

GABRIELA APOLLO DOS SANTOS BRANCO

THE FISSURE PRACTICE:

**A TRANS-(DE)-DISCIPLINARY ARTISTIC
RESEARCH ON BREAKING SILENCES
THROUGH "ENVOICEMENT"
AND EMBODIMENT**

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GABRIELA APOLLO DOS SANTOS BRANCO
MA PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

A Thesis presented by Gabriela Apollo dos Santos Branco to Master Performance Practices, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in Performance Practices, 2023.

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2023

SYNOPSIS

"The FISSURE Practice" is a trans-(de)-disciplinary artistic research that criss-crosses performance studies, biopolitics, cultural anthropology and psychology. The thesis approaches a detailed analyses on the hypothesis about the oppressive TRIAD of Colonialism, Capitalism and White Supremacy - that seals the individual and collective processes of subjugation and exploitation; and it discusses the TRIAD Vortex on behavioural patterns that delineates practices of control, discipline and domination from Western societies on macropolitical and micropolitical scales linked to experiences of trauma.

The FISSURE practice delves into community-based, body and vocal practices within activism in order to trigger the breaking of silence and behavioural patterns from the TRIAD Vortex. Such process potentially can provoke emotional discharge through catharsis, as it is observed on the author's performances, participants, and audience members. Reflecting upon the field research undertaken in Brazil, this thesis discusses the matter of one's voice and the "fissure" to raise awareness on processes of subjugation and exploitation. The field research outlines the methodology "Actions of Connecting" as the basis for the FISSURE practice to establish connection with people in a meaningful way through sharing and engaging with radical sensitivity.

This thesis underpins the idea behind "co-fissuring" as a way to leverage people's voices through "envoicement" - vocalised voice that call upon other's voices and conveys beyond words. The FISSURE practice advocates for social change by connecting people with each other. The emergence of this practice aims to offer exercises of re-(dis)-covery of the self - critically unravelling "silenced-burdens" and the "fissures" inflicted on one's body. This research used from autobiography, autoethnography, and co-autoethnography methods to enable a (self)reflection to achieve (self)realisation on how to dis-embody and un-learn the TRIAD Vortex. The hypothesis, therefore, analyse that the "fissure" strives against the TRIAD and its Vortex by generating processes of (self) emancipation of the oppressed unconscious.

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This master was a dream that became true, and it has been a long personal journey! In 2015, when my beloved mother, Rosana, was still fighting her cancer and having absence moments - an absent body state, in between losing and gaining her conscious she kept asking me why I was not doing my masters. At that time, I decided to refuse such opportunity and stay with her. During the six years until I finally decided to apply again, I see all this artistic research being craft on each experience I lived and led me here. So, first and foremost, I want to deeply thank my mother for keeping me asking about this dream, and my father, João, for telling me "don't give up". In her memoir, I can say that her words never stop to resonate with me, and I still hear her voice in mind!

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Gab.
Dortmund-GE, June, 2023.

DECLARATION

I, Gabriela Apollo dos Santos Branco, hereby certify that I had personally carried out the work depicted in the thesis entitled, 'The FISSURE PRACTICE: A trans-(de)-disciplinary artistic research on breaking silences through "envoicement" and embodiment'.

No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma prior to this date.

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INTRODUCTION

The TRIAD within the context of my trans-(de)-disciplinary artistic research that crisscross performance studies, biopolitics, cultural anthropology and psychology, refers to the formulation of an oppressive structure consisting of three main pillars as its main ingredients: Colonialism, Capitalism and White Supremacy. The purpose of the TRIAD is to condition people in their behaviour through subjugation and exploitation. As Foucault, French historian and philosopher, reminds us, "a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour" (1995, 138) that is substantially generated by the TRIAD, impacts on people's lives, perpetuating docile bodies in Western society. The reason behind my hypothesis is that the TRIAD leverages a degenerative and vicious cycle of traumatic experiences of oppression. I realised that my traumatic experiences were connected to its power on individual and collective level. Such experiences cannot be perceived without taking into consideration the macropolitical aspects associated with micropolitics of interrelation on "devices of production of subjectivity" (Rolnik, 2028, p.16). Thus, the TRIAD and such inter-relational processes of subjectivity between macropolitics and micropolitics are ultimately entangled to practices of control, discipline, domination, and imposition. This artistic research promotes the critical reflection on the impactful consequences of Colonialism, Capitalism,

and White Supremacy on individuals, and the alternatives to re-(dis)-cover from, drawing on (post)-decolonial and anticolonial epistemological lenses and approaches. I tackle the postcolonial and the decolonial lenses in dialogue to grasp these two perspectives that emerged from different socio-historical contexts, of the so-called “Third World” - the latter referring to Latin-America (Walter Mignolo) and the former to India (Gayatri Spivak). Nonetheless, I emphasise the importance of anticolonial lens (Domenico Losurdo) in praise to strive against coloniality. Furthermore, I question the epistemological and ethical implications of the TRIAD as well as examining the possibilities for transformative social and political action through artistic means.

CHAPTER 1

THERE IS AN OPPRESSING TRIAD AND I NEED TO WRITE DOWN ABOUT IT FOR YOU, MY READER.

Our present, the present of the bodies of oppressed minorities, the present of formerly colonized peoples, the present of bodies assigned female gender at birth, of racialized bodies, the present of indigenous peoples, of the working poor, of bodies considered abnormal, sexually deviant, homosexual, trans, mentally ill or disabled, the present of children and the elderly, the present of non-human animals, of ethnic or religious minorities, the present of migrants and refugees.

Paul Preciado, 2022

Historically, Colonialism determines the Eurocentric epistemology, sourcing Europe as the main example of civilisation, emphasising Europeans as the holders of knowledge in philosophy, science, arts - the cradle of “humanity”. Additionally, it is through the “militarism and imperialism in the format of neo-colonial wars (..) [which has] enhanced the capacity of the United States to subjugate other people” (Losurdo, 2020, p.11), placing its hegemonic power in the world, and by consequence, the many economic and military-political relations of subjugations being implemented. According to Domenico Losurdo, Italian historian and essayist, it is known that between one decade before the transition of the XX to the XXI century, there were many wars, power demonstrations, and military-political interventions that they could be called “recolonising” actions. However, they came out to the lay public as “peace-keeping, peace-making, peace enforcing” actions (Losurdo,

2020, p.23). He asserts that in the XXI century “the rivalry between the great powers, committed to ensuring ‘peace’ and expanding ‘civilisation’ and ‘law’, far from being a novelty, is a constant of imperialism” (2020, p.20). According to Paul Preciado, currently the colonial-imperialist manoeuvrer has enlarged the socio-racial wound through exploitation of people - mostly the “oppressed minorities” (2022, p.37), but also, of the planet resources, opening a “fissure” that has never been closed or ever healed. In reason of that, Losurdo argues on the urgency of an anticolonial awareness which is not only a decolonising practice but a detailed reading and critical reflection upon historical events which prioritise the political position of not complying with Colonialism.

Colonialism can be defined as the main remainder nowadays from the colonisations’ historical period and “the term colonial does not define a past historical period, but a rationality (Gayatri Spivak), a ‘regime of knowledge’ (Walter Mignolo) that survives in post-colonial societies” (Preciado, 2022, p.54-55), as the current condition of Western society. Such “regime of knowledge” is embedded in hegemonic structures of knowledge such as the North European academic institutions and the church. This regime implicates on knowledge being kept inaccessible for the “oppressed minorities”, which means without their participation. Nowadays, colonialism becomes colonality revolving around the violences that colonialism has caused (decolonial) within the criticism to

it (postcolonial). Moreover, it is the ideology and mindset embodied by those in charge to represent a nation, such as presidents, chancellors, and ministers but also by its followers. Thus, it turns to shape a mentality that reinforces the exertion of power. It sustains the hierarchical bias, power dynamics of sovereignty promoting the overpassing and overruling of other nations and its people’s rights. In result of that, external political interventions, maneuverers, military invasion, and violent crossing of borders happen in order to demonstrate power, therefore, sovereignty. I argue that Colonialism is the first foundation of the TRIAD because it creates a wound in the “unconsciousness of humanity” (Caruth, 2016, p.9), a socio-racial one due to its mass genocides and slavery of Indigenous and African people. I refer to “unconsciousness” because the many sovereign violences that stem from Colonialism underpins what have been repeated and perpetuated unconsciously in different scales worldwide, leaving the minorities still fighting for their rights, legitimation and recognition. Hence, such historical wound continues nowadays creating a huge gap for the minorities when it comes to their genuine recognition - never fully achieved.

