

**I confess therefore I am: How can Online
Confession be used in a social media cyber
performance**

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be used in a social media cyber performance**

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How can online confessions be used in
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Abstract

“Forgive me reader. It has been two months since my last confession. Ere I err let me confess that this reasearch is to be understood as a confession and this abstract (also a confession) written after the fact. My confession: an admission to another party in order to gain some form of transendance, is this research. All the research is done as a confession where I aim to speak as a *parrehesiate*- one who speaks frankly what they know to be true. I the confessant speak (or rather write) to you my confessor who will offer me absolution and transferring on to me the status of one who has completed a Masters research dessertation. My research is autoethnographical, that is to say that as I write (about) myself into the research as an individual, in a social construct which also operates on me I am doing the reseach. My research in my confessional; the liminal, or outside of time and space, from which I speak.

This research explores how online confession can function as a performance strategy- the sum of force relations of a dramatic presentation intended to affect an audience- in cyber performance on Social media. Where cyber performance is a performance that uses internet technologies for both content and form to connect performers to near or remote audiences. Social media is the user generated internet platform that uses ones social networks as a means of communal connection.

Key terms: Autoethnography, Confession, Confessant, Confessor, Confessional, Cyber Performance, Liminal,*Parrehesia*, Performance strategy, Social Media.

Dedication

To Kabelo.

No confession of who I am would be complete without you.

O phumole ka khotso Maja Kwena.

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1. Introduction

“In a world where the internet is increasingly replacing physical social activity, this study examines this shift in performance by interrogating online confessions as a performance strategy. As world realities begin to include the virtual realm, performance moves into cyberspace. Watch as one Masters Candidate struggles to depict how confessions can be used as an online performance strategy. Revel in the power dynamics of social relations and performances as they encounter the discursive terrain of social media. Marvel at the intrinsic power relations of confessions and see how they can be used in a cyber performance based on social media technologies. ‘I confess therefore I am: Online confessions as performance strategy’, opening in academia next summer.”

The paragraph above explains and demonstrates the aim of my research. It is written (or at least it attempts) to mimic a movie trailer. Just as a movie trailer provides a summary of the main action of a film so too does this introduction. By including this paragraph, I aim to demonstrate how my research will be presented: performatively.

“Forgive us Father we’d rather go online” is an article by Ashley Fantz (2008) which details a decline in people confessing in church, as they prefer to go online. It portrays how confessions are no longer exclusively a Christian ritual sacrament but rather, they have extended to include even the mundane everyday aspects of life (Foucault 1978: 59). It highlights how everyday contemporary confessions are expressed most vividly online. From confessions dedicated sites such as Post Secret to various Facebook Confessions pages, people are using the internet as a medium to expunge their sins, or transgressions (or anything really) more and more. Confessions seem fixed in popular culture.

Poster (1995: [sp]) states that, the ‘magic’ of the internet is that it puts cultural modes of symbolization; that is, representation in speech, film, music, images and so forth, in the hands of all participants. This privileges the experience and articulation of the individual. There has been a seamless switch from the non-mediated experience of life to the mediated experience of the Internet, which has become immediate, normalised and domestic (Tomlinson 2007: 99-101). Its immediacy is due to its real time capability, allowing for instant interpersonal relations to be established. The Internet has become an essential part of our ‘life world’. It constructs ideas of

external self-identity, self-awareness and awareness of society. This develops a complex self-narrative where the self-performer conveys representations of their context and their perception: through observation of society - what Goffman (1959:19) would call a front.

Social networks are seen as 'communities'; the term is used interchangeably with the term 'online communities' according to context. Communities are still the default way of thinking about social relations. There is an allusion that community is the ideal form of social relations today (Han 2011: 66-67). These online networks form imagined communities. 'Imagined communities' refers to a group of people who may have never had direct interaction with each other, but rely on their imagined shared qualities to have communion (Anderson 1983: 49-53). The assumed community affects self to self-relations. Multitudes try to locate their 'identity-belonging' in an ever-changing complex cultural environment (Gardner 2010: [sp]). Online confessions play a large part in this identity-belonging dialect. Truth telling practices like confession are historically how humans have regulated each other and themselves in social contexts (Besley 2005: 79). As one expunges; creates, copies, extrapolates, mixes combines and shares confessions, one creates a sense of self in society, taking on a role in the online social community. This role can be used as a performance or performance strategy.

With the advent of the Smartphone, the Internet and by extension these 'fronts' have become mobile, convenient and increasingly personalised and confessional in nature (Tomlinson 2007: 103). The vital role of the Internet in the conception of human existence is that, it is situated as a potent element of human culture, and thereby human cultural production. The media invades a vast area of human life such that it constitutes how humans perceive themselves and what activities they engage in. Tomlinson (2007:95) states that the internet "helps to define what it is to exist as a social being in the modern world". The constant contact media of contemporary life, due to smartphone technology, becomes akin to proprioception - one needs to orient oneself with one's social network, creating a collectivist shared understanding of the self in a system larger than the individual (Han 2011:62). As illustrated below one needs only to Google the slew of memes; a widely mimicked humorous captioned picture (Jean 2008:1), to find examples of personalised confessions, created,

shared, reposted and re-edited to suit each individual's pastiche in relation to the individual's social network.

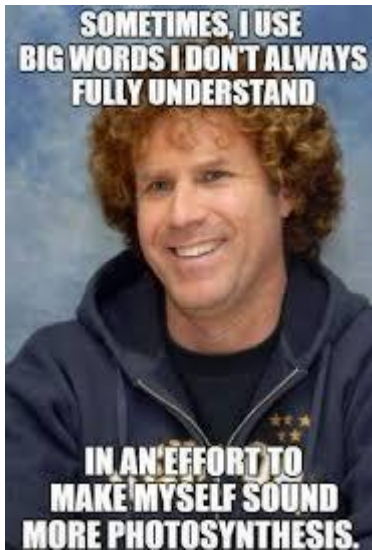


Image 1.1 Meme of Will Ferrell posted on pintrest by Ivana Petrovic

This image is a picture of Will Ferrell upon which a text has been superimposed to create a meme. The creator has used Ferrell's body of work as a mimetic device to punctuate their words. Ferrell's work in movies such as *Taladega nights*, *Step Brothers* and *Blades of Glory* has created the association of Ferrell's image with an idiot who tries to seem more intelligent than he is.

Simply stated, the underlying question in the study is: "What is performance strategy?" De Certeau's *The Practice Of EverydayLife* helps provide a possible answer. Strategy is defined as "the manipulation of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power can be isolated" De Certeau (1984: 35-36). It assumes a place that can be used as a base from which opposition can be managed. The place is delineated from the opposition and it is used as the base for generating force relations separate from the opposition. That is to say, an oppositional relationship is formed between the subject wielding power and the object or environment being acted upon. If performance is understood to be: "all activity of an individual in front of a set of observers in a marked period of time which has an influence on the observer" (Goffman 1959: 19), then performance strategy may be understood as the structure from which activity is set out in order to influence a set of observers towards a pre-determined aim or goal. It is the control or sum of the relations between the observed and the observer in a demarcated

space-time where the observed sets out to exert their will on the observer, instead of subjecting oneself to the observer.

In my 'trailer' I use words like 'watch', 'revel' and 'marvel' to present active imperatives that a writer may use to direct a reader. They are emotive and imply action. As the writer I have established a relationship with the reader. By using the third person omniscient voice I instruct the reader into my writing; a text that I imply is separate from me, objectifying it. From this specific 'base' I control the reader's perception of the text. This being as it may, the research also takes into account critical analysis discourse which discounts intentionality. The study acknowledges the agency of the reader who creates unity and interprets the text. Even though I the writer-performer may intend certain interpretations the ultimate interpretation of the work lies with the audience (the observers). This is a primary tension in the study. It is addressed by using the relational dynamics of text analysis to frame arguments on performance strategy. It underlies the power relations that inform performance strategy and forms the theoretical crux of the research.

The research problem is: "How does one use these tensions, specifically in relation to online confession, to form a performance strategy on a cyber platform which has remapped power relations?" I will demonstrate how online confessions can be used as a performance strategy by interrogating the ritual of confession to extrapolate the power and force relationships therein, then applying them to cyber performance practices, specifically those related to social media. To achieve this, I will cite examples from Facebook, Twitter and Post Secret.

I approach this work autoethnographically confessing in all aspects, essentially endeavouring to demonstrate my research as I explain it. Expending analysis and comparison, I endeavour to determine how online confessions can be used as a performance strategy. By using Foucault's work on Confession and power and Turner's notions of the ritual of social drama I form the theoretical basis of the study. Foucault traces the history of confessions as far back as the practices of various Greek city states (Foucault 1978:19). These practices, which are ritualistic and follow Turner's model of social drama, lead to Christian confessions. The use of these ideas through the lens of postmodern and online performance forms the theoretical

framework of my research. Through these theories I will crystallise the operative power relations which can be used to articulate a performance strategy

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Confessions

Confession is defined as “a process of avowal and acknowledgment in matters of the self. Confession therefore entails a real or imagined audience as the precondition of the acknowledgment” (Posal 2008: 134). The audience, or confessor, becomes an “absolute other” that may or may not carry the power to absolve the confessant (Marlin-Curiel 2001: 221-97). This creates power relations between the confessant and confessor. Confession provides a frame from which one can read another. It lets the reader feel that they have glimpsed a deeper truth (Marlin-Curiel 2001: 95), giving the impression that they are in a privileged position. This is often seen as a position of power.

According to Foucault (1978: 61) “confession is a ritual discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement”. The ritual plays out within a power relationship. The confessor is the authority who requires the confession and has power to judge, punish, forgive, reconcile and console. The ritual intrinsically causes modification in the person who articulates it, providing them with a sense of release through a feeling of communality.

Foucault (1978:19) states that the Catholic influence on confessions imposed “meticulous rules of self-examination”. One not only confesses to things that break the law but one will seek to control and change their desire into discourse. The assumption is that, through confession one starts to conform as one aspires to reconcile with their fellow man (Todd 1985: 39-45). The aspect of control and conformity provides a means of manipulation to be established, allowing a confession to be used as a way of exerting one’s will onto another, for both the confessant and confessor.

A dialogical relationship is created between the confessor and confessant. This relationship is not simplistic. This dialogue is not so much between two parties but three. Terry (2006: 210) identifies the production of two selves in the confessant: the performative self, that is, the one who does the confessing, and the constitutive self -

the one being confessed about. In performance terms they may be understood as the actor and the character. This dual confessional persona adds complexities to the seemingly straightforward power dynamic between confessor and confessant. Terry (2006: 210) identifies four types of relations within confessions: literary confession, religious confession, forensic confession and therapeutic confession. Each type forms a different relation between the two types of selves involved in a confession (the performative and the constitutive self) and to the audience.

