerful is held in things like the spontaneous laughter, the singing students do together and then that quiet that falls on us after someone has done something profound or even awkward, that ‘we are human moment’, I think that’s how power is being shifted around in theatre.”

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

A thought-provoking comment Mkabayi makes on the origins of the intersection of vulnerability and power in theatre pedagogy, exposes her comprehension of theatre performance as a vocation. Rather controversially, she points out the *necessity* of both power and vulnerability as the essence of the theatre relationship. Mkabayi argues that an actor's desire to perform is a response to an internal need to be seen and having the presence of a witnessing audience serves both the purposes of being entertained on the part of the audience and that of being validated on the part of the performer. In fact, Mkabayi is of the view that- in the advent of a myriad of social media performances, where people “*don't get to see each other, not really...*” and where “*...we see versions of each other*” (Interview 2, Zungu, 2020), theatre disrupts *fake* performativity to create space for more trustworthy experiences of witnessing each other as people. Mkabayi explains this notion further by asking me to consider the performer-audience interaction:

“What is at the core of having an audience give you their undivided attention? A need to be seen. And that's about insecurity on one end but it's about power on the flipside...So on the one hand you want to be paid attention to as an actor on stage which says narcissism narcissism narcissism. And on the other hand, there's a vulnerability about that need to be seen so it's a dance between power and vulnerability.”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

While Mkabayi's comments may seem somewhat contentious, her argument about the presence of power as an element to negotiate amongst student-performers (and their audiences) is acceptable given that power is generally a key component in group work relationships in university settings (Volet & Mansfield, 2006). In this regard, theatre production pedagogy is no exception.

What is special, however, is Mkabayi's nuanced understanding of power in theatre teaching as well as the strategies the research participant uses to regulate the effects of power amongst students in the theatre classroom. Mkabayi continues to share her strategies for building commitment to sharing power and responsibility below. The TA describes the often-challenging process of creating a working contract (Volet & Mansfield, 2006, p 341) with her university theatre students, who for most of their theatrical curriculum, work in groups. On this, Mkabayi says the following:

"...We all create a contract to be safe with each other. That's how I work with my students. We create a working agreement of how we will create with each other, if it's in class we might ask the class representative to lead that conversation but if not, if it's a production, as a director I will lead that but it's a joint and explicit agreement and it involves everyone, how everyone wants to be treated and is committing to treat others."

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

Part of building a *collective* commitment to shared responsibility is crafting relationships that make the learning environment safe for both displays of power and moments of vulnerability by the participants of the learning themselves. It is improbable that Mkabayi's teaching principles can be successful outside of a space where students feel safe to play, search and explore the embodied, engaged and critical pedagogy that is theatre performance. Our conversations show that Mkabayi understands safety intricately.

When Mkabayi is first introduced, one of the things demonstrated as central to her teaching ethos is the safety for artists to make mistakes. Indeed, in engaging with Mkabayi the word *safety* comes up a considerable number of times. So much that it is highlighted to me as the issue with which Mkabayi is most preoccupied. The focus on safety in the classroom makes sense if we consider that authenticity is what Mkabayi identifies as her most valued principal in pedagogy. It seems logical that it is where a student feels safe that her authentic self might best be cultivated through learning and play. Below is Mkabayi's pedagogical pyramid. As discussed up to now, while Mkabayi believes the teaching and learning space must be safe, she thinks this is achieved by acknowledging and negotiating power rather than ignoring its consequences. This is done in conjunction with nurturing vulnerability. Mkabayi also perceives theatre's key role as allowing both performers and audiences to see themselves and aspects of their lived experiences in new ways. The ultimate achievement, according to Mkabayi, of how and what she teaches is to encourage self-acceptance and authenticity. All of the above is reflected in Mkabayi's story of pedagogy, below:

Figure 11. Mkabayi Zungu's story of Pedagogy. Interaction.



Harriet Khoza - “I’m interested in how emotion does things to bodies...”

“I’m interested in emotion. I’m interested in how emotion does things to bodies, between bodies and how that allows for the performers to be in state- ‘in state’ rather than just going okay, ‘I’m going to be ‘in character’. So, the characterization always comes out of what kind of state and then what kind of emotional thing it is that’s happening there.”

(Interview 2. Khoza, 2020)

Harriet is fascinated by emotions. As stated in her own words above, she cares about the different ways emotions affect relationships between people (bodies) and how emotions stimulate characterization work in actors. In Sesotho, ²²*maikutlo* is the word for feelings and therefore that is my first reference in understanding what Harriet is so intrigued by. The connotation in *maikutlo* is that while the outward actions of a person may be read as an indicator of their emotional state, *maikutlo* [feelings] are understood as essentially internally experienced. This makes *maikutlo* intimate. This means, more often than not, *maikutlo* are required to be disclosed by the person experiencing the feelings, for others to know of their existence. This is not to imply that some feelings cannot be recognized via observation of facial and bodily expressions alone. However, it is to emphasize that even in the case of bodily expression, feelings must be somehow articulated from the *inside out* to be known by people outside of the person originally experiencing them.

Since emotional expression forms part of my conceptualization of intimacy, I consider Harriet similarly interested in the intimate aspect of performance pedagogy. Indeed, Harriet describes the exchange between performers on stage and their audiences as a kind of shared intimacy:

²² All Sesotho terms (Personal communication, Dhlamini Khala, 2022)

“...there’s an intimate relationship between what the performer on the stage is doing and this sharing moment with the audience.”

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

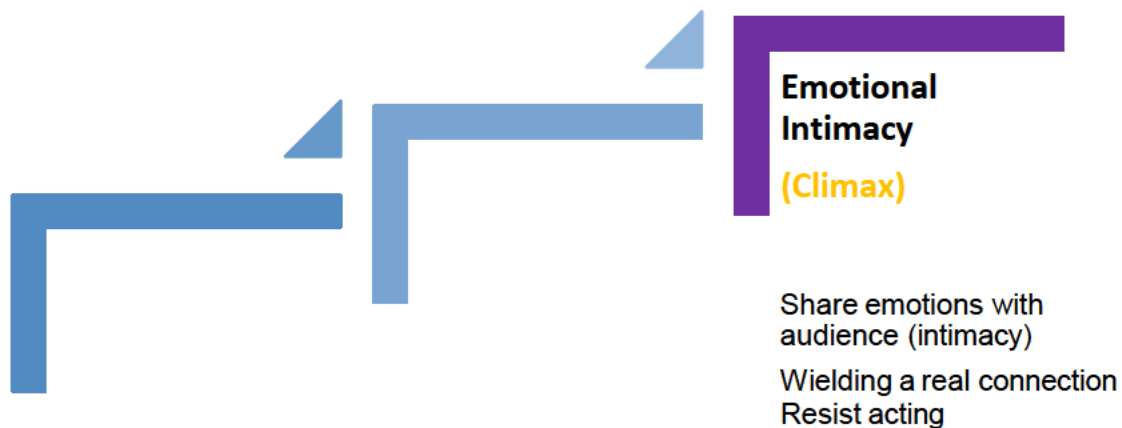
The intimate interaction between the performer and her audience is one Harriet believes is most valuably understood as a moment of sharing, suggesting a kind of distribution of emotions. This is further reflected in how Harriet encourages her students to explore character work- from a state of emotion. Rather than put on a show, as Harriet describes later, she encourages her students to strive to build connections with their audiences, starting with a commitment to exploring the given emotional state of a narrative moment. Harriet believes emotion serves as the connecting agent since most humans- performers and audiences alike- experience and are familiar with feelings. It is for this reason that she remains most captivated by emotion- because emotions build theatrical relationships. Harriet also accepts as true, the notion that the embodied study of emotions enables students to understand and thus communicate the wide range and layers of complexity in human experience. Below Harriet shares her perspective on the notion of acting in performance pedagogy:

“In my kind of work, I am asking them [students] to not act. I’m always trying to challenge the thing of acting! Like ta-dah! Yeah? The showing part. Which is kind of just for the audience, like here is the show! But make space for the student who is then actually navigating very human, very convoluted, really intricate things, yeah? Things that are like in this full, full character place but for that to not be like an internal thing only. That it’s for your audience, as well. I often kind of say “it not just for you” but I’m always struggling with that language because it’s really about the sharing with the audience and that as you [students] are discovering and where you become transformed into being able to be, you know, like somebody else and perform somebody else’s stuff- that is then the thing to be shared with the person who is sitting there [the audience].

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

Given that the sharing “*with the person who is sitting there*” happens as the result of the exploration of emotions, it is reasonable to say that the climax in Harriet’s performance pedagogy is the shared moment of emotional exchange between the student-performer and audience. As such, similar to Mkabayi, Harriet’s pedagogy pyramid begins *with the end in mind*, but also with the aim *to not act* as a step towards the intended connection with the audience, as depicted below:

Figure 11. Khoza's Pedagogy- the climax is the sharing of a character's emotional state with an audience.



Harriet’s emphasis on the immediacy and authenticity of the moment in which the live, theatrical moment takes place, further supports my interpretation of her pedagogical climax. In our interview conversation, the research participant states the following:

Harriet: “...when you are there with the audience right, you know, whatever is happening between you- you are wielding a moment there. You’re not [just]doing a rehearsed thing so even when it’s gesture and action and whatever you’ve prepared. It’s this that’s happening here, right now between me and you...”

Narrator: ...that’s important.

Harriet: Yeah, yeah a very distinct kind of connection in the space and I think it’s very much also in my training, you know, influenced by that Grotowskian kind of stuff and even Artaudian kind of stuff, probably because of my performance art practice as a performer- is that I am always interested in what is happening right now between you and the person you are performing with. So, this moment is a real thing.”

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

Below, Harriet reveals that her motivation in making theatre work involves consistently finding ways to ensure she generates *real, in the present* encounters between performers and audiences. This TA accredits her appreciation of the experience of such encounters to her training at university.

“At Pentworth we were constantly playing with the present moment. Constantly playing with, you know, ‘this is a play, we know we’re doing a play, you [the audience] know I’m doing a play. you’re [audience] here, I’m here. What’s happening in this moment while we’re playing?’ So, there was always that kind of way of working and making that’s interesting-how to constantly find ways to navigate how that real interaction is taking place.

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Having identified the climax, I transition to a focus on Harriet’s reflections on rehearsal pedagogy that took place in a production she created with her students. At the time of our conversation, Harriet’s most recent theatre work with students was a Verbatim theatre production called ²³*Sentiments*. Verbatim theatre, according to the National Theatre website of the United Kingdom is explained as “theatre created from interviews collected with real-life people about an event or a subject. Those real-life people are then portrayed on stage by actors” (Blythe, 2015). Verbatim theatre calls for an intimate kind of exploration, on the part of performers, of the lives of a selected group of people. From the interview process to the portrayal of the interviews as staged narratives, sometimes even beyond, a Verbatim theatre performer is intricately connected to the character they portray as a consequence of working with the original person from whose stories the character is devised.

A complex genre for professional performers to engage with, Verbatim theatre with student performers presented interesting challenges for Harriet, who initially worked as the director and facilitator of the performance but unexpectedly became part of the performance in a more vulnerable and intimate way. Astonished by Harriet's choice, I asked the teacher artist to discuss the decision-making process for selecting Verbatim as a genre. Harriet's process below is indicative of her approach to theatre pedagogy and theatre-making:

Harriet: *In our first conversation, it was actually just a check-in, so in the very first moment of going kind of "Okay hi everyone, we're all here. What's your name? What have you come into this room with today? How are you feeling in your body? If you had to describe yourself in a colour, what colour would that be? You know, that kind of stuff*

Narrator: Yes

Harriet: *So just a check-in. And as we went around the circle, just finding out how people are. I think it was only one person out of the cast of six people that didn't mention something about a grief that they were you know busy with or a loss or something. It wasn't all about death. So, there was one student who had had a death happen who was thinking about death and I think they had done something in class in that kind of mode of thinking about grief so because I was also interested in looking at abortion...*

Narrator: *mmm, yes, the loss there*

Harriet: *Yes, so something felt like it was connecting. So, it started off like this is something that these students are themselves working out and thinking about so to immediately go 'how do we approach this?' and do it in a very kind of intimate way but also allow the students to have some distance to their own story and the story of grief. That's the first thing that we discussed. It was like okay can you consider finding somebody that you can interview who is going to in some way, allow for you to have a sense of either mirroring what it is that you're thinking about for yourself about loss or reflecting it or representing it in some way so that it's not you but it resonates.*

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

²³ A pseudonym is used in place of the title of the production.

The above conversation reveals a principle of inclusivity in Harriet's theatre-making pedagogy. From the onset, the set-up is a circle in which every person sees every other person in the cast. Harriet requires each person to respond to a set of questions about themselves to introduce themselves to the group. Harriet refers to this introduction of each cast member to each other as a "check-in"- a term with which is familiar and understood to denote the orientation of student performers into the rehearsal space. The term signals an intention to fully come into a space and an acknowledgement that one's engaged presence is required in rehearsal. It is in this activity, of bringing oneself into the space, that Harriet's cast also introduces what each of them brings into the space by way of their thoughts and feelings. Loss is identified as a common, *connecting* idea. Immediately after identifying the emotion, the TA begins to carve out for the student-performers a theatrical method to balance exploring a deeply emotive theme and contain the feelings and experiences that doing the work is expected to evoke.

For Harriet, the students must have a way to distance themselves from the exploration of this deep emotion that is loss. As a result, each student is tasked with finding a person whose lived story of loss they can portray theatrically. The story of the rehearsal process makes Harriet's experience ideal for the research I am undertaking given that ultimately the insertion of the TA's own story into the final production took place quite by happenstance when her students asked to include into their final production an interview they had conducted with Harriet as a teaching exercise. As a consequence, Harriet's process for this performance resulted in her thinking through the rationale for the adjustments she had to make to ensure students worked appropriately within the genre since her role became both that of teacher and performed character. Harriet and I found many similarities between what I conceptualize as intimacy produced in theatre pedagogy and Harriet's reflections on the process of creating *Sentiments*.

A common research question was how theatre directors and teachers, respectively, hold and manage strong emotions as well as assist performers to manage the multitude of responses- emotional and otherwise- that arise from working with self-disclosure and vulnerability. Verbatim theatre is perhaps the most explicit example of this. Harriet reveals the practical activities she utilized to contain the emotional upheaval she anticipated would surface in the process.

Harriet: *The one thing I was trying to name there [in Sentiments] was something that I am interested in seeing how it can be developed. It is the idea of practices to actually ritualize the centring of the performer and the performer's awareness of where they are before we begin.*

Narrator: *Okay*

Harriet: *So, I was doing that with the cast I was working with when Covid happened and they were all recent graduates but like that is something that I didn't get to see through to the end of that show but is something that I am interested in continuing to do because that's what came out of Sentiments. Can our practice hold how we enter and how we leave the space of performance if we have very specific kinds of rituals that we perform when we enter a space and the way we leave the performing space? So, my question is around the ways that we de-role that hold you as the performer and asks you as the performer where are you, what's happening with you before you go in. In Sentiments I said as you're going in to remember where is your breath and to use your breath to be able to calm yourself. So, we were working with breath but in that very ritualized space of saying okay we're going to check in and we're going to check out so we've got a very clear way of arriving into the piece and getting back out of it.*

Narrator: *And you're doing it together so the holding isn't just done by you as the director*

Harriet: *Yes, yes*

Narrator: *So, people are self-holding and people are also holding each other so the group becomes its own container in a sense*

Harriet: *Exactly. So that the actors are more aware of when it is that things are happening for them and when it is that things are happening outside of this room but affecting this room*

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

The use of breathing exercises was one way amongst many theatrical techniques that Harriet utilized for emotional regulation. The research participant also enlisted the use of object work. Interestingly, her reflections on why objects were useful in *Sentiments* also led the teacher-artists to reflect on another production entitled ²⁴*Things in Wonder*. In this production, one of the student performers Harriet worked with was required to play the role of a rapist. It was this experience that evidenced another valuable example of the use of objects.

Harriet's account indicated that while her knowledge of the theatrical use of objects was helpful in *Sentiments*, it was in the earlier production that objects proved most theatrically effective as a device to enable the exploration of extreme emotions. On that, Harriet says the following:

“So, the thing that I like about objects is they allow sometimes that when the character has to emote something that is like you know just extreme, heightened emotions, the object is the thing that lets the emotion come out. So that became the tool, literally, that we used with Things in Wonder and then the relationships with the objects allowed us to be able to say okay cool, how do these tools allow for you as the actor to be able to do this thing that needs to happen here, to share this craziness, the ugliness even for the character that has to rape somebody and then for that to then allow you to be able to access that person and then for you as performer to also work out if its centered in the object and how you use the object, does that help you in de-roling to be able to let go of that character. I was interested in trying that in Things in Wonder. To ask how the object then helps the actor to not only be able to let the stuff out they can use to characterize but also to be able to use objects to try and put down the character and be able to walk away from it.

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

²⁴ A pseudonym is used in place of the title of the production.

Harriet highlights the need for student performers to learn how to both deeply access, and fully release the emotions that a character feels to best portray the story of the character. In Harriet's example of *Things in Wonder* the performer she worked with was to portray the act of sexually violating a woman and, as Harriet explains it, that involved *letting stuff out they* [the student] *can use to characterize*. The object, therefore, becomes a way to *find the character* as well as a physical place upon which to project the *craziness* and the *ugliness* of the character's emotions. Interestingly, for dramatic tension, the emotions were from the point of view of the character who was the perpetrator of rape. As such, the *real* moment was a moment guided by the director and, to use Harriet's words, 'wielded' by the performer to share his interpretation of the feelings of the character with the audience. Harriet expressed she was intentional to facilitate an equally effective way to *put down the character* or *de-role* [get out of role]. This disconnecting from the character's ugliness was also facilitated through the performer's interaction with an object. This time, however, to allow the performer to release what they had embodied to portray the rape scene.

The necessity of releasing the emotional baggage that comes with exploring character is another factor of Harriet's pedagogy. As a teacher-artist, Harriet reports that she often uses music as a device for exploring, sharing and containing intense emotion. In her words, "*Music also really helps a lot. Music has this way of kind of saying here is this intense stuff and dissipating it then containing it*" (Interview 2, Khoza, 2020). Harriet's desire to assist students with emotional regulation extends up to how student performers manage the emotional residue they may be left with once the curtain call is made- essentially, *getting out of role* as earlier mentioned. However, Harriet and I agreed there was a dire lack of tutelage on skills helping performers to do so. Below an extracted part of our conversation highlights these concerns:

Harriet: So, we've had multiple conversations with different people over different kinds of capacities about the lack of training in terms of being able to do that work of distancing yourself from a character or you know, being able to...why is the word leaving me? To step out of the role...um the word has left...but to be able to step out and the kind of...lack of techniques that we have...

Narrator: Yeah, de-role is the word?

Harriet: Yeah, de-roling.

Narrator: I've always had an issue with how little we do that. The number of activities you can think of to do... also how shallow...

Harriet: Yes!

Narrator: How shallow our efforts to de-role are. That's been something problematic since I can remember

Harriet: Absolutely. And so, for me also, you know, you learn and you see that it's also not just about being able to de-role. Because we think of de-roling as just being able to step out of the character but it's also about...how is it that we can leave the stuff that comes up and comes out of you as the performer. So, your [own] stuff that comes out when you are in a role when you are in a process. When you are, you know, dealing with emotions that have to be embodied and stuff that is yours [as a performer] that comes out of that. That isn't part of the rehearsals at all. That isn't part of anything that a director or a script has written down and said this is what must come out of the actor for this thing. It's your [the performer's] stuff because stuff is always happening with people. [And if] you act and then it comes out, you know. Like with this one student who was experiencing all of these losses over the same period we were doing work on grief. It was just like, "What do we do with this?"

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

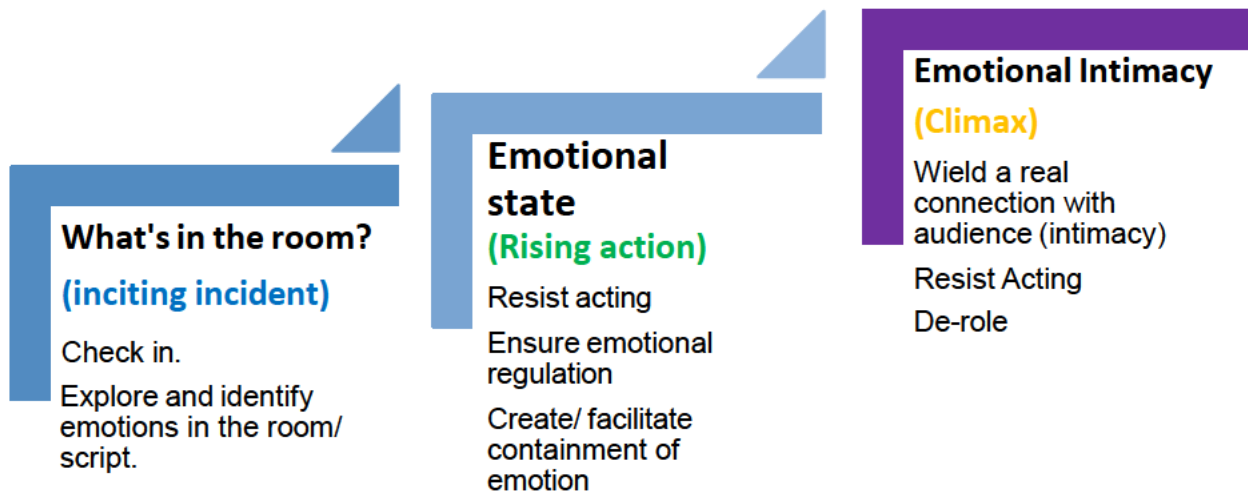
Since performance work asks the performer to use their own body to do work, it is inevitable things will *leak* from the lived experiences of the person into the work of the stage performer and vice versa. Therefore, for Harriet equipping performers with ways to distance themselves from the characters they play creates the boundaries necessary to curb the unintended effects of intense emotional investment as well as ensure the overall well-being of student-performers.

What is also important to note in conversations with this TA is that even while Harriet played the part of director in productions, the responsibility of the teacher to skill students with tools to enable them to navigate theatre pedagogy, shows up consistently- specifically in rehearsal when students are trying out several ways to portray what will be the final performance for an audience. Harriet's experience supports the conceptualization of theatre- making in the academy as the combination of teaching and directing, even while the term has been exchanged for teacher-artist. There is a facilitation of learning that intersects, perhaps even supersedes at times, the artist's art and prioritizes the well-being of the student. This is something that Harriet and I agree is not guaranteed in the myriad of professional spaces of the performance industry. As such Harriet observes, "*there's still quite a significant place of like being a teacher inside the place of being a director...that's [the roles are] very connected in that way*" (Interview 1, Khoza, 2020).

In completing Harriet Khoza's pedagogical pyramid, as depicted in the figure below, including the focus on helping students engage emotions in ways that allowed both exploration and care, feels imperative. This and the *check-in* technique that formed the guiding principle in Harriet's first meeting with her rehearsal cast. Harriet also uses scripted work, as evidenced in her discussion on *Things in Wonder*, thus firmly establishing *what's in the script* is one of the initial steps of Harriet's theatre production process and forms part of what I frame as Harriet's *inciting incident*. De-roling is included in the activities of the climax as well as emotional regulation in the rising action.

In the section that follows, I re-story Queen Sono's field texts to interpret a pedagogical trajectory that incorporates her teaching ethos and values, as I have done thus far with Lindiwe, Mkabayi and Harriet.

Figure 13. Khoza's story of Pedagogy. Interaction.



Queen Sono- “I care a lot and I give a lot.”

“I find myself having to hold a lot and wear different hats in the space whereby I become an educator, I become a mother, I become a sister, I become a motivational speaker, I become a therapist and it’s not easy...”

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

Queen values caring for her students and this is evidenced in the multiple roles she is willing to play even while it is difficult to do so. Earlier, in Queen’s introduction story, the teacher artist shared how she felt responsible and called to “*develop young people*” (Interview 1, Sono, 2020) as well as to change their lives. In Queen’s experience, because her students come from “*compromised, disadvantaged backgrounds*” (Interview 1, Sono, 2020) they also come to class requiring more than education but also a “*place to heal*” (Interview 1, Sono, 2020) from the challenges of their everyday lives. The question of whether to focus exclusively on the required pedagogical objectives of her work or to try and assist students with their personal challenges, in addition, presents Queen with a deep ethical dilemma that is pervasive, as evidenced throughout our interview conversations. It is this predicament that drives Queen’s passion for teaching and similarly informs her methods of pedagogy. Amid the socio-economic problems her students face, and by extension, the mental health strains thereof, Queen believes she should provide all she is capable of giving to address her students’ needs.

Below, I extract a part of our interview conversation that expands on (from ACT 3 Scene 1) and highlights the seriousness with which Queen regards her interventions into a pedagogy that does not adequately address the greater social needs of students:

“...yes, we’ve got a curriculum to push but we are pushing a curriculum with human beings who have got serious challenges, you understand? And sometimes it’s difficult because if

I don't take that role of motivating the child [student] or liberating them in some way or tapping into the therapist in me or the mother in me, it could be a dying moment for a student or a turning point for this particular student so I care a lot and I give a lot."

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

Queen's pedagogy is primarily one of care. Even while she teaches theatre performance in principle, her pedagogical aims are rooted in care work. She describes her pedagogy in four steps: "*I create, I engage, I reflect, I release.*" (Interview 2, Sono, 2020) and, as with the three other research participants, my first impression of what Queen means is best understood in the first language of my interpretation. To create in Sesotho is ²⁵*ho bopa*, which is associated with the Biblical orientation of the genesis of all things seen and experienced. In other words, *to create* refers to the physical manifestation of something conceptualized in spirit and mind. Accordingly, what I understand Queen to mean is that she [and her students] conceptualize theatre in their hearts and minds and then proceed to *make real* what they have imagined.