Paul Preciado, philosopher and art curator, argues that the current moment that the oppressed minorities live is under the conditions of Western society which could be understood:

as a general "somatopolitical" condition, the pain produced by the necropolitical management of subjectivity, while pointing out the "potency" (not the "power") of the living bodies of the planet (including the planet itself as a living body) to extract themselves from the capitalist, patriarchal and colonial genealogy through practices of inadequacy, dissidence and disidentification (2022, p.27).

Such condition is what he calls "dysphoria mundi" when it comes to outline the polarisations extracted from the matter of the macropolitics to the micropolitics – the latter in relation to one's life and former to a society's life, between "revolution or repression, destruction or care, emancipation or oppression" (2022, p.27). Consequently, a person's experiences, and traumas are entangled to the conditions of where one lives, hence, the culture of behavioural patterns conditioned in a specific socio-political context within the impact of geopolitical decisions made worldwide. Geopolitically, the TRIAD diffuses the colonial-capitalist-white supremacist mindset of conquering territories, which reinforces it in the world to undermine people's life through subjugation, and for that, comes in hand the role of Capitalism as the main economic system to play all negotiations.

Capitalism is the second pillar of the TRIAD, encouraging/promoting/favouring work overload, consumerism, a patriarchal and heteronormative lifestyle to be followed as a normative behavioural pattern in Western culture. Capitalism is the actual key for exploitation on economic, political and socio-racial levels. In reason of that, Preciado sheds light to a deeper perspective on capitalism called "petrosexorracial"

capitalism, which stems from the intersection between the exploitation that revolves around petroleum, sex and race focused on subjugation. He asserts that:

"petrosexorracial" capitalism has built during these last five centuries an aesthetic: a regime of sensory and cognitive saturation (...) a taste for the toxic and an inherent pleasure in destruction. (...) The substantial bases of "petrosexorracial" capitalism: ecosystem destruction, sexual and racial violence, fossil energy consumption and industrial carnivorousness (2022, p.41-43).

Approaching Preciado's lens, capitalism perpetuates hierarchical bias turning discrepancies more visible than never on a cyclical chain of exploitation. The ecosystem destruction to extract fossil fuels is done by colonial-imperialist wars with the aim to capitalize its commodities. The deforestations are acts against nature and an entire ecosystem, and also the Indigenous that are deprived of their lands which kept being invaded. Moreover, his point of view covers an understanding that fossil fuels are symbols of power associated to the (omni)presence of those who are privileged to have access to such power – white cis-gender men. The fossil fuels extraction is featured by such cluster, which reveals a predominant domination from those. As Tema Okun, scholar and activist, cautiously points out, "the wealthier and whiter and more cisgender male we are, the more we can count on legally written words to protect our interests, in large part because we have more power to determine what the legally written words will be" (Okun, 2021, p.18). In a capitalist economic system, the female, the black

and queer subjugation is reinforced by the white male cis-gender domination. The resultant damage is embedded culturally on a chain of colonial-chauvinism-sexism-racism and trans-(homo)-phobia that Colonialism and Capitalism trigger together. The “petrosexorracial” lens shed light on the exploitation of labour mostly from these “oppressed minorities”. It is exactly this huge, devalued clusters of people who makes the “engines” of Capitalism rolling.

Capitalism dictates not only a style of life and the norm that is validated but its system. It settles the norm, not only on gender but on race as well, leading to the entanglement with White Supremacy on the colonial remnants of which race is the “civilised” one. Historically, that was visible during Nazism with the “Nordic”, “Aryans”, or even “Master” race and its antisemitism. Thereupon, the White Supremacy culture turns to be the third pillar of the TRIAD which compels the white race superior over any other with their customs, beliefs, and standards. The white sovereignty is observed by Okun on inter-relational alliance with Capitalism. “White supremacy (...) support, reinforce and reproduce capitalism, class oppression, gender oppression, heterosexism, ableism, Christian hegemony, to name a few. These in turn function to support, reinforce, and reproduce white supremacy” (Okun, 2021, p.2). Hence, it was not only during the Atlantic Slave Trade with the extinction of innumerable Indigenous, or the

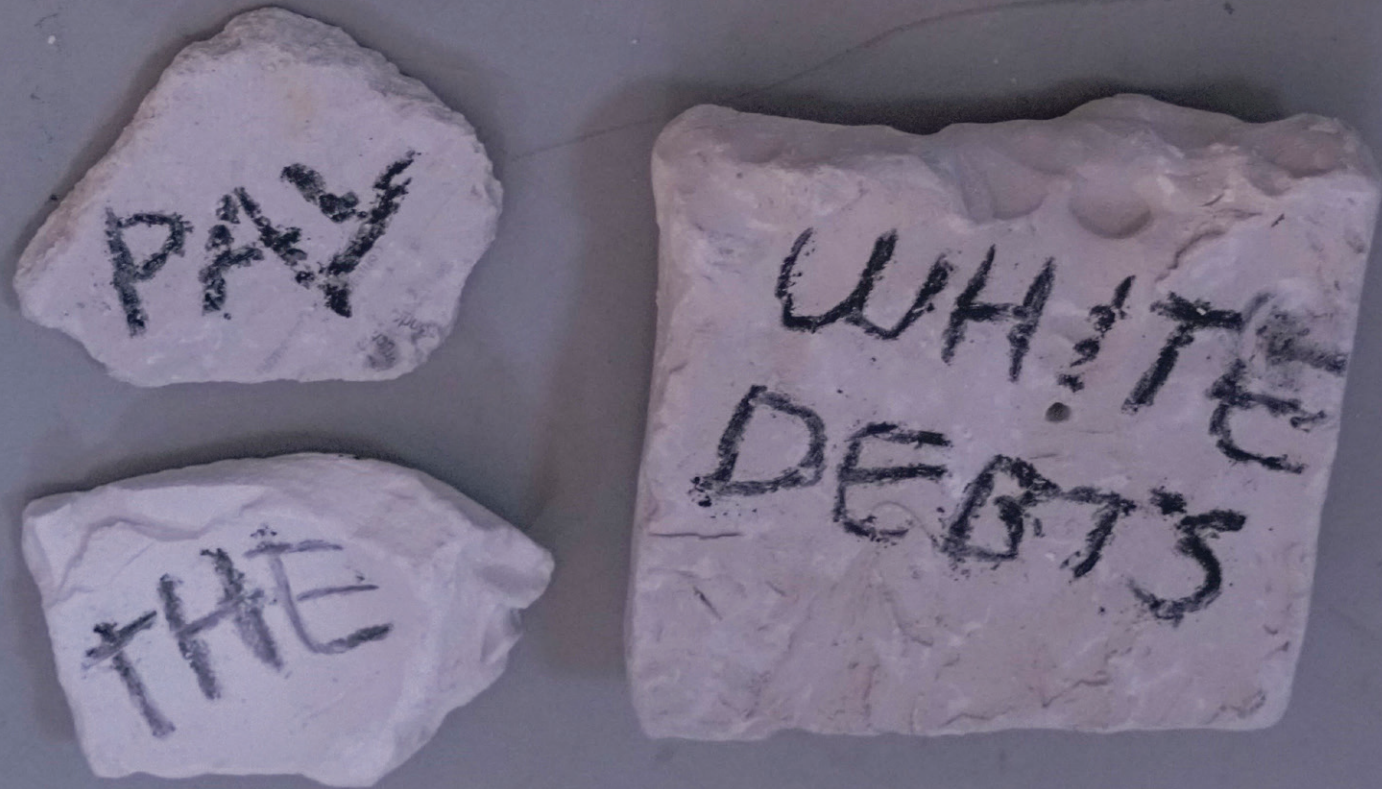
Jewish genocide by Nazi, but the culture of White Supremacy still

dehumanize all living things in the name of power and profit for a few at the expense of the many. And they did this well (and still do), and they did this cleverly (and still do), constructing white supremacy to be ever more adaptable (2021, p.3).

So, it is still the white people who have more rights being covered by laws in practice than any other. It is still the white cis-gender men who have access to power to write Law Constitutions. It is still the same kinship with its offspring who rule the world through generations in Western society. And still no governmental apology or acknowledgement will make people come back to life (Krenak, 2019; Kopenawa & Albert, 2015). It was an irreparable atrocity which still impact Indigenous and Black people descendants in disadvantage. Governmental actions should be done by acknowledging the structural racism left (Race report statistics, 2023, website), providing increasingly opportunities of employment, education within health care, and better living standards.

The term *untermenschen* - subhuman, it was drastically emphasised during Nazism. The neo-liberal and imperialist race struck by USA in the last two centuries has been based not only on colonial remainder, reproducing what that nation has suffered - learned and embodied - once it was colonised, but also it's been driven by white supremacy when it comes to “the framework of anti-black and anti-Jewish racism, already

Figure 1 Kotsopoulou, F. (2023). Image from performance.
Clay fragments with writings in charcoal.