Literary confession is based on the formation of alignment between confessant and confessor. Religious confession traces the plot of the confessant: how far they can delve into honesty by dropping their defences. Forensic confession deals with ideas of projected guilt. The confession is a kind of self-expression that supposes sincerity and authenticity but is inherently unstable and unreliable. When one disassociates oneself from the act of confessing, one is engaging in therapeutic confession. Here the ritual of confession is seen clearly: the acceptance of guilt, the demoralisation, the need and act of relating and then transcendence. There is a clear distinction between the two confessional persona.

The act of confessing is to communicate and express a narrative, recreating the self in a network of the past, the present and the public space; it becomes a dialogue with society and the cultural context of the confession (Besley 2005: 86). This also holds true for online confessions. However, online relations are made complex by the large online community as each individual plays a role in producing the cultural context and is simultaneously influenced by it in a continuing loop (Hall 2001: 166).

The relationships observed in the four types of confessions reveal a persistent distance between the confessant and the confessor. The intrinsic tensions in the confessant/confessor relationship can be manipulated in and between these types of confessions and thereby change how the confession is told and received. Thus the power relations in confessions can be used in and as performance.

2.2 Performance strategy

One may understand performance strategy in terms of inertia. The audience presents a body wanting to sustain its current state of being. The performance represents an unbalanced force that aims to disrupt this state of being. The object is to move the observer to a new state. This may include moving them emotionally,

spiritually, intellectually or physically. Therefore, the performance strategy is the specific site (or force) from which the performance exerts its power to move the audience.

Power is a question of a struggle and contestation. Foucault states that power must be understood as the multiplicities of force relations immanent in the specific discourse they operate in; they constitute its organisation (Chen 1996:311). Foucault maintains that power is an autonomous system; it produces subjects and the subjects reproduce it. The subjects become part of the mechanism of power (McHoul and Grace 1993: 22). Strategy is not merely the manifestation of power but the site of power, made in and through it (De Certeau 1984: 36).

Strategies are institutional, obscuring themselves beneath their manifestations. Effectively they conceal their connection to the base of power that sustains them. Strategy achieves an ultimate goal and it is not opportunistic as it represents the victory of the institution over the environment. If tactics can be understood as the moment to moment means of operation, then strategy is the structure from/in which power operates (De Certeau 1984:36).

2.3 Online or Cyber performance

Jamieson (Papagiannouli 2011:273) defines Cyber performance, which in this study refers to online performance, as a live performance that uses the technologies of the internet as a connection in real-time between remote performers and remote or nearby audiences. In the study, “technologies of the internet” refers specifically to social media and the technologies that are available to use within its interface.

Social media labels a network of software applications, websites, and devices that constitute the complex of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is a user generated techno-culture and a tool for bringing people together; a global intellectual economy that is defined by its sociality (Han 2011: 1, 5). Social networks (e.g. Facebook) which constitute social media, are sites where sociality is felt by means of miniture autobiographical texts or micro blogging (Han 2011: 53).

Online performance is a mode of performance that exists predominately in the digital realm. It is conveyed through digital means, situating it in cyber space. The performance is mediated by a computer or device, making it a part of the

performance. According to Papagiannoulli (2011: 276) Cyber performance can be identified as, 'spaceless' and 'bodyless'; there are no physical bodies performing in a delineated site.

Foucault states that the body is the site of power. As a subject it becomes part of the 'mechanism of power' (McHoul and Grace 1993: 22). According to Turner (2008:11) the human body is the essence of presenting social constructs and therefore social reality; this is also how conventional performance strategies operate - through the body. Performance is a collaborative discourse which encourages embodied understanding. It is a medium that accesses the human body, demonstrating to it that shared or common conception is possible (Rokotnitz 2011:8). This reception overrides resistance to external stimuli due to the profound emotions produced in the body (Rokotnitz 2011:3). When the body enters a specific state, encouraged by a performance, it becomes receptive to those emotions, concepts and memories that are strongly associated with that particular state (Rokotnitz 2011:113). So a performance has the ability to move a person from one state into another.

Online performance differs slightly. The same principle holds. However, limitations of the embodied experience, when using a computer or the internet, lift one out of the 'physical being-in-place' (Tomlinson 2007: 107). This induces a shift in the hierarchy of the senses that results in the gaining of a new sense of embodiment; new 'sensory-bodily rhythms'. This is directly due to typing (ibid: 109), the interface of the body to the physical and virtual medium of the internet, through a connected digital device. Use of the internet is remapping the embodied experience which remaps receptions of external stimuli. The internet provides a new space for performance to take place. This medium allows for the performance to break with conventional modes, often in favour of postmodern ones. The language of postmodernity is that of decentralisation (Smith 1999:205). There is no centre from which instruction or truth is produced. Production becomes a discursive practice which falls in line with other postmodern ideals such as rhizome; relativity of truth and facts, and collective ownership (Smith 1999:147-157). Thus performance is remapped, shifting power and power relations.

Similarly, online confessions remap the power relations within the ritual of confessions. Its discursive nature destabilises the idea of the confessor as an absolute authority.

Furthermore, the autonomy of the confessant is undermined as their confession is highly influenced by the social context of the confessional site. By understanding these relations, how they operate and how they may be manipulated one can create a performance strategy.

In critical analysis, work that uses Foucault's work is often described as Foucauldian or a failure of a Foucauldian approach (Graham 2005: 3). This study does not situate itself as such. In as much as there is tension between discourse analysis, text analysis and the situating of power, the study does not claim or aim to approach its discourse in a 'Foucauldian' manner. Such an approach would muddy the central thrust of the study. The research specifically does not engage with the Foucauldian critical analysis tendency to critique concepts but rather, it looks only at how they may be operative in identify or clarifying force relations. Though there maybe intersections with such a theoretical stand point, it is not to be understood as the prevailing thrust of the work. Strategically it would be ill-advised to engage with such a contentious method. Where pertinent, the study will engage with the mechanisms of different analysis standpoints in as far as they aid in clarifying a coherent way in which strategy may be deployed.

The strategic standpoint of the work is that of the performer/author/researcher thus it cannot fully contain ideas around reader/audience agency. Having said that, the work presents a paradox not only in critical discussion but also in the subject of discussion (confession). Confession demands not only an awareness of audience but recognises the power of said audience on the confession. This is made more complex by the study's slant to postmodern ideas. The concern here is not to be bogged down in the many possible meanings that may be, but to look specifically at principles in postmodern discourse that are highly evident in online performance. The tension throughout the study is the idea of strategy that aims to have binary opposition, and the means of critically analysing performance which necessitates analysis of sociality, ritual and power, that blur binaries. As a result the study does not focus too much attention at the finer nuances of critical discourse analysis in the aim to fulfil its strategic requirement: a clearly defined outcome.

3. Methodology

Autoethnography is both a method and a text, a performing of a process and/or of analysis (Denzin 2013: 129). It is a reflexive means of writing the self into the inscription of culture; the writing of culture and/verses the performance of culture. This is exactly what I am doing. I am performing the process of confessions, thereby demonstrating and explaining how confessions can be used. This form of research approach is akin to confession; one may call it a confessional approach to research. Autoethnography is seen as a form of practice; 'doing' engaging with the field of interest is the research. As stated, by confessing I am 'doing' and depicting my research. Most autoethnographical scholars agree that, often autoethnography completely rejects a methodology section as the research's rigour is found in multiplicity. New comers to the field (like me) find this difficult to navigate. The key features of autoethnography are aesthetic, cognition, emotion and relational values. Autoethnography "offers a variety of modes of engaging with the self, or perhaps more accurately with the selves, in relation to others, and to culture". (Anderson and Glass-Coffin 2013: 65-71).

Culture may be understood as the performed rituals of both individuals and communities as they connect with the world; a specific temporal and geographical phenomenon (Knowles 2010: 1). It has to be noted that in this research the 'geographical phenomenon' is flexible, as it transcends physical space. If "confession has spread its effects far and wide... in the most ordinary affairs of life" and "man has become a confessional animal" (Foucault 1978: 59) then confession can be understood as a cultural practice. Furthermore, if Denzin's (2013: 126) affirmation that people perform their culture through interpretive practices, is to be taken into account, then confessions which are self-reflexive, are a propagation and a writing and re-writing of culture. Through this one understands that the relational forces within confessions, as an interpretive cultural practice, are of agency and power. They can therefore be utilised strategically in representation such as performance.

Autoethnography is an evocative epistemological process which demands a postmodern performance aesthetic (Birringer 1993: 186); it is a performance centred pedagogy that uses performance as a form of investigation (Denzin 2013: 139). Confessions and autoethnography both re-tell and re-perform life experiences. They become an intervention and re-presentation of history. They create new ways of

experiencing and performing the past; re-imagining it. Confessions and autoethnography follow Turner's ritual of social drama (Denzin 2013: 126). The performative inclination of both and their operational similarities are the reasons that this is the best approach to the study.

Anderson and Glass-Coffin (2013: 65-66) state that the aim of autoethnography is to tell emotionally evocative stories grounded in theory, in a way that reveals the self as the central character. It follows that: I will take my personal experiences and my observations of Facebook, Twitter and other relevant social media sites as raw data. Then utilising literary and critical discourse analysis, using relevant theories, apply my analysis to online confessions. I will not look at individual confessions. Rather, I will look at the functionings of the sites as a whole using purposive sampling of my personal experiences on them to give pertinent examples. Finally, I will hypothesise how one can use online confessions as a performance strategy.

To achieve the above, I will:

- Identify/deconstruct the ritual of confession
- Construct an understanding of what confession does
- Identify the performance aspects of online confessions and Cyber performance
- Explore what confessions does as a strategy, particularly as Cyber performance

4. Summation

The unifying factor in confession, performance and ritual is sociality. The notions of social drama and play, which are ritualistic, interweave the operative elements in confession and performance. The social hierarchies and power relations therein crystallise the means by which one may begin to unpack the force relations and thereby identify possible strategies. The remapping of these force relations online adds a different dynamic to this dialect. In confession, the relation between the self and the audience is dependent on its location in the cultural context (Terry 2006: 210). This location is produced by those listening. As such the social realities and histories make up a confession just as much as the confessant does.