In Sesotho, since there is ²⁶no single definitive word to encapsulate the meaning of *engage* outside of associating the word with a context, I understand Queen as referring to a deep sense of study and participation in embodied work within the context of the classroom. Reflection in Sesotho is associated with the term, *seipone*, which denotes a mirror thus pointing to the act of seeing oneself. Finally, *to release* in Sesotho is *ho lokolla*, meaning *to set free*. Thus, in my understanding, Queen's pedagogical aims in the classroom are towards making new theatrical discoveries, born of the hidden realms of spirit, reflection and imagination. Secondly, Queen's students are encouraged to learn in ways that allow them to see themselves and then set free any perceptions that perhaps no longer serve their growth.

²⁵ All Sesotho terms (Personal communication, Dhlamini Khala, 2022)

²⁶ Personal communication, Dhlamini Khala, 2022

This interpretation is plausible given the many roles Queen acknowledges she plays- the mother to care, the motivational speaker to encourage as well as the therapist who makes room for reflection about one's lived experience. And it is their lived experiences that Queen expects her students to bring into the theatre classroom. The research participant's reference to *real people* and *real- life experiences* is a common thread across her responses in our interview conversations. From Queen's perspective, the student's everyday life necessarily forms part of theatre pedagogy since for most of her students, the challenges of their social circumstances are inescapable, even while they are in the classroom. As a consequence, Queen encourages her students to apply what they are learning in class to their lived experiences:

"...it's all about being to engage from a human level, being able to reflect within the different theories that we use but also I encourage the students not to use the theories as they are but to link them with our real-life experience, real-life situations."

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

For this teacher-artist, play is the methodology that allows students to explore their feelings about their lived experiences as well as allow for reflection. Concerning time for reflection, Queen highlights the consequence of working in a way that interweaves education with addressing whatever social issues emerge in the learning. Queen reflects as follows:

"There is actually no time to process things. I mean the only way that holds me within the kind of work that I do and the unexpected that could happen in my class space whether it's an acting class or applied theatre class or children's theatre, is that I use a lot of reflections and I encourage students to connect with current affairs and social issues you know. There is no time to process."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Ironically, Queen's identification of a lack of time to process indicates that what she feels is an essential aspect of pedagogy, is missing. *Processing* here is about taking in and reflecting on what you have learned, which takes the time the TA identifies as a scarcity. As a result, the TA is forced to ensure that part of her pedagogy somehow takes place. As such even her choice of play as a teaching method is based on the idea that embodied play generates knowledge that allows for several learning objectives to happen simultaneously and in ways that intersect:

"I use a lot of play. It's all about making and creating and using imagination and so, if you find me in the space, you'll think I'm one of the students playing with them- that's how I approach my teaching. I don't call myself a lecturer. I am a facilitator, that's how I define myself and how I describe my teaching. I use play as my teaching tool because it's relatable to me and relatable to the students. I need to meet them halfway. Play makes teaching easier and it makes teaching fun because it's all about the doing, it's all about expression, it's all about reflections so because I approach my work like that, a lot of it is about being able to engage from a human level."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Additionally, Queen's view is that the best way to build meaningful relationships, that recognize the 'human level' is through psychoeducation. While this integration is not explicitly prescribed in the theatre studies curriculum, Queen includes it nonetheless for the value it brings. This research participant also emphasizes the importance of making the teaching space a safe one in which trust can be generated. On this, she states:

“I create a safe space and platform for people to just be. So, my classes and my engagement with my casts and with students in class are more intimate because I create a safe space and trust. I build relationships in the whole process of the work that I do. My teaching style is not all about curriculum...curriculum just guides me. We do a lot of psychoeducation but playfully. I use that in all my classes because that’s the way that I find I am able to connect with real human beings and real people.”

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

By psycho-education, Queen explains that she refers to the post-graduate training in psycho-drama that formed part of her Master’s degree pedagogy at Annikle. She describes her experience as a graduate theatre student as follows:

“Annikle’s theatre and therapy course cracked me. I cried. I reflected a lot- in my journal. I reflected in the space with other fellow practitioners and classmates at the time. I think it was my journey at Annikle and those critical reflective classes- it was liberating, it was beautiful it was healing on another level, I really enjoyed it- I think also that’s why I’m aware that it [psycho education] works,”

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Indeed, Queen is so convicted of the impact of psycho-education that she is determined to venture into a career as a drama counsellor shortly, to explore what she believes to be her true calling:

“I’m pushing to get my license to practice because I think therapy is where I need to be for me. Teaching is a skill and it’s something that comes from within and it comes from my family but my gift is to be a therapist.”

(Interview 2, Sono, 20

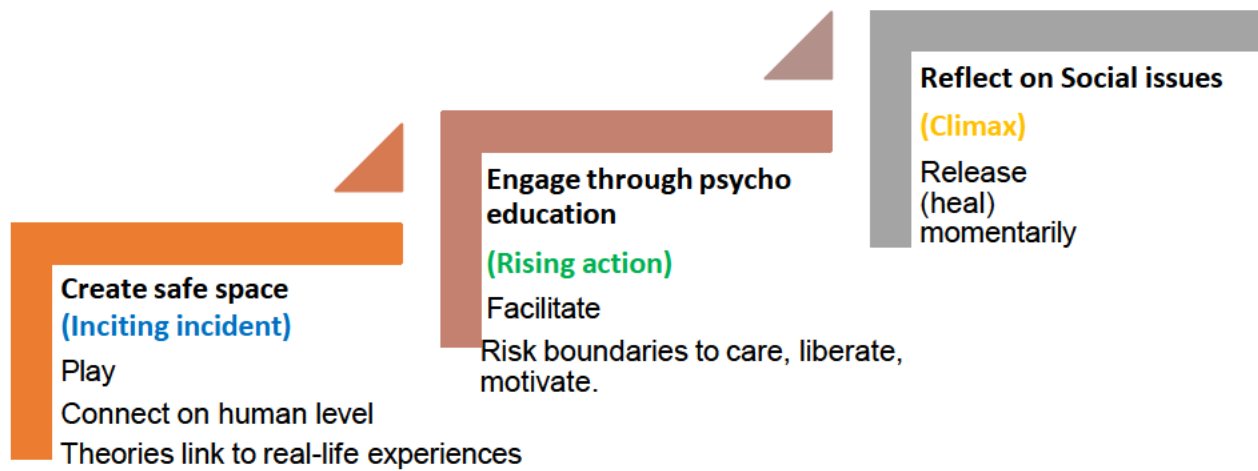
Considering the above statement, it is understandable that care plays a central part in Queen's pedagogy. Furthermore, the insistence that care and her calling form part of how the TA shows up in class and her relationship with her students is something interpreted as falling profoundly in line with the research's conceptualization of intimacy. Another important admission Queen makes that points directly to this inquiry on intimacy's significance in theatre pedagogy is that keeping boundaries between what is personal and what is academic is difficult when working with emotional content. Queen describes the difficulty of such a scenario:

"I don't feel comfortable with all these boundaries and philosophies that make teaching so uptight and so uncomfortable and I think that's the biggest challenge in our workspace whereby you're dealing with training artists, people who are very emotional beings and they willing to express and go deeper with their stuff for example but there's no room for that. So sometimes I risk, I break the boundaries. I go where I need to go. If the students need a mother, I will be a mother for that moment."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

What is clear is that while, for Queen, some circumstances call for interventions beyond what only teaching can provide, she is acutely aware the interventions are momentary and not meant to stand in for long-term solutions or therapy. Her switching of role from teacher to mother, as cited above for instance, is done so to immediately address what manifests itself, in the moment, as she engages with her students. Below, I construct a pedagogical pyramid that reflects Queen's pedagogy of care. In thinking about Queen's pedagogy, it seems reasonable to assume that reflection and release would be at the end of the pedagogical process and also that creation and engagement would happen simultaneously, hence depicted in two steps rather than only where the inciting incident would be.

Figure 2. Queen Sono's story of Pedagogy. Interaction.



In Act 3, Scene 3 that follows, intimacy and theatre pedagogy are analysed through the third aspect of the three-dimensional narrative analysis method: *situation*. The teacher-artists' experiences of *higher education* in a physical and social context are discussed.

Act 3. Scene 3: Stories of Higher Education. Situation

This next section covers aspects of the research interviews that are about the professional theatre industry and higher education, each as a space and a context within which the TAs have participated in the making of theatre. These experiences fall under the term *situation*. In line with the three-dimensional approach of narrative analysis, situation and space are essential elements to analyze because an examination of space assists the researcher in identifying context-specific details about the research participants' stories. Consequently, I take a closer look at the experiences of the TAs in their universities and theatre-making projects to meet the requirement of studying "...*specific situations in the storyteller's landscape, [including] the physical places or the sequence of the storyteller's places.*" (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 339).

Race and racial politics within the university space make up the theme that is most dominant in this segment. The theme emerges from interviews with all the TAs while the call to decolonize education and estranged relationships with colleagues as a result of the politics in the space emerge as themes similar for Mkabayi, Lindiwe and Harriet but not for Queen. Both Harriet and Mkabayi share experiences of isolation and imposter syndrome as disturbingly prominent and Queen shares Mkabayi's sense that higher education does not sufficiently appreciate nor accommodate theatre performance as pedagogy nor is there adequate and appropriate support for the staff who work in the arts discipline.

Sexuality as a performed identity is touched on as Harriet shares a unique account of having to 'dress' the queerness out of her identity to fit into her environment. Queen's story reveals a consistent pattern of exploring motherhood in her career and acting roles, whilst Mkabayi and Harriet highlight differences from the university in their work as educators in other spaces. Once again, the aim is *not* to position the experiences of the TAs as presenting problems to which there are solutions.

Therefore, the climax does not stand for the definitive nor the ultimate responses that the TAs have towards their situations but rather as an indication of where the TAs stand, about their institutions and higher education as a sector, at the conclusion of my research interviews. I begin with Queen Sono's story of motherhood as a recurring motif in her performance career in and outside the university.

Queen Sono- “...those roles are following me, the queen mother and the fairy godmother who does magic and transforms people’s lives”

“The funniest thing is I found myself all the time, like when I did Cinderella twice at the Golden theatre, I was the queen and the fairy Godmother – I doubled [played two roles]. So, the queen was very protective as a mother and as mothers do. I found myself on the royal side of things, the privileged side of things and my son who was the prince character wanted to marry Cinderella and all that so that reveals mother and motherhood. And the fairy godmother created magic for Cinderella to go to the ball and I think that’s where I find myself, those roles are following me in my life, the queen mother and the fairy godmother who does magic and transforms people’s lives. Yhuuu metaphor, metaphor, metaphor! Yes, yes, yes! So, I find myself in a quick realization as I’m talking to you...”

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

Having already observed Queen’s deeply felt sense of responsibility to young people in her work at Belrange University (BU), it is easy to understand what anchors her within higher education despite her repeated expression of how “*really, really tough*” (Interview 2, Sono, 2020) it is to work in that environment. Queen demonstrates a resolve that is fueled by a profound sense of duty to care. However, what is revealed in the above statement, as well as the epiphany Queen has at the moment she tells this story, is that even in the professional acting industry, the fictional role of mother, guardian and carer ‘follows’ her. While this is in line with Queen’s perception of herself as an empath, it also suggests she is type-casted [a term used to refer to the repeated casting of an actor into similar fictional roles] often.

Queen's interpretation of this occurrence is that since she desires to educate and empower young people, she attracts that kind of work. Indeed, her career before teaching theatre at BU involves in-depth work in the educational theatre industry. On this Queen shares the following,

“Before Belrange, I did a lot of children’s theatre and road shows. Also, I did Applied theatre and we were using puppetry to educate children to speak out against abuse. I was in the industry for five years and in the last three years, I found myself doing a lot with a marketing company that I was employed with. The National prosecuting authority was funding the anti-child abuse project and I was playing those roles [scriptwriter, tour manager, actress] for the marketing company that won the bid for the project. This project was more about awareness for children to say speak out against abuse and you’ll be safe.”

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

The moral responsibility to address the agency, or the lack thereof, in children facing the threat of sexual and emotional abuse, aligns with Queen's expressed intention to empower the youth. Once again, the teacher-artist takes the responsibility of playing multiple roles in a marketing company that she admits was ill-equipped to do the work of the project bid they were awarded. Consequently, Queen works in multiple roles to ensure the project is a success. It is here that Queen discovers a deeply held desire to work with the youth in ways that are more ethical and begins to seek ways to improve her skills. Queen shares her thoughts about the experience:

“It went on for three years and it was lovely because I was the creator and I could do it very well but the reason that made me leave the work is we had to hop in and out of one school at a time, five schools a day. When we leave the kids, they want to talk to us but we need to move on to the next school. We can’t interact or engage. It was all about targeting a certain number of schools per province.

Some learners are crying while we are performing, and the schools are phoning us as actors to say, "Hey we've got cases here, how do we go about it?" We had a prosecutor and social workers on site but I got frustrated as an actor because the learners did not want to talk to the prosecutor or the social worker, they wanted to talk to us the people who gave them the information. Hence, I said Joh, I'm leaving this space now. I wanted to get more education on how to go about and hold it professionally, where I am able to have knowledge if I do this kind of performance and give information to the next person so that the child still trusts me and they can be protected against all odds. The child abuse project- that's what I enjoyed most hence I am an activist and an applied theatre practitioner to date. Social issues are a big thing to me, they touch me deeply, they take me back home."

(Interview 1, Sono, 2020)

The reference to *back home*, which connotes a way of giving back to communities similar to the one she grew up in, is a large part of Queen's teaching ethos. As discussed in Act 3, Scene 2, Queen approaches her students as *fully human* rather than as *only students* to teach. As such, being motivated by an ethos of giving back to a community of humans translates into students even outside of her classroom space regarding her as a guardian and mentor. In our discussion on higher education, Queen explains feeling that she does not have a choice but to address the needs of students because she can relate to them. On this Queen says the following:

"So, you can imagine, the majority of students come from remote areas with a lot of challenges in their communities and their households, single parents, some of them are orphans. Because of the kind of clientele that we get here, I must be honest that especially as black women in my faculty, for example, a lot of students relate to us."

I mean they talk to each other and I just find another child come to me and say 'Mama Queen, re utlwile kawena [Mama Queen we heard about you from others], can I talk to you? There's no one I can talk to.' Then I have to listen, you know because there is a lot I can relate with and they can relate to me. So, it's quite challenging gore [that] our fellow colleagues, white people, they are here to do the job and it's all about the job but for some of us black people, it hits us. It's so close to home that we cannot ignore the challenges that students have."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

It's so close to home serves as evidence of an added sense of empathy and obligatory need to respond to students' challenges that Queen believes white people do not feel because they do not relate to the problems of the students in the same *close-to-home*, intimate way. As such this research participant views her race, gender and background as directly contributing to making heavier the burden of responsibility to respond to students' needs. Queen also believe that it is because her white colleagues are insulated from relating to what students are going through, that they fail not only to respond but to recognize what students need:

"It's not easy. And our white colleagues, for example, are not helping the process. It seems like we all forget this university is for people. We need to hammer it into them you know that 'you are going to make it, you need to believe in yourself.' We need to motivate them. And we need to make sure that they work harder, ten times more than a white child, for example, who is already privileged. So, it's really, really challenging, it's not easy."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Queen's belief in care as part of pedagogy is so strong it comes across as an expectation she has of all her peers despite her admission that it is very difficult to attempt to build up the self-esteem of students, cater for their needs as well as teach them.

However, her identification of sharing a common racial identity and socio-economic background with students as a determining factor of the kind of pedagogy students will receive suggests a known and expected disparity between the level of commitment to care of black lecturers and white lecturers towards students in her university. Outside of this, Queen is not overly keen to discuss racial politics at her university. Since it is not specifically what I aim to research, I explain that I am neither requiring nor averse to issues of racial politics emerging from our conversations. We are short on engaging about race largely because Queen explains she has not experienced racial discrimination in any form at her institution since the commencement of her employment. However, her below observation suggest she doubts that her experience of joy at Belrange, as a black woman, is the norm. Queen says she is aware of other black women staff being “*looked down on*” and “*ill-treated*” by white co-workers. She says:

“...I must be honest being a black female I am one of the few, ke na le 15 years ke sebetsa Belrange [I have worked at Belrange for 15 years] and it’s been a lot of joy. I didn’t have many other challenges like other people who are not well received and they [white colleagues] looked down on them. I’ve always been an inspiration to white colleagues to say, ‘Yoh, you bring so much. You bring yourself into this work, how do you do it? I haven’t been ill-treated.’

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

While racism is not part of Queen’s employment experience, another kind of marginalization concerns the TA. When asked to give an overview of her institution’s regard for theatre education, in general, Queen says the following:

“The first thing that comes to mind is fragmentation and a lack of understanding of who we are, understanding our craft and a lack of respect for what we do. So always, every time we need to adapt and adjust to a certain framework that is designed for the sciences. There is nothing that is originally formed to say this is to serve the arts and this is a model for the arts. And it really is unfair.

It makes us feel unheard, not valued but when things happen, when there's a festival or event, then they want us. Ba re-user [They use us.] So ra-usiwa, literally [We are being used, literally] Ba re tsaya cheap maan [they think very little of us]"

(Interview 3, Sono, 2020)

Queen feels the institution readily uses artists as entertainment at events but is disrespectful of the academic value and place of the work of art teachers and their disciplines outside of notions of what the university perceives as usefulness. She describes a sense of feeling under-appreciated, on her part and on the part of others, which I assume she knows as a result of shared conversations with colleagues. Queen feels art pedagogy and its teachers are forced to fit within teaching and learning frames designed for the sciences. This is bothersome to Queen because she views theatre education, indeed the arts in general, as having a lot to offer higher education by way of addressing the emotional and psychosocial needs of students that other kinds of curriculum do not. Queen's view of the university is that there is misplaced prioritization of the business of academia over the academics of academia. Put more simply, Queen's experience is that she and other staff are overwhelmed with what she terms her institution's agenda of research targets, workloads and community engagement which she feels leaves little space and time to build meaningful and collaborative relationships with her peers. She also describes a lack of community, in the organized sense, and sees this as detrimental in that it creates a competitive spirit amongst colleagues. This teacher-artist feels that a competitive environment, especially within the theatre and arts discipline, is more harmful than helpful. Queen says the following:

"...the university has created this toxic business mandate ya gore [that] we must do the work no matter what. We are exhausted into research community engagement. They are pushing their own agenda. We can hardly have conversations amongst ourselves gore ha

Ke batla go explora nto e so so, ke ba kene bana bale classing [I want to explore a certain idea and I will challenge and excite the students in class with it] or ke lo sheba cast yaka ke ba etsise exercise e so so [or I want to engage my cast in a particular exercise]. We don't. Queen is existing there doing her own specialization subjects and ke tshwara so e kare [I hold on tightly like] nobody can be able to do what I'm doing...the university environment is not a community. Actually, it even feels like we are competing."

(Interview 3, Sono, 2020)

Queen's comment on the university as a competitive rather than community space further reveals the TA's preference for a caring environment. And despite the challenge of being overwhelmed in ways Queen feels do not allow for the nurturing of creativity, she concedes that there are ways in which she and her colleagues resist the "fragmentation" she experiences as a very present culture in the university space. She explains how they find ways to work together:

"In drama, we are trying our best, I mean we share. It's four of us, two white ladies and one other black lady. Ga ngata ha re tswa mo classing re a bua [often when we come out of class, we quickly talk], today mathird year [today the third years] are on a roll, they did this and this, another colleague will say, yooh, ke tlo go e tsaya, ka go tsaya approach ya gago mam [I'm definitely going to try your approach Mam] or I'm going to do this exercise le bona [I will do this exercise with them and see how it unfolds] re bone e unfolda jwang. So, we have found our own way of coexisting and partially collaborate and share what we do in our own spaces. But it is not enough. It is really not enough. We are just individuals floating- there is no sense of community within the faculty, within the departments or the programmes. I know gore deep down it's not the way I understand how things should be."

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

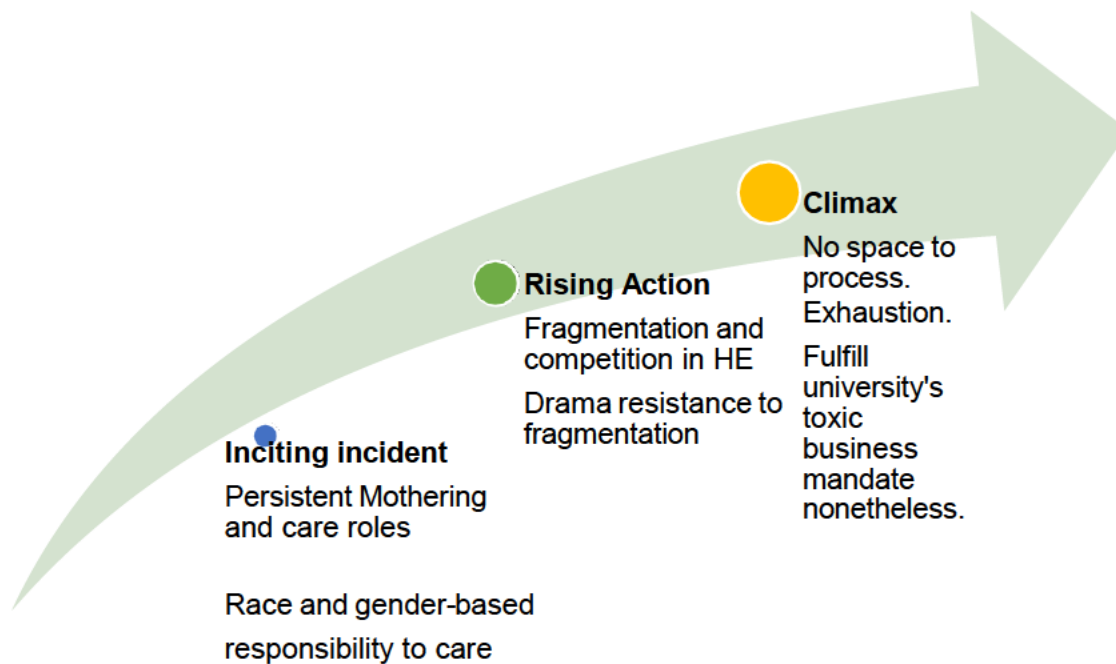
Ultimately, Queen resigns herself to the conclusion that the priority of her university is for staff to fulfil a mandate for the institution. This means that oftentimes it can feel like there is no regard for staff wellness on the part of the university leadership- only the drive towards achieving the university's goals. Queen sees this experience as directly linked to her performance as a theatre arts teacher. The TA laments the lack of space and time to process her feelings as well as those that come up for students during the pedagogical engagement with theatre. Given the array of emotions that can be awakened in rehearsal and the playfulness of dramatic play, Queen's concern is that the strict focus on university goals, despite the intense socio-economic pressures on students and consequently the dual responsibility to address the needs of students while still delivering a quality curriculum, makes the environment one that is less than ideal for theatre studies and its participants- teachers and students alike. Queen concludes:

“At this point, we are just doing our qualifications because the university expects us to be doctors and professors, ke mandate wa bone [it's their mandate]. We do it for the status of the university not for us... (fades out, sounds dejected) yah, yah. We don't have space. For me I think that's the biggest challenge in our workspace whereby you're dealing with training artists, people who are very emotional beings and they are willing to express and go deeper and I also have my own stuff for example so there's no room for that- I must deliver the curriculum and get out of it. I process when I get home if I get the time to process otherwise I just get a shutdown, I take a bath and then I sleep. And start all over again tomorrow.”

(Interview 2, Sono, 2020)

Below is a depiction of Queen Sono's story of higher education. Following that is an account of my research interviews with Lindiwe Dikana.

Figure 14. Queen Sono's story of Higher Education. Situation



Lindiwe Dikana- “I realize everyone is dying here. Wonk’umntu.”

“I was thinking to myself, who would want to hold this grave? As their own? Ndathi [I said to myself], it’s because people have invested themselves and they have gained from that. But for me, I have not. I don’t wanna invest my twenty cents in this grave that you have gupa-d [dug up] yourselves. Off course you’re gonna say we’re all in this in the same way but you’re not hearing what I’m saying. I am saying I don’t want to be part of this. But you are telling me, ‘... be part of it’. So, you have built empires and you built your knowledge and you built yourself out of this dysfunctionality. That’s why you can claim it and want to be next to it. I haven’t built anything out of this dysfunctionality and I don’t want to build something out of this dysfunctionality. What happens to people like me then? I am not here to point fingers. I realize everyone is dying here. Wonk’umntu [Everyone] Everyone is dying so I am not gonna point fingers. The only thing I’m gonna ask is who is holding everyone that is dying here?”

(Interview 3, Dikana, 2020)

In Act 3, Scene 1 is Lindiwe’s sobering confession: *I’ve become part of the machine of death and very heavily*. Through that section, I discussed how Lindiwe felt that, by working within higher education and teaching theatre performance in that context, she had inadvertently become a part of the death (rather than the nurturing and development) of the theatre student. This is similar, she felt, to what had happened to her as a theatre student at university. In this scene, we expand on the notions of death that Lindiwe associates, not just with Drama and theatre pedagogy but with the institution of higher education at large. In the above statement, Lindiwe describes so succinctly what bothers her in the higher education space that in our actual conversation it comes forth from her like a torrent of deeply felt panic.

For this TA, her university is a grave build of dysfunctionality and all who buy into the dysfunctional culture are implicit in its upkeep and insidious nature. Lindiwe consistently describes a sense of being both an insider and an outsider in her academic community. On one hand, she identifies the mechanisms upholding the status quo (of death) as anchored by those who have worked for many years in the institution and are therefore compelled to continue to sustain it. On the other hand, Lindiwe laments the lack of leadership to care for the staff who have no choice- in Lindiwe's view- but to maintain a system that both feeds (literally and figuratively) and harms them.

