

Moi Tran

/ - Re-con-figuring the value of Sadness

2018

PREFACE



*Tran Van Quang 1982
Artist Collection*

RECONFIGURING SADNESS AS BEGINNING

I am interested in how Sadness can be reconfigured to open up the following ideas:

- *Revising and valuing knowledge production from alternative sites of emotional learning.*
- *Reconfiguring Epistemic Sadness as positive and generative.*
- *De- pathologising Mourning and Melancholia*
- *Sadness as a site of productive knowledge, empowerment and agency*
- *Sadness, as sharing ground to promote social togetherness through Performance*
- *Positive Genealogy – The positive transmission of Sadness*

As a Vietnamese refugee, my history is part of a catastrophic tragedy caused by one of the most contested wars of modern times. The exodus of thousands of Vietnamese people after the war became a traumatic humanitarian disaster, with countless lives lost at sea, women raped, children and elders dying, family separation. The challenge of reconfiguring *Sadness* is the subject I propose to explore in this text and in my on-going practice.

In reconfiguring *Sadness*, I will introduce some renewed ideas around *Sadness* and cognizance beyond suffering. I draw on my personal experiences as a refugee person to assert that *Sadness* is *active* rather than simply *static*, that we live with it and we live on. I argue that *Sadness* has the capacity to create productive knowledge and narratives to mobilise agency and active visibility. Throughout, I will share reflections on how this research is informing my current and future thinking and making.

Sigmund Freud, in his 1917 essay 'Mourning and Melancholia' presents a distinction between two scenarios of being and feeling through a 'successful' or 'failed' resolving of loss (Freud 1953)¹. Freud begins by defining his ideas of mourning as the reaction to the loss of a person, or to the loss of ones country and liberty, and continues to state that extended mourning of loss results in melancholia producing an undesirable pathological disposition². Consequently society uncritically employs epistemic ideas of *Sadness* as a blanket term that often smothers the 'intricate structures of mourning'³.

Let us look at *Sadness* away from the epistemic idea Freud has laid down. Firstly, I dispute the tendency to qualify complex human emotions in such a divisive way, it creates antagonism and ostracizes those experiencing these profound emotions. I wish to challenge the assumptions of epistemic *Sadness*, to argue that prolonged *Sadness* should not be considered pathology. I assert

that *Sadness* performs a crucial mechanism in reconstructing loss as productive knowledge to improve life and community. By removing old epistemic notions of *Sadness* we reduce the continued repression and dominance of vulnerable groups, by de-stigmatising the suffering of others we establish kinder generative and restorative encounters. I propose that the construct of reconfigured *Sadness* is much dependent on inter- generational relations, memory recall, identity, culture and politics. To share *Sadness* is not an attempt to cause a nihilistic sense of desperation/depression, but to take power in pathos, become aware, share fundamental collective consciousness and empower communities who have experienced histories of loss, displacement and dispossession to take agency.

Epistemic mourning is judged on successful stages of 'getting over'; we are expected to move through loss in key steps, like all modern activity based on targets to not achieve this is to demonstrate pathology. According to this view there is lack of patience to reflect on the process of loss, mourning, grief and we over look the possibilities for creative mediation between loss and absence.

Professor of Philosophy Susan Brison's studies into ethics and human values are particularly relevant to my point here.

Brison explores effects of trauma on culture (*Brison 2003*)⁴ looking at study results reveal people regularly indicate there should be an acceptable mourning period for different losses; once this period has passed, discussion in the public realm is not considered normal. Below she summarises her findings, in my opinion it is alarming to see that it demonstrates the rejection of understanding and empathy in human conditions of mourning, therefore perpetuating the damaging influence of Freud's 1917 essay.

*'As a society we live with the 'unbearable' by pressuring those who have been traumatized to forget and by rejecting the testimonies of those who are forced by fate to remember. As individuals and as cultures, we impose arbitrary terms on memory and in the recovery of trauma: a century, say for slavery; fifty years, perhaps for the holocaust, a decade or two for the Vietnam war; several months or mass rape or serial murder' (Brison 2003)*⁵

This quote by Judith Butler is particularly poignant and affecting in describing the act of mourning.

'That mourning might be completed is a paradox. The past is irrecoverable and the past is not the past: the past is the resource for the future and the future is a redemption of the past; loss must be marked and it cannot be represented; loss fractures representation itself and loss precipitates its own modes of expression.' (*Butler 2003*)⁶

It is common to think that *Sadness* or mourning is a private experience and part of the process is admittedly internalised; but I believe to share grief openly creates an externalised collective bonding. It importantly conveys the intrinsic social ties that define our crucial interdependence and moral obligation to each other. As human beings we are connected by a physical and psychological vulnerability in experience of loss and *Sadness*.

Professor David L Eng and Psychotherapist Shinhee Han in 2003 developed theories on Racial Melancholia in their essay 'A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia' (Eng & Han 2003)⁷. Eng and Han describe Racial Melancholia as the vexing 'condition' of assimilating for diasporic people, that ultimately affects how they apprehend the world, themselves in this world and the people in it. In addition the removal of a space to express mourning and process feelings causes pronounced physical and psychical feelings of Racial Melancholia.