The post-modernistic, discursive nature of online interpersonal relations shifts the power dynamic between writer and reader, for example, the meme (Image 1.1) of Ferrell. By using the particular caption with the picture, the creator of the meme invokes layered meanings, heightening the effect of their intent creating it anew. The external events around the picture reform it. Of course, it can be argued that the picture itself; form, composition, subject have not changed, but certainly its reception has. This change is culturally specific as only individuals who are familiar with Will Ferrell will appreciate the picture. This process can be reversed.



Image 1.2 An image of Gene Wilder as Willy Wonka from Charlie and the chocolate factory directed by Mel Stuart. Available at: www.funnycaptions.com/tag/willy-wonka-memes

I confess: I am not particularly familiar with this particular image but I have on numerous occasions liked memes created from it, like the one above. In my first encounters with it on Facebook I tended to ignore it but as more of my friends posted and reposted memes using the same image I began to pay attention. The 'FOMO' (fear of Missing out) was intensifying. I noticed that the image was used most especially by my Caucasian friends who I know to be partial to sarcastic memes and films that have now acquired a cult following. In one use of the image it mentioned that the character was in fact Willy Wonka. From this I deduced that the image must be from a rendition of Charlie and the chocolate factory in which Willy Wonka has moments of extreme sarcasm (to this day I am not sure if I am correct). My particular social network context influenced this particular incident and my sense of identity-belonging required me to engage with this particular image. I used my understanding of my social context to solidify my place within it.

What is important here is my imagined exclusion from my social circle. A more pertinent example is of 'The Pots' memes. These memes were created after an episode of *Speak Out*, an SABC 2 program that reports on the injustices suffered by 'regular people', that is, non-celebrities. It is a program where they can 'speak out' about how they have been wronged and hopefully get help or solutions to their challenges. In this particular episode, a woman had purchased pots and had never received them. When the young woman responsible for the undelivered pots was questioned she replied in broken English which subsequently turned into an online sensation. This particular social media trend for me translated into my offline world. I found that more and more of my black peers were referring to 'The Pots' incident and had adopted it into their lingo. My failure to communicate in this manner certainly set me apart. I quickly researched the meme and adopted the lingo; a cultural marker. This marker extended to different scenarios and cultural expressions as seen in the memes below.



Image 1.3-1.5 Memes of 'Pots' girl. The citizen online.

Force relations are evident in the make-up of my social network. The transgressive action of not knowing has to be quickly addressed by me reading my network then creating my story within it. This situates me as both, a social actor and spectator. I as actor continually assert my place in the social group, exerting my will just as the group exerts its will upon me to conform. Turner's observations of social drama are governed by these power dynamics that can be analysed through Foucault's notions on power. The social drama as a performance is ritualised, particularly confessions which have specific parameters marking it as such. Here I have admitted my lack of

knowledge and subsequently atoned for it. This ritual I have used to illustrate or perform the theoretical framework.

The above summation is a depiction of how online social performances function and of the style of the research. Within my explanation of the various memes I encounter in my use of online media I have presented, in a confessional tone, cultural, social and political tensions prevalent in online interaction while using myself as a central point of reference. This is not exclusive to autobiographical moments but extends to performance. The tensions in the interpretation of the memes portray the tensions in critical literary analysis which is important in the formation of an online performance strategy. Not only are issues of race, class, gender and community important in the use or creation of the meme but also in its reception. What is essential to note is sociality and power relations; the use of cultural markers, like language and images to include or exclude one from social relations. Similarly, online confessions as performance strategy function by creating a language that places one in certain positions to act or be acted upon by force relations.

5. Research Question and Sub-questions

Confession and online performances each present ways of engaging with the performer-audience power relation. Similarly, online confessions as a performance presents an intersection of power relations that can be used to produce varied performance dynamics. In light of this, my research question is;

How can online confessions be used as a performance strategy in a cyberperformance?

Consequently, the research sub-questions are:

- What is the ritual of confession and how does it work as performance?
- How is performance remapped online?
- What are the principles used in cyber performance?
- How does social media as a cyber performance form remap confession as performance?

6. Chapter outline

Introduction

Chapter one: I confess: The ritual of confession.

This chapter is an interrogation of confessions. It traces theories of confessions, primarily citing Foucault's notion of *Parrhessia*. This notion delineates confession from autobiography and frames the growth of confession rituals, both religious and secular.

Chapter two: I confess: the act of confessing.

In Chapter two the notion of confession as performance is explored. By presenting a confessional performative text I portray my confession a performance.

Chapter three: I confess, I perform.

This chapter focuses on the form and frame of confession how it has been used not only in the performative text of chapter two but in other mediums. It explores confessions as a ritual and how this informs it as a performance. This chapter exposes methods used in the confessional form and explains how strategy may be implemented through the use of the frame. The chapter explores the use of language and the power of dialogue.

Chapter four:

Forgive me father, I would rather go online: Cyber performance and Social media.

This Chapter focuses on cyber performance. It provides a theoretical contextualization of cyber performance. This chapter also functions as an introduction to my experience on social media as a performance. It provides a background for possible tools that may be used to performatively realize the confession in chapter 2.

Chapter five: To war! Using online confession as a performance strategy.

This Chapter acts as a summation. It highlights the functioning of confession and translates that to a performance strategy for online social media performance.

Conclusion:

The confession comes to an end. The research is summarised. Questions raised in the research are addressed. Lastly possibilities for continued research are highlighted.

Chapter 1 I confess: the ritual of confession

1.1 Contrition: Background and contextualisation

“Forgive me for I have sinned. It has been 10 years since my last confession. I was 14 and in preparation for confirmation. In the Anglican Church one has to confess, to a priest their sins in order to qualify for confirmation. I admit, it was not easy. I happened to know that specific priest very well. He is a family friend; in fact, my parents view his daughters as theirs and consequently my sisters. There was no booth. I had to kneel at his feet, his face in view and make my confession.

I did not confess my whole truth. Truth is understood as those things that have the quality of, or nature of being true, real, factual and believed (Tulloch 1990: 1677) they are irrefutable. This generic definition of truth which is used as a philosophical, conceptual interrogation of truth is not necessary to comprehend confession and serves no operative function in the study. I submit here that it is far easier to talk and write about confession than it is to confess. I take a quick refresher course on Wikihow and make an attempt.

I am the confessant. A Good Anglican Girl (GAG) born of two Basotho parents, 'Maqueen and Francis Matabane. Raised in Maseru, Lesotho I am a:

Mokoena oa ha Monahengoa 'Ma-Nkopane'aMathunya.

Kemolilimanyanengoan'aRamakatsa.

Morapela-putsoa, oerapela a sa e bone!

Petsanakeealehooa-hooa, Makhetha.

E hooa e koma-komasalichabatsahaesotsa ha Monaheng.

*Makhethake tau, ngoan'aRamakatsa!*¹

I have had what I would call a middle class upbringing. As I write I am a Master's candidate. I completed my Honours degree at the University of Pretoria.

¹Translation: I am one of the clan emblemised or symbolised by the crocodile. I am of the ilk of Monaheng of Ma-Nkopane of the Mathunya. I am of the numerous children of Ramakatsa who are pious to [the blue] though they do not see it. This foal bellows for Makhetha. It bellows and makes my nations of Monaheng sing [tell tales or rumble]. Makhetha is a lion, the child of Ramakatsa.

As I make this confession I am structurally invisible, an academic neophyte (initiate)(Turner 1964: 47). I am not recognised as belonging to those who are 'Masters' of their field of study nor am I an Honours graduate. I cannot be formally recognized by this structure. I have transcended beyond that. I am a Master's candidate, student number 11174422. I submit completely to the powers of the academic elders who induct me into my next academic status (ibid: 49).

Unabashedly I admit that I am still learning how to do this research and gain the requirements necessary to attain my Master's. As I confess (make statements) I am engaging in a speech activity that can be verified as either true or false. I speak performatively: simultaneously doing what I say. I speak in the first person singular indicative active voice (Austin 1962:1). I do not describe myself as I speak, I am myself. I confess that this is who I am. I speak of my status and fulfil one of the requirements of being a *parrehsiate*; one who says everything exact and complete, truthfully. I am vulnerable, I put myself at risk, exposing myself and status to state my truth to academia. Academia which represents an abstract governing body that determines whether or not I am capped. This institution holds power over me; the candidate, as its subject. Though I do not follow all the conventions of academia I hold that I must speak. I feel obligated as one as one who is studying performance. I work towards adding knowledge for the betterment of mankind. I am compelled to speak my truth and so I must qualify why I have the right to speak by sharing my status and genealogy. I engage with this politic of speech, speaking the truth I know, rather than remaining silent and false. I am possessed of the qualities of one who knows the truth. I am a *parrehsiate*, an academic citizen. I am frank, truthful, and speak out of a sense of duty and putting myself at risk (Pearson 2001: 11-20).

I invoke *parrehesia* because it exemplifies contrition: the spiritual motivation that prompts and precedes a confession. *Parrehesia* is a Greek truth telling practice that was excised in order to better the polis. The Greeks preoccupation with truth telling extends further than the speech activity of *Parrehesia*. Truth telling was a way of taking care of the self. The purpose of this was not a narcissistic motivated fixation of self with self but rather the duty of every citizen for the betterment of self which meant the betterment of the polis. (Foucault 1988:19-21).It can be argued that the truth is an essential, embodied element of the polis such. It can be compromised thereby compromising the polis. This is possibly why the truth is such a central concept in

Greek society. If I, the confessant and self-proclaimed *parrehesiate* am to trace my history and stand in relation to the truth, I should also trace the nature of this specific means of truth telling, in as so much as it relates to confession.

Confession as it is understood today is a product of western philosophical thought which is traced back to the Hellenistic Greeks. The Greeks were concerned with how to live; how humans and their polis may flourish. Philosophy according to Foucault(1988: 19) translates into 'the art of living'. To paraphrase the Bible (excuse my GAG reflexes) Proverbs 23 verse 7: "as a man thinketh so he lives". Philosophy, or rather, thinking is meant to exist in harmony with one's life. One had to be the best of citizens to be able to speak the truth (Pearson 2001: 18). The Greeks thought that one had to be the kind of person who could access the truth. One who could deploy the means of transformation on oneself to gain access to truth. From these ideas, notions and practices around confessions were formed.

An integral figure in the linking of Greco-philosophical thought and Christian philosophy is St. Augustine. One of his most noted works entitled *Confessions* expresses the ideals of diary writing. The self is the theme or object of the writing. It is a tool to discover something about the self. These discoveries through writing bring transformative knowledge. The Greeks had terms to describe this knowledge: *ethopois*, being something that has the quality of transforming one's being, and *ethopoiein* as something that has the capability to produce, change and transform an ethos or way of life. By writing Augustine engaged in a relentless analysis of himself. In self-writing or confession, one has the freedom of transformation. They engage in the hermeneutics of the self (May 2011: 116-118).