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at the beginning of the 1920s between the Ku Klux Klan and German extreme right-wing circles" (Losurdo, 2020, p.127). The subhuman and the vast dehumanization characteristics results on what I refer to as the "white debts" which unite Colonialism, Capitalism and White Supremacy to demand a racial dispute of sovereignty that never led to an end, and it has only increased its debts and spread more oppression and prejudices.

1.1. THE TRIAD SYSTEM AND ITS VORTEX

Although the triptych of Colonialism, Capitalism and White Supremacy is much more emphasised through worldwide politics, it cannot be forgotten on how it happens on the daily basis. By that I mean, through people's interactions, when one embodies such sovereign role over others, subjecting people and reproducing a "coloniser's" behaviour, for instance of any kind of superiority over someone else - which extends to a patriarchal-bossy-white supremacist behaviour. I've started this Master artistic research with the question "How can I not reproduce the Coloniser's behaviour?" which led me to understand that such behaviour cannot be perceived separated from the economic system of Capitalism as the ruling order that is endorsed by those who had and keep on having access to power through centuries. Neither it can be overlooked that the white men are the stronger basis of White Supremacy in the world. By applying this interrelation

between the aforementioned forces of the resultant impact of each historical event that intertwine Colonialism, Capitalism and White Supremacy, I noticed that these three pillars of order set out a stream of behaviour patterns associated on subjugation and exploitation such as silencing, coercion, bullying, humiliation, self-abasement, self-abnegation, among others.

Considering that and the power structures that trigger the impacts on people's lives, I take from Agamben's theory on apparatuses that "behaviour" is not simply something one person learns, but rather inherit and embody it, constantly shaping it based on the multiple process of subjectification of how a person is affected by others, and by an entire system of apparatuses, which keep influencing unconsciously the human being - substance and subject to any apparatuses (2009, p.14). Furthermore, developing further on my hypothesis I consider that the TRIAD behavioural pattern generates a Vortex, which are those unconscious seeds on one's behaviour that make each axis of TRIAD to feedforward and strengthen themselves through repetition and the behaviour reproduction itself. Therefore, the TRIAD behavioural pattern is diffused over the centuries, which widespread a mindset of human exploitation and subjugation based on oppression, sovereignty and hierarchical systems that serve as the basis for the Western society and its political system. In other words, the subjugated has been disciplined and trained as a

docile body (Foucault, 1995) to accept passively the infliction of violence by the TRIAD which this thesis argues ungently for the need of a “fissure” that strives against the TRIAD and its Vortex, in order to provoke a “fissure” manifestation to recognise and identify the Vortex implications in one’s life.

1.2. HYPOTHESIS: A “FISSURE” MANIFESTATION THAT STRIVES AGAINST THE TRIAD OF COLONIALISM, CAPITALISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

My hypothesis considers that the TRIAD with these three pillars with practices of mostly subjugation and exploitation spread worldwide, strengthen each other which, by consequence, underpins a series of behavioural patterns disseminated in the world that I define as the TRIAD Vortex: the repetition on reproducing and keeping such series of behavioural patterns alive. The “fissure” manifestation emerges with the aim to awaken the experiences suppressed on one’s unconscious. The “fissure” access and reflects detailing such traumatic experiences linked to the impact of the TRIAD on one’s life, and for that reason, it strives against the TRIAD in order to create social change.

I take as an example my personal experiences I lived to demonstrate my “fissure” manifestation. It is in dialogue with Melissa Febos, feminist writer and professor, that I argue on the need of sharing personal narratives to build social change

because “the resistance to memoirs about trauma is always in part—and often nothing but—a resistance to movements for social justice” (2022, p.21). The critical reflection on my own story has enabled me to identify the aspects on which I’ve complied with the TRIAD, recognising the moments in my life which triggered intensely its Vortex. Observing the TRIAD Vortex in my life, it became visible to me the trap of its oppressiveness, and why I kept myself drowning on fear, shame, and guilt. By acknowledging that, it came to my deep understanding that by living as part of this system, I have been subjugated and exploited, leading me to suppress what I’ve experienced, mostly traumatic experiences, and consequently my own voice about them.

The dominant culture tells us that we shouldn’t write about our wounds and their healing (...) We have been discouraged from writing about it because it makes people uncomfortable. Because a patriarchal society wants its victims to be silent. Because shame is an effective method of Silencing. (2022, p.23)

Febos outlines very well on how one complies with the TRIAD Vortex by silencing oneself, as I did to myself. That resulted on an embodied behaviour pattern of reproducing such oppression towards myself.

In this hypothesis, I argue that to every trauma that I’ve experienced there were other people involved, “one’s own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another” (Caruth, 2016, p.8), which explicit the intrinsic relation of the

"I" and the "other" within the system of the TRIAD that outlines the conditions of living. Each trauma explicates different behavioural patterns being reproduced at the actual and posterior moment of it by both parts involved, to an extent of every person involved – if there are more people. According to theories on trauma based on Freud's and Breuer's studies (Scheff, 2001), and Bessel Van der Kolk (2014) on post-trauma, such experiences being suffered or witnessed, lead to a state of shock, numbness, and self-forgetfulness. When these states act on one's body, the trauma itself has not been processed, which means, acknowledged. Hence, the person is not fully aware of what has been through since the event cannot be recalled entirely and sometimes only in fragments. However, that doesn't mean that the person doesn't know, the memory may be unconscious – kept on what Freud called "the files" (Scheff, 2001, p.33), but the embodied behaviour is the aftermath, leading the person to similar situations that revolve around the trauma, or even, the person placing oneself in such situations which reveals the repetition on reproducing the behaviour that stems from the trauma.

According to Cathy Caruth, professor and acclaimed author of theoretical underpinning on trauma in History, "the historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting" (2016, p.18), which means that is kept in the "space of unconsciousness" (p.19), not

providing a space for acknowledgement and awareness of what humanity, as she writes, has been through. That's the key to understand the reason behind behavioural patterns – the TRIAD Vortex, which often are coercive, knee-jerk, and unconscious. Deepening the notion of trauma in history within people's habits, as follows, their behaviours, Caruth asserts that:

it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked to only to what it is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language (2016, p.4).

The TRIAD Vortex on people's behaviours is unknown – unconscious – but being explicitly visible on their actions and language. When it comes to language expressed or implied, spoken and written, the documentation of it is what delineates the white cis-gender men narrative as the main legitimate one, disseminating their actions imbricated on their behaviours.

Nowadays, many historical events happen under the Euro-North American narrative through colonial-imperialist actions which features that narrative over others. Currently, this is the main history told and learned. That leads me to think the narratives that people are not aware of missing. In result of that, people are not sharing only their own narrative but from where they came from, about their ancestors, daily struggles, true stories that are unique and affect the recognition of many

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Figure 2 Kotsopoulou, F. (2022). Image from a spoken words performance.
Performer reading the poem.

other lives. It is paramount to emphasise that “navel-gazing is not for the faint of heart. The risk of honest self-appraisal requires bravery. To place our flawed selves in the context of this magnificent, broken world is the opposite of narcissism” (Febos, 2022, p.22). In sum, people continuously comply with the behavioural pattern of policing themselves to not tell the truth behind their silence and seize the opposition to the main one. That perpetuates the visibility of white cis-gender men and the invisibility of the minorities. Perhaps they think it won't be worth it. This self-sabotage way of thinking just puts people away of connecting with others and strengthening their connections in a mutual cause which stem from different individual narratives that converge on the cause itself. Furthermore, my hypothesis about the “fissure” manifestation observes that such manifestation cannot be developed if it is not articulated. Thus, sharing one's personal narrative enables a collective level of connections that draws upon several narratives that outlines a cause. My hypothesis points out that one's breaking of silence is ultimately necessary to disrupt the normative narrative imposed by the TRIAD.

CHAPTER 2 IN PRAISE OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF SHARING

2.1. “MESEARCH” ON AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

*I start to write, prioritising the burden that one carries. The experiences that muted one's soul. The experiences that took one's breath. The experiences that silenced the “I” from the entire body.
Gab Branco, February/2022.*

I am a Brazilian white woman from the countryside of São Paulo state and from a lower-middle class family - which does not represent the 73% of people living in real poverty that deals with deeper scales of socio-political issues reflecting on their lives, thus, who experience a larger recurrence of traumas. But I've suffered, experienced, and witnessed many traumatic experiences during substantial years of my life that I wish that never really happened. In truth, I wish I could've been only a child that went through simple emotions of joy and sadness, or only a teenager with regular worries and anxieties, and then a young healthy adult without the concerns from my traumatic memories that haunted me. I know by experience how sick I got throughout all those years, and how difficult it is to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I can share it has been a long pathway to get better, a journey for personal healing which I carved through my artistic works and

research. I realised I cannot reverse or erase everything that happened to me. But I do can transform through my curiosity, my studies, my reflections, and artistic creations, diving in an ongoing process of autobiographical and autoethnographic acknowledgements.