Understandably, it creates feelings of anxiety for someone as new in her career as Lindiwe and given her commitment to intentionality, to discover that the academy is no different in how it treats students in the present from the unpleasant way in which she experienced it as a student. And that it appears as if no one amongst the staff and students of higher education is left untouched by the death the teacher artist perceives as taking place.

Wonk'umntu is the exclamation that is most disturbing since it implies that for Lindiwe, there can be no intervention for the level of crisis her institution faces because no one operates outside of the death trap. For Lindiwe, death is also manifested in what she views as stagnation in the curriculum, which she contests fiercely. While she views her interventions into the said stagnation as potentially transformative, Lindiwe cites the disconnected ways in which the teacher artists in her department work as a part of the reason she feels unable to fit her unique pedagogy into the existing paradigm.

"...Why are we as lecturers not having a conversation, why are we not going into the studio and creating with each other so we know what our rhythms are? Not this thing of you telling me what you've taught for the last twenty years when I wasn't here. I don't learn like that. Because you're just talking to my head, essentially, in a discipline that

should be about what we can embody. My pedagogy is not just for my institution. When I think of myself as a teacher I don't think I see it here."

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

As an embodied pedagogue, Lindiwe's ethos is centered in practice as the premise from whence theory is born. As a teacher-artist, she speaks emphatically through gestures and bodily movements, even in our interviews, which makes her words much more emotive. As such, when she describes, below, how she spends most of her time at her institution, *doing calculations*, instead of practicing her pedagogy, her frustration at the situation is palpable:

Lindiwe: *I thought I would come and teach at this institution. I thought I am gonna come and kuzosetyenzwa [there will be the making of work]. Uyayazi cakusetyenzwa, ²⁸cakumsebenzi kokwenu [like you know when there is a traditional ceremony at your home], for example, there is an energy of ukusebenza [working together] because everyone has an intention.*

Narrator: *What are you doing instead?*

Lindiwe: *I'm doing a lot of calculations.*

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

I interpret *doing calculations* to mean having to be strategic in navigating university politics, rather than doing the work of thinking creatively and collaboratively as an artist and teacher. Below, we discuss how having to *calculate* even the most ordinary discussions with colleagues leaves Lindiwe feeling like she cannot be awake to respond to what is happening outside of politics at any given moment. The work of calculating keeps her *dead* rather than *awake* to what is happening outside of whatever political issue she is distracted into circumnavigating. Below she continues to share her feelings:

²⁸ Here, Dikana makes reference to the double meaning of the word *umsebenzi*- 'to work' and 'an ancestral ceremony'. The latter has embedded in its meaning the implied obligation to work collaboratively as a community.

“I feel like I need to calculate how to, and when to. It’s calculating living and calculating expression. It’s like don’t do this one, don’t say this today, say this tomorrow, especially now when we’re having meetings on Zoom cause now you’re not just disrespecting me, you’re disrespecting my family and my space so I can’t now go from work and just say okay ndizakulibala [I’ll just forget work] and be home but I’m continuing. It’s now become part of my living, the erasure, the dysfunctionality. And it should not be part of my living. I don’t want it to be part of my living. So now you are making this teaching thing a dream- because I can’t be awake”

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

We continue to discuss what Lindiwe describes as the psychological and emotional effects of a persistent awareness of political dynamics that are not ever explicitly declared but viscerally felt to be overbearingly dominant. This, Lindiwe explains, sets the tone for the behaviour and rules of engagement, particularly in gatherings with colleagues within her school.

Lindiwe: *Even ke ngoku I don’t know what I should say or should not say even in meetings sometimes cause I don’t know which truth we are dealing with here.*

Narrator: *That’s quite powerful, ‘I don’t know what to say because I don’t know what truth we are dealing with’. In other words, I don’t know what conversation we are actually having.*

Lindiwe: *Exactly.*

Narrator: *Because we constantly have multiple conversations in these meetings so then you’re responding to something else or you know that you could be read as responding to the hidden conversation so then you hold yourself back.*

Lindiwe: *That’s the violence. When a line manager will look at me and say, ‘Guys, let’s talk.’ I’m like you want me to say something but you don’t want me to say something at the same time. At the same time.*

Narrator: *Yep, yep, yep. I resonate!*

Lindiwe: *I'm not sure how to navigate that dilemma, in all honesty. That's my position in almost everything. I don't know how to navigate that dilemma. Like, if you're not coming to me already open, what do you want me to do?*

Narrator: *It also puts you in the awkward position then of thinking, '...if they're not coming open then I must find ways to close myself as well so that I don't come open'.*

Lindiwe: *That's the violence*

Narrator: *So then before we've had the conversation we have both had to go do things to ourselves and then come and have it? So, then who is really having the conversation? It's no longer me, it's a closed-up, guarded version of me.*

Lindiwe: *Then why are we having the conversation? I'm still stuck there mna. I hear policies. I hear everything but I can't move from there, in all honesty, because [even if] I think, okay dying is also useful, I think but some deaths make things disappear. When you're not dying to become but you're dying to disappear- that is a problem.*

Narrator: *That is erasure*

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

Perhaps it is needless to say that this conversation proved to be highly illuminating about intimacy and connection in generating pedagogy because, as evidenced above, at some point, Lindiwe and I were speaking in such a way that we were able to complete each other's thoughts. So similar were our experiences of having to navigate through insidious, conflicting political agendas in the workplace, that the connection we formed was also about recognition and resonance. However, in recognizing what Lindiwe spoke of so acutely, I realized I had already sensed what she spoke of, even experienced it myself in my own institution. Until our conversation, I had not interpreted the experience as a cycle of self-censorship and *being silenced* in quite the same perception-altering way.

My research interviews with Lindiwe allowed me to see my present environment and situation in ways I had not before. In this way, the conversations were transformative, as intimacy is and can be. Lindiwe and I also talk about her coping mechanisms. The irony in her below reflection is that she leans on her colleagues and endeavours to remember that being civil and decent is better than contributing to the ongoing death with unpleasantness. However, as she is meticulous in pointing out, despite the inclination to seek support from each other, the environment locks all staff in a cycle that is unhealthy. About this, Lindiwe states:

*“How I am managing right now is in going, sonke, we are all basically f**ed. I’m sitting in the position of saying there is no better individual here. We are all in this situation and what I think we can do is to give each other those human decencies. At the moment, we are holding each other but I’m sick of going to talk to my colleague because sifasoy’two [we are both dying]. And ekufenisoy’two [and in the dying of us both], we end up not being healthy for one another. We want to be healthy but asibonani [we can’t see each other]. I need to know who’s gonna remove a little bit of the load so that at least we eliminate those things that make us not want to see each other”.*

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

From her statement, it is clear Lindiwe feels there is an unwillingness, even within the staff, to connect in transparent ways. We agree that since her experience resonated so viscerally for me, the sense of death that Lindiwe experiences is more than likely something that her colleagues sense at some level as well- even if perhaps in ways different from Lindiwe's. Perhaps it is a realization that a healthy sense of seeing each other is least likely to happen in a space that does not encourage 'life'. Another story Lindiwe shares- in much the same sense of not being seen- is her experience of racial relations. Lindiwe reveals a perspective on being black in the academy that is aligned with the sense of alienation from oneself, as cited in the story of Lindiwe's pedagogy.

For Lindiwe, there is a meaning to being black and female that her institution, as well as her white colleagues, use for their own purposes. This is reflected in the below extract from our research interview.

Narrator: *How much do you think what you're experiencing at your university is affected by your gender and your race?*

Lindiwe: *[long pause] I don't think it is 'affected'. I think it is because I am black and I am a woman. When I say 'black' in the academy, I have to talk away from whiteness. I'm not saying black as in how in the university I've been understood as black. I mean ubundim [my being]. That is where I come from, where I am, how I am and how I live my life- it is all very much influenced by apho ndisuka khona [where I come from] and the fact that ndimnyama [I am black] and this is how I think. I think for me sometimes beyond how I can be labelled, how it can be racialized, I think there's a deeper sense of knowing that sometimes being deliberately black and female in the academy, if I really sit in that row, I will not survive.*

Narrator: *Why not?*

Lindiwe: *Because first of all, ngokungena kwam' [with only my entrance] I already know, I haven't even said anything, ndiyayazi kuthwa [I already know people are saying] "Okay, wena uzozisa iproblems"[okay, you are bringing problems] and if I chose silence uv'umntu ethi [someone will say], oh why are you not saying anything but I already know that there's someone who is uncomfortable, here.*

Narrator: *By your presence? Just by your presence?*

Lindiwe: *By my very presence, And I know this because [long pause] let me go to white women, let me go there, about where I work. I have a problem with someone who understands vulnerability. White women understand my vulnerability and me telling them my pain and my problems. But in that institution, my vulnerability is not my pain or my problems. My vulnerability is that I am expected to have the pain and to have the problems.*

It's an expected pain and the expectation is that it's gonna be constantly there. That I will never resolve it. But when you speak from that pain, then you're called passionate and angry. But also, they want that pain because it's also their way of accessing umuntu ofana nami [someone like me]. Andithi [Because] white women use care to gain their power. They want that thing- to infantilise you so that it looks like they are nurturing you. And when you don't give them that and you say, 'Let's talk about the work and choices we're making in teaching,' it's like, 'We want your pain, we don't want your intelligence. You can't be here to say anything else.'

Narrator: *We want your pain we don't want your intelligence?*

Lindiwe: *Yes.*

(Interview 2, Dikana,2019)

To say the university space is a place where Lindiwe's intelligence is not welcome is profound. To have that perception, on Lindiwe's part, is to see herself positioned- by others- in a way that neither allows for nor expects her growth as a teacher-artist, which fits into the metaphor of the death trap. It makes the work environment one that has no prospects for the future. That said, Lindiwe does, however, anticipate that a meaningful intervention amongst black artist-teachers is possible. In the teacher-artist's view, this potential space of collaboration might work to assist people who feel displaced in the university space to find ways to claim the space as their own, and on their terms. Lindiwe explains this idea as follows:

“I’m not wanting to always speak of whiteness or about the institution all the time but my discomfort right now is, what we’re doing right now, you and me talking like this, when do we get these moments of having these conversations? I think that’s what I want- that’s the thing that I want for the academy. It has to be these open conversations about how we do these things, and how we engage. And if we do, how do we then solidify [solutions to the] problems esinazo [that we have] within the black females? For me, I just want to get to that point. There’s a deeper part of me wanting to deepen some things. That’s where I am at.”

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

In a somewhat contradictory turn, Lindiwe clarifies that she is equally suspicious of the call to identify herself as a particular race and gender group within higher education.

Expanding on the subject of race, she says the following:

“I could never not be black- ndim [it is my who I am] but there is an agenda here especially with black females. I hear all good things about black females and I know asikhuli mos thina [we are not growing therefore] as the black females. I get bored of being right all the time. Uvimba ukundikhulisa [you stagnate my growth] if you keep talking indaba enye [the same thing] over and over again, it’s a strategy.

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

Lindiwe’s comment suggests there is a commodification of sorts of the identity ‘black female’ within the national higher education sector, of which her university is a microcosm. This commodification serves to mask the real struggles of black female academics by reducing transformation to an algorithm where system gaps are addressed by employing a black female employee without taking into account whether or not institutional culture makes room for the experiences of being black and female in a university. Perhaps the saddest thing Lindiwe shares about being black and female in her work environment is a feeling that what she wants to

contribute to higher education cannot be valued in her university as it presently stands. In response to this feeling, Lindiwe admits to operating like a transgressor of the culture of death and disconnection that she experiences. The research participant does this in the way she positions herself as well as imagines others think about her presence in the space:

“Mna I am just trying to grow something that is not nurtured here... I refuse most things that I am being asked to teach or expected to teach. I refuse expectations even from students. And I end up feeling like a fugitive, moving in and out of measure. My refusal is about being separate from settling. But it positions me as the problem. Ndithi [I say to myself] Lindiwe, you are the problem. First of all, you're not teaching what you are meant to be teaching. Secondly, you could be fired for actually teaching. For the very fact of asking students to be critical you could be fired. Here, you are in danger and you are also dangerous. It feels like that. That's why also I feel panic when students come with queries because I'm already not doing what I am meant to be doing. So ndi-illegal [I am illegal].”

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020).

Any hope of the call to decolonize as a remedy to the fugitive state Lindiwe experiences is also lost in her view and most especially in performance studies. This is because, as Lindiwe believes, theatre pedagogy [and its practitioners] fails to be self-critical. Lindiwe feels the willingness to self-critique is not only absent in theatre performance pedagogy because Theatre performance professionals preemptively think of their pedagogy as decolonial (because it is embodied, engaged, and critical pedagogy), but it is also possibly unachievable. Dikana describes a sense of feeling embodied in a *colonized* body in such a way that, while the desire to decolonize exists theoretically, the pragmatics make that yearning near impossible since the space, as well as her body, may not be trustworthy to do the work of decolonization.

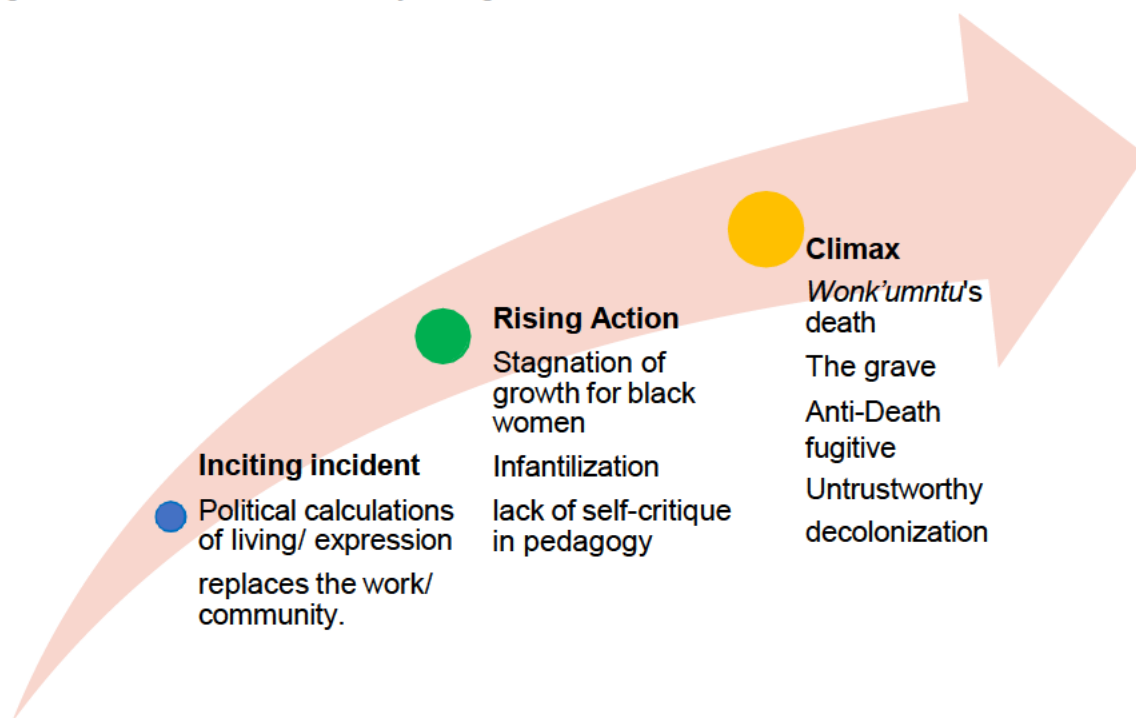
The significant question Dikana raises on this issue, she describes as having been inspired by a speaker at an academic conference on decolonization as a pedagogical project. Dikana states the following:

“The one thing that was crucial that this guy said was like, do you trust your body? Do you trust this Colonized body? As a thing that's gonna teach now this new world that you want? And I was like ‘Oh my God’. I think what was crucial about that question is the same thing that's happening within our political landscape of people who are not healed or who are not in the process of healing who want to start on the new project. I feel like I'm in a trapping relationship of manipulation when someone says, ‘What are your thoughts on decolonizing our curriculum? We [Theatre Studies] are the number one department in decolonization.’ And I come in and go, what are you talking about?”

(Interview 2, Dikana, 2020)

In concluding this segment, the below diagram depicts Lindiwe's story about her context. What follows is my interpretation of conversations with Mkabayi Zungu about her experiences of Higher education as a context.

Figure 15. Lindiwe Dikana's story of Higher Education. Situation.



Mkabayi Zungu- “Our discipline does not belong in academia. But by design.”

“I feel like our discipline does not belong in academia. But by design. So, in other words, the academy or the people who create...we are all not willing to do what it would take so that our discipline could be housed in this space in ways that change the space- which would be the case if we did it properly. I mean beyond the artificial tick-box exercise. If we must include it in the university setup because degrees must be gotten because qualifications are important then at least with some integrity. Let’s try and create a space that acknowledges some of the core values of the work that we do. Like, we’re not having conversations. That’s what I struggled with when I first arrived at my university. That wait, everyone is kind of teaching their own thing, you’re not even sitting down to brainstorm together about how this speaks to that and that speaks to the other and I thought to myself, you know if we were doing another kind of discipline maybe it would make sense.”

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

Mkabayi’s positioning of theatre and performance studies at her university is that it is a political fit rather than a holistic inclusion that honours the philosophy of the discipline. As a result, the discipline feels dislocated. Also, according to Mkabayi, this is evidenced in how the teacher-artists of the discipline themselves do not adhere to what she believes is the collaborative nature of teaching and learning theatre education. She describes an environment where her colleagues operate in isolation and are not deliberate in creating a pedagogical path in which their teaching projects align. Mkabayi suggests that the inclusion of performance education as a qualification, presently, is done so without integrity that recognizes what performance education is about and its implications on the overall university space. Furthermore, this research participant is convinced that the discipline has the potential to transform her university. Mkabayi perceives it cannot presently do so because of how it has been situated, *by design*, which I interpret as meaning that the potentially transformative impact of the discipline is opposed by some.

Mkabayi expresses a concern that all *the people involved*, including herself, are unwilling to do things *properly*. However, it appears from our continued conversation, that the meaning of *doing things properly* remains contested. Mkabayi reports that scientific rather than artistic pedagogy is set as a university standard of evaluating what is valuable and what is not. The TA reports that she often resists university requirements that she feels do not honour arts education and shares that a repeated narrative from her university leadership of the limited availability of funding for the arts is limiting even on a motivational level. Consequently, Mkabayi says she is not inspired to exert herself beyond what she experiences as the university's discriminatory parameters for funding support. On this, she says the following:

“You’re always hearing about how there’s no money in the faculty of arts so our opportunities feel limited to be honest because what the university considers research is more scientific than artistic so you have to prove your work is research to be supported [financially]. Otherwise, you consistently have to beg for the peanuts it takes to put on a show. I just couldn’t be bothered with proving my work is anything to anyone except my students. Why should I have to? It’s not easy if you want to make theatre work unless you ignore the ‘academia’ of it or you prove your work is research, which is not what I’m doing (laughs)”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Mkabayi's resistance also seems to create an undesired effect of feeling and looking like a non-performer in her university, which she says causes her distress and anxiety. Another related pressure the teacher artist reports experiencing is the set of expectations she feels are on those identified as 'young, black, and brilliant'. This is because their employment in higher education is largely based on those attributes aligned with transformation policies. For Mkabayi, the expectation of high performance is flattering, daunting, and overwhelming altogether.

Below, I include an extracted part of our conversation on this notion:

Mkabayi: *It's not feeling like enough. I know it's called imposter syndrome but mine just feels like intense anxiety [laughs] it's feeling like you are not enough for the academic system, like sooner or later someone will say you can't manage what they want from you. That's a huge one for me. Also having too much expected from you because you're young and black and brilliant, so like produce is the expectation! I feel like an underachiever here because there's so much more to do outside of doing the art. There are all these other professional milestones to meet- NRF research ratings, big funding proposals to impress everyone with, and publishing. It's a lot. It's too much actually but you're not allowed to say it. I say it all the time to myself and I hear people who have been here longer say it too but I feel like I don't have permission to.*

Narrator: *Why do you think you don't have permission to say that when other people do?*

Mkabayi: *There is just a lot of 'get on with it' and any space they give you, you have to fight for. It's not just there. There's also a lot of professional jealousy from the older black women like, 'Nobody helped us why nina nifuna ispecial [why do you expect special] attention? Nizoba right [you'll be fine]. Swimani nani, [just learn how to swim like we did] you know.'*

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

Interestingly, Mkabayi identifies older black women, specifically, as showing traits of professional jealousy and deliberately withholding the support they could give their younger colleagues. This seems ill-fitting since the very reason for the appointment of the *young black and brilliant* is for sector transformation. Mkabayi's later reflections on the attitude of a white colleague towards students, reveal a contradiction in what she feels would be helpful for novice staff but unhelpful to students. She describes her discontent with the daily decisions a white colleague makes about the standard of work and commitment expected from black students.

Mkabayi: *I would get upset at one of my white colleagues. I felt like she was not pushing our students to have the psychological and emotional strength it takes to hold yourself and to find your way through difficult academic work. Because there was a constant “Oh life is hard for them so, you know, let’s make it easier...let’s do less, let’s change that”. In a sense, I felt, ‘You’re not challenging these students because you’re deciding for them that they can’t. And there’s a skill there that must be learned, a muscle that must be trained that you are now taking away. Yeah, it’s about empowerment but you’re taking away their power.’*

Narrator: *How so?*

Mkabayi: *In an effort to help them. But you’re not helping in the long run. You’re disenfranchising actually, in the long term*

Narrator: *I see, yes, yes, I get what you mean.*

Mkabayi: *I mean, I’m a lecturer now, and if I wasn’t tough, I’d be gone already. There is that much pressure now, you gotta prove yourself. Black women in academia are excelling because there is no room to not excel. I really feel like that. No one says it, but there is a... You just, just feel it. You feel you can’t make mistakes. The safety isn’t out there to fall and get up and know that someone is gonna literally hold your hand as you get up. So, we must prepare them [the students] for the real world.”*

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

I agreed with much of Mkabayi’s assessment, however, I also raised the idea that Mkabayi’s analysis of the actions of her colleague showed an attitude of perhaps taking for granted that her students did not already know something of the harshness of the real world. We discussed the notion that, because it was a learning environment the university environment might be deemed as a kind of haven. However, as established in an earlier segment, Mkabayi does not see the university space as a safe place, even for herself.

Below Mkabayi shares her struggle to find collegial companionship within the university environment. The teacher-artist states the following:

“I’ve tried to establish friendships with other like-minded people in the university and people I work with but those relationships are so fractured, so they are safe but not safe...It’s really bad but I find my colleagues shifty and I know it’s through no fault of our own and nobody can switch it off. We’re just always having to do politics and I don’t know if people feel the need to protect themselves first and therefore only ever present themselves in certain ways or if maybe I do that. I have had my heart broken in many relationships I tried to create in this place so the university space is very lonely for me”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

This revelation made Mkabayi’s efforts to create safety in the classroom while simultaneously edging her students towards resilience understandable. We discuss the pitfalls of trying to create safety in the university and our conversation moves to decolonization.

Mkabayi describes how the renewed call to decolonize education, amidst academic staff and students during the FeesMustFall movement, found her in a position where she had built enough rapport and trust with students that she was able to deeply engage with students on the issues presented. It is within that context of having heard what students desired and understanding the temperament and attitudes of her colleagues that she made the following comments:

Mkabayi: *It’s [decolonization] a noble idea but it’s fraught with error right from the start. I don’t think it’s possible. So many people who work within the university space are by virtue the elite in society- even the black middle class if you will.*

Most of those people are where they are because they are influenced by Westernized education and so what you have are people who are themselves colonized in the mind, to quote Ngugi [Wa Thiongo], trying to decolonize education. How? You would have to value what sits outside of decolonial education and where did we learn to do that? I'm not sure how many of us can say we can see outside of the spectacles of Western education. We would like to value it [decolonization], we know it is right but I'm still at how? Legitimately and honestly?

Narrator: *That sounds like you are saying it's impossible- even in Drama studies?*

Mkabayi: *Can I tell you at my university it has been the agenda to restructure the curriculum in response to the call to decolonize since the falling fees but we can't get past our race issues to agree so we have a divided discipline. The pro-black and indigenous languages side and the white Aristotle Greek theatre side, even today. And we will never cross that divide until we are forced to. Decolonization isn't enough of a motivation. Yeah, we talk about it at conferences and we look in tune with academic trends but on the ground? Ask one of these guys whose been here for longer than 10 years if they are willing to change their curriculum in ways that really matter? Never.*

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

The near despondency in Mkabayi's response to decolonization as a lived experience was both fascinating to observe as well as sobering. While the argument for decolonization and the importance of such a project are more than apparent, ultimately it is a change that must be driven through the willingness of people as the teacher artist so aptly noted. On a different but related path Mkabayi talks about how she feels, a curriculum she identifies as Eurocentric and taught in her time as a student, has affected her pedagogy as a teacher-artist. Among other things we discuss how she imagines having more exposure to indigenous and African artists- in the way she says her students have now- would have shaped her identity as a teacher and artist.

Mkabayi states:

“It probably would have made me a different artist, completely different maybe but I would still be me, right? Surely. I might have even maybe been so different as a performer, you know that talk of accessing the black imagination that reflects my own culture rather than English culture so my work and my priorities might have been different, most probably. Ultimately though my imagination is mine and this is who I am. That’s the only place I can create from. I don’t have another space. And I’m still a great teacher, so there.”