To deploy the means of transformation on the self is what Foucault terms technologies of the self (McGushin 2011: 135). These 'technologies' imply a training of sorts. This in Greek practices can be manifest in two ways: *Melete/epimelesthai* is meditation, pondering or taking care/interest in the self through meditation. There is a vested interest in transforming one for the better. *Melete* works in conjunction with *gymnasia*. *Gymnasia* is the physical ritual one engages in to better the self. This takes the form of depravation, hardships and purification rituals. These practices help one master the art of life (Foucault 1988: 36-38). *Parrehesia* functions as a means of linking the thought life with the 'lived' life. In so doing one lives a true life, becoming the best of

citizens. Living what they say. These citizens were in a position to access the truth and so had the ability to speak (Pearson 2001: 44).

These truth telling activities assume an institution. This is the site of power from whence power is exerted, for example: the state or the church. The institution is represented by the listener or confessor, the assumed authoritative power. Truth telling has the capability to undermine or reinforce the power of the institution depending on the speaker's relation to the truth (Pearson 2001: 17). To speak the truth means one has power and freedom. Freedom is not abstract but concrete. Freedom is 'situated'. That is to say it exists in a certain situation of time. It is freedom in the specific political and historical circumstances. Freedom is also a 'space of possible transformation'. It is not only a question of restriction but also of remaking the self, a 'freedom *for* not just *from*'. Thus freedom is the ability to control or manipulate one's environment; external or otherwise (May 2011: 79-82).

The truth telling activity of *parrehesia* is tightly associated with the truth teller's social status in respect to their audience. The audience of the truth telling speech activity is always of higher status than the speaker. They are the authoritative 'other'. A three-way tension between the truth, the speaker and the authoritative other is created. In this relationship there is no assurance of power, only power tensions. The truth stands to hurt the speaker or the other because of the risk of offence and criticism respectively. If the speaker offends the authoritative 'other' they may lose their freedom or even their lives. The threat of criticism puts the authoritative 'other' in a precarious position. Open to losing face, control and power. The truth is endangered because there is the threat of silence; a silencing of the truth due to the risk involved (Pearson 2001: 17-18).

In the act of truth telling, freedom exposes the nature of the relationship between the truth, the speaker and the audience. It depicts the transgressive nature of the truth in relation to the other or audience of the *parrehesiatic* act. It situates the speaker as perpetrator and the audience as the victim. The truth becomes an instigator; it disrupts the status quo. If one accepts truth telling as an implement of change and constituting social drama it only follows that after the transgression and resulting schism, action must be taken. The subsequent action exposes power relations. The listener (authoritative other) may choose to submit to the truth and by extension (to a lesser

extent) the speaker. Otherwise, the speaker can submit to the fear of retaliation from the listener thereby rejecting the truth (and in terms of *parrehesia*, reject the self) (Mendieta 2011: 123). Each person has the freedom to choose their use of the truth as a tool for controlling their situation. Freedom functions as a combative element. The freedom to speak the truth constitutes technologies of the self. It exposes the subjective, self-expressive nature of freedom in truth telling. The speaker engages in a self-to-self relation whereby they have the creative freedom to decide how they relate to the truth. This can also hold true for the listener. Both engage in a self-to-other relations held in the context of their shared society. If both the speaker and listener are free to speak and their truths are not in sync with each other or with the popular conception of society their freedom to speak becomes doubtful. In this sense, freedom has an agnostic feature in truth telling. Whether it is transgressive, self-expressive or combative, the freedom to speak (the truth) is to have power. One controls their social reality through their words. Either they use them to them to transform themselves or to affect others (ibid).

In the Epoch of Christian philosophy, the idea of transformative truth took on a slightly different meaning. The Bible (John 14: 6) states, that Jesus is “the way the truth and the life”; indeed the Bible (Romans 12: 2) also speaks of how the righteousness of God allows God to transform their minds for them to live a new life in his holiness. Every Christian is to confess that Jesus Christ is their Lord and saviour. To walk in the ‘way’ one must confess [to] the ‘truth’ and bring all things to the light. To confess is to realign the self to the king of heaven and earth. Much like *parrehesia*, to confess in Christianity is a means of strengthening the kingdom. The kingdom itself as an institution does not need strengthening; rather it is the citizens thereof. By telling/confessing the truth, God’s light shines through a citizen and brings glory to his kingdom. The glory is such that others shall see the goodness of God and come into the glory of his kingdom. To confess is the duty of every Christian. To change the world one must change the self, looking inward to attain success and to benefit society.

The transhistorical and psychological compulsion to confess has made confession the most valuable technique of producing truth. The ethos of public displays of emotion has privileged emotions over action. These candid emotions in a society that demands reciprocity and therapeutic cure blur the line between public and private. Social problems are perceived as emotional problems of the individuals in the society. The

blurring of the distinctions between self and society in relation to expression of emotion shift intrapersonal relations. In a sense, one could fix social ills by fixing individual and personal emotions to fall in line with what is needed for a thriving society. Tensions between confession power and self to other relations in freedom of expression are expressed (Taylor 2010: 2-6).

I write again: I confess. Forgive me for I have misled you. I imply that *parrehesia* and confession are synonymous. In truth, *parrehesia* contributes to the conception of confession both classical and contemporary but the extent to which *parrehesiatic* principles are valued and are, to a large extent no longer applicable to the notion of confession. That is to say, the notions of frankness, risk, speaking all the truth and duty are not conceived in the same way. A *parrehesiate* stands in relation to the city, a religious confessant or penitent stands in relation to God and the church, a contemporary confessant stands in relation to their given community. The power relations and functioning remain the same but the value is different because the polis, church and community are different institutions with different value systems.

Confession reveals and is a form of interpretation of the self. Confession is dominated with the idea of knowing yourself where *parrehesia* deals more with taking care of the self. Self-knowledge can be seen as a subset of taking care of the self. Frankness, truth and duty form part of confession. However, frankness is not seen as the opinion of the speaker, which is true because the speaker believes it to be so. The speaker need not be possessed of high moral qualities to qualify to tell the truth (Pearson 2001: 14-15). In confession the duty is not to the polis but to the self or a higher spiritual power depending on the circumstance of the confession. The confessant may confess without being a *parrehesiate*, there is no danger or risk in their speaking.

In *parrehesia* one is expected to be educated as *parrehesia* forms part of being the best of citizens. Confession in the Greek states was used in educating those who would be *parrehesiates*. As confessions make use of self-monitoring and evaluation, students would confess to their instructors or to a group using self-knowledge as a tool for learning. A collective 'salvation' takes place where the students help each other to discover the truth. Consequently, confession acts as a means of discipline. Discipline is a mechanism of power which trains one to regulate their behaviour and structure their lives. When the confessant confesses they affirm and accept the self in order to

become 'whole', realigning the present self with the past self through epistemological, normative and psychological codes determined by social context. By continually seeking alignment with society one transforms themselves to 'fit in'; they conform (Pearson 2001: 114). While confession can help one become a *parrehesiate* the two are not synonymous.

The biggest distinction between the two is the element of risk. In confession, the social status of the confessant is similar to that of an initiate or liminal persona, as described by Turner (1962: 48-50). Confessants are all completely equal in status whereas *parrehesiates* are not. A confessant risks little by telling the truth. Their status is not in question; they do not necessarily speak in direct reference to a specific institution. The relationship is more abstract. They operate in power relations that do not necessarily pertain to the direct threat of the institution. As an individual, they operate in multiple institutional contexts.

The importance of speaking about *parrehesia* is to clarify the functions of confession that have been blurred and altered with time. They allow one to perceive the principles that make confession and situate it as such a powerful tool in society. The importance of the *parrehesiate* principles is their relation to the control of the individual in relation to the collective. For the collective to continue to work, the individual has to keep within the vision and mission of the collective lest it is weakened by their loss. Confession is a way to ensure control and continued realignment to the collective. This is the power of confession; self-imposed control. The good citizen, the good Christian works always for the good of the institution, to keep it in power. Despite my bold proclamation, my GAG (good Anglican girl) reflexes and my fulfilment of most of the *parrehesiate* criteria I cannot be one; not within the term's original parameters. I am a woman, a foreigner to Hellenistic Greece. I cannot be a citizen. I have neither freedom nor the power to speak as a *parrehesiate*. Simply, confession is for all but *parrehesia* is for the few.

1.2 Contrition: What is a confession?

A confession is a truth telling practice in which the confessant admits and acknowledges their thoughts and action to an audience (Posal 2008: 134). This verbal act often leads to a cathartic effect as one may feel a sense of relief and reconciliation with one's society. In Western culture, there is an "association of prohibition and strong incitation to speak". That is to say, by forbidding something there is encouragement to

talk about it (Foucault 1988: 16). The things which are identified as forbidden are perceived as a means to reveal the 'true' self. Foucault links this idea with how one interprets themselves. The need to speak about the forbidden or taboo issues comes from the notion that one needs to be truthful with themselves and society so they may reconcile themselves to their fellow man or to God.

Confession is a three-part process: contrition, Confession and satisfaction (Luijten 2003: 166). Contrition is the internal motivation behind the confession, confession is the physical act of confessing and satisfaction is the compensation that realigns one to their community (ibid). The ritual entails the acceptance of guilt, the demoralisation(contrition), the need and act of relating and expressing guilt (confession and satisfaction) and finally, transcendence (Posal 2008:134).Confession as a truth telling practice is a technique or, 'technology' of understanding the self. Technologies of the self describe what confessions do. They produce power relations, within a determined sign system. In confession one produces, that is, to transform and manipulate things within a sign system which allows one to use semiotics to communicate and depict meaning. Power relations, the determination of individual conduct, and submission to domination are created. The subject is objectified. The individual alone or with the help of others (according to their capability) performs on their bodies operations that allow them to attain happiness and purity(Foucault 1988: 18).This process of self-examination; an examination of the conscience leads to purification (ibid: 33). In Confession, purity and happiness are determined by reconciliation.