On February 2022, I wrote the poem "Remember to remember" (Branco, 2022b) which (un)intentionally opened a slit to look through my wounds and beyond my "silenced-burdens". I touched upon my "fissures", giving "space" to transition my traumas from the unconscious to conscious. That poem was the first manifestation of breaking my own silence. Reflecting on that, I can share that I am a person that went through a rape during my childhood - an incest one and several sexual assaults during my adolescence. Trauma has started there when I had only 7 years old. With 11 years old, I started to become the caregiver of my mom due to her first cancer and with 21 years I was her caregiver on her second cancer. I faced her loss at the age of 22 and fell into depression for more than a year (and I still deal with it on each up and down of my life). During that same period, I also experienced two-gun shootings; I lost female friends who were raped and murdered; not to mention the "little" aggressions and violences of the everyday life in Brazil - that was routine. That was my everyday life that I lived until my 26 years old - when I got the opportunity and all my savings to leave my country - among all odds, still beloved country.

Ultimately, my MA studies places a relevant meaning towards my healing because I dived in a challenging process of unravelling each trauma-wound: acknowledging what I have been through and recognising the behavioural patterns that trapped me in relation to which aspect I have complied directly with the TRIAD. Such reflecting exercise turned out to be, what I call, the "fissure" manifestation upon one's trauma caused by the TRIAD.

Fear played and still plays an important role on this process, and recurrently I encountered people who kept their burdens in silence, suppressing traumatic experiences on what I call "silenced-burdens". Audre Lorde, Afro-American radical feminist, philosopher and activist, strikingly wrote:

My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. (...) What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? (2017, p.2-3).

To remain in silence is to comply with the TRIAD Vortex, the norm of social control and discipline that silence people through fear. It is to reproduce such behaviour of policing and censoring. It is to be dominated by shame and self-sabotage. I lost count how many times I tried to break my silence on telling my mother about the rape. I used to think that such information would break her apart more than the cancer she was fighting against, and then I'd lose her earlier than it happened. The truth is that I was afraid of not only

breaking my own silence and telling her, but of being the cause of her dying sooner. I kept in silence, sicking myself for exactly 29 years - the age that I turned out during the first year of my master studies. My fear was triggered from the day that there was a knife on my neck and the spoken threat of "I kill you if you say something", which has swallowed me entirely, placing my own voice into completely oblivion. Indeed, my silence didn't save me, resulting on self-guiltying, shame of not being brave enough to speak out, low self-esteem, and, unfortunately, not accepting myself within all my broken parts - the "fissures" that live inside of me.

My master's research became a prototype of something that I couldn't really understand whilst I was completely immersed in - including not only the critical analysis on my theoretical studies, but also my personal process on "mesearch" - "I consider myself as the researcher researched or researched researcher, and I discuss the duality of both roles, encapsulating the notion of self as part of the research process: mesearch" (Edward, 2018, p.33). During two years of artistic research, I have tackled different aspects of the voice such as 1. spoken/written words, 2. screaming and 3. vocalisations, to inquiry the relation between voice and trauma within the TRIAD. My first year was about unravelling my personal story, diving into the autobiographical, and reflecting upon my silence and the system of oppression which slowly I could refine as the TRIAD. For my performances I tackled the emer-(ur)gence of my voice.

Briefly to offer an overview on how I worked artistically and the main operations I used to develop my performances, the first aspect I explored was spoken/written words on my poem "Because I am not what you reflect on me as a Brazilian" (Branco, 2022a). This operation allowed me to not internalise my thoughts and to practice the breaking of my silence through the cognitive - language. Then, I shifted to screaming and kept written words on "Tender Transgression" (Branco, 2022c), getting closer to my core traumas through the action of breaking dry clay to release through my screaming the choking effect of my silence. Last, during an artistic residency, April-May/2022, in Venice (IT), I finally explored the vocalisations, without using words. Afterwards, that became a site-specific action-based performance, "Until I" (Branco, 2022d) consisting of one hour writing on the floor with chalk and 15 minutes of vocalising the traversing between "silenced-burden", the TRIAD and my "fissures". For my first year's final performance, I created the "The ANTI-(dote)-WEAPON Body" (Branco, 2022e), a performance that delved on practices of dis-embodiment and un-learning my behavioural patterns learned during my 29 years of life. This performance explored my "unmatrixed" voice, which can be understood through Johnston's perspective:

"unmatrixed" voice would go beyond language and music, crossing the threshold into the unknown and seeking out the sounds in-between structures. It is a process of developing awareness and consciousness, while taking a leap into the unknown" (2014, p.36).

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Figure 3. Kotsopoulou, F. (2022). Image from performance.
Final's year 1, performer vocalising and tackling the "unmatrixed" voice.

My aim with this performance was to let the audience to be traversed by the resonance and vibration of my vocalisations which didn't have words or any kind of codification - "unmatrixed". This performance led me to think further for my second year what could be "antidotes" and "anti-weapons" against the TRIAD. I understood that breaking one's silence is definitely one of them, speaking/writing one's truth another, and vocalising one's trauma becomes a vocal manifesto that tackles what is not conforming with the norm.

2.2. THE FISSURE ART PRACTICE AS ANTI-(DOTE)-WEAPON TO THE TRIAD VORTEX: METHODS AND RESULTS.

I finished my first year with the understanding that this research showed up to be my purpose as an artist, and by that, I mean focusing on the next step which was to find ways to offer and share my artistic practice and research in order to create a community around and expand the knowledge gathered. I situate this practice and myself as an artist crisscrossing the fields of community-based, body and vocal practices within activism. In other words, my purpose is to advocate for social change and offer creative ways of connecting people through sharing one's story, engaging on a sensitive listening to others and embracing the exposure of personal experiences as a bridge to connect meaningfully with people. The FISSURE art practice is based on these principles which acts against the

TRIAD that extensively has been disconnecting people from themselves, with others and the planet.

For my second year, my next step was to transition from autobiography - as a method to break silence, unpacking of the relation between voice and trauma in performance through poetry (spoken/written), screaming, and vocalization - to autoethnography. I based that on the stream of questions that I had for this inquiry, such as: what about the rest of women that also went through similar experiences? What about people who suffered or witnessed other types of traumas? of what constitutes their silence? Are they silencing themselves just to play their "civilised" behaviour of not disrupting the order? Or are they silencing themselves without really knowing, as I did unconsciously? Of what are they afraid?

With these questions in mind, I came into the realization that if I wanted to contribute to social change, I needed to expand my actions by engaging and connecting with people. For that reason, I decided to conduct field research in Brazil - exactly where I was raised and experienced/witnessed my core traumas. So, I could apply my hypothesis about the TRIAD Vortex and the "fissure" emancipation starting from the context I come from. The understanding of the "fissure" and its implications needed to be practiced and disseminated. From there, it came the idea of formulating the methodology "Actions of Connecting" which includes three



Figure 4. Christodoulou, E. (2022). Image from performance.
Performer vocalizing.

methods: 1. Sharings, 2. Co-lab: co-creation in collaboration; 3. Dissemination. Hence, the field research took place in São Paulo-BR for a month and half with the aim to practice, evaluate, and assess it. In details, I offered one-to-one meetings of sharings - in person and online - to voice the findings of this research through telling my own story and inviting them to also share theirs. In this way, we could reflect upon the TRIAD impacts in relation to the Brazilian socio-political context, and to practice, what I realised to be, "co-autoethnography" - to be discussed thoroughly in the last chapter.

The sharings were all confidential, thus, I approached the documentation by asking them two questions after the meeting which I recorded for this artistic research's archive. The questions were: 1. What resonates with you after the sharing? 2. What is the fissure in your own words? The co-lab was optional for the people who participated on the one-to-one sharing to choose whether they would like to continue through a collaborative creation, a co-creation, focused on a "connecting knowledge" - between me and participant - that emerged from the sharing. Finally, the dissemination consisted of the presentation of the documentation from the sharings and co-creations being uploaded to the research platform - www.fissura.art. The methodology has showed to me that practicing the simple act of sharing has made me to practice speaking, voicing, listening, recognising and acknowledging, which unexpectedly has made me to leave

behind the numbness of the pain, or suffering of my traumas. The audio recordings from the participants have shown a synthesising reflection that the sum of all these practices have reverberated with them. The sharing has the quality to invite people to face together their "silenced-burdens", thus, unburden the burden through voicing and listening each other. Moreover, sharing one's narrative makes others to recognise their lives in such traumatic experiences - the "fissures" that were inflicted on one's body.