(Interview 2, Zungu, 2020)

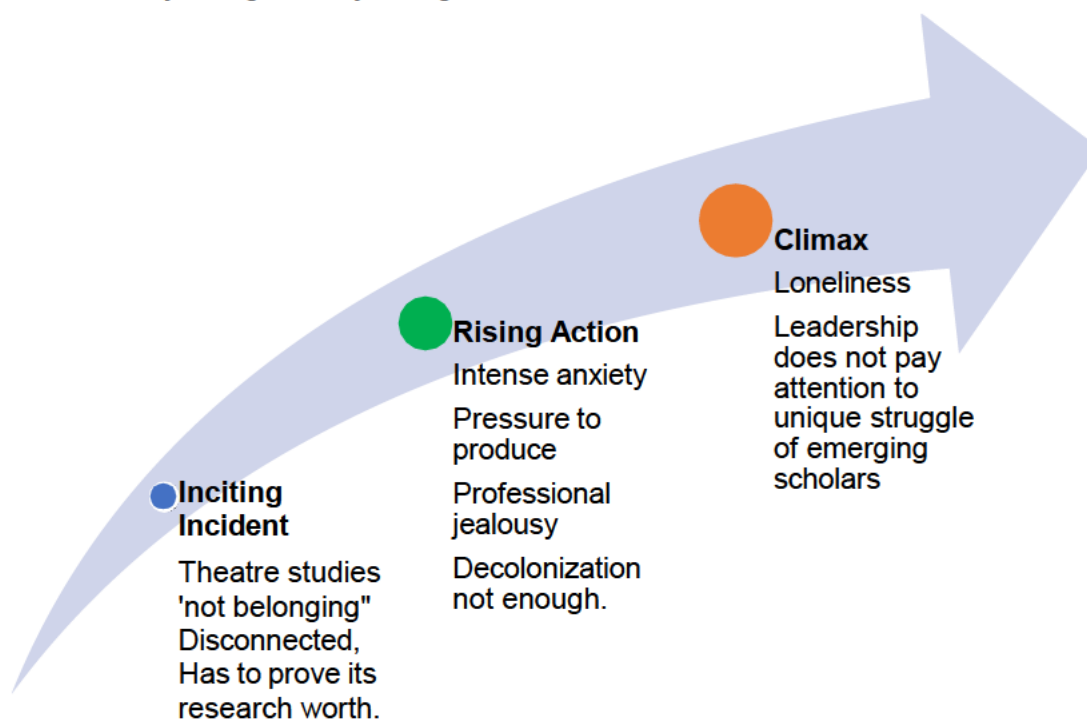
There is some acceptance of a perceived limitation to her imagination due to the contents of her curriculum and perhaps even a quiet but resolute forlornness but Mkabayi’s reclamation of her skillfulness despite this is delightful. In moving forward and concluding this section I focus on Mkabayi’s thoughts on the importance of having leaders, in higher education, who understand the struggles of the university teaching staff that she says are called emerging scholars:

“When you’re in a space where the leadership pays attention to that kind of unique struggle. Unique to the ones who are coming in, the ones called emerging scholars. When you have a space where the leadership is aware of the intersection of the problems and the challenges for emerging researchers in the university space. Then it shifts but I don’t see a lot of that here”

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

The changes Mkabayi speaks of are ones we both agree would create an experience that is different from the isolation, the pressure and anxiety that she has described are a part of her present experience in higher education. Below I construct Mkabayi’s situation pyramid, which is followed by Harriet Khoza’s story of higher education in a teaching and working context.

Figure 16. Mkabayi Zungu's story of Higher Education. Situation.



Harriet Khoza- “...you have the burden of transforming the university and the university resists that at every level.”

***Khoza:** I think I arrived and I had an assumption, I guess, based on my education. I was going ‘Okay, by the third year, they will have this kind of knowledge’ and then arriving and going, ‘Oh, you don’t you know? You’ve never done this? Oh okay cool. So, what have you done? What are we working with?’ So, there’s a lot of that kind of, you know, having to figure out what’s going on. That was very destabilizing for me at the beginning. And then I was coming into the time when the students were saying ‘We want to decolonize’ and so then I’m going, ‘Okay, we don’t have the syllabus. We don’t know what you’ve done before. We don’t know if there was like, you know, a kind of tearing or contesting of what it is that you were learning and where you’re going next. No one can tell me what your outcomes must actually be. I’m being told that I can design the course but I don’t know what to design around or what to work with.’*

***Narrator:** I resonate with this so much.*

***Harriet:** There’s, there’s no kind of standard. So, if these second-year students had been doing this with these people and those are the things that they learned, and at first year those students did that. It’s not in any way the same for the students that are now in their third year. They are completely different people [teachers] that come in at this point and at that point. Nobody knows what that person was teaching. So, then they repeated something that they’ve done, the students so then what does that mean and what does decolonization mean here? It was very, very difficult. And then the environment was also just very unhealthy. I think just in the department, there was like, competitiveness and all kinds of things that you’re kind of jumping into and under attack for you and you don’t know why...”*

(Interview 1, Zungu, 2020)

While the role of context is important for every story, the research participant for whom context was most starkly significant in her contribution towards the specifics of this research is Harriet Khoza. When Harriet and I engaged in our research conversations, she specifically began taking stock of what her first encounter with teaching in a formal institution of higher education had meant for her understanding of teaching performance studies as a pedagogy.

As earlier described, Harriet's entrance into higher education as a teacher was during the FeesMustFall movement of 2016 and this experience significantly impacted Harriet's life as a teacher and performance studies professional. As such, most of our conversation is rich with reflections about how teaching at that time evoked particular thoughts and feelings in both Harriet and I- feelings and thoughts about teaching and artistry in performance, rehearsal pedagogy, race and gender. According to Harriet's description above, at the time of her arrival, the theatre and performance curriculum at her university was a disorganized array of activities, seemingly disconnected from one course and level to another.

Harriet's expressed frustrations about the lack of direction or a comprehensive guide on the overall pedagogical trajectory of the theatre studies programme into which she was inducted. And the term *inducted* is used loosely here, since in Harriet's case, there was also no formal induction into the faculty nor to the administration systems and culture of Annikle University as a theatre-making space. Instead, Harriet describes a hostile departmental environment where sometimes she did not understand the reason for the conflict and situations she found herself drawn into. Below Harriet continues sharing about her experience, this time with a focus on gender and race-based expectations:

“...there are these expectations of you, as a black woman. Somehow you get expected to mother also inside of the teaching space. You get expected to hold mothering and I mean mothering in so many different ways uhm in the space of, you know, students needing care as well, in the environment, because the academic environment is harsh.”

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Harriet describes the academic environment as harsh on the student and as her story expands, it becomes evident that her first university teaching experience was harsh for her as a teacher artist as well. Harriet’s comments on the kind of expectations she feels are held up for black women under the guise of transformation in the higher education space are disheartening. I use the term *guise* because as Harriet explains, the intention to transform university culture is often only translated in the changing of the staff demographic to include a notable increase in the number of black female lecturers in the faculty. On coming into Annikle University as a transformation appointment, Harriet says the following:

“This is how I’m coming in. What is it that you guys are doing in terms of transformation? What can I step into? How can I become instrumental in some of the things that are happening or participate in the ways in which you are transforming this University? And then I realize it was just hiring. Like and then going- Okay, cool. Figure out what we need to do to transform and then transform things. But we don’t, you know, don’t go too far because we don’t want that, but do things so that people can see that we have transformed. Then you have the burden of transforming the university and of course, you know, the university resists that at every level. In your actual work, and then in the environment, that is created for us to work in.”

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

According to Harriet, the responsibility of transforming her university is placed on the incoming cohort of staff members who are appointed in line with the national Department of higher education agenda of redress and balancing the scales in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. People of colour are purposefully sought out and employed as a means of changing university culture and supporting diversity in the sector. Furthermore, as Harriet describes below, these are people about whom institutional culture shapes a narrative that encompasses expectations of mothering as well as the holding and dissemination of 'black' culture. Harriet gives this account of what it is like to be a black and female emerging scholar in academia:

Harriet: *You are expected to hold culture. You have to know culture. You have the black reference, you do. It's because the decolonizing thing is still very, it's alive here. Like it's constant, yeah. So, I think you know, like maybe at your university it's actually very different. I think from going there and watching, I was like 'Look at how easily they are, you know. Just moving inside of their language', inside of, you know, cultural expressions. It's quite different there because you're couched also inside of like, inside of Zulu-ness. You're in Kwa-Zulu Natal, right?*

Narrator: *Yeah, yeah. I know exactly what you mean.*

Harriet: *In Johannesburg, there's so much negotiating and negotiating of so many things and so, on the student side, they're needing you to be able to help them figure out these negotiations. They expect you to hold cultural knowledge.*

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Having heard, in Harriet's introductory story, about how this TA's education as an undergraduate at Pentworth had been void of references to black playwrights and black South African culture, it is understandable why Harriet would feel ill-equipped for the demands that an *alive* decolonial movement would make of her as a black teacher. She admits she envies my teaching within a space where the students have strong cultural roots and are taught in an environment that embraces the language (isiZulu) and cultural expressions of the students, and within a broader regional environment that further validates Zulu culture.

Since Johannesburg is an Afro-political metropolis, the students are confronted by cultural diversity on a large scale, hence the necessity and pressure on students to negotiate difference as well as the subsequent pressure on their teachers to assist them in doing so. About this Harriet shares the following:

“So, at Annikle, the kind of pressure that's put on the lecturer coming in is to also be a practitioner in the industry and then to also be a knower in everything there is to be known about all different kinds of modes of working and, you know, experiments and frames of thinking and all of the kinds of things that come within the academic space. Then obviously, the academic environment also asks you as the employee to be an administrator, you know. Be a researcher so you also have to be producing and publishing and when you're a theatre-making lecturer, you are having to do creative work because that's now something that's become quite important for the university as well, but you also have to publish. So, there are multiple areas where you are expected to do things, and then you're expected to kind of hold some kind of status. Also. It's kind of a strange thing when you're an artist, really.”

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

Much like Mkabayi, Harriet describes the *muchness* of the professional career of an academic. This research participant also finds that the demands of the job weigh on the artist in a way that is foreign to the process of art-making. The teacher-artist describes a scenario of expectations that are piled one on top of the other so that it becomes obvious that there is not enough capacity in one person to meet all of the opportunities and tasks set before them. However, in retrospect, Harriet feels the sense of dislocation and disorientation she felt as a newcomer at Annikle University, might have been improved if there had been an official induction programme for her as a new university member of staff.

On the subject of the absence of such a support mechanism, Harriet bitterly complains:

“At the time that I was starting out, there wasn't like a clear way of what do you call it now? Inducting and bringing people into teaching in higher education and now they're doing more of that because I cried about it. I said I don't know what this is. I don't know why we asked to be here.”

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Harriet brings up the issue of racial discrimination in academia, amidst our discussion on transformation, similar to the other three research participants. However, Harriet's account is more nuanced in demonstrating the effects of racial inequality on her interaction with staff and students as well as their perceptions of her value within academia. Below Harriet describes the state of racial affairs, as she experienced, at Annikle:

Harriet: *There's like, racial dynamics that are always at play. Because, there is also always kind of a sense of, you know, being tested that as the black woman, you really have to know your shit. And if you are sensed to have some kind of, you know, failings or shortcomings with knowing everything. Then it's like, oh, yeah, you don't quite know uhm enough. You don't know as much as like; you know, our white professors. You just have to perform your knowledge so much more. It was definitely toxic and it was just exhausting. For example, one of our professors used to go and look at our course outlines that were posted up, right for students to see on the wall and stand there with a pen and just write down questions [on the course outlines] like, what does that even mean? What is black theatre? How are they going to teach that? They don't even know what that is. The only person who could possibly teach this is Mbongeni Ngema. They are not Mbongeni Ngema.*

Narrator: *Oh, wow. Wow. Wow.*

Harriet: *And so, you know, you kind of being completely undermined in the transformation agenda you've been given that you now have to create and implement. And then being undermined at every level. So, then, even the students are going, well, Professor So-and-so said, you know, they don't know what this is. Where does this come from? How have you formulated this? You know, now having to answer for what it is that you're trying to do before you even begin doing it.*

Narrator: *Wow!*

Harriet: *And yeah, I remember we'd have these transformation meetings. Where the one meeting the white Professor, who was running the meeting had put on calming music. As you walk in. And so, you know, you walking in and you going, 'What's happening? You know we never play calming music before any meeting, why is it calming music playing before a transformation meeting?'. And so, you know, it's just like the expectation of our anger constantly, which then kind of really manifests or creates it. Yeah, just various levels of ... (makes a gesture towards her stomach) many knots."*

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

The idea of a theatre educator in authority- indeed one as held in high esteem as a professor-questioning the legitimacy of a newcomer's course as well as her capability to teach the course content, in full view of the student body is indicative of an abuse of power. The assumption should have been that since Harriet had been hired by the university, her credentials as a theatre education candidate were well vetted. However, according to Harriet, being publicly undermined in the way the white professor had done, resulted in Harriet having to work to prove herself to students even before she could step into a classroom with them.

In addition, Harriet says the added pressure of having an established academic disapprove of her course material resulted in anxiety within herself about her abilities. She shares the following about how that incident and similar others caused her to doubt her skills:

"...You constantly trying to, you know, prove yourself and that sense then of just being an imposter, right. Being an imposter in the space like, 'Do I actually have what it takes to try and belong here? If I'm fighting to belong here?' Even feeling internally like you don't actually know what you should know to fight to belong here...knowing that you are not really desired here in any way. And then, you know, the sense of also going, 'Well, do I belong here?'

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

Harriet's story of higher education also involves her working in two educational spaces simultaneously at some point. These were a theatre studio, which catered for high skills transference to upcoming actors and the university setting, which she experienced as more focused on performance studies as academic research. Below, she compares what was expected of her in the two locations:

Harriet: *There's a particular kind of pressure with the academic institution that's different to the kind of pressure that comes from the kind of conservatory space. So, like the studio, for example, the students want people who are making work. They want their teachers to be people who are performing or producing or directing, whatever it is because they want to know that those are people who know what's happening. So, they're going to teach them what's happening and so, you know, they're going to come out of there running straight into, you know...*

Narrator: *The industry?*

Harriet: *Yeah, exactly and then in the academic space, there's so many tensions there and I think that industry tension is very specific in Johannesburg...the students do want to be able to do what*

the conservatory students are doing. They want to be able to also be performing, performing and performing so they can run straight into the industry.

Narrator: *Right.*

Harriet: *But they are also at a university and the university is not geared for that. University is not designed for job readiness and so the tension at Annikle becomes about how to do both of these things. How to give the students industry readiness but also do what the university is designed to do, which is about critical thinking and experimentation. So, at Annikle, the kind of pressure that's put on the lecturer coming in is to also be a practitioner in the industry and then to also be a knower.*

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

In the above-extracted segment, Harriet makes several points. First, her story reveals a tension within performance pedagogy between preparing students for industry, where the critical thinking required is specific to one's ability to demonstrate expertise in their skill as a performer or technician, and developing the skill of thinking critically as an essential in academic research. Secondly, Harriet shares how one space- the conservatory space- provided students with the opportunity to practice performance more often than in the university but that both spaces exerted a kind of pressure on the teaching role. In one space the teacher is required, according to Harriet, to be a *knower* while in the other, a *doer*. This observation mirrors what has also been identified as scriptocentrism in an earlier section. It is also thought-provoking that, for Harriet, the university is not a space that focuses on preparing students for the theatre industry, which as explained is something the TA feels contradicts the expectations of university theatre performance students. In the end, Harriet highlights that the dual requirement of teachers as industry and academic specialists is a pressure point that can be better managed if students are aided in understanding the kind of knowledge that belongs in the research-driven university environment.

Returning to the theme of belonging, Harriet and I also discuss perceptions about how one should dress as a lecturer to fit in with the formality of the university space and how that is often at odds with the way theatre practitioners need to dress to work on the stage floor.

Consequently, our conversation includes Harriet's experience of having to shift her style of dress to also fit into heteronormativity. On the subject of negotiating her appearance in higher education as a context, Harriet says the following:

Harriet: *And how to dress. I mean you're an artist you're coming in to do practical classes, half of the time, right? And so even while I might be going into a theory lecture in the morning that the rest of the afternoon, I'll be working on the floor with students and so it was difficult to figure out, you know? Can I wear my haram pants and, you know, put on a blazer so that I can take off the Blazer and then work with the students?*

Narrator: *Mm, yes.*

Harriet: *In the beginning, I would get dressed for teaching, you know? And then change into prac [practical] clothes.*

Narrator: *Oh, wow, you just reminded me. I used to do that too.*

Harriet: *Yeah, yeah, it was so tiresome.*

Narrator: *Yes.*

Harriet: *So, so tiring and, you know, you also so aware of how everyone else is aware of you negotiating yourself and that makes you feel quite vulnerable. Also, kind of negotiating, you know like, queerness as well. I said this at some point in a workshop. We were looking at identity and things like that. I said, I've only been wearing dresses and things to come and teach here, and you know, it's been an interesting thing to become aware of that. I feel like I have to perform myself as a feminine person and I moved between being very feminine and being very masculine.*

So, then I had to fight to go, okay cool. I'm going to dress like this. I'm going to arrive like this and just kind of keep doing that until it became more comfortable for me because it felt uncomfortable to be seen."

(Interview 1, Khoza, 2020)

It felt uncomfortable to be seen suggests that Harriet might have preferred to remain in the periphery. This is perhaps because of the humiliation she had already endured by being undermined persistently or perhaps an attempt to have her sexuality *not* framed as an aspect of her identity that requires managing or masking for an audience. Whatever the case, what is evidenced in this statement is the university space is not one in which Harriet was comfortable being herself. In the end, Harriet made a difficult decision- to leave Annikle University:

Harriet: *Oh my Gosh! Being inside of like the hyper-activist moment of Fees must fall, where you're also having to prove yourself, amongst the other activist black lecturers. So, if you are black enough, if you are radical enough, if you are, you know right?*

Narrator: *If you're making a difference in this space...*

Harriet: *Exactly. I quit my full-time post after only a year. And I literally scratched my way to that year. To say I've made it to a year, I'm not a complete failure.*

Narrator: *Sho.*

Harriet: *I thought I can't do this anymore. I'm out, you know, the muchness of all of those things. Like I really feel like it was an absolute test and you're failing all the time and yet, you're not allowed to fail. Because no one is allowed to experiment even in reality you are not allowed to experiment. You are supposed to know where you stand already. You are supposed to know what things are. You're supposed to know. So yeah, yeah. I was like in the eye of Annikle's storm and yeah, I didn't manage to hold ground.*

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

Listening to Harriet, I imagined being at Annikle for the year she was there was close to unbearable. From her above account, it is clear Harriet felt overwhelmed and unsupported even while the ability to decolonize pedagogy was expected of her, as the black transformation appointment. It is also clear that Harriet's sense of being an imposter in the space and of not having what it takes to fight to belong comes full circle when she puts on herself, the responsibility of failing to hold ground. Harriet both expects herself to have done better and acknowledges the great odds set up against her as a new lecturer in an environment that did not allow for the process of development to unfold but rather demanded expertise and absolute resolve. In closing, Harriet shares what she was able to observe about the black male academics during her storm at Annikle. She recalls that these colleagues handled the pressure of being within university space at the time as a united front that shielded each other but would not get involved in intersection issues that arose from the political upheaval. On this Harriet says the following:

Harriet: *The black men in the institution, they also then have, you know, a very different experience to the black woman.*

Narrator: *How So?*

Harriet: *So, for example, the black men would generally be quiet and they were also older, so I think also coming in the younger one had a particular aspect to the experience, but the black men, they have a caucus of their own and they all know, they support each other. They are going to put the black men forward. We must all rally behind each other as black people, they say. But the moments where something has to do with the intersectional issues of the woman and the student who is female and even the queer ones, then it's like 'Oh (makes a hand gesture). You know, that's so much noise. You guys like to be loud all the time. Why are you getting all emotional about these things? You need to be rational about it, you know. We need to move up in the institution so that we can run things they say...'*

(Interview 2, Khoza, 2020)

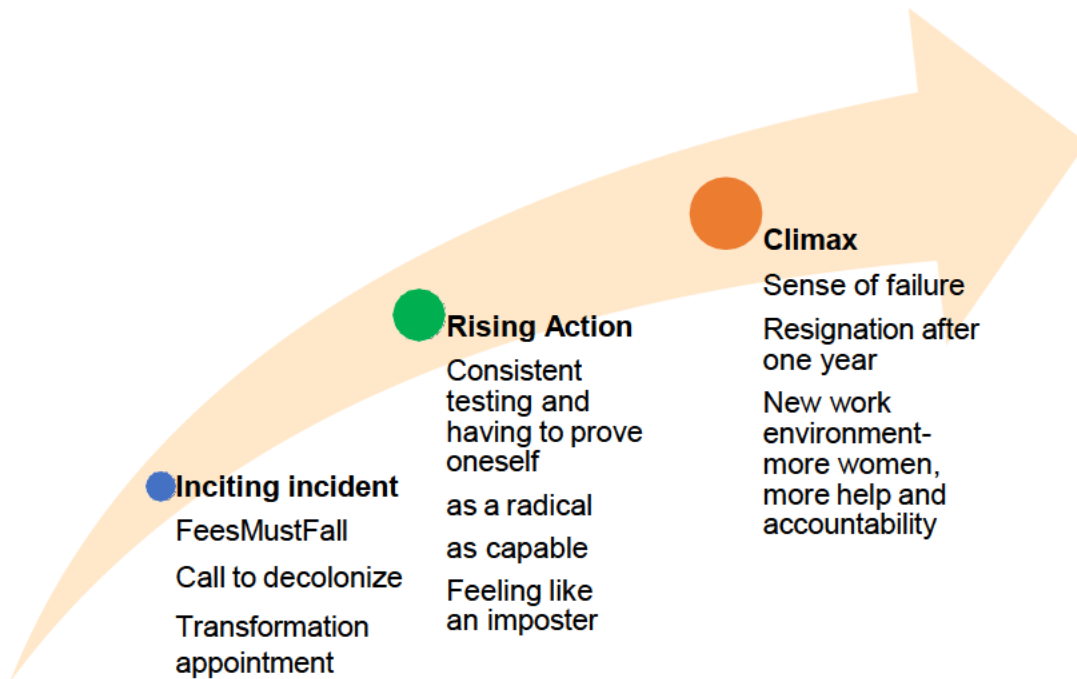
It is clear from the above excerpt, age, sexuality and gender all played a significant role in Harriet's experience, making it markedly different from that of her black male peers- from her perspective. Nonetheless, Harriet concludes our interview by expressing her view, also born of personal experience, that the pressures placed on teacher-artists in the university need not be something teacher-artists confront without support. Having moved from the Theatre performance department at Annikle to another department, Harriet says she experienced some changes she believes correspond directly to there being a greater presence of black women and some in positions of leadership. On this, she says the following:

“One thing that I maybe like to end off with is to go there’s been such an interesting shift for me. Very clearly, but also that there’s been more awareness in the spaces and there are also more women where I’m working and more black women kind of holding things accountable and really trying to create a working environment that is helpful for the person who is new and working to be able to do the work that they need to do to and help those that they need to help. So, there has been a considerable shift inside since I have changed places of work. There’s something really incredible when there is awareness and they trying to implement things. They trying to plug the holes. That’s the change for the other black woman that you work with when you start seeing other black women, who are working with you grow. It’s massive, you know, because you can feel like you can actually grow. Like you can actually too...”

(Interview, Khoza, 2020)

Below I conclude the scene with a diagram of Harriet's situation pyramid. The scene that follows is a discussion of the key findings in the data.

Figure 3. Harriet Khoza's story of Higher Education. Situation.



Act 3. Scene 4: Discussion

In this scene, I give an interpretation of the key findings in the stories of Harriet Khoza, Mkabayi Zungu, Queen Sono, and Lindiwe Dikana. In line with Narrative inquiry, I follow an essential ontological script underpinning and framing my understanding of the findings as well as how the findings relate to the key questions in this research. I also discuss the implications of the findings with specific reference to intimacy as a conceptual frame of interpretation aligning with the purpose and focus of the study. Although my overall intention is to demonstrate the relationship between pedagogy and intimacy in experiences of teaching theatre performance studies in higher education in South Africa, my discussion includes findings that reach beyond what I had expected. My findings also demonstrate how different relationships contribute to varied understandings of the workings of intimacy within pedagogy.

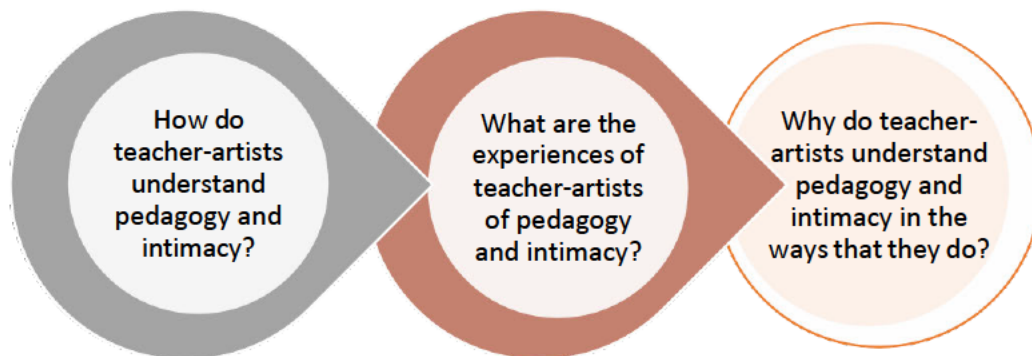
Ontological and epistemic underpinnings of Narrative inquiry:

Figure 48. Narrative Inquiry- Ontological and epistemic underpinnings (Rosenberg, 2019)



Below is a visual representation of the key questions of the research:

Figure 19. Key research questions



I begin with a *thematic analysis* of the combination of stories organized into the three different categories of continuity, interaction, and situation. This is supported by literature that argues...*"The thematic approach is useful for theorising across several cases –finding common thematic elements across research participants and the events they report"* (Riessman, 2005, p. 3). In identifying recurring ideas as well as unique deviations from one story to another, meaningful relationships between and across the categorized findings (inciting incidents, rising action, climax), the literature and the conceptual frame become clearer.