Eng and Han propose that mourning identified as a finite process is more aligned to Western majority thinking, they continue to present that *Sadness* or melancholia in minority groups actually delineates an unresolved process that might usefully describe the unstable and suspended assimilation into the '*national fabric*' (Eng & Han 2003)⁸.

Although I agree that *Sadness* experienced in the diaspora or minority groups, can be closer understood to an unresolved process, I find the misleading assertion that only complete assimilation into the '*national fabric*' stabilises the diasporic situation problematic. In her study of "*Coerced Loss and Ambivalent Preservation*": *Racial Melancholia in American Born Chinese*" Sophia T Sarigianides identifies that coerced imposition on the Asian diaspora is at the source of Racial Melancholia (Sarigianides S T 2017)⁹. It is not ethical to impose complete assimilation or ultimate integration of oneself into a '*national fabric*' as the only version of successful living for a diasporic or minority groups. To become '*part of*' should mean to have influence on the invention, construction and decision making of what the '*national fabric*' should be or represent. Coerced assimilation (Sarigianides S T 2017)¹⁰ acts to strengthen the hold of racial dominance employing psychological and social control on the non-dominant community to negative effect. Trinh Thi Minh Ha from her essay "*Women, Native Other*" suggests that imposed ideas of assimilation reinforces the ideas that one must first assimilate, and only then be different within permitted boundaries. (Trinh T M Ha 2009)¹¹

"When you no longer feel like a stranger, then there will be no problem in becoming a stranger again"¹²

Contrary to political campaigns imposing assimilation and enforcing conditions of 'getting over and 'getting in', I argue that we need to adopt a reconfigured

understanding of *Sadness* as not a condition we should make disappear nor should it be a trigger for complete assimilation of diaspora groups, that might ultimately result in the complete erasure of cultural identities. *Sadness* is deeply inscribed in stories of displaced people, but how can we extend the lens to empathise with *Sadness* and share in vulnerability? How can we use it to empower *Sadness* as site of productive knowledge rather than hide it as shame, victimisation or pathology? I believe this would require communities to reclaim the power to be, power to feel, power to talk and power to be seen and heard as a displaced person with memory, history, knowledge and value.

Psychologist Lawrence J Kirmayer, specialises in investigating the affects of trauma across different cultures states “*rebuilding a social world requires both a renewed commitment to justice and specific acts of contrition, atonement and restitution, but forgiveness follows different protocols in different cultures and traditions*” he continues to argue that it is necessary to find understanding of these differences in order to better understand *Sadness* “*an important step in elaborating the range of responses that can help individuals, families, and ultimately, whole communities work through their suffering to a place of strength, solidarity, and creative vitality*”(Kirmayer 2007)¹³

I refer back to Kirmayer’s above quote in agreement that *Sadness* must be considered specific across different cultures and groups, however it is essential this knowledge be identified as determined by distinct experience and events for any real benefit to the diaspora community. Mobilising *Sadness* as productive knowledge specific to each diasporic community can activate progressive relational experience for the future.

The production of knowledge is arguably not restricted to one definition of thinking or application, to one practice or lived space. Togetherness stimulates thinking sharing, writing, voicing or enacting within a collective communality. I am interested in exploring the bonds of togetherness in performance and live experience. Performance can function as lived togetherness to articulate *Sadness* through collective experience and affectively materialise collective feelings of shared pathos and the conscious agency. *Sadness* reflects on the depth with which our sense of self is radically dependent on others (Critchley 2017)¹⁴. I invite us to engage with the idea that there are as many ways of thinking or, even further that everything thinks. That is, we might conclude that thinking is going on not only in performance but in all things, therefore in all human, but also non-human, aspects of performance. Indeed John Mullarkey a Professor of Performance Philosophy proposes “*We should no longer think of thought as something representing passive things, but rather as something that things do themselves alongside us*” (Mullarkey 2009).¹⁵

Heidegger states that the 'body' thinks independently as a separate 'thing' (Heidegger 1962), he goes on to quote in the same passage "*My body, for example, is doing its own kind of thinking alongside 'me' as I work in the studio*"¹⁶. I strongly support the notion that Theatre and Performance making can be seen as a practical form of phenomenology, an investigation of Being.

Can Theatre and Performance be a metaphorical and practical sharing ground for reconfiguring *Sadness* as a site of knowledge? Theatre arose as a form that did not require physical initiation on the part of the spectator or as collective ritualistic performance, however the status of this description and purpose has altered considerably as people have mined this practice to find human narrative, comment and connection.