Additionally, to the field research, I also offered an intensive week at Oficina Oswald de Andrade in São Paulo in the format of a co-lab activity, which included all the methods, but it was focused on the co-creation. This activity had the aim to share my artistic research and practices which included readings, writings, storytelling, physical and vocal exercises, besides the co-creation with the three participants. That one week of synthesising and coordinating the co-lab activity became the vision for the FISSURE art practice - a multifaceted artistic practice that strives against the TRIAD and its Vortex aiming to connect people in a meaningful way through personal sharings and co-creations. More specifically, the FISSURE art practice has at its core a body and vocal practice based on the Klauss Vianna Technique (KVT) - Brazilian somatic technique of creation based on improvisation, and my movement research "Body States Through Memories" which the practitioners can exercise their awareness on their habits

and behavioural patterns through applying the seven topics from the first process of KVT - the Ludic Process¹. Besides that, there are readings groups to raise criticality on the voice matter, its importance, and the revelation of one's breaking of silence into action based on the essay "The Transformation of Silence into Action and Language" (1977) by Audre Lorde, which happens through acknowledging their own story in relation to other participants' stories, letting their voices come out and set them free.

During the co-lab in Brazil, I refined such process of acknowledgment for the participants through a performative exercise that I call "The individual protest within the collective one". Throughout the whole week I invited them to, firstly, identify the experiences they have lived that might have silenced them in any level. From there, I opened the discussion of reflecting collectively whether those experiences are understood by them as traumatic ones, so I also shared and introduced my theoretical studies on trauma. During the week, they have written about not only their individual experiences of oppression (which for some were indeed related to traumas), but also how those experiences were related to major socio-political topics such as structural

¹ KVT Ludic Process consist of investigating one's expression and movements based on 1. Presence, 2. Articulations, 3. Weight, 4. Supports, 5, Resistance, 6. Oppositions, 7. Global Axis. This process outlines how one's personal experiences is intertwined with one's movement patterns. In this way, habits and behaviour start to be tackle through KVT practitioners and their reflection.

racism. That unfolded on the revelation of the TRIAD's impact on their lives. It was from there that I guided the participants to delve into their co-creation, the performative part - which can be articulated in any kind of artistic expression since it is coherent to their collective process. In their case, it was a performance that started with them writing their individual manifestos with chalk on the sidewalk. Guiding the audience to the studio, the space was full of written A3 papers from the entire week. Then, they initiated their vocalisations exploring dissonances until they merged their vocalisations, transitioning from the individual to the collective. Their voices vibrated in unison. The performance was dissident to the norm of entertaining an audience. Instead, they aimed to provoke through questioning the role of an artist on overproduction - on over doing many artistic roles, besides the performer one to entertain a lay audience. They used their vocalisations on screaming to express the artists' class struggles contrasting with laughing about it, realising the "joke" that implements their supposed rights.

On their reflection about practice afterwards, one of them said that the "fissure" was a "crack on the bottom of his soul and as every crack opens space, this one has opened space for his own voice" and the other said it was "an anthropophagic reverie" (Branco, 2023b - William & Vanessa testimonies). On evaluating the art practice within the methodology applied, it is noticed its reverberation on the participants by triggering

the use and purpose of their voices, and without doubt that wouldn't be possible without the honest sharing of their stories. The sharings have proved to be a serviceable method to embody othering, to not only connect with people or even recognise the reason why one couldn't connect, but mostly to provoke in each one of them their "envoicement" processes - their inner voice to come out from their inner wounds and to vibrate on collective causes. Traumas are inner wounds in the format of "fissures" asking to become a scar. All not visible by an insensitive eye but that trauma continuously bleeds inside and hurts, whilst the wound grows without one's awareness. The art practice sheds lights on such awareness on the level of individual and collective co-listening to co-exchange experiences. Moreover, it elucidates that their silences were transformed by sharing, co-creating, vocalising their traumas and vibrating their voices in an autoethnographic weaving that each one of them had responsibility on it.

2.3. RADICAL SENSITIVITY AND CO-EXISTENCE

It was admirable the participants interest, their openness and great generosity on sharing their "fissures" with me. The experience of my field research in Brazil - by applying my methodology and sharing the FISSURE art practice - has shown to me that it is possible to trigger such acknowledgment about traumas linked to the TRIAD Vortex presented on my hypothesis. The key to that is by engaging with radical

sensitivity towards each other. I argue that radical sensitivity serves to transgress exactly what the TRIAD emphasizes as "weak" or "fragile". Hence, to engage with the "radical" on sensitivity does not mean to be(come) weak or fragile. On the contrary, it requires much courage and resistance from the numbness effect of the TRIAD Vortex. The sharings were a great exercise to awaken the understanding and reflection that sensitivity and vulnerability are not be feared - as the TRIAD has taught people - but rather practiced and embodied. People, including myself, have been sustaining the TRIAD Vortex to not face their own "fissures" inflicted on their bodies, to not become vulnerable to each other, and to not be sensitive to each other. Radical sensitivity on the frame of the sharing enables to meet people without the bias of judgment, shame, or any kind of prejudice, which acts as an "antidote" towards the numbness, and it generates connection between people. That's the reason why I do want to spread the FISSURE art practice with the aim to achieve co-existence. People can connect in the same amplitude they can get numb, because:

Numbness and connection are shades of the same spectrum (...) it is the pushing back, the pushing of 'our' norms back out into the society at large that creates counter-culture, that preserves an opportunity for change. (...) the closer we focus on our experience, the greater the awareness of the experience will be, the greater the immersion, the greater the possibility for connection (Tempest, 2020, p. 114-115).

I understand that connection relies in co-existence because as English spoken word performer, poet, and novelist Kae



Figure 5 Baraldi, G. (2023). Image from co-lab-BR. Participants during the activity with vocalisations.

Tempest asserts: "it is collaborative, communal feeling that takes the whole room or none of us" (2020, p.101). Most of all, connection is not about changing people, it's about re-learning what it is to co-adjust in order to, finally, co-exist within the differences. This art practice seeks to listen, to exchange, to share and establish trust to unravel the "silenced-burdens" together through the act of connecting with people in a meaningful way. When people avoid the soft power of connection by not practicing and embodying radical sensitivity - as a new way of behaving towards each other, the perpetuation of the TRIAD Vortex just enlarges.

In the end, the people who really enable the relational motion of the TRIAD and its vitality are not only those in possession of power - the ones who make the decisions on larger scale, systematically - but also the people who follow and accept the conditions of those decisions, continually, in silence. As Spillers observed, "such silence is the nickname of distortion, of the unknown human factor that a revised public discourse would both undo and reveal" (1987, p.73). The breaking of one's silence is an undeniable challenge, still very much needed to have the opportunity of "a revised public discourse", "voluming" voices often not heard to create impact on political decisions made by those who seems so unassailable.

A society is characterized by diversity and people who bring life to it. Sometimes to change things - and by that, I

mean the order of things to achieve social change - it's not needed to go through the most difficult way, trying to reach the "unassailable", but simply spreading a different way of thinking, perceiving, and behaving. Affecting other people in a chain of relations makes the motion of a society to get a new pace, rhythm, timbre, making people's voice vibrate and be tuned together, resonating in favour of new law constitutions that mind the minorities. That is the aim of awakening the individual "fissures" in order to acknowledge the importance of "co-fissuring" the system of the TRIAD for collective causes and social change. A "co-fissure" has plural voices that when addressed with purpose by embracing its diversity pierces an entire system of order. Evidently, voice is a matter of socio-political articulation to underlie social justice and it is from its matter that I delved and refined my master's final performance "The(ir) fissures written on me" (Branco, 2023a).