The premise of my findings is that the research itself is evidenced as an intimacy-generating pedagogical exercise since my research interview conversations were interactions characterized by reciprocated self-disclosure as well as partner responsiveness. Emotional expression was a key feature in the ways the research participants shared their experiences as well as in how I responded. The in-depth level in which the teacher-artists shared their personal histories and struggles is evidence of trust and emotional connection between myself and each participant, all of which was directly generated through the pedagogical question-and-answer method of generating knowledge through the story. Some examples of this bonding include Harriet sharing her feelings of failure after resigning from her job at Annikle after only a year.

Queen discloses how she breaks the boundary of where her role as a teacher should end to give care to her students. Lindiwe tells of the ways she felt exploited as a child by an adult who posed as a drama expert, and Mkabayi is open about her loneliness in the university environment. There are also various moments of shared emotional expression and the construction of a collegial relationship between myself and the research participants. This is especially true when their reflections resonate with mine, and I am explicit in sharing that information in the way I react to specific aspects of their stories. In the interviews, the research participants and I discuss belonging, vulnerability, violence, power, trust, and safety as personal values and issues present in the classroom and workplace- all of which form part of the definition of intimacy as conceptualized for this thesis. Thus, from the onset of the first interview, the teacher-artists and I are engaged in intimacy-producing pedagogy. Further probing of the research findings for evidence of intimacy is conducted through a closer look at the summaries of the continuity stories of all the research participants.

Continuity. Inciting incident thematic Summary

Table 1. Continuity summary. Inciting incident

Continuity	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Inciting incident</i>	<p>Primary school speech and Drama competition</p> <p>Teachers selected good people, she wins bursary. KwaZulu Natal</p> <p>Graduating students motivate return to postgraduate</p>	<p>Grew up in township playing Brenda Fassie, Gauteng</p> <p>Attended theatre group.</p> <p>High school acting Award</p> <p>change from law to performance</p>	<p>Drama in community group.</p> <p>Enter Mama Dee and violence of the Arts.</p> <p>Violence of media campaign, mothering that does not see us as kids</p> <p>Eastern Cape</p>	<p>Bophuthatswana youth theatre group.</p> <p>Aunt and Mother oral tradition of storytelling</p> <p>North-West Province</p>

In the *Inciting incident* within the continuity segment, what is common in the data (stories) is first:

1. The *theme of mothering within the pedagogical environment and theatre as a notion introduced by a maternal or pastoral figure.*

In the data, it is a teacher, a mother, an aunt, and even a stranger who requests to be recognized as *mama* but embodied “a mothering that did not see us as kids” (Act 3, Scene 1), which introduces the love, appreciation or practice of theatre to the teacher-artists. Harriet and Mkabayi’s talents are validated in the awards facilitated by their teachers in primary and secondary school, respectively, and Queen’s passion is fuelled by storytelling as practiced and modeled by her aunt and mother. While in Lindiwe’s case, MamaDee’s role suggests an exploitative and (as described by Lindiwe) violent kind of intimate connection, even this outsider to the community theatre group understood the value of positioning herself as a mother figure. And so, for all the participants, the genesis of a relationship with theatre is immersed in a pastoral relationship of care and intimacy- in the maternal and pedagogical sense, thus reflecting intimacy as connection (Brown, 2015) as well as emotional expression and interaction (Jansen et al., 2017; Fishbach et al., 2017).

While the data does not provide a detailed perspective of the entirety of the relationship each of these teacher-artists had with the said pastoral figures in their story, it can be confirmed that the vulnerability (as a child, niece, or pupil) of the research participants plays a role in the nature of their interactive relationship with each figure, making the significance of the pattern and the workings of intimacy in each relationship difficult to deny. This means, in the instance of the four participants, the seeds of theatre performance that later expand into industry and academic careers are planted in intimacy.

Secondly, as evidenced in the *continuity* categorization of the data, as well as in the *situation* category to follow, there is a resonance in Harriet and Queen's stories of the self and externally imposed responsibility of playing a motherly and nurturing role to students. Queen admits to being emotionally motivated by the idea that her interventions could be life-changing for a student when she states, "*If I don't take that role of motivating the child [student]...or tapping into the mother in me, it could be a dying moment for a student*" (Act 3, Scene 2). Similarly, Harriet finds it both an unavoidable expectation and oftentimes a necessity to take on a protective, mothering role towards students, which she expresses as follows: '*You get expected to hold mothering...of students needing care as well because the academic environment is harsh*' (Act 3, Scene 3).

A second theme is as follows:

2. *The experience of a community group or family as a place where drama and theatre performance are first explored.*

Notions of interdependence, belonging, and collaboration, while mutually exclusive, are inherent in ensemble theatre work as well as family relationships, which results in the

development of intimate relationships. Furthermore, as established in the literature review, the engaged nature of theatre as a learning experience inevitably ¹*“forges a meaningful working relationship.”* Thus, my interpretation is that the first instances of learning theatre work and the nurturing of the teacher artists’ theatrical abilities (singing, orator, dancing, and storytelling) occur through the intersection of intimacy and pedagogy.

What is unique is the articulation of theatre as something Lindiwe associated with violence as a child. *“I found myself violently within the arts”* (Act 3, Scene 1), she says and proceeds to explain how she came to understand herself as ‘black’ as a result of her interaction with Mama Dee- a white, female self-proclaimed theatre expert. This frames the racial aspect of Lindiwe’s sense of self-perception as discerned through the intimate violence of her relationship with theatre pedagogy as facilitated by Mama Dee. Lindiwe says, *“...It was in the way she spoke about us and she wrote about us...[and] what we would read later in the newspapers about ourselves as people who need to be developed, and using art to discipline us”* (Act 3, Scene 1) which reveals that it is in the articulation of Mama Dee’s account of Lindiwe (and others) as a human being who would undergo a process of “improvement” through theatre pedagogy, that catalyzed Lindiwe first grappling with race as part of her identity. Later in a story about her pedagogical ethos as a teacher, Lindiwe refutes the idea that theatre [arts] can change lives, which I understand as an idea conceived in the meaning she derived from that story of her childhood. It is reasonable to argue that since theatre was instrumental in the story and used to distort whatever sense of self she had before knowing herself as black, the violence is exacerbated by the fact that it is an outsider-insider who was able to use theatre to do that.

Furthermore, this motherly stranger performed the public deception of claiming the visionary authority of a drama group that had existed even before she arrived in Lindiwe's community. This was also a drama group through which Mama Dee was able to access economic capital through the exploitation of the intimate inequalities (Jansen, 2016) existing between herself and the group of young township children she claimed to mentor in a student-teacher relationship (Pryal, 2010). This was orchestrated through the story MamaDee told about how much she had changed their lives. It is no wonder that Lindiwe is averse to the idea of the arts as "transformative". In her own words, the teacher-artist was "... *skeptical from the beginning when I kept hearing narratives of how I was developed*" (Act 3, Scene 1). However, the irony is that Lindiwe's story of how dance theatre was introduced to her did change the young artist's life in an area as intimate as her self-concept. I argue that this change is so far-reaching, that it affects Lindiwe's present understanding of theatre pedagogy. Her perspective as a teacher is intimately linked to that experience of coming into dance theatre pedagogy (in which she presently specializes) as well as an understanding of her identity as a racialized, through an intimately violent relationship.

Accordingly, and rather ironically, Lindiwe's own approach to pedagogy suggests that theatre pedagogy can indeed foster change in the lives of its participants. Lindiwe perceives theatre research as imperative, even up to shifting the way students think of themselves. I argue that it is because of the presence of violence, enabled through the intimacy of Mama Dee's interaction with Lindiwe, that inhibits the TA from seeing what is evidenced in her own approach to pedagogy. As explained in the conceptual frame, violence that is enabled through intimacy, while not unique to South Africa, forms a unique part of how South Africans, especially black women, understand relationships and their consequences.

Continuity. Rising Action thematic Summary

Table 32. Summary Rising Action. Continuity

<i>Rising Action</i>	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Continuity</i>	<p><i>Transition from Pentworth-all "white" teachers and curriculum,</i></p> <p><i>Enter Annikle as Post-graduate- study protest theatre, black material</i></p> <p><i>Start again, educate myself. Peers encounter predators Johannesburg, Gauteng</i></p>	<p><i>Soul mind shifting, social construction undergraduate experience at Annikle, Johannesburg.</i></p> <p><i>Performer in HIV education roadshows in townships in South Africa.</i></p>	<p><i>Community artist at university- Is'pantsula- thinks deeply about experience rather than write</i></p> <p><i>Bored with narratives of history- want to explore rhythm, what does dance do for 'our humanity'.</i></p>	<p><i>Anti-child abuse theatre campaign</i></p> <p><i>Annikle MA</i></p> <p><i>Head hunted by Belrange University</i></p> <p><i>Belrange afforded her travel to Brazil for self-development.</i></p> <p><i>90% student body on government-funded study loans Gauteng</i></p>

Regarding the *Rising action* of the data categorized as *continuity*, what emerges as dominant themes are the following:

1. *Government-funded social justice theatre programmes,*
2. *The proactive stance to undergo further training to compensate for apparent gaps in formal education*
3. *Annikle College is most cited for reported life-altering experiences.*
4. *Additionally, all four research- participants have medium to long-term (three years and above) theatre pedagogy experiences in at least two higher education institutions, each.*

What is significant is that socio-political issues affect the pedagogical choices the research participants make for themselves. For Harriet, the absence of black lecturers and black material at her "very, very white" (Act 3, Scene 1) undergraduate university results in a feeling that she is ill-prepared upon her arrival at Annikle, where the curriculum introduces her to black theatre makers and playwrights for the first time.

Here I argue that the absence of black theatre material in Harriet's undergraduate studies demonstrates a disconnection- the antithesis of intimacy- in the pedagogy from Harriet's lived experience as a raced person and, in turn, a disconnection of Harriet from herself as a black theatre maker since there were no presentations of work by or about people who looked like her and possibly share her culture. On the contrary, for Lindiwe, a sense of personal responsibility to represent Is'pantsula in the academic terrain is inspired by the connection with her theatre community group's dance instructor and his work at a 2day Is'pantsula dance workshop at the same institution. This work results in a pedagogical decision to abandon the need to analyse dance from a historical lens and rather focus on "*what they [dance forms] do, for us and for our humanity,*" (Act 3, Scene 1) as well as to document what she learns in writing for the inclusion of Is'pantsula embodied knowledge in academia.

While Harriet embarks on a self-teaching mission to compensate for the knowledge she does not possess, Queen's pedagogical development is catapulted by an anti-child abuse government-funded theatre project which causes her to question her ability to significantly contribute to psycho-social theatrical interventions. Queen embarks on a journey of self-development and travels to Brazil to become educated in Boalian theatre. The teacher-artist also enrolls in a psycho-drama post-graduate programme at Annikle, motivated by this pursuit of appropriate skills. This results in her being held in high regard and head-hunted by her present institution, Belrange University, where Queen takes on the responsibility of care to address what she feels her students lack as a result of their socio-economic context. Both teacher artists are inwardly motivated towards self-directed change through their interaction with theatre pedagogy. Mkabayi, like Queen, is involved in a government-funded HIV/Aids Awareness theatre campaign, however, for this TA, the roadshow happens while she is an undergraduate theatre student at Annikle.

Interestingly, AC emerges as a place of teaching and learning where three participants- Harriet, Mkabayi, and Queen- all report having had life-changing experiences through their participation in theatre and theatre pedagogy. For Queen, the momentous experience is in her Master's Degree programme, where she reports feeling deeply motivated to reflect on her purpose in the arts, which consequently determines her path to becoming a drama therapist. Mkabayi's "soul and mind shifting" experience occurs when she is undergoing her undergraduate theatre studies and learns about the notion of social constructivism. Harriet's experience is twice-first in her experience encountering black material as a post-graduate student and secondly, in what I liken to a baptism of fire into theatre performance teaching during the FeesMustFall protest era at Annikle.

The fourth thematic finding reveals that the teacher-artists collectively have over twelve years of experience in the higher education sector. This classifies their experience with the sector as extensive. According to the data, three of the participants (Mkabayi, Queen and Harriet) attain their post-graduate education at Annikle College in Gauteng. Both Harriet and Lindiwe attained their undergraduate qualifications at Pentworth University in the Eastern Cape, while Queen attained the sum of her formal theatrical training at a local theatre community centre in present-day Northwest province, in Brazil, and also at Annikle College in the province. By the end of the study, two teacher-artists (Mkabayi and Lindiwe) have both worked at and left the Queen Nandi Institute of the Arts (QNI) in KwaZulu Natal, one (Harriet) has resigned from a teaching post at Annikle Campus and one (Queen) is employed as a teacher at Belrange University. Henceforth, Annikle College (Gauteng), Pentworth University (Eastern Cape), and the Queen Nandi Institute of the Arts (KwaZulu-Natal) are *hotspots* in this research since these are the three institutions the research participants have in common, either as places of theatre pedagogy tuition or employment, as depicted in the table below.

This is important to note for future studies of teacher-artists of theatre pedagogy in South African higher education:

Table 3. Universities and “hotspots”

<i>Teacher-artists</i>	<i>AC</i>	<i>PU</i>	<i>QNI</i>	<i>B</i>
Lindiwe		<i>Undergraduate</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	
		<i>Post-graduate</i>		
Mkabayi	<i>Undergraduate</i>		<i>Post-graduate</i>	
			<i>Teacher</i>	
Queen	<i>Post-graduate</i>			<i>Teacher</i>
Harriet	<i>Post-graduate</i>	<i>Undergraduate</i>		
	<i>Teacher</i>			

In this section, intimacy emerges in several ways- first in the connectedness of the journeys' of the participants from institutions of learning to institutions of teaching. Evidenced later, in the discussed *interaction* summary, an alignment between the pedagogical expectations of the teacher-artists of their students and the university of their training is more clearly demonstrated. Secondly, the imposed (Fishbach et al., 2017) and functional (Gray et al., 2017) intimacy created by the anti-child abuse theatre campaign between Queen and the children for whom she performs drives the children to seek counseling from her as a theatre actor. Queen tells of school officials calling her company requesting the help of the theatre actors in addressing the post-intervention needs of learners. Queen describes how the children preferred to speak with the actors rather than the prescribed social workers. This is the intimate interaction that motivates Queen's decision to learn further.

Queen's choice also demonstrated a requirement of theatre pedagogy audiences for practitioners to engage them more intimately if they are to be effective in social justice interventions. In turn, Queen positions an advancement in theatre pedagogy as the tool to enable that. Both Queen and Harriet's stories of advancing their knowledge demonstrate their understanding of intimate inequalities that involve power and pedagogy. Where Queen is compelled to develop her skills to practice care for those affected by social inequality. Harriet senses that her pedagogical marginalization makes her vulnerable in her workplace and, therefore, uses her agency to empower herself.

Continuity- Climax thematic summary

Table 4. Continuity summary. Climax

Continuity	Harriet	Mkabayi	Lindiwe	Queen
Climax	<p>Enter Annikle as lecturer Strong peer activist time/ FeesMustFall</p> <p>No induction, negotiating how to be in the space</p> <p>Destabilizing</p>	<p>Teach and perform, Queen Nandi Institute, KwaZulu Natal</p> <p>Guide students to question how they see/ look</p> <p>Allows for student growth and mistakes</p> <p>Prioritize safety when teaching- for herself and students.</p>	<p>Accomplice ye murder Connecting theory and practice Students with cognitive dissonance KwaZulu-Natal</p>	<p>Consumed by many "hats"- director, teacher, practitioner, counsellor</p>

What emerges as a common theme in the stories classified as *the Climax of Continuity* is as follows:

1. *A sense of disconnection- the antithesis of intimate interaction with the environment.*

This theme applies to Lindiwe, Lindiwe's students as well as to Harriet. Even while Harriet takes the initiative to negotiate "how to be" (Act 3, Scene 3) in the space, it is not without a reportedly considerable amount of discomfort. This TA finds the lack of a formal university induction process destabilizing, given the tumultuous protest era in which she entered higher education as an educator. A contradiction in her story, however, is that she finds the reformist movement also initially allows for a self-selected set of approaches to self-expression. Furthermore, as time develops, Harriet finds the related expectation to be just as enthusiastic in the activism as her colleagues, is appealing. I pick up on this notion later in the discussion on Higher education as a context and 'situation'.

In a similar thematic experience, Lindiwe is uncomfortable with what she feels is the university's positioning of her as a *murder accomplice* (Act 3, Scene 1). The TA also believes her students suffer from a "cognitive dissonance" both as a result of struggling to fit into the pedagogical philosophy of theatre as it is taught in her university and theatre pedagogy's disconnection of their lived experiences.

2. *The connecting of theatre theory with their everyday lived experience as well as their theatre practice*

A second theme resonating with the study's concept of intimacy is the intention that both Queen and Lindiwe have to enable students to engage with theory through their lived experiences. Here, both teacher-artists encourage a close connection between what students learn cognitively, what they practice theatrically as well as how they live socially. Unique to Queen's data, however, is that the discomfort in her teaching environment, evidenced in her feelings of being overly consumed by her varied roles, is something not imposed but rather that she chooses based on her sense of obligation. Mkabayi's focus on the safety of learning for students is the reason for making room for mistakes and change in her theatre performance pedagogy, which fosters feelings of trust (Costa, 2004) within the space. Furthermore, rather than restrict intimacy, this points to its avowal in the safety to be vulnerable (discussed in *Intimate Inequalities: Power and Pedagogy*) in class. Furthermore, this is an example of intimate interaction as this type of safety is one the teacher-artist cannot achieve without the cooperation of students in the class. In the next thematic analysis, I discuss the 'interaction' pyramids of each teacher-artist.

Interaction- Inciting incident thematic summary.

Table 5. Interaction summary. Inciting incident

<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Inciting incident</i>	<p><i>Check-in</i></p> <p><i>Explore and identify emotions in the room/ script.</i></p>	<p><i>Safety</i></p> <p><i>Negotiate/ share power</i></p> <p><i>Nurture vulnerability</i></p>	<p><i>Intention</i></p> <p><i>To live</i></p> <p><i>To be present</i></p>	<p><i>Create safe space</i></p> <p><i>Play</i></p> <p><i>Connect on human level</i></p>

Above is a summary of the data classified as the *inciting incidents* of all the teacher artists in the interaction category of the three-dimensional data analysis approach. The dominant emerging theme directly linked to intimacy is as follows:

1. *The facilitation of functional intimacy.*

The facilitation of functional intimacy (Gray et al., 2017) is done through the check-in practice, which involves self-regulated degrees of self-disclosure. Functional intimacy is also fostered through the simultaneous nurturing of vulnerability and negotiating of power, as strategic management of potential violence born of intimate inequalities in rehearsal or classroom relationships. Additionally, there is the intentional construction of classroom and rehearsal safety, the requirement and enablement of students to connect on a human level, the spontaneity (and therefore the vulnerability and joy) of play, the required identification and expression of people's emotions in the room as well as the sifting out of emotions evoked within theatre texts (the script). What is notably different in the data is the articulation of intention from Lindiwe as a teacher artist, thus highlighting Ramohai's (2012) notions of navigating institutional dynamics with a sense of resistance and agency. While Lindiwe does not share whether or not she requires students to be aware of or to set their own intentions, what is apparent is that Lindiwe herself has an intention that drives her pedagogy.

Lindiwe's pedagogical motivation is intimately connected to her sense of purpose. While the teacher-artists can equally be interpreted as beginning their pedagogical work with some intention, none of them articulate it in the same explicit way as Lindiwe. Furthermore, the organizing of their data using Freytag's (1895) pyramid as a frame admittedly imposes on all the research participants a sense of beginning with an intention.

Interaction- Rising Action thematic summary.

Table 6. Interaction summary. Rising action

Rising action	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
	<i>Resist acting</i>	<i>Seeing self and others.</i>	<i>Vuka</i>	<i>Link theories to real life</i>
	<i>Ensure emotional regulation</i>	<i>See the new</i>	<i>disrupt analysis violence</i>	<i>Engage through psychoeducation</i>
	<i>Create/facilitate self-containment for emotion</i>	<i>See and be seen</i>	<i>Avoid talking about the self</i>	<i>Facilitate</i>
		<i>Self-acceptance</i>	<i>Employ strategies for disrupting dislocation</i>	<i>Risk boundaries to care, liberate, Motivate</i>

In the interaction category, there are four themes emergent in the Rising action:

1. *Focus on promoting intimacy with oneself.*

This theme emerges through the self-containment of emotions that Harriet encourages in her theatre-acting students. The theme also emerges in the notion of *seeing oneself* as a portal that allows the *seeing of others*, which Mkabayi proposes as the bedrock of her pedagogy. The theme is present also in Mkabayi's self-acceptance, in Lindiwe's focus on *being oneself* (through the strict avoidance of *talking about oneself*), as well as Queen's engagement of students through psychodrama strategies that facilitate an intimate engagement with one's emotions.

2. *Facilitation.*

There is a strong focus on facilitation as a teaching and learning strategy in this section. For Queen, the skill of facilitation aids the connection the TA seeks to create, *at the level of the students* rather than in a hierarchical teacher-student arrangement.

3. *Resistance.*

The resistance of acting as hyper performance, in Harriet's pedagogy, is actioned to usher in a deeper emotional interaction (and intimacy) with an audience. There is also the resistance of university strategies that dislocate the self from being present in the space, as encouraged by Lindiwe. Finally, there is resistance to teacher role boundaries by Queen to provide care to students.

4. *Vuka and seeing the new*

Both *Vuka* and *seeing the new* are similar since both are about coming out of a previous state of thought or dispensation and stepping into a new one. Both concepts suggest the transformation of how one used to perceive or think. Both concepts point to embodied knowledge that emerges to enable the theatre performance student to stand separated from the status quo.

What is unique in this section is that while Lindiwe and Queen aim to link theatre performance theory to real-life experiences, Lindiwe believes this is done through rapture, disruption, and separation- rather than through care, which is more explicitly about connecting rather than pulling away. This is indicative of both a *pro* and *anti-intimacy* agenda simultaneously present in Lindiwe's theatre pedagogy.

Interaction- Climax thematic summary.

Table 7. Interaction summary. Climax.

<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Climax</i>	<i>Wield a real connection with the audience</i> <i>De role</i>	<i>Authenticity</i> <i>Create</i>	<i>Fukuza</i> <i>Trace</i> <i>Search through training</i> <i>Create black-on-black conversations</i>	<i>Reflect on social issues</i> <i>Release (heal) momentarily.</i>

What is common in the above-depicted category is the notion of creating and dismantling relationships.

1. *Creating intimate relationships*

One instance of creating a relationship is Harriet's pedagogical aim is to purposefully build interaction with the audience based on emotional connection. Lindiwe's relationship-building is a conversation based on racial identity as a unifying factor. Yet another articulation of this theme is the formation of a relationship with the self in Mkabayi's pedagogy through the development of authenticity in the student performer.

2. *Pulling apart from intimate relationships.*

Harriet's insistence that student performers release emotions used to depict onstage characters symbolizes the breaking of intimacy with a character, as well as the detachment from residue emotion embodied as a result of exploring characterization. This is part of a fundamental aspect of Harriet's pedagogy- teaching students how to manage the combination of their own emotions and those they *wield* in doing performance work. Additionally, Queen's notion of play as a way of releasing hurt can be understood as a kind of separation from undesirable memories or experiences from a student in the moment of play in theatre pedagogy.

What is different in this category is Queen's explicit desire to reflect on social issues through pedagogy. However, I interpret Lindiwe's *ukufukuza* as equally a way of engaging with social issues since it is plausible that what students will discover as they trace their own journeys (and the journeys of other human beings) will invariably be linked to aspects of social life. In some ways, even '*ukufukuza*' will lead to intimacy in this way since the students are most likely bound to make personal meanings of what they discover.

The section that follows is an analysis of the themes emerging out of stories of higher education and, in some instances, the arts industry in South Africa.

Situation- Inciting Incident thematic summary

Table 8. Situation summary. Inciting incident

Situation	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Inciting incident</i>	<i>FeesMustFall</i> <i>Call to decolonize</i> <i>Transformation appointment</i>	<i>Theatre studies not belonging"</i> <i>Disconnected,</i> <i>Theatre has to prove its research worth.</i>	<i>Political calculations of living/ expression</i> <i>replaces the work/ community.</i>	<i>Persistent Mothering and care roles.</i> <i>Race and gender-based responsibility to care</i>

In the thematic analysis of the category *Situation*, the following commonalities emerge.

1. Decolonization and political reform

The call to decolonize is experienced across all the university spaces although it is Harriet's experiences that expose decolonization as a raced and gendered burden of responsibility.

Lindiwe is distrustful of decoloniality. For this TA teaching is adversely affected or replaced by politically calculated (rather than authentically intimate) interactions with colleagues and students.

2. Race and gender- black and female

Harriet's story reveals that accountability for reform and transformation in the university space is experienced as belonging to black females. Ironically, black females are reported to also be used to paint the impression of transformation which contradicts what is happening in reality. Lindiwe experiences silencing as an intellectual and believes her infantilization is a raced and gendered experience.

3. The positioning of theatre studies within higher education

For both Mkabayi and Queen, the place of theatre as a discipline within higher education is questionable. Queen articulates what she perceives as a duplicitous attitude- on one hand, her university fails to recognize theatre's pedagogical dexterity while it recognizes theatrical

works as useful entertainment. Mkabayi is reluctant at what she interprets as the requirement to prove her theatrical work as *worthy* knowledge in an environment that the TA says is not genuinely prepared to embrace theatre beyond appearances. An interesting nuance in this category is that the mothering role persists for Queen, whether in the university environment or professional acting industry.