Confession is an autobiographical endeavour. What separates confessions from autobiographical utterings is that, autobiographical utterings do not need to be qualified by an external entity (Gready 1994: 165). Confession by definition requires an audience. It trains one in the "minuet to minuet art of self-scrutiny, elevation and regulation" (Besley 2005: 86). Through meticulous scrutiny one operates on their bodies, soul, thoughts, conduct and ways of being to transform the self; the self that conforms to society. There is no confession without a confessor. Confessions are an effective means of governance. Besley (2005: 77) states that "part of the history of the ways in which human beings have regulated others and have regulated themselves [is] in light of certain games of truth". These 'games' are historically constructed and

operate within stereotypes. They are a classification of individuals. They create a sense of belonging in the individual and create order and structure in society. Besley (2005: 79) further explains that these 'games' are an aesthetic practice of self-formation: an exercise of the self on the self. Through this process one attempts to define and develop a certain way of being. By confessing one is actively defining a central personal truth in the relation to the self and to others as an audience, creating an intimate public space (ibid: 81).

The intimacy of the confessional space means that self-formation and transformation is not a 'personal' individual pursuit but a collective utilitarian one. The self-to-self process of confessing is disrupted by the presence of the confessor (Foucault 1988: 34). The autonomous subject, which is the confessant, is objectified. In a confession there is the production of two selves: the performative self, that is, the one who does the confessing, and the constitutive self who is being confessed about (Terry 2006: 202). The performative self which can be seen as the subject, speaks about and examines the constitutive self (the object). As the two selves are one the subject is objectified. The objectified self becomes "something to write about, a theme or object (*subject*) of writing activity" (Foucault 1988:27). Additionally, the confessant is objectified by society. Where society may be understood as a collective body utilising methods of domination and power (ibid: 18) an object can be examined, evaluated and be acted upon. In this way the confessant and the confessor act upon the constitutive self to realign or reconcile them to society.

Within the discourse of confessions, penitence is a central theme. Paying penance is an important means of reconciliation. For Christians confessions were a form of publicly recognising their faith and realigning with God (Terry 2006: 214). Penitence is a sign system conveyed by the acts of the confessant and the confessor. Historically one would confess their sin and perform penitence for it. This progressed and penitence became a status. It was a status which could only be endowed by a bishop. This status had to be symbolically ritualised and theatrically realised by the penitent. The penitent is compelled to validate their confession by delivering their penance in a certain way. The act must be dramatically realised through their words and subsequent actions (Foucault 1988: 41-43) to convey the confessants reconciliation with society. Often these symbolic acts of transformation were of extreme physical or

mental strain. The more the strain the higher the action is regarded and the greater the level of transcendence.

Last year a confessional was installed in my childhood church, the Anglican cathedral in Lesotho. It takes up the space at the back of the church formally used for St. John's altar; a structure within a structure with white walls and purple curtains covering the entrances. It is the first confessional I have ever seen in an Anglican church. I wonder what it would be like to be in it. (I have never been in a confessional. Irony.) I imagine myself stepping inside and becoming invisible. Closing the Anglican funeral purple curtains and becoming a religious confessant. Inside this small hut structure, I imagine there is a cushion on which to kneel.

Caught between sin and righteousness ready to die to the world and be reborn, a child of God. I like to think that in there I will lose all markers of this world, truly equal to my fellow humans. God, and by extension the priest, his agent on earth sees me as neither male nor female, young nor old, rich or poor. I am just a being. The old me withers away (Turner 1964: 49). I start my confession.

Chapter 2: I confess: the act of confessing

2.1 Confession

I keep a file. In that file; pictures, hand drawn illustrations, poems, unfinished short stories and scripts, notes passed around class in high school, old diaries and fragments of memory from primary and pre-primary years. I have in there anything and everything I thought would be relevant to document me, my personal *herstory*. My plan is to write or have written a biography. At fifteen I decided that there would be a detailed document of my life. I had to be sure that nothing pertaining to my formative years was thrown out if I could help it. The file is in my mother's study amongst her biology books and religious texts. That's me; between and betwixt biology and religion. It has always been me, even on the 21st of November of 2012:

"It is Friday afternoon, about 12:15. I am sitting on the front seat of this mini bus on my way home. I have just had an argument with my sister. She is hell bent against my trip. Of course she is. It's no secret that she doesn't approve of my boyfriend- not that she has ever admitted to it. Quite frankly I think it's unfair. I put down my phone and look up.

The rear view mirror is adorned with a pair of red dice linked to a heart shaped container. It is filled with water and an unspecified red liquid. Suspended within is a little red heart with an arrow through it. It floats on the red liquid being less dense than it is but denser than the water. Not sure what these little things are called but they are a popular cheesy trinket, found mostly in gift shops on valentine's day for those too lazy to think up something thoughtful for the one they 'love' (if you will excuse the bitter tone things like those peeve me).

I really don't see how what I am doing differs from her driving to another province to go see her boyfriend. There is the same amount of risk in my view –although, admittedly I do get quite scared when I have to do this. I look outside at the passing scenery: the graphite grey of the road, the brown green of the open fields, the blue-grey horizon and the sky filled with puffy white clouds. This is beautiful, I pick up my phone and take a picture, red dice and all. This will make a good cover should I ever decide to write a novel about these events, RED DICE I will call it.

I sit still and try to meditate on what my heart is telling me. This may sound cheesy but honestly I do this. After reading *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho I find myself looking within myself to hear God's voice. If it's not clear from that, yes I am a believer, a Christian, and an Anglican to boot. People like to say I am religious. I would agree with them except for the negative connotations the word carries these days: narrow minded, hypocritical and ungodly in all respects. I hope to change this view but that is a thought for another day. It is concluded: there is stillness within me, the fear is only superficial. Most of it was dissipated by a short visit to Mikutlo².

Before catching a taxi to town I had to drop off the play UBU ROI for Letsatsi. Letsatsi lives in Centurion which is out of my way so my best bet was to leave the play with Maikutlo. Letsatsi could just pick it up from her later. Leaving the country with a prescribed text that I promised to have read and handed over would be ill perceived.

Maikutlo, or more commonly Miks - as used by our fellow drama student peers- is a special one (this is for lack of better words to describe her...uniqueness?). I won't go into explaining her character, it would take too long. What is important though is to mention how she has a gift of drawing people together and towards her. She has a

²Character names have been changed to protect their privacy

magnetic personality (lame I know but the sentence was just dying for it! Cut me a break). On this particular occasion she had amassed *Banyana*³ minus Letta.

In any case after rushing to wash and pack a weekend worth of necessities into my school bag I had send Maikutlo a voice note asking her to meet me in the lobby of her flat urgently. Maikutlo can be difficult (to put it politely) when it comes to replying to messages. I am never quite sure if this applies to messages in general or just mine. Four pings later (Blackberry messenger pings that is; don't judge, they were a thing then) I am waiting at the entrance to her building. THE FIELDS- a rather too urban, too concrete cold building if you ask me. But noone ever does. And I have to call her. I state the urgency of the matter and five whole minutes later she is in front of me, blue slippered, cloth-wrapped and old top apparelled *avec* ginger hair and all.

Letsatsi, Relebohile, Khutsufatso, Miks and her younger sister Sindisiwe stare at me in shock when they hear where I am rushing off to. They all agree that I am a wild child for travelling to another country in a taxi (without informing my parents) to spend the weekend with my boyfriend (Well of course it sounds bad when you say it like that!).

At this point I would like interject a fairly useless but valid point. If your parents are not really cultural, strict or white my actions may not make sense to you. Girls with strict culturally inclined parents will understand and also realize how risky my actions are. As a side note: a friend of mine did the same thing but she got on a plane and went to Dubai. Dubai! I am not saying anything; I am just saying.

After all the fear dissipated I jump on a taxi to town, next a taxi to Lesotho. I will not bore you with the tedium of the in between bits. The trip went by without incident. The chatter of the passengers, the friendliness of the driver and the old man sitting next to me make me at feel at home. Everyone is excited about going home.

Perhaps it's also worth mentioning that my dad also happened to be going home this weekend. You may wonder why I didn't just go home with him. Well, it's my boyfriend's birthday and I want to be able to spend the night with him. Going to my parents' house would make such an ambition impossible. If I am seen by my father or my mother or any close relative I am screwed (to put it mildly).

³Translation: The girls

Ok, so maybe a quick explanation of my family situation. My parents are married, still in love, besotted I think, though they may disagree with the latter. They are so very in love that it's no wonder I am so in love with my boyfriend. In any case they do not live together. My dad works in South Africa and my mum is a teacher in Lesotho. They are not separated; my mum doesn't fancy living in South Africa and she is an independent sort of woman who cannot be a house wife. She is quite comfortable living in her own house where her family is.

My dad, being the man he is and wanting the very best for his family works in South Africa as a consultant (financial and strategic management I think, it's all rather boring if you ask me. But no one ever does).

I arrive at the border. Clearly, not packing a sweater was a careless mistake. Parts of the sky are an ominous grey. However, the sun provides plenty of light and warmth for the late evening, seemingly sneering at the clouds threat. Unknown to the sun and me, the clouds are plotting with the wind. It is to be a coup of the skies.

The plan:

To strike when the sun was at its weakest. First the wind will gain strength. Full of moisture it will then proceed to gather and unite all the clouds heavy with rain. The process will probably take all night but by dawn success will be nigh. The sun will wake to discover its rays are impotent on the dark clouds.

My outfit is designed to make me look run of the mill. Just an average student, the younger I look the better. In an eggshell cream t-shirt with a print of a young girl on the front, a scarf made into a headband and shorts of my own design (by this I mean a pair of three quarter stretch denim pants that I happened to introduce to a sharp pair of scissors), I step out of the taxi. To top off my disguise: a pair of shades, an uncharacteristically soft high pitched voice with meek posture on the side.

I go through the boarder checking points with a keen awareness of every car that passes by. Lesotho is a small country, anyone might recognize me. My father, to my dismay, arrived before me and was already spotted around town by my boyfriend. My father can be unpredictable; I wouldn't put it past him to be around the border post doing goodness knows what.

I make it to the 4 plus 1 stop just outside the border post's last checking point. I hop into one headed to town, and get off at *Makhetheng*.

My boyfriend said he will be at *Marasteng*, near Fashion World. Fashion world is situated on Kingsway near the big traffic circle. To its right there is a row of makeshift stalls where one may find a hodgepodge (I like this word, assortment seemed so boring- can anyone say synonyms!?) of items ranging from shoes, local medicinal herbs to small animal skins (mostly snakes, I think it's also meant to be medicinal). I don't know. To its far left is the pedestrian bridge, in between and below them is the taxi stop *Makhetheng*. I get off the 4 plus 1. If you haven't figured it out, a 4 plus 1 is a cab.

I pay the driver his R5.50 for the trip. Public transport is ridiculously high priced! (an interjection here: the South African transport system which is more expensive and also if I might add, rather less reliable than that of Lesotho. Mostly because of the taxi drivers. But let us not get into that). I call my boyfriend to let him know I have arrived at the agreed upon venue. I wait.