CHAPTER 3 "THE(IR) FISSURES WRITTEN ON ME"

3.1. ON THE MATTER OF THE FISSURE "MANIFESTATION" ELUCIDATING CATHARSIS

*When entering the room, I noticed a multitude of temporalities. To elaborate, there was a feeling in the space of 'something had happened here' as well as 'something will happen here' (...) the exposing of your nude torso indicated some sort of eerie event, a form of incompleteness - what happened here? (...) What I do know is that the sounds you were making communicated to me a deep form of pain and suffering rather than something cheerful. It felt like you were screaming in a language that I did not understand literally, that is however, understandable beyond words - it could be felt.
Karolina Rupp, May 30th 2023*

I believe finding truthfully my own voice these last years has triggered a cathartic discharge of my emotions in relation to everything I have been through and summed to all stories I have listened during this research. "The(ir) fissures written on me" (Branco, 2023a) became a paramount example of emotional discharge on catharsis. This was a 40 minutes performance in a white space full of pieces of dry clay, which contained written words in charcoal. Differently from my first-year performances that my voice was "unmatrixed, for this work I decided to practice technically my voice in order to use it as medium that communicates more than words and language, "it could be felt". My final performance summarises my realisations from engaging with co-autoethnography and it expresses not only my own individual practice with the voice,

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Figure 6 Kotsopoulou, F. (2023). Image from performance.
Final's year 2, performer vocalising and breaking a piece of dry clay.

the interaction with the materiality of dry clay and my personal “fissures”, but also propels through voice, sounds, and actions what I have listened from the participants – their “fissures”. Overall, I have listened to loaded experiences, from women, men, and non-binary people, revolving around the topics of sexual assaults, rape, murder, organised crime, human traffic, bipolarism, psychiatric treatments, gun shootings, grieving, racism and structural racism, drug traffic, narcissism, among others. Listening to all those lived experiences it has made me to realise that the “fissure” refers to substantial experiences of trauma which were not healed – they were in the moment before becoming a “scar”. Since there is no “scar” yet, it is not fully acknowledged because it is not tangible or visible to the person. To track reciprocally – mine and their “fissures” – on how trauma relates to the TRIAD Vortex became easier considering that “the ‘I’ has no story of its own that is not also the story of a relation – or a set of relations – to a set of norms” (Butler, 2005, p.8) and, therefore, a system that one lives in but at the same time contributes to.

3.2. ON CO-AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND CATHARSIS

I see this contribution being built reciprocally through the practices of sensitively co-listening, co-sharing, co-voicing, co-exchanging, co-releasing, co-creating which the FISSURE art practice delineates on co-autoethnography.

When we engage in this methodology, there is opportunity for change through action. Indeed, rooted in experience understood from sociocultural perspectives with insight gleaned from each other and the world, co/autoethnography has the potential to be transformative (Coia & Taylor, 2019, p.18-19)

I noticed the engagement with co-autoethnography during my field research when I realised, I was not identifying or reflecting on the TRIAD Vortex and its impacts individually, but collectively through the sharings. Co-autoethnography is a conjoint analysis of the self through depicting and unravelling reciprocally one’s story in relation to other and identifying the implications of the socio-political context that both parts lives in. My voice and their voices got united by the experiences that were shared through recognising one’s narrative on other’s. That recognition is what connected us, leading to transform the perceptions that each one of us had before the sharing’s encounter, which creates space for resilience and the practice of co-adjusting to co-exist with each other. In reason of that, I understand that the “fissure” as a concept within the art practice facilitates unlearning and disembodying the TRIAD behavioural pattern taking into account that

The more repressed emotion one has accumulated, the less one can tolerate discharge in others, since it disturbs one’s own equilibrium (..) when complete discharge occurs these distinctive consequences are avoided. The person becomes more tolerant of discharge in others and thus stops transmitting the pattern of repression (Scheff, 2001, p.50-51)

The sharings provided an opportunity for me and participants

to discharge emotions that got repressed alongside with such traumatic experiences of suffering or witnessing. Furthermore, it seals a real attempt to break the “pattern of repression” that the TRIAD Vortex keeps in a loop.

When I reflect upon the Brazilian history the very first event that comes to my mind, taught during elementary school, is the Colonisation process and its period; the subjugation to and exploitation by the Portuguese crown, the murders, rapes, and slavery of Indigenous and Black people. As a child I couldn't understand all that in depth and not with so much detail, but it is tough and sad to acknowledge that Brazil is a country that tells its history starting from the Colonisation. The counting of its age comes from this historical “mark” - more alike for a wound - accepting such historical period as the beginning, thus, complying with a Eurocentric-colonial perspective. It is tougher to understand that the topic of race and the discussion on *mestiçagem* - the racial mixture - starts by recognising that it was initiated through the act of rape of Indigenous and Black African women. As a Brazilian, when you trace back who in your family could be possibly lived that period, you get horrified because that accompany the knowledge that where you come from is a place of so much pain inflicted at the core of Brazilian society, following by suffering, sorrow, fights, deaths, injustices, and remainders of the Portuguese colonial-patriarchal acts on Brazilian culture and society. That generates a societal demerger,

which is inscribed throughout the entire Brazilian history and is conveyed through the inherited behaviour from one generation to another. A recurrent topic that was mentioned in all sharings was the fact of experiencing such demerger reflex in different situations of the Brazilian everyday life which served to gather knowledge from “the everyday as sites for reflection on issues of power and authority” (Coia and Taylor 2017, p. 59). Historically, to mention a few, it was explicitly visible not only during Bolsonaro term (2018-2022), but also during the dictatorship (1964-1985) and the irreparable and adverse manoeuvre of the Portuguese crown which moved in and lived in Brazil (1807-1821), characterising Brazil on the history of the Colonisations as the only colony, at that time, to have the oppressors on the same land of their oppressed.

Perhaps this fact has enlarged the presence of repression on Brazilian society, making its people to suppress their emotions and oppress themselves in their wholeness, including their voices, attesting the fact of countless recurrent police interventions which were supposed to establish some kind of order and justice, but only have created more chaos and injustices. Perhaps, not only this example of repression exemplifies people's repression, which was well mentioned during the sharings when any kind of authority was implied on the conversations, but as Brazilians, repression has been part of our history, therefore, habits and behaviours. The necessary resulting catharsis from so much repression,

including censorship, plays an important role which I cannot assert whether it was ever accomplished, but it was always attempted through several riots, demonstrations, and protests. On catharsis,

The theory insists that emotional distress and discharge are two different and, in fact, opposite processes. The signs of emotional distress are symptomatic of increasing muscular and visceral tension, just as the signs of emotional discharge are indicative of the relaxation of tension (...) grieving, fearing, embarrassing, angering, for the distress of the emotions, and degriefing, deembarrassing, de angering, for the discharge side (Scheff, 2001, p. 48-49)

By co-autoethnographing with the participants our stories, it has enlightened the understanding that the great majority of Brazilian history has caused emotional distress on its people and not emotional discharge. When I think about myself, I can recognise that, it's clear the innumerable moments of suppression, omission and withdraw of my own voice. The participants shared from the same moments, and the sharing was offering a space for potential emotional discharge on catharsis. I witnessed their emotions growing on them through their trembling voice at the beginning of the sharing, and afterwards they were having body reactions such as shivering, crying, angering, sweating, and laughing.

The difference between me and every participant is that I don't live anymore in Brazil, but they live. I want to highlight such information on this inquiry because I have been four years distant from that reality - albeit that is impossible to ever feel completely distant at so ever. They have been

completely immersed in the Brazilian context, differently from me. When it comes to achieve catharsis, it is necessary a minimal distance from the event to re-visit with safety, without getting overwhelmed by it, to un-intentionally and, often unconsciously, discharge the emotions. "When the individual's attention is exactly divided between past distress and present safety (i.e., at optimum distance from the repressed emotion), repression is lifted, and catharsis can occur" (Scheff, 2001, p.57). "Present safety" means being triggered by other's experiences, therefore, it's not one's own traumatic experience which enables such "safety". I question whether the participants have indeed experienced catharsis by engaging with co-autoethnography, considering that such "present safety" might not be ideally achieved, even though what I have experienced has provided a different traumatic narrative from theirs, which might have triggered their emotions having such "safety".

I must say that catharsis has been very present on my life since I moved to Germany in 2019 because it was when I initiated this journey of taking distance from everything I knew on my daily basis. The German everyday didn't remind me of anything I ever experienced in my home country. Germany, as many European countries, have what Brazil never had: safety. That's why when I entered the studio to rehearse and go through my practices, so many emotions came to surface, urging to be discharged. These were the moments I was

getting closer to my past, remembering things that used to be part of my routine through evoking the memories, which also hidden the unbearable ones. It wasn't any different on my rehearsals for all my performances related to the current artistic research. Many times, I found myself having an outburst through my vocalisations, or motion, to release my repressed anger. That's why the interaction with the materiality of clay became so important for me, which honestly was never really planned. It happened for the first time on my performance "Tender Transgression" (2022) through a cathartic moment I had of not only breaking the clay to break my silence, but of screaming, storming, and crying. From there and onwards, I decided to keep the clay in this process, closer to me, also to understand its properties as an incredible material that transforms itself. The clay has taught me to shape my traumas in it, giving form to it; to get distance from by letting it dry; to release my emotions by breaking it; to blow and move forwards from my anger through its dust; and to gather water to its dust to become malleable - anew, and unexpectedly transformed. This entire process, somehow unconscious, but embodied, it was brought to light through the interactions with its materiality - a knowledge that I discover not from a human, but a material.