Elin Diamond in her introduction to "Performance and Cultural Politics" writes a "*Performance whether it inspires love or loathing often consolidates cultural and sub cultural affiliations*" (Diamond 1996).¹⁷ The point is as soon as performativity comes to rest on a performance, questions of affiliations and political effects all become discussable, which is why I am drawn to employing this form in my practice to reflect on some of the ideas I am discussing. The making and experience of performance often involves movement from one material state to another, from one place to another and this echoes the relational back and forth aspect of knowledge. Performance externalises emotion through creative activity. Foucault claims that a work of art opens a void, a moment of silence, a question without answer, provokes a breach without reconciliation where the world is forced to question itself. (Foucault M 1984)¹⁸

Sophie Nield in her 2006 essay "On the Border of Theatrical Space: Appearance, Dis-location and the production of the Refugee" (Nield 2006)¹⁹ invites us to think theatrically about one of the pressing political issues in contemporary Europe – the movement of people. In doing so we assess our attempts to understand the world we live in and our encounters with the people who appear (and disappear) in the making up of this world. Nield describes the dramaturgical event as a political dimension, so fundamental that we might use the theatrical to describe spaces to enable or disable the production for the appearance of 'the people' (Nield 2006)²⁰. In "The Human Condition" Hannah Arendt explains the power and potential in spaces of appearance predates and precedes all constitutions of the public realm and various forms of government familiar to the public landscape we know today. That is "*the various forms in which the public realm can be organized, wherever people gather together, there is potential but only potentially, not necessarily forever*" (Arendt 1958).²¹ In order to witness the appearance of people we require the appearance of space to activate agency, the relationship of people and space is integral to the ideas I advocate of shared togetherness in performance. The potential of uniting these two elements is dependent on the activation and

unlocking the potential power of encounter.

I have always been fascinated by the effect of watching people on 'stage'. I use 'stage' to describe any set up scenario, or a presence, this to me could also refer to people I watch on the street, people at work, these people are not in the role of a performer but they are performing, this sets up questions of power in appearing and being, intentionally and unintentionally, in context and out of context.

It is the potential in these scenes that most interest me. Performance commonly requires that scenes are rehearsed and set, however in the nature of humans there is always the risk that something may go wrong. I am particularly interested in the instance where performer/s work collectively to devise through these 'wrongs', this process usually offers a more interesting direction and sense of unpredictability to steer the performance. The chance of risk informs many of the choices I make in my performance scenarios, employing devised and improvised durational techniques in my work, I set up certain situations that require us to find different modes of working. The tensions that are set as a result of improvisation and duration create a temporal liveness in the performance that is essential to the making and experience of the work. It sets up vulnerabilities in the performance that I believe equalizes the space between performers and audience.

The following quote by leading writer and curator in Performance Art Adrian Heathfield eloquently describes the process of using duration and improvisation in this art form.

"Performance Art has long tested the nature and resonance of time. Since the Happenings this experimentation has found many different forms: creating fleeting works; diminishing the 'known and rehearsed dynamics of performance by opening it up to improvisation and chance; employing actions in 'real time and space'; banishing, rupturing or warping narration; scheduling works at improper times, creating work whose time is autonomous and exceeds the spectators ability to watch them; extending or shrinking duration beyond existing conventions; presenting the experience of duration through the body; deploying aesthetics of repetition, which undo flow and progression" ²²

My ideas around reconfigured *Sadness* have influenced the choices I make in my practice and research. The experiences of shared togetherness in Live performance generate strategies of recovery that expose the value of these events. I do not suppose that these sites of performance will elucidate all discussions around the experience of *Sadness*, but providing a site of shared togetherness is important as a starting point.

Here, Judith Butler importantly articulates the intrinsic values of togetherness, the knowing of each other, one loss is the loss of all, *Sadness* is the *Sadness* of all.

For if I am confounded by you, then you are already of me, and I am nowhere without you. I cannot muster the "we" except by finding the way in which I am tied to "you," by trying to translate but finding that my own language must break up and yield if I am to know you. You are what I gain through this disorientation and loss. This is how the human comes into being, again and again, as that which we have yet to know. (Butler 2006) ²³

During the Vietnam War, death touched every family in Vietnam. Approximately one in every 38 Vietnamese people passed away on the fields of war, my family suffered the loss of my sons, brothers, uncles and cousins. In looking at the complex experience of death, absence and loss in context to my personal history my practice has found a place where memories are simultaneously fluid and fixed. To follow I will discuss ideas pertaining to the role of memory in the context of reconfigured *Sadness*.

Performance inevitably draws on memory: as inspiration to create material; memorising text, movement and cues. In the process of making *'The other day you sat too far away from me'* (from this point I will refer to this work as *The Other Day*) I use memory recall to construct the text, my own memories and also the memories contributed by other people. I intend to collect new memories each time I perform this work, whether with the same performers or with new, in this way the script remains fluid and responsive and the memories will be shared and transmitted into the future.

I am very aware I do not want to fall into the trap of creating a mournful spectacle, so I am keen to use this platform as an opportunity to unpack ideas that also move beyond reconfigured *Sadness* in my practice. To critique the premise of mourning as spectacle I propose to look at an immersive installation titled "*Occupation of Loss*", a work by American Artist Taryn Simons. The work has garnered much praise and I, by no means am disregarding the investment of work that has gone into the making. In a series of nightly performances the imposing towering architecture of the underground site are silent until occupied. Simon invites the audience to enter each space at their own pace, within each, viewers encounter paid mourners from around the world (approximately 30 in total) whom Simon has invited to grieve. The audience is both witness to each mourner's cultural traditions, in the form of songs, wails, chants, and costumes enmeshed in the task of the mourning required of them. I find this work problematic and argue it ruthlessly manipulates mourning as spectacle. The power of spectacle orchestrates an experience for the audience that is undeniably intense, though I would concede the event is overly coordinated and feels more like it is hustling you towards sensation rather than opening up a place for sharing. The notion of *Sadness* extending into the attendance of society also suggests that *Sadness* may also be recognised as having political presence, however, it is

important that this presence avoids exploitation, misidentification and misappropriation as a pornification of vulnerability and suffering.