Situation- Rising Action thematic summary

Table 9. Situation summary. Rising action

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Rising Action</i>	<p><i>Consistent testing and having to prove oneself as a radical as capable</i></p> <p><i>Feeling like an imposter</i></p>	<p><i>Intense imposter anxiety</i></p> <p><i>Pressure to produce and prove</i></p> <p><i>Professional jealousy</i></p> <p><i>Decolonization not enough.</i></p>	<p><i>Stagnation of growth for black women</i></p> <p><i>Infantilization</i></p> <p><i>lack of self-critique in pedagogy.</i></p>	<p><i>Fragmentation and competition in HE</i></p> <p><i>Drama resistance to fragmentation</i></p>

The following themes appear in the analysis of the rising action in the category of *Situation*.

1. *The pressure to perform, testing, and professional competitiveness.*

A common experience for Mkabayi and Harriet is feeling as though they have to prove themselves in the academic space as well as consistently enduring the questioning and testing of their credibility by colleagues and, consequently, students. However, Mkabayi develops a way to navigate that pressure through performance. Both teacher-artists describe experiences of imposter syndrome and anxiety. Both describe experiences of professional jealousy and an unhealthy spirit of competitiveness within the workplace. This is Queen's experience as well, although her description is of fragmentation amongst staff in the university in general rather than in her discipline. The above-cited experiences are also isolating and antagonistic for the research participants, thus discouraging intimacy within their environment.

2. *Lack of political reform, decolonization, and stagnation of growth.*

The expectation of radical commitment to transforming the university emerges once more as a theme. However, this time Mkabayi believes decolonization is *not enough* motivation to

effect change beyond an artificial sense of performing what is academically trendy. Lindiwe cites a lack of political will within the theatre discipline to self-critique to transform and suggests that the call to decolonize is instead engaged at arms-length. This teacher-artist describes what she experiences as the deliberate stagnation of the growth of black female academics- where a focus on their pain is preferred over embodying their intelligence.

Interestingly, the theme of resistance arises again- in the resistance against fragmentation and the experience of isolation. While Mkabayi embraces solitude and seems to find solace in her isolation from colleagues, the notion of surrender to isolation is singular and the resistance of the same is described as collective. This suggests that unless colleagues work together, individuals *fall through the cracks* as it were. This points to the idea of community as a generator of relationship and intimacy.

Situation- Climax thematic summary

Table 10. Situation summary. Climax

Situation	Harriet	Mkabayi	Lindiwe	Queen
Climax	<p>Sense of failure</p> <p>Resignation after one year</p> <p>New work environment- more women, more help and accountability</p>	<p>Loneliness</p> <p>Leadership does not pay attention to unique struggle of emerging scholars</p>	<p>Wonk'umntu's death</p> <p>The grave</p> <p>Anti-Death fugitive</p> <p>Untrustworthy Decolonization</p>	<p>No space to process. Exhaustion.</p> <p>Fulfil university's toxic business mandate nonetheless.</p>

The dominant themes in the data classified as the *Climax* (combined) of the situation category as follows:

1. *The grave, loneliness, a sense of failure and exhaustion as well as no space to process.*

The higher education situation, as a context, is experienced as unhealthy in several different ways for all the teacher-artists. Queen reports high levels of exhaustion due to the lack of time to reflect on her work as well as adequately practice self-care. This teacher-artist appears to be the least negatively affected of the cohort. There is an inevitability about her acceptance of the reality of her university's *toxic business mandate*, even while she views it as detrimental to the well-being of herself, her colleagues and her students. Lindiwe's metaphoric description of her university as a grave reveals the negative impact of higher education as a context in her experience of teaching. What is interesting about this grave is that no one in higher education escapes it, according to Lindiwe's perspective. The university space is everyone's (teachers and students) death.

2. *Resistance/ implosion*

Harriet's resignation is interpreted as resistance to the all-encompassing turmoil of a teaching appointment in theatre pedagogy at Annikle at the time of the FeesMustFall movement.

Lindiwe takes up the role of the anti-death fugitive, devising methods of being awake through her pedagogy. Decolonization is problematized again, however, this time due to the untrustworthiness of the intimacy of one's body with colonization. Lindiwe contemplates the effectiveness of actions to decolonize if these are embodied in people previously educated in colonial universities in South Africa. An interesting contradiction is while Mkabayi experiences black women leaders as disconnected from the struggles of upcoming women academics, Harriet's experience results in her perception that women leaders who are intimately connected to the raced and gendered nature of the problems faced by staff are most likely to intervene in ways that demonstrate accountability.

Discussion Conclusion

Using the analysis of data, the key findings enable responses to the key research questions in the following ways:

- How do teacher-artists understand pedagogy and intimacy?

Teacher-artists initially understand theatre performance pedagogy and intimacy through pastoral relationships of belonging and care- specifically in school relationships with their teachers, in family relationships, and through their participation in theatre programs and community groups. Some of these relationships, however, allow for exploitation and violence (in this instance, psychological) as a result of intimate inequalities inherent in the pastoral relationships compounded with inequalities characterizing the socio-political context of South Africa. As duly noted about the higher education context in South Africa, "...the institutional cultures manifest in university systems and structures [are] implicated in the colonial-apartheid social formation." (Lebakeng et al., 2006, p. 71)

Teacher-artists also understand theatre performance pedagogy's intersection with intimacy as resistance to alienation within the academic institutions (Ndlovu et al., 2024) in which they were early career academics, as the vehicle for the transgression of institutional boundaries that limit personal social justice interventions (Courpasson et al., 2012) and as compensation for the lack of care and support that their students experience as a result of macro socio-economic inequality. Teacher-artists also manifest theatre performance pedagogy's relationship with intimacy through teaching strategies of emotional self-regulation that create the opportunities and personal safety necessary for student performers to take the risk of *feeling* in order to *connect*. Theatre Pedagogy is understood as necessarily intimately connected to the lived experiences of students to facilitate learning that is helpful beyond the classroom. Accordingly, as Kindelan (2004, p. 52) argues, "...dramaturgical activities emphasize the importance of community and cooperation over individualism.

Additionally, according to the experiences of teacher-artists, theatre performance pedagogy is understood as capable of creating and facilitating relationships of functional intimacy that are safe and that facilitate meaningful student-led action in the management of power, vulnerability and inequality as and when it shows up in the classroom. Teacher-artists understand theatre performance pedagogy as capable of facilitating introspection (Taylor, 2004) and self-care in students and themselves, as well as fostering skills of conscientization in the students (Freire, 2005). Finally, teacher-artists understand theatre pedagogy, through its intimate relationship with lived experience, as a kind of embodied search engine that facilitates research both internally (personally) and socially (with peers), as proposed by Servant-Miklos & Noordegraaf-Eelens (2019).

- What are the experiences of teacher-artists of pedagogy and intimacy?

Teacher-artists' experiences of theatre performance pedagogy and intimacy, in the time between their first encounter with theatre up to the time of their work as employees of higher education institutions, include the contradictory occurrence of economic empowerment and

personal exploitation. Their experiences also include both the benefits of mentorship and role modeling by teachers, maternal figures, and imposters, as well as the lack of support from potential mentors and colleagues. The experiences of teacher-artists are ambiguous in that there is something to gain for some, while other experiences come at a great cost. The experiences of economic exploitation and empowerment are intimately connected to state agendas of socio-economic redress as well as the opportunistic responses of some individuals to these agendas. Teacher-artists experience theatre pedagogy's intersection with intimacy in government-funded social justice programmes where the relationships built with audience members create unexpected but important bonds.

Teacher-artists experience imposed participation (and expectation to participate) in the decolonization of higher education despite misgivings about theatre pedagogy's assumed decolonized and, therefore, 'untouchable' status. Teacher-artists experience the raced and gendered imposed responsibility of facilitating transformation in theatre performance pedagogy and academic institutions in general. Similar to Walkinton's (2017, p.53) argument, "Intersecting power systems result in socially constructed and complex set[s] of social inequalities for black women [teacher-artists] working in higher education who experience these intersecting identities via their material reality"

Consequently, teacher-artists also experience feelings of distrust, inadequacy, and reluctance to participate in the transformation and decolonization agendas of higher education. Teacher artists experience the imposed pressure to reform as exerted by external agents and also as an internalized moral obligation. Teacher-artists experience versions of the antithesis of intimacy within theatre pedagogy in instances of alienation from the curriculum content as well as the environment of higher education. A paradox is that higher education is the same environment in which teacher-artists also experience meaningful and life-changing learning that is valued.

Teacher-artists experience their academic institutions' attitudes towards the discipline of theatre pedagogy as duplicitous therefore rendering the discipline and its staff vulnerable in the context of general academic politics within higher education. Additionally, teacher-artists experience professional competitiveness as well as raced and gendered professional 'testing' and pressure to prove their worth. This coincides with reports that "...black women in higher education... are constantly challenged to prove that their success is justly due and achieved and not an effect of affirmative action" (Chance, 2022, p.51). This pressure is mitigated only in instances where leadership is cognizant of the struggles of teacher-artists and thereby shows care.

Finally, teacher-artists experience and employ coping strategies that stagnate their academic growth. Some opposition to their growth is evident in the attitudes of their colleagues and institutions regarding their qualifications and the value and legitimacy of their academic contributions. Other strategies are expressed as resistance to conforming to systemic norms, which inadvertently shorten or negatively affect their career trajectories.

- Why do teacher-artists understand pedagogy and intimacy in the ways that they do?

When reading the evidence through the lens of the conceptual framework and the literature review, three answers are revealed: Transformation and its consequences, transference, and attachment/avoidance. First, the institutions attended in undergraduate and post-graduate studies affect the reasons teacher-artists experience pedagogy's relationship to intimacy in life-altering ways- Annikle Campus and Pentworth University provide both notably pleasant and traumatic pedagogical experiences for its student-performers.

If we consider the role of the epistemic and social upheaval of the FeesMustFall protests of 2015 and 2016, it is a reasonable (up to a significant degree) deduction that the unprecedented upheaval made higher education a volatile workplace environment for many students and academics and as such would have made any environment more or differently hostile to academics than it might have been without it. Like decolonization, FeesMustFall and the transformation policy are evidence of the external conditions of political change that significantly affect the public and private lives of individual citizens, including their educational journeys. All of the research participants attend and teach theatre pedagogy in an elongated time of transition for the South African higher education sector as evidenced in the literature review. It is, therefore, inevitable that theatre performance pedagogy is a platform where the intimate connection of a plethora of issues converges and manifests in the way the pedagogy and the intimacies it generates are experienced.

The institutionalized transformation policies responsible for the employment of the majority of the teacher-artists are more than likely also the reason for what I interpret as backlash—a sense that the transformation cohort is political recruits who receive special attention and, therefore, are received with skepticism by colleagues. Intensified by pervasive racism and its resultant epistemic injustices in higher education, the pressure to perform excellently is felt intimately by teacher-artists. This performance is equally about *earning* their place in a space where their employment is positioned as somehow unmerited and as a political favour. This context causes teacher-artists to experience high levels of self-doubt and self-scrutiny, thus becoming instrumental in the construction of institutional gaslighting inflicted upon them.

Institutional gaslighting is made possible through the intimacy of the contractual relationship between each teacher-artist and their institution of study and work, as well as each teacher-artist's ethos of pedagogy. Furthermore, the varied relationships that teacher-artists have with the institutions in which they practice inadvertently affect the understanding of intimacy and pedagogy of teacher-artists. Transference, trauma, and attachment/avoidance are all phenomena discussed as part of intimacy as experienced and understood by South Africans. Transition and transformation, while inevitable, are also processes that generate trauma.

I argue that much of the experiences of pedagogy and intimacy by teacher-artists are manifestations of their pedagogical response to the socio-political context of South Africa and the trauma inherent therein. For Queen, the moral drive to take care of her student-performers at the risk of depletion is a response to the trauma she sees her student-performers endure through no fault of their own. Her empathy is derived from the fact that "*they have it so much harder than us*" (Act 3, Scene 1). Harriet's trauma causes her to leave her teaching job after a year in which she wrestles with anxiety and imposter syndrome to survive the onslaught of epistemic and racial violence she experiences. It is this violence, turned to gaslighting, that causes Harriet to see herself and not the institution as failing in not being able to '*hold ground*' (Act 3, Scene 3). Mkabayi experiences the trauma of isolation and- by teaching theatre- being an academic misfit, with no one in leadership to provide support. The teacher-artist retreats to the classroom space to avoid interaction with colleagues, whom she understands '*...feel the need to protect themselves first*' (Act 3, Scene 3) as a result of the persistent need to navigate politics in the space.

Lindiwe takes on the role of fugitive and is afraid of being caught challenging the system. The teacher-artist feels enrolled as an accomplice to the intellectual and spiritual murder of her students. The aim of her pedagogy suggests there is transference present from the initial incident of coming into theatre violently. Much like my reasons for pursuing the original aims of this research, Lindiwe's pedagogy evidences a confrontation with a past relationship.

In the scene that follows, I provide a conclusion to the research that gives an overview of the study, discusses its limitations, and suggests possible future research trajectories. I also articulate the original contribution this research makes to the existing literature on higher education, theatre performance pedagogy, and intimacy.

Act 3. Scene 5: Conclusion

This scene serves as a reflection of this study—its triumphs, challenges, and shortcomings, as well as its implications for future research. I begin by reminding readers of the study's aims, continuing with a discussion of the methodological considerations, and concluding with an argument for the value of theatre performance pedagogy as an intimacy-generating pedagogy within higher education.

Purpose and focus revisited

This study sought to understand the intersection of theatre performance pedagogy and intimacy through the experiences of black female teacher artists working within the context of higher education in South Africa. The participant group was selected via purposeful sampling based on two criteria. First was that the study was developed from an initial idea of investigating the pedagogical consequences, if any, of the abuse of intimacy within rehearsal practice particularly, as reported to have been happening in some universities in the last decade. As a result of having been a victim of sexual harassment from my theatre teacher in my time as a student-performer, I sought to gather some of the individuals- all black women- whom I knew had been student-performers and teacher-artists who played instrumental and public roles in resisting the abuse of the closeness inevitable in rehearsal practice and who remained in higher education as lecturers of theatre practice. I imagined that these black female teacher-artists were ideal research participants for the project of situating intimacy within contemporary theatre pedagogy. This is a pedagogy, which as a result of the project of decolonization, is supposedly in transition. I imagined that these individuals would have a perspective on intimacy in theatre performance practice that is influenced by their experience and that would be evidenced in their present practice and theatre pedagogy.

In the end, the criteria of availability during the Covid 19 pandemic period played a key role in who remained as a research participant, from my original sample. Additionally, the fact that black female theatre practitioners working within institutions of higher learning make up very few of the authors of literature on theatre as an educational practice in South Africa, deemed the decision to remain with the demographic reasonable, despite the changes to the research.

Consequently, what took shape in the thesis was the intersection of intimacy with theatre pedagogy as a result of various approaches to the university transformation agenda, the socio-economic challenges of student-performers as well as the context of higher education as a place of political contestation. In the previous scene, I presented a two-part argument based on my interpretation of the findings. First, I argued that each research participant was in a relationship of intimacy with each of their institutions of learning and teaching and, as a result, had experienced what I theorize as intimate partner violence, specifically institutional gaslighting. I also argued that this occurrence was tantamount to epistemic injustice coupled with the fact that these academics teach a subjugated form of knowledge. Secondly, I presented political and ideological transition as a messy and complex process for which all stakeholders of higher education are equally responsible if the project is to succeed and the system is to be inclusive in ways that are meaningful to epistemic minorities like the teaching staff and students of theatre performance.

Methodological Considerations and Limitations

Narrative Inquiry facilitated a research process that prioritized the lived experiences, as well as the interpretations and meanings of those experiences, from the point of view of each teacher-artist and me. This created a relationship of intimacy between the research participants and myself as a primary researcher and between myself and their stories which both strengthened and complicated the process of interpreting the data.

As an Indigenous insider, part of the strength of my positionality was that as a colleague within the subjugated knowledge field of theatre performance studies, I could relate even at a visceral level to much of what the teacher artists shared. I understood at an intimate level the events that the research participants described and, more significantly, how these events made the teacher-artists feel about themselves, the student-performers, and the context within which they navigated a theatre profession. This made their testimonies trustworthy and plausible to me. It also enabled a very strong case of intersubjectivity that worked to expose nuances about a gendered and raced reading of the higher education theatre performance teaching that has not before been achieved. This case is detailed with resonances but is simultaneously *not* homogenous since each teacher-artist's journey, by virtue of the method of telling one's own story, is unique.

The methodology also allowed me to see the similarities across experiences as well as the idiosyncrasies specific to theatre performance pedagogy at each institution represented in the study. This has proved important in the overall argument of this research as well as created a base for further research that will prove valuable as institutions work to decolonize and reimagine their curriculum programmes. The Indigenous insider position also made the interview interactions free-flowing, which generated the trust necessary to delve into the emotional and psychological experiences of the teacher-artists. This added depth to the research. However, what became very apparent was that even while the research participants were not the teacher-artists I had hoped to work with initially, the in-contact three-day workshop that I had planned but did not happen would have yielded extraordinary data. The research participants expressed the need for greater support in a workplace context that they each described as often alienating. Consequently, there was a defined keenness for the gathering with other black women teacher-artists in a safe space where we each could learn from each other. This is an opportunity none of us were able to have in this project.

While it is possible that hosting even one online session, where the participants gathered together, might have yielded data beneficial to the study, it may have also been reckless for the effectiveness and, thus, the credibility of the research methodology. This is because at the time, September-December 2020, each of the research participants and I was engaged with the chaotic and unpredictable complications of delivering online instruction of a pedagogy we had all only ever known as in-contact, physical practice. Each of us was simultaneously managing the socio-economic and traumatic upheaval caused by the pandemic in our personal lives, including a case of gender-based violence. Consequently, I was concerned about my ability to facilitate and hold (emotionally and cognitively) such a conversation between four possible strangers who would have been required to engage intimately over a then foreign and often uncomfortable online platform. I would have been required to generate a sense of ensemble and togetherness amidst internet connectivity disruptions, power outages, and the consequences of working from home, which had specific strenuous domestic and professional implications for female academics.

Sharing autobiographical writing and samples of lesson plans from the research participants and discussing this material during the interviews would have provided greater insight into the thought processes of the research participants about theatre pedagogy curriculum. However, this was designed to be an embodied conversation different in nature from the seated interview scenario. A more in-depth understanding of the ideological underpinnings of theatre performance pedagogy from the point of view of four practitioners might have pointed to further discoveries about theatre pedagogy across the four universities cited in the research. Additionally, the process of triangulation might have been even stronger as a result of this. In retrospect, the resonance and spirit of comradeship that emerged in my conversations swayed the direction of my semi-structured interview questioning much more than anticipated, as a result of my vulnerability.

I believe I greatly underestimated the effects of the trauma of my own wounds suffered within the messiness of the higher education system, most specifically during the process of conducting the research. At the time, I needed resonance and validation, and the teacher-artists, as well as the intimate position of an insider, provided that. In retrospect, the research unfolded in the best way it could have, considering the overall circumstances, and exactly as it should have been for both myself and the research participants. However, while giving the credit due to the uniqueness, depth, and scope of research generated as a result of my positionality, an outsider's perspective would undoubtedly have revealed things about the knowledge produced here that are vastly different in perspective. Consequently, the strength of this study- is that it is written by someone who is black and female, who is a survivor of sexual harassment within the context of theatre performance pedagogy, who experienced intimate partner violence simultaneously writing this thesis, and who is a teacher-artist- is also very much the sum of the study's limitation.

This limitation is specifically regarding how intensely subjective the study is and how this may adversely affect the overall trustworthiness of the study. In a narrative inquiry context different from mine, I might agree with an argument that suggests that hearing alternative voices, in other words, those outside of black women, would make for a more reliable study. However, the merits of this research's particular circumstances put trustworthiness that is based on plausibility itself under scrutiny. This is because what is plausible in the experience of the teacher-artist is extraordinary to the outsider.

Furthermore, if the changes to the study aim and design are considered, if it is considered that the initial changes are a direct result of systematic dysfunction most detrimental to those most marginalized within higher education, if we consider that this study provides evidence that black women students and staff of theatre performance pedagogy form part of that marginalized demographic, if the conditions of the COVID-19 national lockdown and its implications for women at home and in the workplace are soberly considered and if the inciting incident of this research is considered as well as the internal repression that causes a doctoral researcher to opt for self-censorship rather than increase the scope of her research in fear of risking another systemic delay, then subjectively telling my story as a black woman in theatre university education is arguably more reasonable than not.

That is, until conditions in higher education change. I argue here that teacher artists must necessarily tell their stories subjectively. In as subjective a manner as is necessary for other scholars whose race and gender affect their higher education experiences to use the data as support when they too must one day tell their extraordinary stories. Otherwise, no one will believe us. Without these deeply personal accounts, no one in academia will believe these stories are plausible, trustworthy or even reliable. In my view black women theatre pedagogy academics cannot afford that.

Moreover, this cohort of academic professionals deserves to have their peers and scholars in positions that can effect change and understand the extent to which the higher education space is one in which black women suffer and survive several injustices at a time. These stories are of things that happen to real people. When the conditions in higher education make the requirement of less subjective work a more ethical rather than just political ask, it will allow others like myself the space to tell our stories in ways that are far less focused on ourselves.

For now, this is my story. My story is a stance against an expectation of trustworthiness that limits my subjectivity in a space where the rules of engagement are designed so disfavouredly against black women teacher-artists that rigor, reliability, and plausibility for black women teacher-artists are not the same as for others.

Review of the study

In Act 1, the introduction of the study, I presented Freitag's pyramid of the literary elements of drama as a structure, which would also serve to contextualize my adaptation of the analytical approach to the data (stories) in Act 3. I made the point that academic research in the field of theatre pedagogy is necessarily an intersection of the myriad of roles and identities I hold as a human being and a black woman. Consequently, I asked that the reader openly engage with a writing style that included personal anecdotes, poetry, and reflections. This request and the shared material were used as performative elements to further demonstrate the effectiveness of theatrical methods of communication in generating intimacy. In Act 1, I also articulate the key research questions.

In Act 2, I shared a conceptual outline of Intimacy that frames the thesis discussion. Most significantly, following a detailed conceptualization referencing literature, artists, and scholars across the globe, I conceptualized intimacy as a South African phenomenon highlighting the consistent role that the state- apartheid and democratic- has played in the management of interaction, closeness, and sexual intimacy through legislature and public health strategies from the Group Areas act of 1950 to social distancing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Finally, I focused on the deadly reality of physical and emotional violence for black females as an expressed part of intimate relationships within the South African context.

In the Literature review, the articulation of theatre performance as pedagogy outlays three distinct types of pedagogy interweaving in theatre- embodied, critical, and engaged pedagogy. In the discussion on higher education, I begin with a global perspective of the movement and then focus on the local context of the agenda of transformation and the movement for decolonization of epistemic systems.

In Act 3, I articulate the rationale behind the selection of Narrative Inquiry as methodology given the transition from the original aims and design of the research to the reimagined focus area as covered in the research as presented presently. I argue against the interpretation of the research as decolonial, even as *testimonia* as a method is imperative because while the research participants talk about decolonization, the purpose of the research was not for that purpose. I share the data generated in the research interviews as re-storied narratives. The stories are organized into three categories, as per the three-dimensional analysis approach. A thematic analysis frames the discussion scene in which I conclude that the research participants showed courage and vulnerability amid racial, cultural, and institutional gaslighting as a manifestation of intimate partner violence in the relationship between the teacher-artists and their institutions. The scene is followed by this conclusion in which possible research questions for future studies are constructed as a result of the findings of the study as well as the acknowledgement of its limitations.

Pedagogical Implications and Future Considerations

This study points to the need for continued investigation of the effects of racial and gendered social experiences on knowledge generation within the field of theatre performance. A field famous for its local effectiveness and global reach in political conscientization regarding the atrocities of apartheid South Africa, theatre performance belongs in spaces driven by both educational and political agendas. While the category of Applied theatre is the field most obviously expected to focus on social reform, my experience of teaching multiple theatre approaches has demonstrated that intimate aspects of challenging oppressive ideologies and confronting the ugly residue of history can be addressed in how we engage with *all* theatre students and in *all* methods of theatre teaching.

Furthermore, theatre is also capable of raising the banner for those presently living with socio-political trauma. What teacher-artists choose as content in the intimate space of the classroom can be facilitated in appropriate and effective ways to highlight this plight. Our curriculum can benefit from such intentionality and focus because it is an intimacy-generating pedagogy whether we actively *utilize* the intimacy or not. Our pedagogy has the mechanism within it to mitigate asymmetrical power, continuously invent alternatives to the ways people traditionally interact in interpersonal and communal spaces, promote inclusiveness, and creatively engage with emotionally difficult content. This means theatre pedagogy in higher education has a significant role to play in the social and epistemic transition from injustice inherent as a result of South Africa's deeply painful past to a future limited only by our imagination

Finally, an argument can be made that this study concludes itself as a form of productive resistance (Courpasson et al., 2012) to higher education as a teaching and learning environment for teacher-artists and intimacy-generating pedagogy. This reasoning is partly appropriate since resisting involves not only challenging but even disrupting the way power is configured in the workplace in order to produce the changes or interventions desired. In the stories shared, there were many instances and ways in which the teacher-artists worked to resist the status quo for the betterment of themselves and their students. Moreover, effective resistance involves "choosing collaborators [to] reflect on a given dysfunctional situation [to] draw conclusions and formalise recommendations" (Courpasson et al., 2012, p. 817). These are all characteristics of resistance that are accomplished here. However, as a caution, McCabe (2018) reminds those of us who are advocates for change in workspaces that, inevitably, "...resistance is embedded within and reproduces existing workplace norms" (2018, p. 259). This means resistance and, by implication, resisters, are always at risk of creating the very practices and ideologies they wish to contest. In the case of theatre pedagogy within higher education, this would suggest that offensive and undesirable ways of utilising the intimacy generated in theatre education may be repeatable by resisters. To mitigate this, I argue that establishing communities of practice (much like the workshops initially planned as part of this study), albeit in the liminal and peripheral spaces of academic experience (Ndlovu et al., 2024), will provide critical friendships and the sharing of experiences and strategies necessary to collectively forge a constructive way forward. This study is one such example. Ultimately, the aim would be to continually "generate knowledge and a common vocabulary for [resistance] action..." (Courpasson et al., 2012, p. 817) even while there are slippages and risks in the ambiguous work of changing workplace environments.