3.3. ENTANGLEMENTS OF "ENVOICEMENT"

The use of voice was the main medium which I and participants used to interact. In reason of that, for my performance I set the real exercise of evoking such shared experiences and giving voice to them - without any kind of codification. That became my aim and the key point to understand the embodiment of those shared "fissures" through "envoicement" - a vocalised voice that call upon other's voices and conveys beyond words. Artistically, I have made the decision to not use spoken words, because the layering of my vocalisations and the interaction with the materiality of clay within the actions I've undertaken - which have created more sorts of sounds to the performance, it had already spoken volumes to the audience based on testimonies I've received.

"Sounds of your voice, sounds of your hands and feet, sounds of dragging, touching, holding, cracking, hitting, sounds of clay pieces, or even the dust (...) By the end of the performance, when audience started to leave the space, (...) everyone started to walk on the pieces of clay, creating a new, unexpected (for me, at least) soundscape" (Valero, 2023, email correspondence).

I also had a clear statement of not bringing language to my voice, keeping only the vocalisations to not comply with Western language. It is important to acknowledge that "by using one's voice one is also 'always-already' yielding power to the Other" (Dolar, 2006, p.80). The orientation on addressing one's voice needs to be done with care, "being cared for and of caring (..) The realization that caring and authority

are not only complimentary but also need to be seen, (..) in relation with each other" (Coia & Taylor, 2019, p.14). Hence, who voices needs to take accountability on that, minding the reasons why one voices, for whom, when and where. Situating and locating one's voice is a constant practice to engage as well with awareness on the impact that it'll have.

Preach R Sun, actionist and activist, on his performance lecture in Venice-IT "Name and Break the Blocks" (2017), he had the participation of the audience members to "name it" what it needed to be broken and he was voicing in a mantra "name the blacks, where are the blacks" by breaking the blocks for each response he got from the audience. He displayed a conjoint action for the performance in which his action of breaking was relying on the continuous response from the audience through their reflections and voices. I tackle his performance because differently from him, I didn't have the people who participated on my field research to be part of the final performance. I realised I had a lot to release due to participants' experiences added up. I felt responsible by carrying their voices, by honouring what they have trusted me. In reason of that I acknowledged the danger of appropriation and distortion on the displacement of their words and voices. As Tamy Spry, professor emeritus of performance studies, wisely reminds us that "there is danger 'Being Here' when writing of 'Being There' [which] involves speaking in multivocal tongues and shifting cultural shapes"

(2001, p.714), the same applies for my performance. The field research experience had affected immensely this work, that's why I had to carefully think through on how to display or frame the traversing of their voices on the actual performance. For that reason, I have decided to bring their words - from their voices - written with charcoal on pieces and blocks of dry clay spread throughout the whole space. My aim was to not objectify their stories, but to highlight their words present with me during the performance which was a paramount tool for my embodiment and "envoicement". The words, mostly overloaded, were concentrated on the emotions and the topics approached such as "rape", "weeping", "human traffic", "Indigenous genocide", "screaming". However, there were a few pieces with words that kept resonating through the sharings such as "connection", "other", "slit", "awakening". I wrote those words in English and Brazilian Portuguese, to make visible what was being approached through my performative actions such as carrying on my back a big block of clay whilst vocalising or erasing those loaded words through sounding the clay by touching, breaking, and sliding on the floor, for instance. I knew that the breaking of the clay would be inevitable, but not enough. That's why those words were activating my embodiment and "envoicement" through the process of evoking memories of when I witness their breaking of silence.

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Figure 7 Kotsopoulou, F. (2023). Image from performance.
Final's year 2, performer interacting with the materiality of dry clay.



CONCLUSION REFLECTING WITH THE AUDIENCE

Since the audience had to choose whether to sit or stand, as it was instructed upon their entrance, by carving their own space. Such proximity and possible immersion on the performative landscape created, it has challenged the audience's listening, witnessing, and behaving, as they were invited by my facilitator to let themselves to be traversed and embrace radical sensitivity. They were interacting with the performance, not only by simply watching it, but by moving those pieces and blocks to sit or walk; seeing and absorbing the landscape; reading the words written, listening my vocalisations within the clay interaction and its sounds; above all, by witnessing the actions. I analyse that such witnessing potentially can trigger cathartic emotional discharge on audience members. I noticed that based on the knowledge that

"most cathartic laughing and crying, the individual is unaware of the unconscious source of the distress, as in the case of the cathartic processes that take place in an audience in the theatre. Most of the members of the audience, most of the time, do not make any connection between the powerful emotional experiences they undergo and events in their own lives. They usually think of their reactions as caused by the events in the drama"
(Scheff, 2001, p.65)

Rupp' s testimony (2023, email correspondence) has shown to me a possible discharge from her emotions through catharsis being triggered by my performance. As she wrote,

this tension turned into anger that was being released through the smashing of the bricks - it felt as if I was sort of doing it with you (...) I also felt a sense of emotional closure - someone did it, someone dared to be angry (Rupp, 2023)

When I read her words, I got deeply touched on knowing that my performance served as a bridge for her to release repressed emotions from her personal experiences. The performance process was crafted intrinsically to catharsis being held through autobiography and co-autoethnography lenses. My performance became a potential bridge between my own and audience's catharsis. I consider such surprisingly discovery relevant for my future actions and the impact of this performance when performed more times accompanied by the FISSURE art practice being offered on different socio-political contexts, since this first one was focused on Brazil.

Such proposition entails the mission of my artistic work in order to advocate for social change through trans-(de)-disciplinary artistic research that dislocates and relocates each time. Traversing and being traversed by different places as well countries and people who partake. I approach trans-(de)-disciplinary with the understanding that this artistic research has crisscrossed diverse fields of knowledge such as community-based practices, performance art, biopolitics, cultural anthropology and psychology. Beyond that, it has analysed through an intersectional lens the de-disciplinarity inherent of crossing such study fields and of not complying

with the institutionalised point of view on discipline - when one subjects oneself to be disciplined or to acquire certain discipline. Moreover, I perceive its trans-(de)-disciplinarity through its transversality established with the participants through co-autoethnography. This research's mission was devoted on the aim of gathering more knowledge around co-autoethnography through community-based actions encompassed by the FISSURE art practice. This MA artistic research inquiries being done on the aspect of the "fissure" as a concept and art practice has demonstrated that its manifestation is a self-revelation on people's lives in relation to their "silenced-burdens".

Elucidating further on that, one acquires awareness on the "fissures" inflicted on one's individual body - the person in its micropolitics, as well the collective body - the society in its macropolitics.

Any process of political transformation which does not contemplate the decolonisation of the unconscious is condemned to the repetition (even when there is a displacement) of the forms of oppression; (...) there is no possibility of a transformation of structures of government without the modification of the micropolitics devices of production of subjectivity (Rolnik, 2018, p. 15-16).

The FISSURE art practice within its methodology "Actions of Connecting" have enabled to understand that through sharing, co-creating, and disseminating this artistic research, it's being possible to act on the "micropolitics devices". People who partake the practice dive into exercises of self-

reflexivity about their subjectivity by questioning and evoking oppressive and traumatic experiences. Such exercises enable, thus, “involving ourselves in a heterogeneous multiplicity of revolutionary micropolitics processes” (Rolnik, p. 15, 2018), which consequently results, on co-fissuring the TRIAD of exploitation and subjugation. The action of co-fissuring means going through the individual and collective process of recognising the “fissures” that were silenced. The “fissure” starts to become manifested when one finally starts to break the patterns learned from the TRIAD Vortex. Hence, co-fissuring results on the break of silence by feeding people’s voices and emancipating their oppressed unconscious. Therefore, the “fissure” manifestation is a substantial ongoing process of changing behavioural patterns through self-awareness and criticality on economic-socio-political decisions that writes the history of humanity. The “fissure” which has been firstly ascribed to the traumatic experiences caused by the TRIAD, lastly it transforms by claiming the formed scars that will stay marked on one’s soul, but not forgotten in silence.

Figure 8 Kotsopoulou, F. (2023). Image from performance. Final's year 2, performer's written words on clay fragments.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Documentation from field research in Brazil

Photos credit: (1) Gio Baraldi; (2)-(3) Gab Branco (4)-(5) Gio Baraldi.

A.0 Flyer Co-lab "FISSURA"



A.1 Co-lab "FISSURA" process and co-creation of the participants at Oficina Oswald de Andrade, São Paulo-BR.