Diasporas are continuously reckoning in what Vijay Agnew in his book *'Diaspora, Memory, Identity : A search for a Home'* argues as a double relationship²⁴, a duality of belonging in geography of mind and identity, of present connections and space and continuing attachment to origin, of being here and there simultaneously. I connect the use of referencing to a double or dual place directly to Trinh Thi Minh Ha's theory of a double bind in the diaspora²⁵, a double consciousness that acknowledges current existence and earlier existence elsewhere through inherited cultural memories, the feudal, social and familial structures that permeate the psyche of old to new generations. I expand on this idea to say that across cultures, there is difference in what constitutes *Sadness* and in how the culture interprets and manages, it is imperative we recognise and respect this.

Anthony J Marsella (1988) defines culture as “*shared learned behaviour...transmitted from one generation to another to promote individual and group adjustment and adaptation. Culture is presented externally as artifacts, roles, and institutions, and is represented internally as values, beliefs, attitudes, cognitive styles, epistemologies, and consciousness patterns*”²⁶

The definitions of trauma must be adapted to the culture from which it arises, deeply situated and generally inextricable from social context are our autobiographical memories and to identities.²⁷

Post-memory theorist Marianne Hirsh²⁸ proposes memory as a transformative tool. Hirsch contemplates inherited inter-generational memories and feelings. She employs the term ‘post-memory’ to highlight the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to “*constitute memories in their own right*” (Hirsch 2008).²⁹

Writing on the transmission of trauma within first and second generation Holocaust victims, Hirsch elucidates in her essay “*Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Post memory*” that ‘children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma “remember” the experiences of their parents as narratives and images with which they grew up (Hirsch 2008).’³⁰

Hirsch highlights the space of the family as a powerful site for transmission of trauma and family relational identity. I would add that intergenerational transmission can also produce restorative strategies of productive knowledge as active resistance against losses for social gains in intergenerational connectivity.

The creation and retelling of family narrative is a way of establishing a family

identity that distinguishes the family from all other families and defines its view on the world, and a shared identity (Hirsch 2008)³¹. All cultures, and families are small cultures of their own (Langellier, K. M & Peterson, E. E. 2006)³² and have implicit cultural life memories that define preferable or acceptable ways to be and act. Remembering necessitates forgetting and forgetting necessitates remembering (Hirsch 2008)³³. Memory's duality of remembering and forgetting point to the will of memory operating in the collective transformation of loss, consequently, the photos and stories that tell me about my parents' experiences of loss function as a means of productive remembering and forgetting in our intergenerational relationship, it acts to sharpen the experience of interconnectivity as transformative avenues to reconfigure our shared *Sadness* into strength and knowing.

However there are many instances in the Diaspora community when language is incapable of restoring the gulf of resentment and misunderstanding within the intergenerational family and community. The loss of connection in these cases is caused by the conflicting intergenerational values that are adopted between generations; the pressure of the second generation to assimilate and shed the binds that make them different including history, heritage and family. I have witnessed many familiar situations within the Vietnamese Diaspora in London. The cause of this fracture does not necessarily lie with the second-generation Diaspora but the fact is there is no open space or support to resolve these complex feelings within this community.

Giving *Sadness* a voice is to give *Sadness* agency. Voices from people of Diaspora and minority communities need to be empowered to express and celebrate what they have overcome through knowing loss and *Sadness*. To use voice as an act of creative process asserts ownership of lived experiences within the stories and experiences. Ownership of stories is important to create and affirm individual and collective selfhood. Voice, in this regard, becomes both instrument and agent. Language can facilitate positive and constructive bridging of intergenerational contacts, hence using language to instill confidence in identity, whilst formulating social gains via shared stories.

Language has been used historically as a primary tool for colonisation³⁴ and is still being implemented in the process of assimilation for immigrants and continues on a global scale. The use and visibility of diverse voices and accents in constructive ways in the public political realm is more than lacking. My relationship to my second language has always been quite strained and fraught with confusion. My mother tongue is Vietnamese, this is the language that connects me most physically to my land of birth and also to my parents, yet this has now become the language I use second to English to communicate. I was not conscious of acquiring English as a language, it created a connection to my new world as a tool of assimilation and helped me translate our new life to my parents, but it also formed an unbearable divide between us.

Many working class immigrants have great difficulty assimilating to new lands, they focus on getting work, money to feed and learning how to adapt their lives, there is little time to dedicate to solely learning a new language or behaviours, it must be learnt on the move, my Father and Mother barely learnt to speak English, let alone write. Through my experience I have witnessed the fragmenting, ego-dissolving experience encountered by and imposed upon immigrants, and especially refugees, who live on the periphery of a dominant and adopted language. Simultaneously I experienced through the Vietnamese women in the community, the complicated situation to be endured by the non-English-speaking immigrant woman of colour as “Other” (Trinh T M Ha 2009)³⁵. Already subject to exploitation, when she is not fluent in English, or a native speaker, all too often she is treated as if she were less-than-human: unintelligible if not stupid, distracting if not disposable, a nuisance or curiosity at best, and at worst a threat worthy of scapegoating, exclusion, and extermination.³⁶