Epilogue

*A higher education institution held a theatre event celebrating the work of their graduates. I was invited (as a theatre academic) to form part of a panel of audience members. At the event, two students staged an adapted production of British playwright²⁹ Jasmine Lee-Jones's (2020) *Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*. This was a play in which a³⁰ "...[a] young Black woman takes to Twitter to voice her frustration with white women profiting off Black culture and stereotypes". The context was a conversation between friends- two young black females living in the UK.*

The script was an intensely bold depiction of a young woman's resistance against the cultural appropriation of blackness as identity. It also tackled issues of difference in hair texture, pigmentation and sexuality amongst black females quite skillfully. However, while the text was well-adapted to a South African setting by the teacher-artist responsible for directing the piece, I felt somewhat bothered by the performers' embodiment of the work. My view was that the performance was missing... something.

After the curtain call, an interesting discussion on the role of theatre in South African politics was held through a facilitated question & answer segment that involved both the performers and their teacher-director. Ordinarily, such robust public discussion at the theatre is welcome however on this occasion even the play was upstaged by the comments of a white female academic in the audience. I will refer to her as Gloria.

²⁹ Lee-Jones, J. (2021). *Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*. Methuen Drama.

³⁰ Drama Online. (n.d.). *Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*. <https://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/playtext-overview?docid=do-9781350208803&tocid=do-9781350208803-div-00000003>

A few moments before Gloria spoke, I had opened the interactive engagement the student-performers in an interactive style. While this happened, the performers were seated on the stage floor, visibly depleted from the intense performance. Based on what I remember asking the student performers, I think I may have been the first of the panel members to speak.

Narrator: *That was a really moving and very intense performance ladies, how are you feeling? The question was deliberate. I was creating the space for the student-performers to begin the process of de-roling by sharing their emotions as performers. The aim was to allow the students enough distance from their fictitious roles to be able to participate meaningfully in the Q&A. The first performer answered.*

Student-performer 1: *Honestly, I am exhausted.*

The actor wiped tears from her face as she responded and continued to tell us that the exhaustion was a result of how intimately she had related to the intensity of the feelings of the character she had just portrayed. The performer explained that the exploration of the character had taken over a month and in that time she had experienced a familiar connection with the subject material. The second performer had a similar response. Feeling that they were in the state of mind to think critically, I used the opportunity to share my earlier discomfort.

Narrator: *I am going to share how I feel about the overall performance as part of my feedback. And then I would like your response to what I share. Yeah?*

The performers both nodded.

I commended them for tackling a difficult topic that they both had expressed an intimate understanding of and acknowledged that "...this kind of work takes a lot". I also admitted to 'catching feelings' as someone coming from a similar position of resonance but that as a theatre researcher, I felt particularly uncomfortable. I explained that I felt displeased with the way the play ended. To be precise, I used the words, "It made me angry".

I explained that I felt aggrieved by what seemed to be a suggestion in the script that the solution for black women aggrieved by racism was to bury the pain born of racially discriminatory encounters and 'move on'. I then asked the performers to comment on this interpretation.

Narrator: *Does that feeling, of anger, about the way the play ends, resonate with you at all? I realize I am from a different generation from you guys, which I suspect plays a huge part in how I feel.*

In retrospect, I noticed the woman that sat beside me stirred uncomfortably as the audience hummed in agreement when I spoke of my anger. But I paid her no mind at first.

The performers on stage responded in beautiful ambivalence that articulated how difficult it was to be young and "born-free" in a South Africa that expected a certain level of consciousness and political action from them, based solely on their race. Their responses were rigorous, unscripted, and authentic. Needless to say, as a panelist, I felt that their critical thinking skills were extremely impressive. It was clear the performers had undergone much learning through their process and in the present conversation. It was in the midst of this meaningful discussion, that Gloria had raised her hand to speak.

At first, Gloria acknowledged all the black female political heavyweights in the room, of which there turned out to be quite a few, much to the surprise of the audience. This show of respect to the guests is how I came to learn that Gloria herself held a position of authority at the institution. She then proceeded to apologize profusely for wearing a Seshweshwe skirt- a garment made of hemp cloth traditionally worn by Basotho women. Gloria voluntarily described how she interpreted wearing this skirt as cultural appropriation since, as she explained it, she was a white woman and not of Basotho ethnicity.

However, in the same breath, Gloria also argued that since she had received the skirt as a gift from someone who was Mosotho, wearing it on her part was equally as appropriate as it was not. In essence, Gloria first apologized for what she identified as problematic, in line with the play's themes, and then proceeded to justify the said appropriation.

The audience stirred uncomfortably.

As if that was not awkward enough, Gloria then turned to face me directly.

Gloria: *I agree that it is offensive to say just get over it, we should rather take our anger, turn it into rocks and beat everyone with it.'*

The sarcasm was hurtful and intentional.

Some days later, I shared this story with my therapist who is herself a black woman academic.

Narrator: *Why host a play like that, a play about contemporary race issues, invite a diverse audience and then expect us to respond in ways that make you comfortable? So, then hosting the play was just about the hype?*

Therapist: *Mmm, she tried to use her authority to undermine your comment.*

I listened to my therapist's response and immediately, I thought of Lindiwe's comment about black woman teacher-artists in higher education: "...we want your pain, not your intelligence." At that, I felt both disheartened and grateful for my research and recognized the sense of ambiguity as familiar.

Narrator: *I hear you doc, but that's gonna have to change. These clever blacks are here to stay! We both laughed in agreement marking the end of our session.*

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Appendices

Appendix A. Ethics documents

INFORMATION SHEET

Date: 12 September 2020

Dumela.

My name is Ayanda Khala-Phiri, a PhD candidate from the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus).

My contact details are: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

My supervisor's name is Prof. Nyna Amin.

Her contact details are: amin@ukzn.ac.za and 031 260 7255

You are invited to consider participating in a study that involves researching the experiences of female teacher-directors (TDs) and teacher-performers (TPs) of Performance Studies in higher education. The aim and purpose of this research is to study and understand what, from the point of view of teachers, constitutes rehearsal pedagogy as well as how participants of rehearsal in higher education experience closeness and physical and emotional interaction in relation to pedagogy in the space of theatre rehearsal.

The study is titled Intimacy as / and Pedagogy: Teaching Rehearsal in Higher Education.

PARTICIPATION

The research is designed for participation in three moments.

- First, the research will involve one-on-one interviews which will take place telephonically, via skype or face-to-face at a place of your convenience.
- Secondly, participate in a three-day rehearsal workshop involving all the participants of the study (estimated 6 participants in total). A qualified Drama therapist will be present throughout the duration of the workshop to facilitate daily group debriefing sessions as well as individual debriefing should you so require. The workshop will involve the following procedures: participant observation, embodied storytelling, autobiographical writing, lesson plan analysis and group discussion.
- Finally, the narrative write-up of the research text will be done via consultation on a one-on-one basis after the workshop sessions. You will be free to add data or omit data generated in the interview or at the rehearsal workshop.
- Kindly note there is no payment for participation, however all accommodation and transport costs incurred participation will be provided.
- Participation in this research is voluntary. The names of institutions, related module names, theatre productions as well as the participants in research will be replaced with pseudonyms throughout the study, which includes the narrative write-up of the final research text.
- Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any point without incurring penalty or loss of benefit.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study may involve discomforts like disclosing aspects of your teaching experiences with other participants. You have the right not to disclose sensitive information. A qualified Drama therapist will be available should you require emotional support and debriefing.

Furthermore, fictional details (including coding and the altering of geographical location and dates) will be included to embellish details of the narrative presentation of the research publication where accidental exposure of your identity may exist.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at the above stipulated details or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan
Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

This study has been ethically reviewed and provisionally approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

There will be no financial benefits, incentives or reimbursements accrued by participants as a result of participation in the study.

Ka boikokobetso
Mme Ayanda Khala-Phiri

INFORMED CONSENT

DECLARATION

(Please fill in the below information should you choose to participate in the study)

I _____ (please _____ insert
name)..... have

been informed about the study entitled *Intimacy as/and Pedagogy: Teaching rehearsal in Higher education* by Ayanda Khala-Phiri.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I understand that in the write up of the research my identity will be kept confidential.

I have been informed about the psychosocial support available to me as part of participating in the study.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher, supervisor or university research office at the above provided details.

ADDITIONAL CONSENT

I hereby consent to:

Audio-recording of interview / focus group discussion	YES / NO
Use of photographs for academic purposes	YES / NO
Publication of papers based on the study	YES / NO
Presentation of the study at conferences	YES/ NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date



17 December 2019

Ms Ayanda Khala-Phiri (215082575)
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Khala-Phiri,

Protocol reference number : HSS/1460/018D

Project title: Intimacy as/ and Pedagogy: Teaching rehearsal in Higher Education


Approval Notification - Expedited Application This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 03 December 2019 and 13 September 2019 to our letter of 14 March 2019 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid for one year until 17 December 2020.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Shamila Naidoo (Acting Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Professor Nyna Amin
 cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Ansurie Pillay
 cc School Administrator: Ms M Ngcobo

**Humanities & Social Sciences Research
 Ethics Committee Dr Rosemary Sibanda
 (Chair)**

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 **Facsimile:** +27 (0) 31 260 4609 **Email:** ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

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Appendix B. Field text Production Plan (Original design)

Questions	How do TD/TPs understand intimacy and pedagogy within Performance Studies?
Why is the field text being produced?	To obtain thick descriptions of the ways in which TD/TPs recognize and understand intimacy and pedagogy in the rehearsal classroom.
What is the research strategy?	Structured interviews Lesson plan analysis
Who (or what) will be the sources of the field texts?	Four higher education TD/ TPs.
How many of the field text sources will be accessed?	Four higher education TD/ TPs.
Where is the field text to be produced?	Various neutral (not universities) locations, telephonically or via email correspondence.
How often will field text be produced?	Twice- First, in face to face or telephonic structured interviews. Secondly, the lesson plans will be analysed and discussed in follow-up workshop.
How will field texts be recorded?	Audio-recording and written accounts.

<u>Questions</u>	What are TD/TPs' experiences of intimacy and pedagogy in rehearsal (past and present)?
Why is the field text being produced?	To obtain thick descriptions of the experiences of TD/ TPs of the relationship of pedagogy and intimacy in the rehearsal classroom.
What is the research strategy?	Focus group discussions (interactive, embodied storytelling) Field notes Autobiographical writing
Who (or what) will be the sources of the field texts?	Four higher education TD/ TPs.
How many of the field text sources will be accessed?	Four higher education TD/TPs.
Where will the field texts be produced?	Interactive three-day workshop- neutral location.
How often will the field texts be produced?	Twice- the data will be generated at a three-day workshop. The interim texts (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) and research texts will be shared via member checking (Dwyer, 2017) following the workshop.
How will field texts be recorded?	Audio recording, written accounts and photography.

<u>Questions</u>	Why do teachers experience intimacy and pedagogy in the ways that they do?
Why is the field text being produced?	To build a detailed argument/ theory explaining the circumstances that result in teachers' experiences of intimacy and pedagogy in rehearsal.
What is the research strategy?	Field notes (including interim texts). Autobiographical writing
Who (or what) will be the sources of the field texts?	Recorded documentation (including interim texts) from the workshop retreat. Four higher education TD/ TPs.
How many of the field text sources will be accessed?	Four higher education TD/ TPs.
Where is the field text to be collected?	Various neutral (not universities) locations, telephonically or via email correspondence. Interactive three day workshop retreat.
How often will field texts be produced?	Three times- first in one on one structured interviews. Secondly, the data will be collected via participant-observation at a three-day workshop. Thirdly, the data will be shared and constructed (member checking) via email correspondence.
How will field texts be recorded?	Written, narrative accounts and participant observation in the workshop retreat.

Appendix C. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedule will be used to generate narrated field texts of the past and present experiences of rehearsal of individual teacher-directors/ teacher-performers. The interviews are scheduled to occur first in order will allow for deep, reflective thinking about what each participant would like to share in the following workshop where participation will be at a collective level.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

Thank you (participant's name) for agreeing to do this interview. As explained in our conversations prior to today, this interview will focus on your experiences of rehearsal as a teacher-director/ teacher- performer and will be audio-recorded. My intention is that this experience should feel comfortable for the both of us so please feel free to ask any questions that may come up for you during our conversation. You are free to choose not to answer any question I may ask you. You are also welcome to include a question (or a few) that you think is meaningful that I may have not asked as well as to suggest a topic area related to the research that you would like to talk about. If you understand everything I've told you, we can begin the interview with your permission. We'll start with a few questions about you and then move on to more in-depth questions about your experiences.

WARM UP QUESTIONS:

All questions to be followed by probing questions, where necessary

- a) Please tell me about yourself.

Details of teacher-director/ teacher-performer context

- a) When and under what circumstances did you come to study Drama and Performance?
- b) How long have you been a teacher-director/ teacher-performer of Performance Studies?

QUESTIONS ON EXPERIENCES:

All questions to be followed by probing questions, where necessary

Rehearsal as a performance studies student.

- a) Please describe, if you can recall, your first impression of a practical class as a performance studies student.
- b) Please describe the most memorable rehearsal experience you had as a student.
- c) In what ways were your practical classes similar or different to your production rehearsals as a student?

Thinking about/ experiencing pedagogy as a student

- d) If asked to think back, what would you say you learned in rehearsal as a student?
- e) What did you understand to be the purpose of rehearsal when you were a performance studies student?
- f) Where did you get this idea from?
- g) If asked to think back, what do you recall doing in rehearsal as a student?

Thinking about/ experiencing rehearsal as a professional theatre practitioner.

- a) Let's talk about your experiences of rehearsal as a professional theatre director/ performer. Please describe your last rehearsal as a professional theatre practitioner.
- b) If asked to think back, what would you say you have learned in rehearsal as a professional theatre practitioner that was different from what you learned as a student?

Thinking about/ experiencing intimacy in professional directing/ performing.

- c) Are/where there any activities in your rehearsals as a professional that require/s you (or in which you have required others) to be close either physically or emotionally to others in the rehearsal cast?
- d) (If yes) How do/did you (or the people you required) respond to this requirement?
- e) How do/did you (or the people you required) respond to closeness?

CLOSING REMARKS:

We've come to the end of the interview process as I had planned it. Are there any questions or parts of our conversation that you would like to go over again?

Following today's conversation, I will work on transcribing the recordings of our interview. As soon as the transcribing process is complete, I will send the texts to you to check for accuracy as well as to give you the opportunity to request for any edits or changes you may wish for me to make. Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences with me.

Appendix D. Tables and Figures

Figure 1. Freytag's (1895) pyramid. A depiction of the Literary Elements of Drama

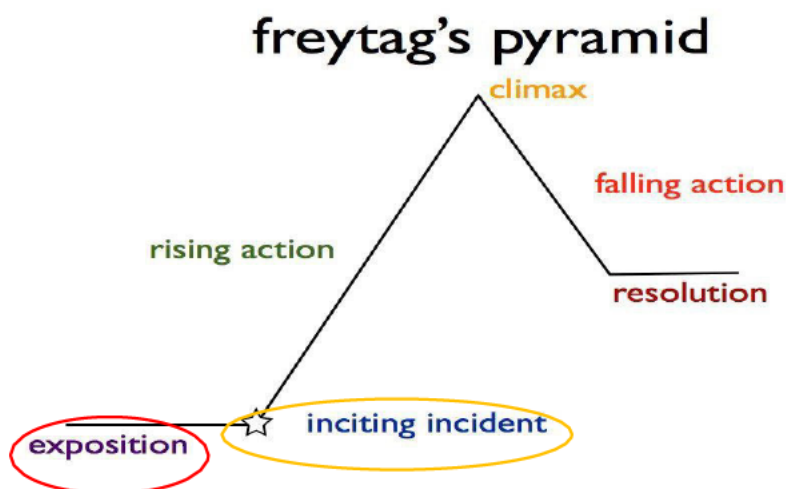


Figure 2. Original Methodology design for Data generation.

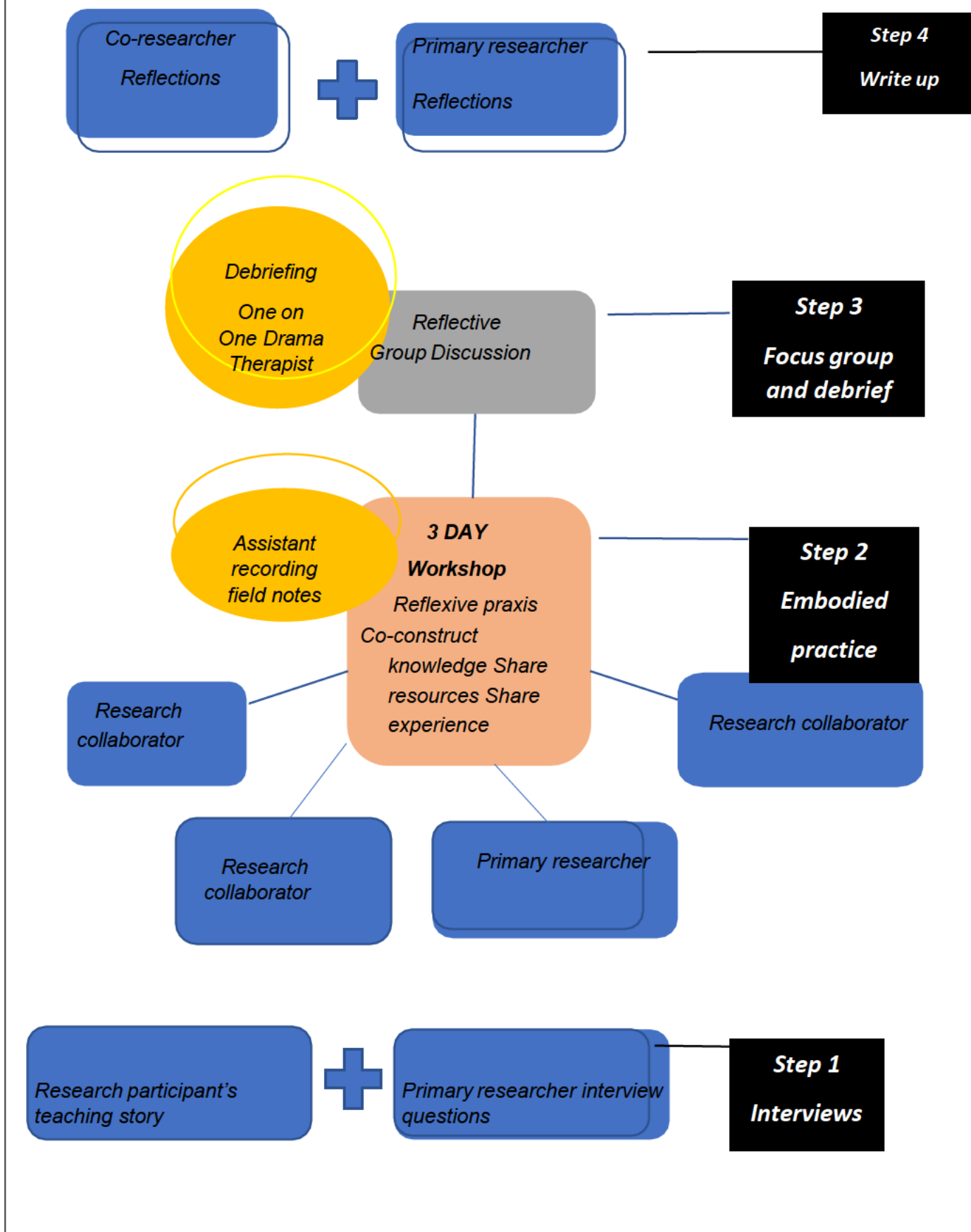


Figure 3. Harriet Khoza's Opening story. Continuity.

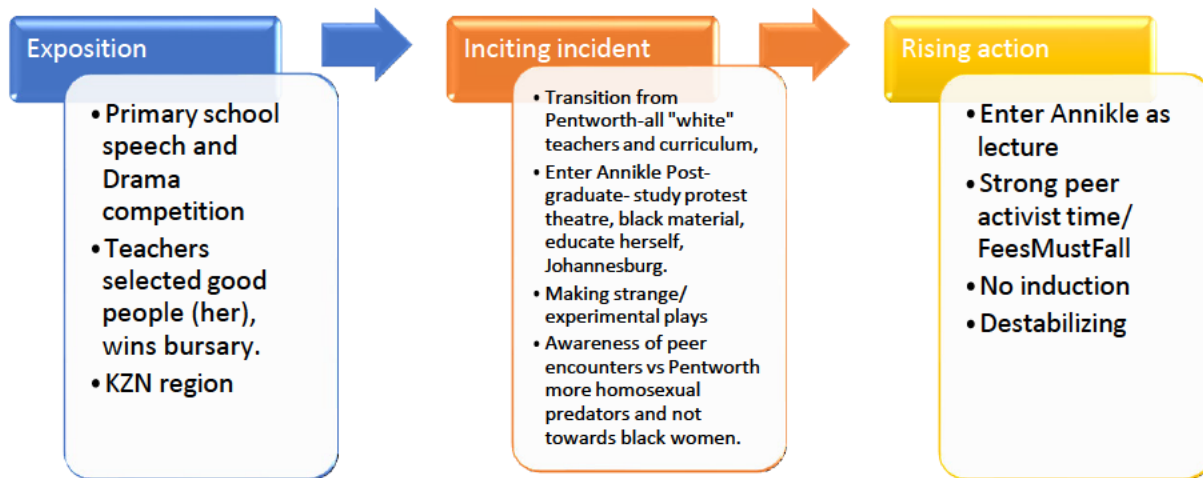


Figure 4. Queen Sono's Opening story. Continuity.

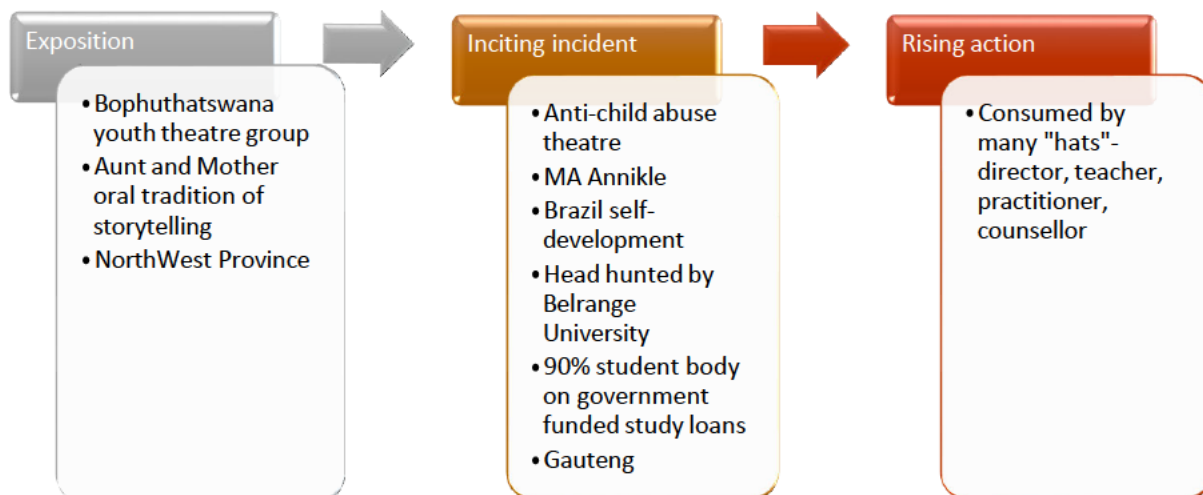


Figure 5. Lindiwe Dikana's Opening story. Continuity

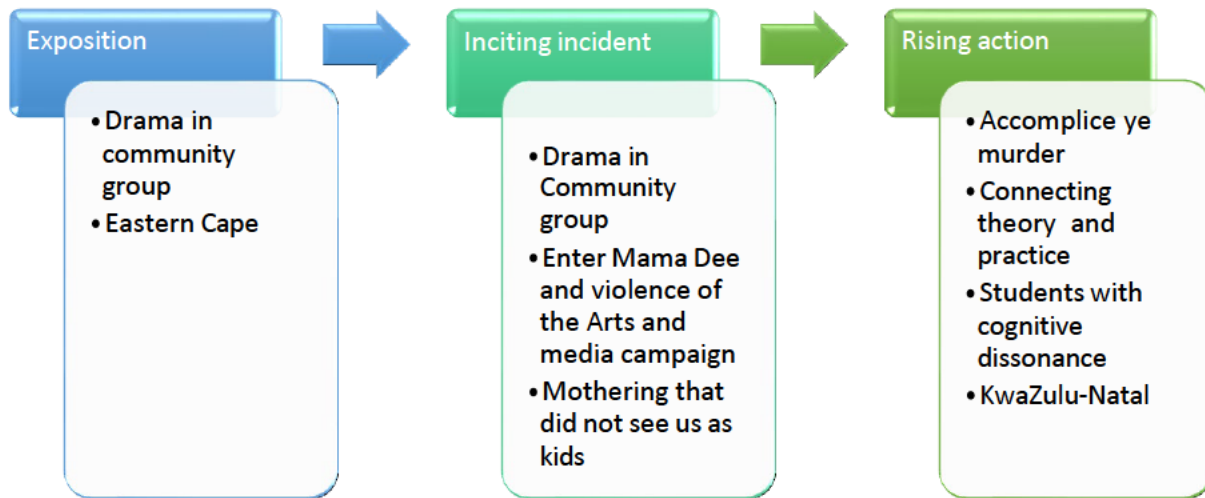


Figure 6. Mkabayi Zungu's Opening story. Continuity.