A skinny rather unkempt- er... boy? No. Man? Also no, umm... guy? Hmm...Ok 'guy' fits better. A rather unkempt guy walks up to me. He clearly knows me, he smiles and gives me a hug. I oblige, reluctantly, not entirely sure who he is. He is wearing black UZZI t-shirt, beige pants, what used to be a white *sepoti* and black Converse Allstars. Thankfully they were not beaten up- all South Africans SHOULD know what beat up Allstars look like. I think we can all agree what an affront to the eyes they are.

He is of average height and dark skinned. From his eyes I can tell he has been drinking.

"Swiss o re ketlo o lata"⁴ He says.

He leads me past more make shift stalls to a small collection of shacks and metal containers which are used as shops. In front of the collection are more stalls, to the right side of the collection more stalls. Above them is Fashion World and to the left? More stalls. Behind the collection is what I guess one could call Lesotho's version of an unsavoury back alley. The place is decorated with an assortment (here it works) of

⁴Translation: Swiss says I should come get you

plastic bags, papers, bottles and variations other bits of rubbish. This less than charming site is accented by the faint aroma of urine. There is a rocky foot path which is a saving grace for those who wish to make the walk down hill to the nearest road. It feeds onto Kingsway and is located south of the big traffic circle in front of the Roman Catholic Circle.

At the collection of stalls I walk by a bunch of Rastafarians having a jolly old time dancing, chatting and smoking. I guess this is why people refer to the place as *Marasteng*. The unkempt guy. No; that is no longer not working. Young man is better. The unkempt young man, whom I now decide to believe is a friend of my boyfriend, leads me to one of the containers that are to the back of the collection. There I find my beloved standing and chatting with someone I have never seen before.

If by now you are thinking: 'well this all is rather dodgy', then you would be correct. Especially for a snob like me. However, I am feeling strangely at peace with the situation and to be honest this place is a step up from the last place he used to hang out, an unsavoury shack, in the middle of other shacks enclosed by the taxi rank. If you have ever been to a taxi rank, you can imagine just how unpleasant the place is. My boyfriend turns to me and in our usual way we coolly acknowledge each other.

"Reeakae he?"⁵ I ask.

"Ha re tsamaehonajoale"⁶ he replies nonchalantly.

"Re saemetseng?"⁷ I ask calmly in my soft high pitched voice which I have no idea why I am still using.

At this point the person I have never seen before interjects by agreeing with me. Good for you, person I don't know! He then adds

"Che, ha kebatlehokenatabengtsalona"⁸

⁵Translation: Where are we going then?

⁶Translation: We are not leaving now.

⁷Translation: What are we waiting for?

⁸Translation: But, I don't want to get in the middle

He is quite diplomatic this guy. My boyfriend then proceeds to ignore my question. He turns off the laptop on the table he is standing by and takes a swig of the Black label clasped in his hands.

The particular container we are presently in is used as a mini diner. There is a tiny kitchen to one corner; above it is the containers only window. It is a lot like a *spaza*⁹ shop. The rest of the container is filled up by a table and benches on a small platform. On the right side of the table is the guy I have never seen before. He is sitting on an empty quart wearing a green shirt, denim shorts or rather jeans that are slightly too short to be proper jeans, made to look like shorts; like the hip-hoppers wear. A pair of white sneakers and a cap complete the look (at least I think he was wearing a cap. I don't recall seeing the top of his head).

He is seated but I can tell he is short. My boyfriend lets me know he is just finishing off one last quart. He is about to leave when the guy I have never seen before asks him if he is going to leave a pretty girl in his presence without saying anything to him. Such flattery from a guy I have never seen before. My boyfriend laughs, runs back, introduces me as his wife then leaves. I sit there for a good 20 minutes. The normal evening activities of this container play out. No one pays much attention to me except for the unkempt young man who I now know is my boyfriend's friend Rico. He is quite touchy feely- if you dont know what that means you are too old or too young. Perhaps I should not have let him hug me when we met.

I bump into Chochie, an acquaintance I am on friendly terms with. Its' a bit awkward. He is supposed to be hooking me up with a job for the holidays. (Yes I used the term 'hooking me up'. It's allowed. I am young. Who are you to judge anyways? The literature judicial authority?). I kissed him once when we were co-stars in a movie. We didn't have a scene together though. I was just in character. No comment on the kiss. He owes me.

After some gentle nagging we finally leave. My boyfriend, Rico, Kamohelo his other friend-more about him later- and I walk to the Sefika taxi rank and hop on to a taxi headed to Ha Leqele where we will be spending the night.

⁹General café

Kamohelo is a lanky, dark caramel skinned, slouching, nervous looking and for as long as I was there quiet guy. His skin left something to be desired and coupled with his big somewhat bug eyes he seemed all together a guy who was... I don't know... Lost? Sad perhaps? It's obvious by looking at him he has some issues in life that he decides to leave unattended. He is wearing a yellow shirt with a blue jersey vest on top, blue jeans and *aspoti*. All in all he looks like an overgrown school boy. The house we are in is his older brother's.

I have neglected to give a description of my boyfriend. Forgive me I am not willing to give a description. I am possessive and there are home wreckers out there. Anyway, I feel I would fail in capturing his totality, his essence and uniqueness into words without gushing like a teenager. However, I will say he is wearing his light blue work golf shirt, fading blue jeans, brown shoes and a navy blue cap that has definitely seen better days. Underneath the blue shirt is a black vest (I love seeing him in black and vests. I have a weakness). He is a short guy but still taller than I am. He has short dreadlocks which at first I was against but I now love. His upper body is muscular but he has lost a little of tone since he stopped working out- a shame. And he has the sexiest 'fit-right-into-my-hands ass' - not a shame.

We arrive at the place and to cut a long story short I will state it in short sentences: get off taxi. Walk to house. Enter house. Leave bags in house. Head to off sales. Buy alcohol, which I pay for. Head back to house. It is getting cold and windy. Back in the house. The guys play around with a police club. I take possession of a police club. They sit and drink. I watch them get drunk. As they drink they take off their t-shirts. A number of other unimportant things happen. Rico and Kamohelo leave. I go prepare the bed my boyfriend and I are to sleep on. I call him to come to bed.

He is a little drunk. When we get to the bedroom he asks me to turn off the lights so that I wouldn't peep as he stripped down to his birthday suit. I of course am in my pyjamas. The cute pink ones with white dots; shorts and loose top. I have to maintain some front of modest behaviour. He gets into bed and I crawl in next to him.

He pulls me on top of him. I run my hands through his dreads (now you see why I grew to love them?). He groans and whispers in my ear "Oantaea¹⁰" I smile and proceed. I suddenly stop to catch my breath.

"O shap?¹¹"

"Yeah.Keshap...love? Do you have condoms? "

"No."

"Oh."

"I want more."

"We can't."

The crippling fear of falling pregnant outweighs my desire. Sulking like a child, my boyfriend rolls over and falls to sleep in no time. Slowly I fall into an uneasy half sleep. I am half aware of my surroundings and images of private investigators play out before my closed eyes. Sometime later, I don't know how long I hear music blaring. The sound is so strong I can feel the air vibrating. The tin roof is vibrating so much that it's buzzing. I don't get up.

My half dream explains away the sound, as half dreams so often do. The bedroom door opens. It is chased by the sound of drunken laughter. This I can't ignore. There is someone in the room and I naked! So is my boyfriend. I am still facing away from the door. I can't turn around. After an agonising minuet they leave and I pull up the sheet to cover me. Moments later they re-enter the room. My heart is beating faster from fear. They are still laughing. The bastards!

My back is turned away from them but I see a faint flashing white light. Assholes are taking a picture of us. I didn't cover my boyfriend, how stupid! I am too scared to move; scandalized. They leave and I pull the sheet and blanket to cover us both and force myself to sleep.

¹⁰Translation: You are intoxicating

¹¹Translation: Are you ok?

It is early morning and the clouds are thick outside; it's raining. We both get dressed. I desperately need the toilet. I put on a pair of sandals and make my way to the outhouse. It has no door. Great! I have two options: pee in my pants or use the outhouse and pray no one sees me. Well, there is no one around and it's pretty early. No harm in doing what must be done.

Some prayers just don't get answered. As soon as I place my bum on the toilet seat a man walks out of the house right in front of me! Right, I am halfway through my pee I am not about to stop. What to do now? The man goes about his business as if he is oblivious to the half-naked girl with her panties at her ankles. I make myself as small as possible.

I quickly pull up my shorts and rush back into the house. As per usual I am the only morning person. The others try to regain their bearings no doubt hindered by dehydration and nausea. I saunter into the bedroom. My boyfriend is finally awake and I inform him about our late night visitors. He seems rather annoyed that I didn't wake him- in retrospect that would have been the smart thing to do. When the guys are fully awake they decide to leave, to go heaven knows where, to do I don't know what, with a guy who was sleeping in a grey VW Passat parked outside the house. Pretty dodge but I have grown used to dodge-ness by now. I am alone in the house and I am not exactly sure what to do with myself. Maybe I should clean the place up; how very housewife of me. What am I going to do with my day? Maybe study. I don't know. I am just going to go back to bed. I didn't really get much sleep done last night.

The sky is insisting on remaining grey; the cloud's hostile takeover of the skies turns out to be not so hostile: they are unable to build up a storm, shame. They are moody and sulking; gently sobbing above. Why not take advantage and sleep? I crawl into the bed fully clothed shut my eyes and try to rest. This is not working. I am just not comfortable but still I feign sleep to myself. The minutes pass by lazily as I try to let my mind drift. There it goes, floating above the clouds through time to last night. The door of the house opens and so do my eyes. (Now if I may, I would like to add here that I have this ability to make myself at home wherever I am. I do not have to be used to a place to fall asleep or to take a dump. I hear some people have this problem; travelling must be a big problem hey? My ability is a gift and a curse). I lie waiting for something to happen. The bedroom door opens; a man I have never seen before

stands before me. I can see the changes in his face; seeking eyes, confusion, realisation, then fury. Pure, sweat producing fury.

"Kamohelo o hokae?¹²" He asks in an obviously forced calm.

"Ha ketsebe, batsamailebasabuahorenabaeakae.¹³" I answer.