In Butler’s essay ‘*Precarious Life, Violence, Mourning and Politics*’, She argues that there is a deep-rooted problem not only in the US, but in human kind regarding the differing hierarchical value of human life. There are some lives, and it is usually those who are most vulnerable that do not warrant the same value. This is a major barrier in terms of integrating the idea of reconfigured Sadness in society and politics and building communities on understanding and equality.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to understand how humans suffer from oppression without seeing how this primary condition is exploited and exploitable, thwarted and denied. The condition of primary vulnerability, of being given over to the touch of the other, even if there is no other there, and no support for our lives, signifies a primary helplessness and need, one to which any society must attend.³⁷

Butler considers knowing vulnerabilities as an important factor in current political mobilisation (Butler 2003)³⁸ and ways to reconstitute these experiences as ultimately progressive. The lack of power to communicate creates a profound sense of vulnerability; for people in this situation I argue that their voices need different types of language, a language of understanding.

If this barrier of language exists and the vulnerable cannot be heard, do we simply ignore their story? I have witnessed on many occasions when women’s stories from the Vietnamese diaspora retreat underground and remain invisible as they do not the language or space for their stories to appear. They are lost forever.

I am interested in the act of borrowing language, visual tropes and working formulas from Theatre, it gives me the opportunity to directly confront and

critique the very nature of exclusion that Theatre perpetuates. I am driven to radically reset ideas of using Theatre by restaging this less conventional work within in the traditional tropes of Theatre. For example at the centre of the 'set' for ' *The Other Day*' stands a cubic structure of red velvet. All four sides greet with a soft wall of red velvet, synonymous with going to the Theatre, the red curtain often greet audiences as a pre set to performance. The curtains as a visual trope are pregnant with the potential of possibilities, offering a sense of expectation and anticipation.

Baz Kershaw questions the cultural efficacy of Theatre but also what it represents historically and in the current context. *"It is not independent of the social and political environment – but consider performance as a cultural construct and as a means of cultural production"*³⁹

Theatre in the UK is a predominantly inhabited by white middle to upper class people imposing a western ideology through culture, this leads to a predominately white middle class work being staged to audiences it represents. It is hardly surprising that this cycle perpetuates an internal colonisation. Actors must be trained in RP, it is the desired accent in most casting rooms, foreign accents or regional accents do not usually smash box office records and as a result the funding is not forthcoming for work that promote a minority cast, trapping the visibility of minority groups on the periphery further still.

Voice creates agency through the ability for a person to share experiences, it holds power against being socially erased by the impositions of a dominant language or culture. It is important that we use, hear, feel and share voices that hold different sounds, accents, history and tones in the public realm, we must promote visibility and not hide it from public experience.

In my work "*The Other Day*" I am conscious to present a range of voices as forms of resistance against impositions of a dominant language. The four performers are from China, Vietnam and Poland where the dominant language is not English

The shared space between the voices of the performers and viewer is also very interesting in this context, one as shared space but also as a way to physically explore emotive transmission as discussed in some of this research. In the exchange of a call and response, the performers in "*The Other Day*" call out to search for ways to activate emotive responsibility, duty and the instinct to reply to the human call. In my practice, words have become a way to express momentary observations and feelings as a holding ground for questions. The rhythm I have discovered in using words to respond to the live moment has opened up ways to explore ideas of alternative communication in my performance practice. I am curious to explore the effects on experience of different tones and intention that manifest in the delivery of the message and

also the assumptions of voice in protest. The appearance of Judith Butler at the Occupy Wall Street in 2013 reframed the experience of collective understanding and performativity for me. Butler makes use of the human microphone by which amplification is achieved not by a technological structure (Schmidt 2017)⁴⁰ but through repetition of their words through the voices of the collective. It was an exemplary moment where the power of togetherness appeared through people and present place.

In contrast to the material existence of voice, I am also very interested in using the effects of Silence as agency in my work. Silence as an alternative language, although when I refer to silence I realise that there is no such thing as complete silence. The state I am interested in sharing is a silence that gives space to the experience and creates a shift of senses within the ordinary moment. I have used silence in many of my past works and it is again revisited in my new work *“The Other Day”*.

Linguistic researcher Collete Granger identifies the “Silent Period” (Granger 2004)⁴¹, a term used in the study of linguistics to describe the stage during which a second new language learner refuses to speak her/his new language. Silence in second language learning claims that the “Silent Period” might represent a psychical event, a non-linguistic as well as a linguistic moment in the continuous process of identity formation and re-formation. Granger calls on psychoanalytic concepts of anxiety, ambivalence, conflict and loss, and on language learning narratives, to undertake a theoretical dialogue with the learner as a being engaged in the psychical work of making and re-making of the self; and the real and remembered experiences of individuals who live in the silent space between languages. (Granger 2004)⁴²

This research paper has allowed me to incorporate the influence of many philosophical texts on my thinking and practice. My interest in Performance as a form of Philosophy (in that it produces thinking) has influenced the way in which I have begun to approach my practice and making.