A.2 Co-lab "FISSURA" process and co-creation of the participants at Oficina Oswald de Andrade, São Paulo-BR.



A.3 Co-lab "FISSURA" process and co-creation of the participants at Oficina Oswald de Andrade, São Paulo-BR.



A.4 Intervention action-based performance "Sensitive Crossing" at Sta. Ifigênia bridge, São Paulo-BR



A.5 Intervention action-based performance "Sensitive Crossing" at Sta. Ifigênia bridge, São Paulo-BR



APPENDIX B

Audience testimonies, thoughts, and feedback from the performance "The(ir) fissures written on me".

Felipe Navarro Valero <F.NavarroValero@student.ArTEZ.nl>

Wed 2023-06-07 19:04

To: Gabriela Apollo dos Santos <G.ApollodosSantos@student.ArTEZ.nl>

Dear Gabriela,

I hope you are doing well and your thesis writing is going smoothly :)

First of all thanks for trusting me to record the sounds of your performance, it was a real privilege to be there with my ears augmented, witnessing your work in this way.

Here I send you a brief text about your performance, with some thoughts I had, especially sound-wise, as we discussed in Nelson the last day.

Well, to start, the sound of your performance is already super rich. It's true that, because of the equipment, I had a bit more volume but I guess with a good listening attention all details are equally perceivable. Sounds of your voice, sounds of your hands and feet, sounds of dragging, touching, holding, cracking, hitting, sounds of clay pieces, or even the dust... Also at some very quiet point, the lighting turned on and it was also perceivable in the sound space... By the end of the performance, when audience started to leave the space, I kept on recording, and that was a very special moment when everyone started to walk on the pieces of clay, creating a new, unexpected (for me, at least) soundscape. If you keep working with the audience inside the performance space, I think it's interesting if you consider the soundscape that you will leave them with, after you're gone. That, of course, made me think about the potential of the performance to become an installation and how that could affect the sound experience of a visitor, or a former audience member that becomes a visitor suddenly...

There are many options in terms of using live mics or recording sounds and play them, or layering them... or even, if you consider the installation option, playing with speaker/sound source position in the space. But I think, since the sound textures are so clear already, is good to take those textures as the seed to "augment" or present the sound in a different way than the "raw live", if that's what you want to do. So if you would like to do something in that direction and need something, I would be very glad to help, let me know :)

Thank you and see you soon! Take care!

Best,
Feli

I hold Gab's performance very close to my heart. I appreciated the display of the roughness and the tension she presented for every kind of oppression and injustice we experience in our everyday life and it made me think of the need for softness and vulnerability which can weaken and empower us at the same time. Through her voice and the smashing of the rocks she expressed the need for a collective scream and a kind of resistance which is usually silenced or banned.

The feeling of a deserted landscape and loneliness is the unfortunate reality for many women and people who suffer through a patriarchal, capitalist and racist society and performances like Gab's remind us of the hard road we need to pave in order to unite our experiences and stand free.

Best wishes in your future endeavors,
M.T.



GABRIELA • BRANCO <gabriela.apollo@gmail.com>

Some thoughts about your performance

1 message

Karolina Rupp <info@karolinarupp.com>
To: gabriela.apollo@gmail.com

30 May 2023 at 10:53

Dear Gab,

Thank you so much for your wonderful performance. As I told you in person, I was deeply touched by it.

As promised, although a little late, herewith my thoughts on your piece.

When entering the room, I noticed a multitude of temporalities. To elaborate, there was a feeling in the space of 'something had happened here' as well as 'something will happen here'. I believe this is the case because of your hair being the same colour or even drenched in the same material as the objects in the room (presumably plaster - if this is the case I do hope you did not have it in your hair!) and thus suggesting a tampering/ working with these non-human bodies beforehand - your body becoming a little dirty from forming the plaster for example. In addition, the handwriting in charcoal on the plaster blocks indicated that a human has 'had their hand in it', that there is evidence of someone having interacted (written) with these blocks beforehand. Also, your choice of costume - the exposing of your nude torso indicated some sort of eerie event, a form of incompleteness - *what happened here? Why is she only wearing a pants and no top?*

When your performance started, you sat in the corner of the space, curled up, your face not visible from where I was sitting. The movements and sounds that followed reminded me very much of a non-human, an animal, of an anthropomorphic figure, something along the lines of a centaur or a humanoid-futuristic-creature that is in severe pain, or lost, or has just survived an attack on their group/clan/tribe and is the only one who remains, looking through the destruction surrounding them - I know this sounds hectic and I'm not sure how much I'm projecting here. What I do know is that the sounds you were making communicated to me a deep form of pain and suffering rather than something cheerful. It felt like you were screaming in a language that I did not understand literally, that is however, understandable beyond words - it could be felt.

The moment you started smashing the plaster pieces in the space, you were destroying what was there before, the words written on the pieces in charcoal. I was sitting in such a way that I could clearly read the word *RAPE* on one of the blocks - I was eagerly awaiting its destruction! From my perspective all the words I could read where ones with negative associations - I'm not sure if there where more neutral or positive ones too? This leads me to some more observations which are very much informed by our conversations beforehand. Knowing that you're from Brazil, and that this country, just like the country I grew up in (South Africa), is experiencing massive pressures internally as well as externally along the lines of crime, violence, patriarchy, colonialism to name a few, I felt as if all this baggage was being broken, smashed with so much force and anger in order to create a space to move on from. On the contrary, I also understood this action (the breaking of the bricks) as a forceful reshaping of the Western gaze towards so called third world countries, by eliminating the negative notions associated with these countries to create a clean slate so to speak. In addition to this, it felt like many aspects where smashed that were brought about by the colonial powers in the first place. Thus, in this regard, your performance and you became (as you put it) an ambassador to feel, work through and release the ancestral anger brought about by colonial pressures and patriarchy.

I very much appreciated how much time you took for the various sections of the piece (for example the slow moving in the space at the beginning as well as the smashing of the plaster bricks at a later stage). Throughout, you kept my attention, as I was given time to somewhat process this hurt and anger through your work. I became tense when you started howling (for a lack of a better word) and this tension turned into anger that was being released through the smashing of the bricks - it felt as if I was sort of doing it with you. When you exited the space, I felt relieved that you got out safe (both out of the performance but also out of this space peppered in heavy and gruesome words - again, I don't deny heavy projection here on my part). At the same time I also felt a sense of emotional closure - *someone did it, someone dared to be angry.*

I realise that I'm writing very much from my own experience and would like to extend this into a more formal way of looking at your work - I'm thinking here of the feedback framework we are both familiar with 😊

Moving straight into operations (possibly concepts), I noticed the following:
Installation, anthropomorphism, ritual, destruction, mark making, casting, playing field, nudity, quadrupedalism, force/energy, transformation, power relations, human traces (writing), deconstruction (bricks loose - not in wall, rubble), demonstration, transformation, revenge, healing

More towards concepts & themes:

Decolonialism, feminism, more-than-human, reparation, conciliation

I have not elaborated on this point much, but I am again and again returning to the charcoal handwriting on the plaster blocks. Besides charcoal being a fairly unstable writing medium (it can be wiped off quite easily), in performance, but also for example in photography, I personally struggle with giving other actions and/or objects equal attention if a text or words are present - especially if these are faded, about to be erased (charcoal's impermanence adds to this) as I want to make sure I keep them somehow, read them correctly, repeatedly. Moving our eyes to a text is something we are almost conditioned to do, it's habitual, and often the easiest to make sense of (yes, ableness does play a role). Sometimes I feel that it makes a being (yes, me!) a little lazy, as in, it's harder to make sense or take up aspects of a work that are more subtle, abstract and not as clear as text or words. These aspects fade into the background because I feel that I already understand something about the work (the text as the most obvious clue), have something to hold on to and don't necessarily need to find other anchors. Of course this is my personal experience, however, in reflection, I am inviting you to consider experimenting with whether the words on the blocks are needed in the work, as the blocks themselves have a shape and form that communicates by itself already quite strongly.

Ok, this turned out longer than anticipated :)

Thank you again for your work, it brought me a lot!

Take good care and I look forward to meeting you soon again!

My very best,

Karolina

--

Karolina Rupp

info@karolinarupp.com
www.karolinarupp.com

APPENDIX C

"The(ir) fissures written on me" performance, recorded on 10.05.23, at BEAR-ArtEZ, Arnhem-NL.

Audio link:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-478186672/audio-their-fissures-written-on-me>

Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/KQqdnTIEWqM>

APPENDIX D

Master Archive with performances, poems, and writings mentioned in the thesis:

<https://www.gabrielabranco.com/>

"FISSURA" artistic research online platform with full archive of the practice:

<https://www.fissura.art/>

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