The man is wearing a black blazer and an orange and white vertical stripes shirt. He has a brush haircut sleeked down giving off an aura of money. He looks clean (I am not saying that this man is not good looking, he is, but he is very clean, squeaky clean) but for the fury he walks out. I stay where I am, uncertain of what to do next. Somehow I know this guy is the owner of the house and he is not too happy to discover a girl in his bed. He walks back in to the room, wipes some sweat off his face, paces for a few seconds then looks at me,

"So bo- Kamohelo brought you here?"

"Yes."

"How do you know them?"

"Well I have known one of them for a long while, from when I was in high school."

Pause.

"And are you in the habit of doing such things?"

"No"

"Uh huh?"

"I guess I trust people too easily and trust them to lead me places."

"Do you still trust them now?"

"No. Not so much now."

"So you just trust people?"

¹²Translation: Where is Kamohelo?

¹³Translation: I don't know, they left without saying where they are going

"Well I have known one of them for years so I trust him"

He walks out the room. I can tell he is disgusted with me. I get up and make the bed. When I am done I walk out of the room. He is thundering around the house. He is a pseudo Minotaur, half man, half pounds of fuming animal flesh; storming through his territory. I take my things and make myself as small as I can in the living room. He walks in.

"Do you have air time?"

"Yes I do."

I hand him my phone and he calls his brother. He walks out and the conversation is lost to me. Obviously my accommodation here was not properly organized. He walks back in.

"Do you come here often?"

"No it is my first time here."

"I don't ever want to see you here again! I was nice this time, next time I might be rough."

"Yes of course. I completely understand."

He walks outside. I can't believe this. I sit there for a while feeling very awkward. He walks back in. He seems calm now. He looks at me sizing me up.

"You're a good girl; I can tell you are a good girl."

"Thank you" I reply, smiling slightly.

The conversation that followed detailed: how he could tell this sort of behaviour is not really me, my lifestyle choice and the company I keep, my parents, where I live and if my parents know I am here, concerning myself with my future and not sacrificing it for someone who is not building me up. He tells me he is a pastor, not only that but a prophet as well, and his name is David. Ok, sorry, how many times can this happen in one's life? It's bad enough the man found me in his bed. But he is a man of God too? And knowing what happened in it didn't make me feel too great about myself. And does his name really have to be David? As in: 'A man after God's own heart,' David! I

should be mortified. In the same calm stillness, I had in the taxi on my way here I listened to him intently, taking in all that he said to me (some of it was really encouraging actually).

He prophesies about my life, my parents, and the financial situation at home. Some of it was quite accurate. It's not all sunflowers and daisies though; he says he sees a lot of Satanists around me. – 'Um... ?????? Sorry did you say Satanist?????????' As in Devil worshipers?' Those people makes no sense to me. It's like deciding to eat a piece of shit over a slice of really amazing cake. How do Satanists justify what they do? I don't get it! So if you worship the devil who is God to you? Is he evil to you? My brain does not compute. Logic malfunction! In any case I am pretty sure that these Satanists who surround me are no threat as I have the protection of God; it's either that or he meant something different when he said Satanist. Next he tells me the devil is trying to kill me in a car accident. That is going to make my taxi ride back to Pretoria so enjoyable!

All in all it's a disturbing conversation. Disturbing because I know I dislike my boyfriend's lifestyle. Being in 'his world' tends to get me in situations I would rather not be in. Do I cut him off? Let the relationship go in order for us both to grow? It's all very troubling for my poor heart that knows that trying to leave him is about as successful as filling a bucket using a sieve. David has fallen silent and he is surveying me. I can only guess at the musings of a prophet, especially one in this... cough...interesting situation- He must think me a sorry sight. I am staring at nothing, with my fingers on my lips as if to silence myself. I ponder my life. I seem to be doing this a lot this year and it is always to do with My boyfriend; it seems he is the crux of all my troubled musings. I feel that he is the one thing I should rid myself of but can't. Is it because I love him so much? More than I love God? No. It's clear he is tied for second with my family, or at the very least a close third, it changes with situations, sometimes my family gets on my nerves or he does. Right, it's obvious that this debate about him and his role in my spiritual life is ongoing, mostly because it is due to him that I started seeing things differently. At least that's what I have been telling myself all this time. But to be honest, the change in view was inevitable, seeing as how my life was progressing and how I spent many an hour contemplating my relationship with God. Who is he to me?;Am I good enough? Why am I not good enough? How can I be better, knowing I will never be better and knowing it doesn't matter? Contemplating his word; how it came to be written, were there ulterior motives? Who wrote these words?

What was the role of the Holy Spirit in all this. What is My boyfriend wearing? Hope he doesn't get sick. You know, that guy made me see that a relationship with God can be dynamic- oh sorry I digress.) I suppose the silence is getting to David, still surveying me he says "o ntsonahanang?¹⁴"

"Thinking about what I need to do." I reply (I don't like being disturbed when I am thinking, it makes me snippy) - he gave me a lot to think of. I thought that was the whole point of the conversation: so let me think. He keeps at it, asking and giving advice. Now is not the time seriously! I am starting to feel uncomfortable. To cut a long awkward situation short, I will state the main points. We talked some more-that's how I learned he is getting married (great! I defiled his wife-to-be's bed). He said a prayer for me; you know the ones where you let Jesus in your life et cetera, et cetera-

I was too ashamed to tell him I was saved, already having accepted Jesus into my life. Ok, so judging from my actions you wouldn't say so. But one is not to judge others; so there! He gave me a bible and a DVD of his preaching. I accepted the gifts as graciously as I could under the circumstances- again, too ashamed to let him. I own about 5 Bibles, one of which is in Greek- yes I can read it, no I can't speak it.

Finally, Kamohelo appears to pick me up. All I want now is to go back to Pretoria; rethinking the things I allow to happen in my life and all my relationships. I am impressionable so sue me!

Kamohelo walks me through the maze of foot paths that make up the 'streets' of Ha Leqele. Ha Leqele is a village, but not in the way most people think. What people see when you say village is mud huts, fields, animals, rivers, heard boys, young women in cloths singing, working, fetching water, small children naked or semi naked running around, the final product being rural and picturesque. It's not really like that, nor is it like a township. There are by no means as many shacks, and it is far less densely populated. It's like a hybrid settlement, not entirely the rural picturesque village, not really a township.

¹⁴Translation: What are you thinking?

The foot paths lead to the main road where My boyfriend is waiting. I immediately ask him to talk- he hates it when I say those words to him: 'can we talk?' His face drops. I push on.

"Kebatlakhokhutlelasekolonghonaajoale"

"Butle, joale o reng? Ha o tla moo o no rerilehokutlaneng?"

" Sontaha"

" E, o tlakhutlahosane he.¹⁵"

I sigh, he is so stubborn.

"My love mamelahle!¹⁶ I want to- no I am going back to Pretoria today."

"Hobanengjoale?"

"Feela!Hobanengkebatla."

"KehobaabutioaKamohelo a ubuetsenthotsengata?¹⁷"

"No the decision is my own. I am returning because I want to. Look let me just get on to a taxi and leave. I am fine really"

"Butle."Pause "Re saeahoRicokehlokahokopana le eena¹⁸."

We walk while we talk; he is leading me up the road. He is stubborn this man of mine. He simply refuses to let me leave. What a drag trying to convince him to let me go. Ok new approach. I will just take out my money and get on the next taxi. I open my bag and take out my wallet; I should have one hundred Rands in there. I open it and it stares back at me as if to say 'did you want something? Oh? Sorry I can't help you.'

¹⁵Translation: I want to go back to school right now

Wait, what are you saying? When you came here when did you intend on returning? Sunday.

Ok, you will go back tomorrow then.

¹⁶Translation: listen please!

¹⁷Translation: Why?

Just! Because I want to.

It's because Kamohelo's brother said something to you?

¹⁸Translation: Wait.

We are going to Rico, I need to see him

WTF!! I hastily check my return trip money which I had stashed in the school bag. It's still there. Thank God. Someone stole from me. I can't believe this. I keep opening my wallet and looking through my hand bag as if the money will pop back in there. They both chuckle menacingly, they mock me with their moneyless-ness! I look up from my bag. A tiresome conversation about where the money is begins Rico and Kamohelo both promise they didn't take it, meanwhile I am still harping on about going back to Pretoria. Those bastards taking pictures from last night are blamed.

Rico hustles and gets me enough money to get me to the boarder but still tries to convince me to stay; he feels responsible- but not more than My boyfriend, all the while he has been getting more and more upset-. I am adamant, I am leaving and I will not be convinced otherwise. Rico turns to my boyfriend for help in persuading me. My boyfriend is despondent, he walks away. As he does he wipes away a tear and puts on his shades. I have never seen him like this - I must say (much to my annoyance) seeing My boyfriend so upset darn near breaks my heart. I am staying. At the very least I need to get clean, the day is getting along and it's not right for me to be dirty at the ripe old hour of 10 am (sarcasm doesn't translate well on paper).

Rico hustles us a taxi and negotiates with the driver to get us a discount. My boyfriend and I are off to his place in Ha Abia. Finally I will get to see his place, he has been very secretive about it and I was wondering why I couldn't just stay at his place from the start. My boyfriend's mood has lifted considerably and he is trying to talk and make me laugh, but I am too wrapped in my thoughts to really engage with him. We arrive at his house and I realize why we didn't stay at his place. He stays with his brother and his girl friend- my question though is does he live with them or do they live with him? There is a difference. We find his brother washing the dishes. As we enter he looks at me and smiles. I am glad to see a familiar face. I smile back by way of greeting (let it not be said that I am a bad reflection on my family, I still know how to greet... at least.) He offers me coffee and as soon as it's made I am fast asleep on My boyfriend's bed.

Their place is small; it's a one room... Um flat? Um...Hut? Apartment? No, none of these work, eish! O lulamalaeneng!-sorry if you are not a Mosotho and don't understand what that means, just goes to show you should have been born a Mosotho. It has blue walls, a tin roof and houses 2 beds (the larger of the two belonging to My boyfriend: he has been buying furniture for when he gets his own place), a wardrobe,

a small kitchen cabinet and a table with a very good computer on it. Six twenty litre buckets of water crowd the corner on the far left of the room. A gas stove on a small table is located near the buckets of water, and behind the door a blue plastic washing basket with a plastic bath basin on top. Strangely does not 'smell of guy' (this is a very bad translation of an expression in Sesotho, if you don't get what I mean you have never smelt guy). For all the stuff crammed in here it certainly is cleaner than David's house.