To conclude I will end with some text by Laura Cull who is a leading expert in defining this relatively new field of practice. Laura Cull responds to the existence of a new emergent field, she defines as Performance as Philosophy (Cull 2012).⁴³ Cull states that this new field is entirely open and what count’s as Performance Philosophy must be ceaselessly subject to redefinition in and as the work of performance philosophers (Cull 2012)⁴⁴. Performance Philosophy could be: the application of philosophy to the analysis of performance; the philosophy of performance and/or the performance of philosophy; the study of how philosophers and philosophical ideas have been staged in performance or how ideas and images of performance have figured in philosophy; the theoretical or practical exploration of philosophy as

performance and/or as performative; and likewise, experiments emerging from the idea that performance is a kind of philosophy or thinking or theorising in itself, it seems to me could also be much more besides.

Above and beyond closing with somewhat a conclusion to this research, I remain convinced that to reconfigure *Sadness* and to remove the stigma of trauma as a failed experience by promoting the productive knowledge that comes from these events as valuable is an ongoing project. However I hold deep conviction that forms of togetherness will shape and stretch the parameters in which we currently share *Sadness*, into an expanded collective reflection of outward empathy on the macro scale of humanity.

Endnotes

- ¹ Sigmund Freud (1953) *Mourning and Melancholia*. Pp28 *The Standard Edition of the complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol 14. Trans And Ed James Strachey . Hogarth Press. London
- ² *Ibid* Sigmund Freud (1953)
- ³ Leader, D. (2008) *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia and Depression*. Pp109 London: Hamish Hamilton. UK
- ⁴ Brison S J (1999) *Trauma Narrative and remaking of The Self*. *Acts of Memory Cultural Recall*. Edited Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe, Leo Spitzer. Pp209 Dartmouth College University Press of New England. Hanover. USA
- ⁵ *Ibid* Brison S J (1999)
- ⁶ Butler Judith (2003) *After Loss. What then? Loss. The politics of Mourning* pp167 Edited David. L. Eng and David Kazanjian University of California Press USA
- ⁷ David L. Eng and Shinhee Han, 2003 *A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia in Loss: The Politics of Mourning*, ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press. USA
- ⁸ *Ibid* David L. Eng and Shinhee Han, 2003
- ⁹ Sarigianides, S. T. (2017), “Coerced Loss and Ambivalent Preservation”: *Racial Melancholia in American Born Chinese*. Pp 37-49. *Educ Theory*, 67: doi:[10.1111/edth.12224](https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12224)
- ¹⁰ *Ibid* Sarigianides S T (2017)
- ¹¹ Trinh Thi Minh Ha (2009) *First published 1989. Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* .pp 34/ .Indiana University Press. USA
- ¹² *Ibid* Trinh Thi Minh Ha pp 342 (2009)
- ¹³ Kirmayer J Lawrence 2007 *Foreword* pp 7 *Voices of Trauma Treating Psychological Trauma Across Cultures*. Edited by Boris Drozdek and John P Wilson Springer LLC USA
- ¹⁴ Critchly Simon. (2017). *Tragedy’s Philopsophy : Performing Antagonism, Theatre, Performance and Radical Democracy*:pp 32 Ed Tony Fisher Eve Katsouraki: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ¹⁵ Mullarkey, John,(2009) *Refractions of Reality: Philosophy and the Moving Image* pp 16. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ¹⁶ Heidegger Martin (1962), *Being and Time*. Heidegger, M. (1962). Pp147 *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). London: Blackwell.
- ¹⁷ Diamond Elin 1996 –*Introduction: Performance and cultural politics*- Edit Elin Diamond pp10 Routledge London New York

- ¹⁸ Foucault Michel (1984) *The Foucault Reader* pp45 Edited Paul Rabinow Pantheon Books New York.
- ¹⁹ Nield Sophie (2006) *On the Border of Theatrical Space: Appearance, Dis-location and the production of the Refugee* “ In *Contemporary Theatres in Europe: A Critical Companion*. Edited by Joe Kelleher and Nicholas Ridout, pp61-72. Routledge New York London
- ²⁰ *Ibid* Nield Sophie (2006)
- ²¹ Arendt ,Hannah (1958) *The Human Conditon* . pp199 University Press Chicago Press. Chicago.
- ²² Heathfield Adrian (2000) *End Time Now , Small Acts Performance*. pp 10 Millenium and Marking time Black Dog Publishing UK
- ²³ *Ibid* Butler Judith (2003) pp170
- ²⁴ Agnew Vijay (2005) *Diaspora, Memory and Identity: A Search for Home*. Pp70 University of Toronto Press. Canada.