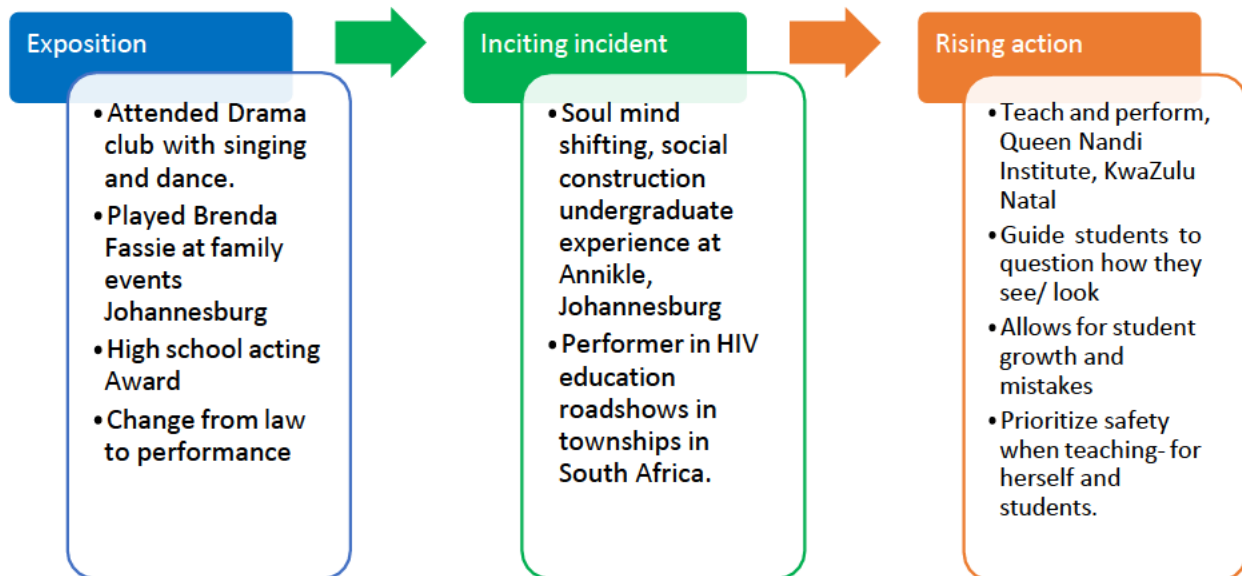


Figure 7. Freytag's (1895) pyramid focuses on the *inciting incident*, *rising action* and *climax*.

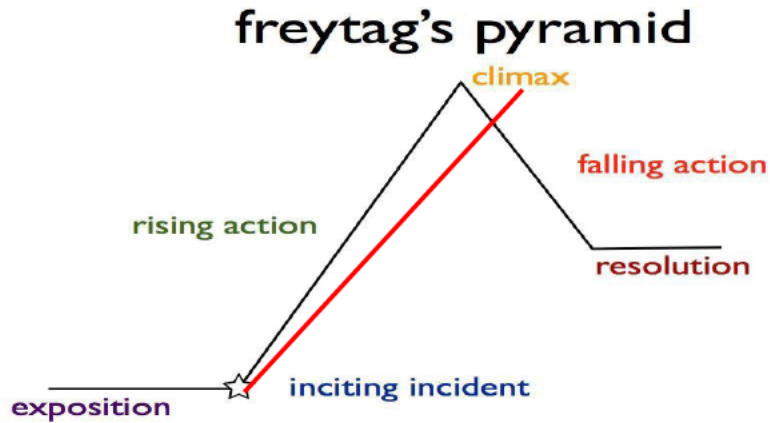


Figure 8. Lindiwe Dikana's *Story of Pedagogy. Interaction*.

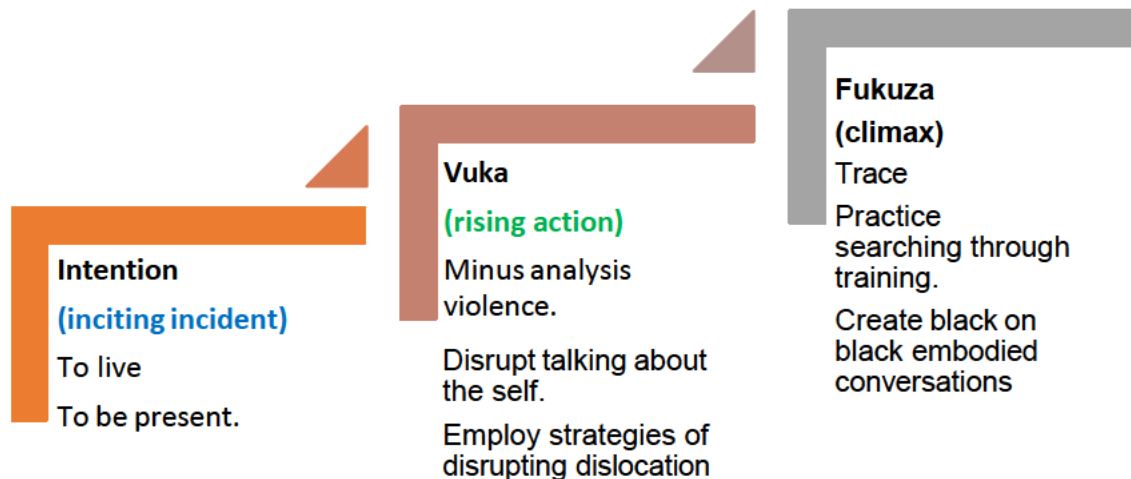


Figure 9. Mkabayi Zungu's pedagogy begins with the climax as the teacher's goal.



Figure 10. Mkabayi Zungu's Story of Pedagogy. Interaction.



Figure 11. Harriet Khoza's pedagogy- the climax is the sharing of a character's emotional state with an audience.

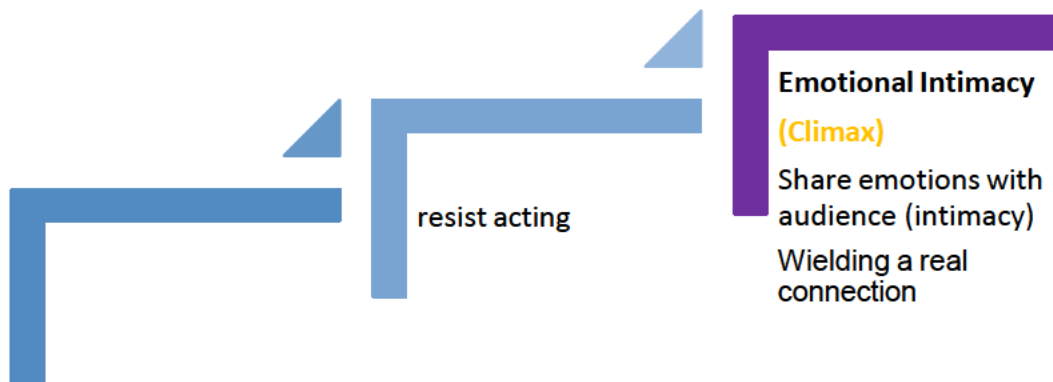


Figure 12. Harriet Khoza's Story of Pedagogy. Interaction.

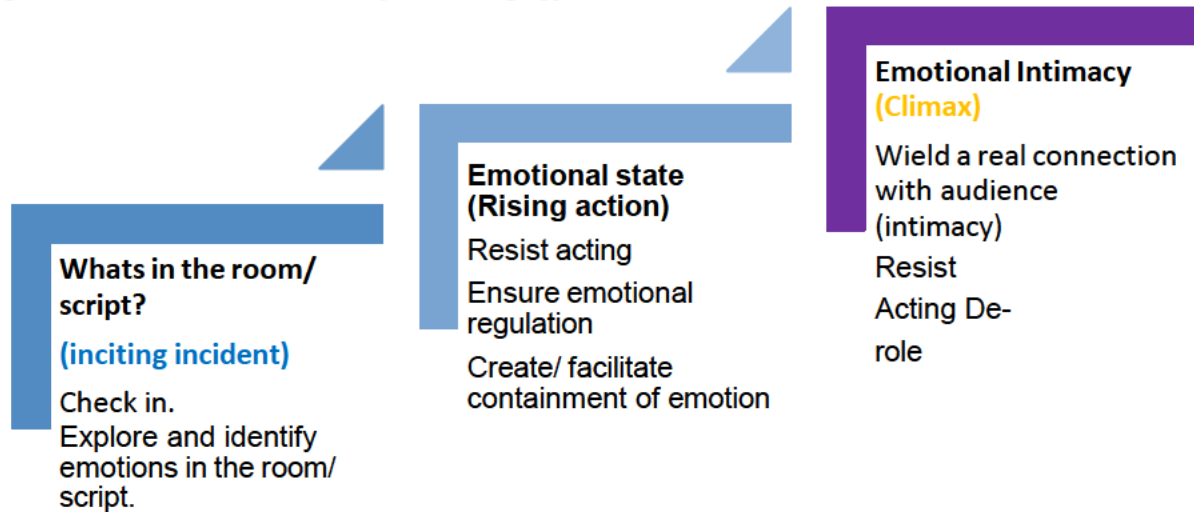


Figure 13. Queen Sono's Story of Pedagogy. Interaction.



Figure 14. Queen Sono's Story of Higher education. Situation

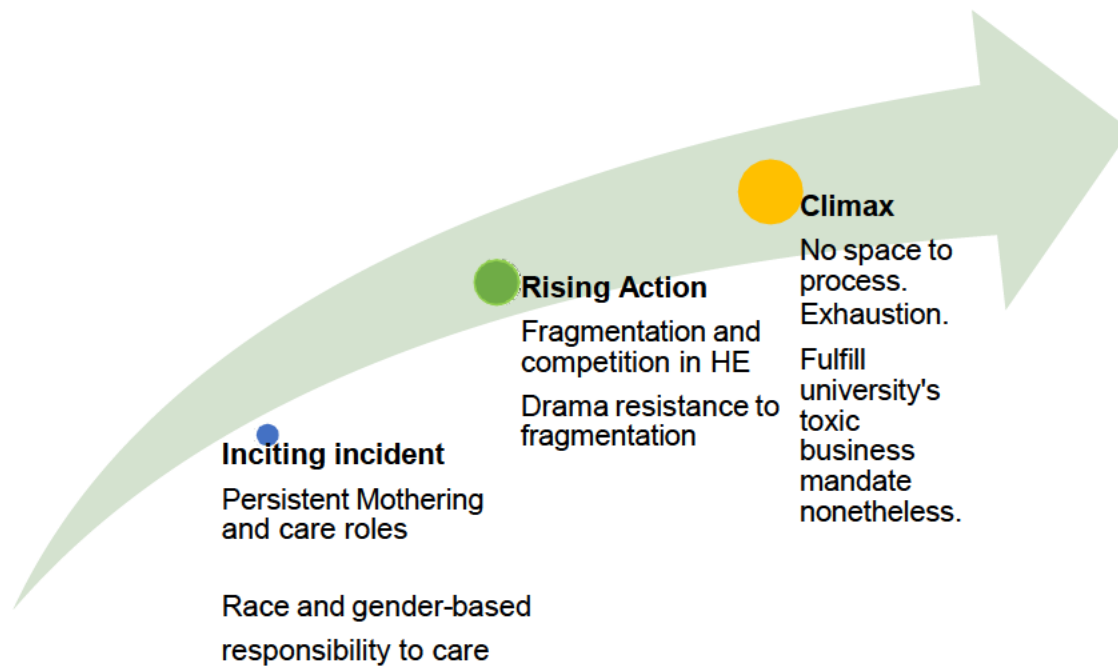


Figure 15. Lindiwe Dikana's Story of Higher education. Situation.

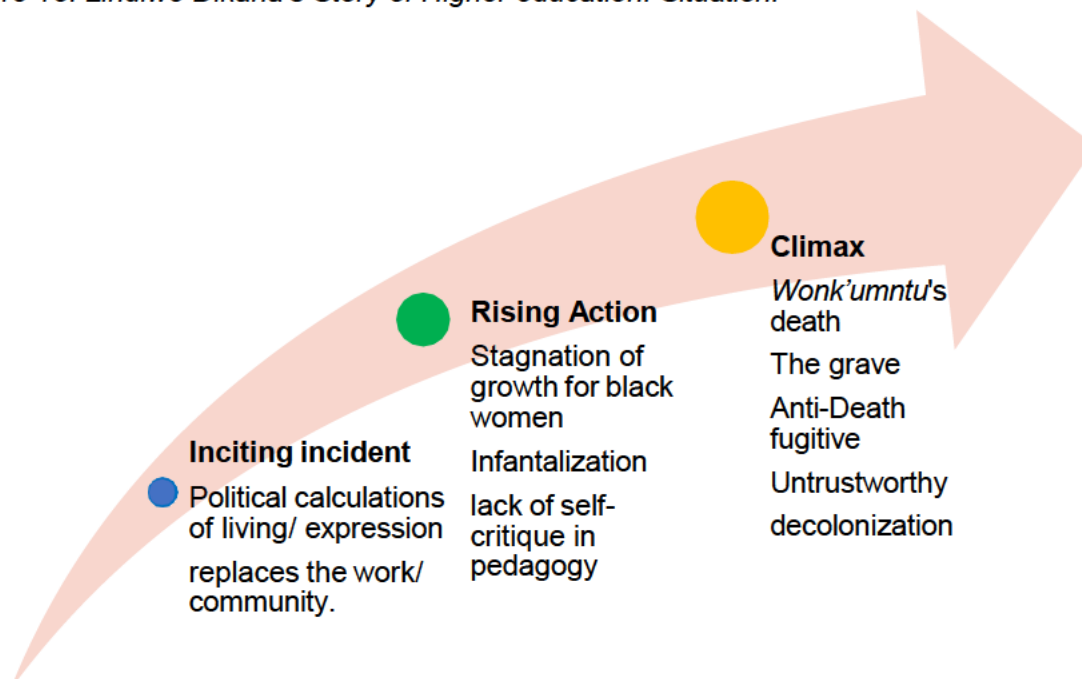


Figure 16. Mkabayi Zungu's story of Higher education. Situation.

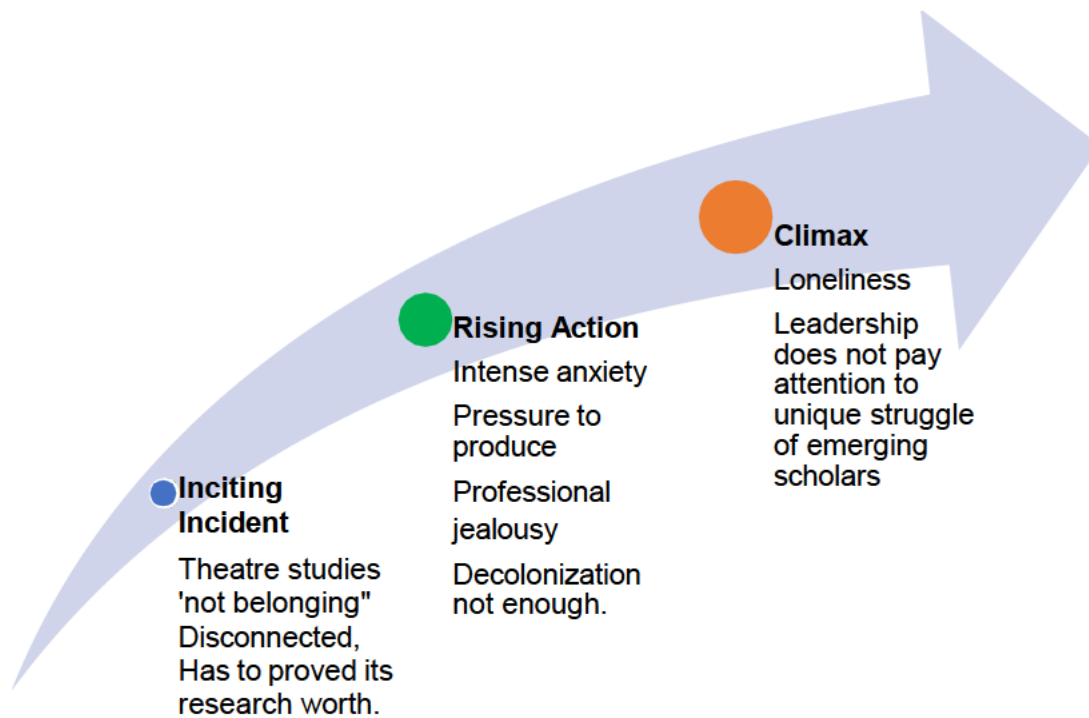


Figure 17. Harriet Khoza's Story of Higher education. Situation

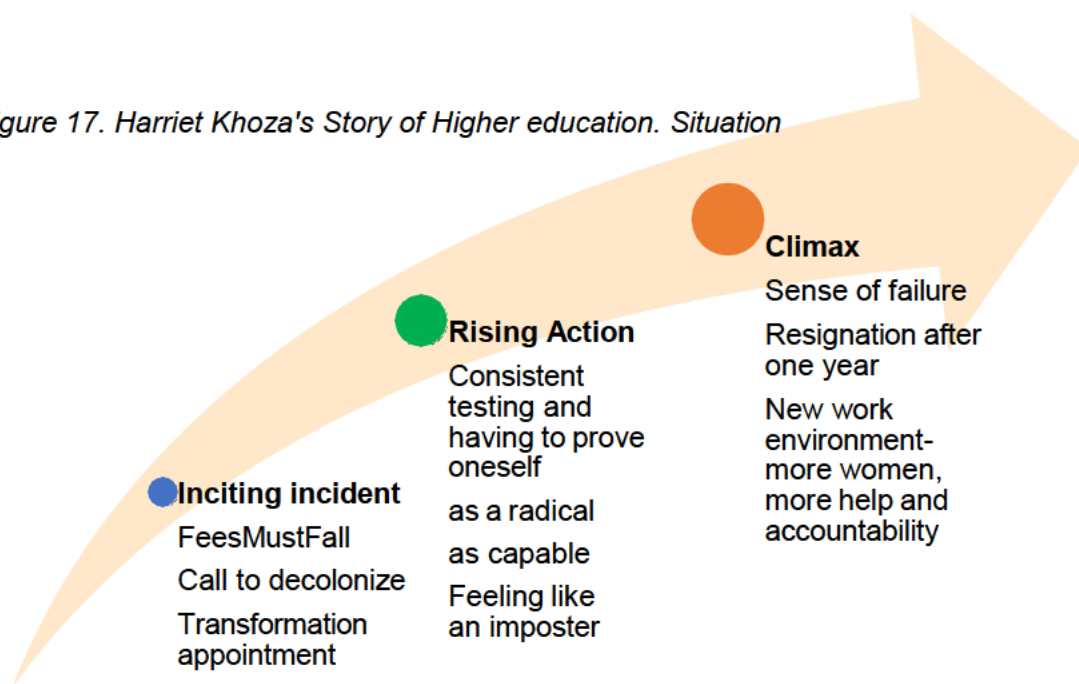


Figure 18. Narrative Inquiry- Ontological and epistemic underpinnings (Rosenberg, 2019)



Figure 19. Key research questions

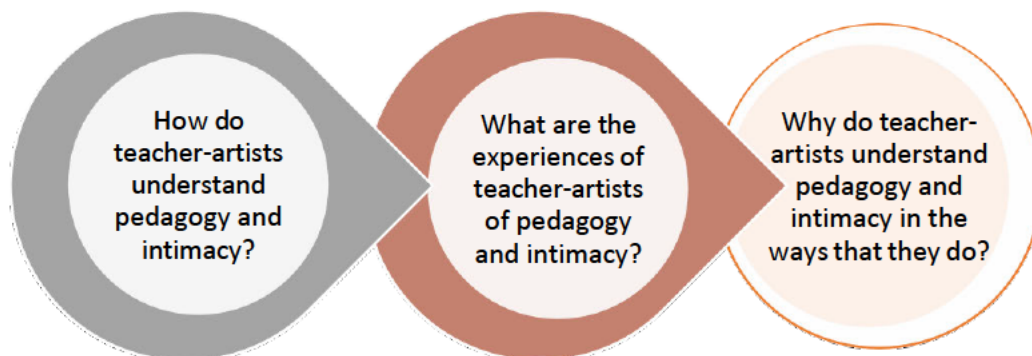


Table 1. Continuity summary. Inciting incident

Continuity	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Inciting incident</i>	<p>Primary school speech and Drama competition</p> <p>Teachers selected good people, she wins bursary. KwaZulu Natal</p> <p>Graduating students motivate return to postgraduate</p>	<p>Grew up in township playing Brenda Fassie, Gauteng</p> <p>Attended theatre group.</p> <p>High school acting Award change from law to performance</p>	<p>Drama in community group.</p> <p>Enter Mama Dee and violence of the Arts.</p> <p>Violence of media campaign, mothering that does not see us as kids Eastern Cape</p>	<p>Bophuthatswana youth theatre group.</p> <p>Aunt and Mother oral tradition of storytelling</p> <p>North-West Province</p>

Table 2. Continuity summary. Rising action

Continuity	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Rising action</i>	<p>Transition from Pentworth-all "white" teachers and curriculum,</p> <p>Enter Annikle as Post-graduate- study protest theatre, black material</p> <p>Start again, educate myself. Peers encounter predators in Johannesburg, Gauteng</p>	<p>Soul mind shifting, social construction undergraduate experience at Annikle, Johannesburg.</p> <p>Performer in HIV education roadshows in townships in South Africa.</p>	<p>Community artist at university- Is'pantsula- thinks deeply about experience rather than write</p> <p>Bored with narratives of history- want to explore rhythm, what does dance do for 'our humanity'.</p>	<p>Anti-child abuse theatre campaign</p> <p>Annikle MA</p> <p>Head hunted by Belrange University</p> <p>Belrange afforded her travel to Brazil for self-development.</p> <p>90% student body on government-funded study loans Gauteng</p>

Table 3. Universities and 'hotspots'

<i>Teacher-artists</i>	<i>AC</i>	<i>PU</i>	<i>QNI</i>	<i>B</i>
Lindiwe		<i>Undergraduate</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	
		<i>Post-graduate</i>		
Mkabayi	<i>Undergraduate</i>		<i>Post-graduate</i>	
			<i>Teacher</i>	
Queen	<i>Post-graduate</i>			<i>Teacher</i>
Harriet	<i>Post-graduate</i>	<i>Undergraduate</i>		

Table 4. Continuity summary. Climax

Continuity	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Climax</i>	<p><i>Enter Annikle as lecturer</i> <i>Strong peer activist time/ FeesMustFall</i></p> <p><i>No induction, negotiating how to be in the space</i></p> <p><i>Destabilizing</i></p>	<p><i>Teach and perform, Queen Nandi Institute, KwaZulu Natal</i></p> <p><i>Guide students to question how they see/ look</i></p> <p><i>Allows for student growth and mistakes</i></p> <p><i>Prioritize safety when teaching- for herself and students.</i></p>	<p><i>Accomplice ye murder</i> <i>Connecting theory and practice</i> <i>Students with cognitive dissonance</i> <i>KwaZulu-Natal</i></p>	<p><i>Consumed by many "hats"- director, teacher, practitioner, counsellor</i></p>

Table 5. Interaction summary. Inciting incident

Interaction	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Inciting incident</i>	Check-in <i>Explore and identify emotions in the room/ script.</i>	Safety <i>Negotiate/ share power</i> <i>Nurture vulnerability</i>	Intention <i>To live</i> <i>To be present</i>	Create safe space Play Connect on human level

Table 6. Interaction summary. Rising action

Interaction	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Rising action</i>	Resist acting Ensure emotional regulation Create/ facilitate self-containment for emotion	Seeing self and others. See anew See and be seen Self-acceptance	Vuka disrupt analysis violence Avoid talking about the self Employ strategies for disrupting dislocation	Link theories to real life Engage through psychoeducation Facilitate Risk boundaries to care, liberate, motivate

Table 7. Interaction summary. Climax.

Interaction	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Climax</i>	Wield a real connection with audience De role	Authenticity Create	Fukuza Trace Search through training Create black-on-black conversations	Reflect on social issues Release (heal) momentarily.

Table 8. Situation summary. Inciting incident

Situation	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Inciting incident</i>	<i>FeesMustFall</i> <i>Call to decolonize</i> <i>Transformation appointment</i>	<i>Theatre studies not belonging"</i> <i>Disconnected,</i> <i>Theatre has to prove its research worth.</i>	<i>Political calculations of living/ expression</i> <i>replaces the work/ community.</i>	<i>Persistent Mothering and care roles.</i> <i>Race and gender-based responsibility to care</i>

Table 9. Situation summary. Rising action

Situation	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Rising Action</i>	<i>Consistent testing and having to prove oneself as a radical as capable</i> <i>Feeling like an imposter</i>	<i>Intense imposter anxiety</i> <i>Pressure to produce and prove</i> <i>Professional jealousy</i> <i>Decolonization not enough.</i>	<i>Stagnation of growth for black women</i> <i>Infantilization</i> <i>lack of self-critique in pedagogy</i>	<i>Fragmentation and competition in HE</i> <i>Drama resistance to fragmentation</i>

Table 10. Situation summary. Climax

Situation	<i>Harriet</i>	<i>Mkabayi</i>	<i>Lindiwe</i>	<i>Queen</i>
<i>Climax</i>	<i>Sense of failure</i> <i>Resignation after one year</i> <i>New work environment- more women, more help and accountability</i>	<i>Loneliness</i> <i>Leadership does not pay attention to unique struggle of emerging scholars</i>	<i>Wonk'umntu's death</i> <i>The grave</i> <i>Anti-Death fugitive</i> <i>Untrustworthy Decolonization</i>	<i>No space to process. Exhaustion.</i> <i>Fulfill university's toxic business mandate nonetheless.</i>