- ²⁵ *Ibid* Trinh Thi Minh Ha (2009) Pp243
- ²⁶ Marsella, A. J. (1988), *Cross-cultural research on severe mental disorders: issues and findings*. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*,78: pp 7-22. doi:[10.1111/j.1600-0447.1988.tb08998.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0447.1988.tb08998.x)
- ²⁷ Stamm B Hudnall, Stamm E Henry, Hudnall C Amy, Smith Hudson Craig (2004) *Considering a Theory of Cultural Trauna and Loss*. *Journal of Loss and Trauma* pp 1-9. USA
- ²⁸ Hirsch Marianne (2012) *The Generation of Post Memory* pp72 Columbia University Press. USA
- ²⁹ *Ibid* Hirsch, Marianne. (2012) pp75
- ³⁰ Hirsch, Marianne (2010) *Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory* pp243 *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, Vol. 14 No. 1,Project MUSE USA
- ³¹ *Ibid* Hirsch, Marianne. (2012) pp 90
- ³² Langellier, K. M., & Peterson, E. E. (2006). *Narrative performance theory: Telling stories, doing family*. In D. O. Braithwaite & L. A. Baxter (Eds.), *Engaging theories in family communication: Multiple perspectives* .Thousand Oaks, CA. USA
- ³³ *Ibid* Hirsch, Marianne. (2012) pp101
- ³⁴ Usevalad Auramenka (2014) *The importance of language as tool of the colonization in Homi K. Bhabha and Frantz Fanon*. www.academia.edu
- ³⁵ Trinh Thi Minh Ha (2009) pp 245
- ³⁶ Letson Joshua Chambers (2016) *Performance's mode of reproduction I: searching for Danh Võ's mother*, *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 26:2-3, 122-145, DOI: [10.1080/0740770X.2016.1249627](https://doi.org/10.1080/0740770X.2016.1249627)
- ³⁷ *Ibid* Butler Judith (2003) pp178
- ³⁸ *Ibid* Judith Butler (2003) pp180
- ³⁹ Kershaw Baz 2005 *The quest of performance efficacy. The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as cultural intervention*. Pp20 Routledge UK, USA, Canada
- ⁴⁰ Schmidt Theron (2017) *Is This what Democracy looks like? The Politics of Representation and the Representation of Politics* . *Performance Philosophy. Performing Antagonism Theatre, Performance & Radical Democracy*. Edited Tony Fisher & Eve Katsouraki. Palgrave Macmillan. UK
- ⁴¹ Granger A Collete (2004) *Silence in Second Language Learning A Psychoanalytic Reading*. Pp 80 -101 *Multilingual Matters*. USA
- ⁴² *Ibid* Granger A Collete (2004) pp 80-101

-
- ⁴³ Cull Laura (2012) *Performance as Philosophy: Responding to the Problem of 'Application'* pp20–27 *Theatre research international* · vol. 37 | no. 1 International Federation for Theatre Research UK
 - ⁴⁴ *Ibid* Cull Laura (2012) pp20-27.

References

- Argyropoulou Gigi 2017 *Collective Horizons: Rethinking the performative and political (Im) Possibilities of Being together: Performing Antagonism: Theatre, Performance and Radical Democracy* Edited by Tony Fisher and Eve Katsouraki pp171 Palgrave Macmillan London
- Baddeley Jenny & Singer A Jefferson (2009) *A loss in the family: Silence, memory, and narrative identity after bereavement. Journal Memory Volume 18, 2010 - Issue 2: Silence and Memory 18:2, 198-207, DOI: 10.1080/09658210903143858*
- Bal Mieke (1999) *Trauma Narrative and remaking of The Self. Acts of Memory Cultural Recall. Edited Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe, Leo Spitzer. Dartmouth College University Press of New England. Hanover. USA*
- Bal Mieke 1999 *Acts of Memory A Cultural Recall In the Present* Edited Mikke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe, Leo Spitzer Dartmouth College Published by University Press of New England
- Bartlett C Frederic *Introduction Walter Kintsch (1935) 2nd Edition (1995) Remembering A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* Cambridge University Press. UK
- Beaumont Atlanta (2016) *Psychology Today Magazine. Sussex Publishers.USA.*
- Bergson Henri (1911), *Creative Evolution, Translation. Arthur Mitchell . Henry Holt and Co Publishers. New York USA.*
- Bille, M 2010, *Seeking Providence through Things: The Word of God versus Black Cumin. in M Bille, F Hastrup & TF Sørensen (eds), An Anthropology of Absence: Materializations of Transcendence and Loss. Springer Science+Business Media, New York.*
- Cheng Anne Anlin (2001) *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation and Hidden Grief (Race and American Culture). Oxford: Oxford University Press.*
- Epstein Russell (2002) *Consciousness, art, and the brain: Lessons from Marcel Proust. Department of Psychology and Center for Cognitive Neuroscience, University of Pennsylvania, 3815 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104-6196, USA*
- Etchells Tim (1999). *Certain Fragments : Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment. London : Routledge*
- Fivush Robyn, Habermas, Tilmann Waters E A Theodore, Zaman Widaad (2011) *The making of autobiographical memory: intersections of culture, narratives and identity. International journal of psychology : Journal international de psychologie. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-making-of-autobiographical-memory%3A-of-culture%2C-Fivush-Habermas/52b3d7d9359c9fa220badcdee09f1271cd0dff40?tab=abstract>*

-
- Foucault Michel (1984) *The Foucault Reader* Edited Paul Rabinow Pantheon Books New York.
 - Foucault, M. (1989) *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated from the French by Richard Howard. London: Routledge.
 - Groen, S.P.N., Richters, J.M., Laban, C.J., Devillé, W.L.J.M. Cultural identity among Afghan and Iraqi traumatized refugees: Towards a conceptual framework for mental health care professionals. *Cult Med Psychiatry*, online publication 20-01-2017.
 - Hamilton D (2017) *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*
 - Harrison, R. (2003) *The Dominion of the Dead*. London and Chicago: University of Chicago
 - Heathfield Adrian 2000 *End Time Now , Small Acts Performance*. pp 10 Millenium and Marking time Black Dog Publishing UK
 - Heidegger Martin (1987) *An introduction to Metaphysics*. Yale University Press. London
 - Hollinger A David (1995) *Postethnic America Beyond Multi Culturalism*. NY: Basic Books.
 - Hollinger A David. (2010). *American Nationality in Postethnic Perspective*. *Scienza & Politica : per una Storia delle Dottrine*.
 - https://www.suntory.com/sma/exhibition/2013_2/index.html
 - Hyman, I. E., Jr, & Loftus, E. (1998). Errors in autobiographical memory. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 18(8), 933–947. James, W. (1983) *The principles of psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1890)
 - Jenna Baddeley MA & Jefferson A. Singer (2010) *A loss in the family*:
 - Joan W Scott *Feminist theorize the political Ed Judith Butler and Joan W Scott*
 - Kaprow Allan (2008) *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life* Edited Annette Leddy and Eva Meyer-Hermann, Thames and Hudson. London
 - Kirkpatrick, D. (2017) *Grief and loss; living with the presence of absence. A practice based study of personal grief narratives and participatory projects*. PhD, University of the West of England. Available from: <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/29973>
 - Kupfer H Joseph (1984) *Experience as Art Aesthetics of the Everyday C.7 Death in the time of our Lives* State University of New York Press
 - Langellier, K. M., & Peterson, E. E. (2006). *Narrative performance theory: Telling stories, doing family*. In D. O. Braithwaite & L. A. Baxter (Eds.), *Engaging theories in family communication: Multiple perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA. USA
 - Lee Chonghwa (2015) *Still Hear The Wounds. Towards and Asia, Politics, and Art to come. On not letting Death Die*. Cornell East Asia Series. Cornell University Press. USA
 - Lee Christopher (2012) *The Semblance of Identity Aesthetic Mediation on Asian American Literature* Stanford Stanford University Press USA
 - M. Bille et al. (eds.), *An Anthropology of Absence: Materializations of Transcendence and Loss*, 3 DOI 10.1007/978-1-4419-5529-6_1, © Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2010
 - Pauline Boss & Janet R Yeats (2014) *Ambiguous loss: a complicated type of grief when loved ones disappear*, *Bereavement Care*, 33:2, 63-69, DOI: [10.1080/02682621.2014.933573](https://doi.org/10.1080/02682621.2014.933573)
 - Phelan Peggy (1998) *The Ends of Performance Memory, Identity, Loss in the practice of Live Art Theatre*. New York University Press. New York. London
 - Pierre Janet 1919-25 *les medications psychologiques 3 vols paris societe reprint 1984*
 - Press. USA
 - Rosenblatt, P. (2000) *Parent Grief: Narratives of Loss and Relationship (Learn to Say no!)*. Philadelphia & Hove: Taylor & Francis. UK
 - Routledge New York 1992

-
- Rummel Kathryn (2007) *Rewriting the Passing Novel : Danzy Senna*. The Griot ProQuest Direct USA
 - Said Edward (1997) *Reflections on Exile in Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*, eds. R. Fergusson et al. [New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and M.I.T. Press.
 - Schacter, D. L., Norman, H. A., & Koutstaal, W. (1998). *The cognitive neuroscience of constructive memory*. *Annual Review of Psychology*. USA
 - Schmidt Theron (2017) *Is This what Democracy looks like? The Politics of Representation and the Representation of Politics . Performance Philosophy. Performing Antagonism Theatre, Performance & Radical Democracy*. Edited Tony Fisher & Eve Katsouraki. Palgrave Macmillan. UK
 - Senna Danzy (1998) *Caucasia* Riverhead Publishing USA
 - Shklovsky Viktor (1917) *Art as Technique* English translation in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, Edited. by L.T. Lemon and M, J. Reis.
 - Silence, memory, and narrative identity after bereavement, *MEMORY*, 18:2, 198-207, DOI:
 - Singer. Jefferson A. & Salovey Peter (1994) *The Remembered Self: Emotion and Memory in Personality*. The Free Press. Division of Macmillan INC. USA
 - Singh, Amritjit, Joseph T. Skerrett Jr. and Robert E. Hogan. Eds. (1996) *Memory and Cultural Politics: New Approaches to American Ethnic Literatures*. Boston: Northeastern Press.
 - Sontag Susan 1969 "The Aesthetics of Solitude" in *Studies of Radical Will*, chapter 1. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969; Anchor Books, 1981; Picador USA, 2002.
 - Steiner George (1961.1980) *The Death of Tragedy* Oxford University New York Reprinted by permission of Faber and Faber Ltd and Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.
 - Stroebe, M.s & Schut, H.A.W.. (2010). *The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement: A Decade on*. *Omega*. 61. 273-89. 10.2190/OM.61.4.b.
 - type of grief when loved ones disappear, *Bereavement Care*, 33:2, 63-69, DOI:
 - Vo Danh (2018) *Artist Statement Xavier Hufkens Gallery*. Belgium.
 - Vo Danh (2018) *Interview with Nadja Sayei for The Guardian Newspaper*. London .UK