The rest of the day passes without incident (well more or less, we had a conversation about our relationship. When I say conversation I mean I talked he listened and pretty much disagreed with everything I had to say. It was based on the conversation I had with David and my own hopes for him- I sometimes feel like I hold him back that he gets too comfortable and content with life because I am in it. I have issues against mediocrity and complacency; I would hate to be the perpetrator of such). We just watched a series while lying in bed- the appropriate terms now would be Netflix and chill

Sunday morning. My boyfriend has to go to work and I have to catch a taxi back to Pretoria. For all the debating I did about leaving I have to say I am sad to go. He borrows some money from his brother for me to get to the boarder and to get back to school from the Pretoria taxi rank. And so that's what we do, work and school; life moves on.

I am sitting in a taxi on my way back to Pretoria, it's a rickety old thing and it makes me fear for my life (thanks David!). None the less I calm myself and try to sleep. I have had nothing to eat all day save a packet of much too expensive MSG filled maize snacks. The taxi is filled with the smell of chips and vinegar, fatty and mouth-watering. There is a lady in the seat in front of mine merrily munching the delectable smelling morsels of fat soaked potato pieces. It's all I can do not to ask for a hand full. My desperation must be obvious because the boy sitting with me offers me his chips and chicken wings; Hungry Lion no khal! I haven't had it in a long while; it tastes so good right now. I tell you the honest truth, the Lord is a provider. The taxi ride is silent; it's a drag having to leave home heading back to Pretoria. The stillness of the atmosphere is palpable; it gives one time to think. I spend the rest of my time, playing over the events of the weekend; my boyfriend, my parents, David and what it all means.

I was never caught, I didn't stop seeing my boyfriend, I am not remorseful (well not in the way I should be if you ask me, but no one ever does). So what is the point of all this, the significance? After all, I know I didn't just go through all this by accident. There was and there is a reason for the prevailing stillness of my heart (it is almost eerily still, it's not like me to not worry). There must be something I am meant to do or see. God why did all this happen the way it did? My boyfriend, David, Rico, Kamohelo, the pictures, my missing money. If I was meant just to meet David why didn't I leave on Saturday?

In the silence of the taxi, broken only by its creaking as it speedily canters down the road, no epiphany came.

An epiphany is like walking out of a dark room into a bright day. It is blinding, grand, obvious and sharp but it only lasts so long. Your eyes soon adjust and life continues pretty much the same. Even though the message of it was and always will be important, it loses its potency. This however, this slow, measured look and reflection gets under your skin and remains there every day, as a reminder changing you as you chew on it like a cow on cud. Perhaps that is the reason why I wrote it all down.

A slight interjection here: It occurs to me the more time I spent obsessing the more I obscured God from my sight and heart. My focus became my sin and those who cause it, instead of God (guilt is the biggest lie the devil ever told- guilt is obsessive, self-loathing, obstructive, fear inducing, and love abusing. It is a soul eating virus). I always look externally for those things wrong with me. I can't make those I love to bear the burden of my sins. Maybe it's time to grow up a bit (or at the very least stop being spiritually stunted), to accept responsibility for me and my actions. Maybe this is why the epiphany didn't come.

Where an epiphany lacked, inspiration hit; I am on my phone starting my book, "*Red Dice*", it comes easy, and the words flow out of me spontaneously.

"I am sitting in the front seat of this minibus on my way to Lesotho..."

I have confessed. I look back at myself to strip my sin away. I am as naked as an infant. Like my perception of the monks of antiquity, I feel I have attained a sacred poverty that allows me to access a sacred status. I am penitent, symbolically prostrating myself in public, wearing a sack cloth with dark ash on my head. By publicly

accepting and acknowledging my unclean filthy earthly state I start the process of becoming a clean, holy and heavenly being. In the dead stillness of the confessional, I am other to myself, strange and grotesque in my sin. Through this process I completely submit to the authority of my confessor. There is no space for manipulations or compromise. My presence in there is an outward visible form of my internal repentance process. It is inciting to be all at one neither holy nor sinful, existing in a phase between my physical presence and reality and my spiritual existence. It may be esoteric to say but while in the confessional it is as if I am unbound from physicality and unlimited by the intangibility of the spiritual. In that space I am infinite. I imagine that as I conclude my confession and am absolved. I will feel renewed. I cling to this feeling that will sustain me in my new life. Metaphorically I will draw back the curtain of the confessional and step out into the light. I move out of the hut-like confessional that was both the site of my death and my birthing channel (Turner 1964: 49-50).

This particular text written in 2012 and edited sporadically between 2013 and 2014 is sampled due to its extensive nature and use of various self-narrative devices. It, more than any other items in my file is confessional, acknowledging an audience and is self-reflective. The original unedited version is still in my email inbox, awaiting the day I call upon it.

Chapter 3 I confess, I Perform

3.1 Satisfaction:

3.1.1 Satisfaction: Form, Background

According to Schomer (1994: 157) identity or self-definition has become a problem of performance not the metanarrative behind the performance. Most confessional inquiry focuses on the content of the confession (Tell 2012: 10). However this study looks at the form, how it operates and how this may be used as strategy. As such I begin my analysis by looking at previous uses of confessional forms which provide insight into how confession may be used strategically. The key source of post-modern confessional performance is the feminist inspired art of the 1970s. Self-revelation took on the element of theatrical protest. It was a strategy of deconstructive criticism. It drained away dichotomies of power oppressed by the present tense of self. This manifestation of the personal into the political was a means of appropriating power.

As performance, clear tension became apparent between the public self-disclosure and the private self-definition that exist in the theatrical discourse of distance and objectification. In the 1980s American Confessional performance distinctions between fiction and theatrical event, character versus actor's true self versus identity through multiple characters or manipulation of autobiographical personae exaggerated and subverted the individuality of American theatre (Schomer 1994:161). In Traditional American drama confession was a mainspring of narrative structure often involving climatic revelations of truth which defined the dramatic action. Confessions of crime, regret, rage, aspirations and so forth revealed the intent of these confessions: a recovery of the past self. This was in line with the didactic social view. These confessions always carried a negative tone. The admission of truth was taken to be an exploration of authorial self and/or theme of the performance. They took on themes of social isolation, destructive family relationships, addictions and forms of self-slavery.

Schomer (1994: 158) states that in American confessional performance there can be said to be three categories: Monologue, transformational comedy and controversial vanguard. Monologue, as drama it is an ironic reflexive confession which disrupts thematic certainty. The confession is used as a strategic framing device as seen in realism. It reflects the central action and thematic conflict. This poses identity as a question of ambiguous constructions or artifice. It becomes an act of survival not avowal. Transformational comedy is a confession that traces the form of a solo performer who portrays multiple characters. It depicts multiple 'not-selves' in order to portray narrative in high contrast to the 'self'. Controversial Vanguard is a form often done by a performance artist who uses intimate autobiographical text, chance improvisation and ritual to deconstruct traditional notions of identity and social reality (ibid: 159). Like Brecht this type of confessional strategy breaks theatrical illusion. It emphasises actual un-mediated events in an inversion of traditional principles of theatre. What is 'real' in terms of identity is problematised. The performing self is indicated by use of a non-unified sense of social order or mythological meaning.

Social phenomena is looked at as a process therefore analysis would require: (1) regulation of process, (2) situational adjustment, (3) the interdeterminancy between (1) and (2) (Turner 1987: 8). Post-modern performance subverts narrative authority by replacing objective assumptions with subjective disclaimers. Structure is analysed alongside process and the field of perception over the will of the creation. The reason

why there is so much resonance between observed popular culture, confessional performance and theatrical approaches to the problem of defining the post-modern self is because the post-modern self is a performing self and the post-modern aesthetic is a theatrical one (Schomer 1994: 168-170). This chapter explores the ideas above.

3.1.2 Satisfaction: Form

Satisfaction or penitence is a sign system conveyed by the acts of the confessant and the priest: the confessor. These acts constitute the matter (content) and form of the penance (Luijten 2003: 166). This sign system is made up, as I have said, of three parts: contrition, confession and satisfaction. The confessant is compelled to validate their confession by delivering it in a certain way. The act must be dramatically realised through their words and subsequent actions (Foucault 1988: 41) to convey the confessant's reconciliation with society. In this specific case I present my penance, or perform my act of satisfaction by providing a critical analysis of the first two chapters. Here I hope to reconcile myself to you my confessors and to realign, to a degree, to academic convention: my given society.

Tell (2012: 1-4) states that confessions are at the nexus, race, class, regional democracy and violence. By violence I mean to include gender politics. Both that are self-imposed and imposed by society as with the GAG comment. This violence also includes my historic background as a second-generation, post-colonisation individual in an African country. Hence at the very beginning of chapter one I stated each in turn. This not only set up the parrethesia explanation but functioned in making this study very specifically researcher-centred. This study is in fact my confession about confessions.

The act of confession cannot be separated from the one who is confessing, as mentioned in the introduction. As previously stated Terry (2006: 202) identifies this as two selves, the constitutive and performative self. The performative self is the one who does the confessing and the constitutive self is the one being confessed about. The performative self, is admired for being brave enough to confess and the constitutive self is judged for perpetrating the 'sin'. To make a simple example, in chapter one I am predominately speaking in the performative self. I stand apart from my words to explain rather than to embody them. However, the reader cannot separate this from the

knowledge that I am in fact a black, middle class, young female who claims to be from the clan of the *Bakoena* et cetera. To further emphasise this, the chapter is split into clear sections leading the reader through the phases of my argument, much like a narrator would do.

In chapter two however the constitutive self is more evident. I no longer refer to myself, my tone is more immediate (active). In the imaginary confessional, I am relaying a past experience not as narrator but as perpetrator:

“I keep a file. In that file; pictures, hand drawn illustrations, poems, unfinished short stories and scripts, notes passed around class in high school, old diaries and fragments of memory from primary and pre-primary.”

Chapter 2 pg11

The form of confession has shifted. Terry (2006: 202-210) outlines four forms of confessional forms, that he emphasises depict the relation of the performative self to the constitutive self. These forms of confessions carry a different relation to the confessor, whom he states is kept separate from the confessant. The forms of confessions he identifies are: literary confession, religious confession, forensic confession and therapeutic confession.

Literary confession is based on the formation of alignment between performer and audience; a narrative relation where the audience is privy to the forbidden and suppressed stories of the performer. This relationship is voyeuristic. The audience is spun a story that is at the sole creative force of the performative self - an illusionary world where the constitutive self is the main character followed on a journey. Religious confessions give the impression of delving deep into honesty, dropping defences and vulnerability. The constitutive self is stripped bare. The performer is constantly admitting guilt. This form is related closely to the desire for absolution. The audience is meant to provide it. This too is an illusion; the audience can no more absolve the confessant than they can wipe away sin (depending of course on what belief system you the reader subscribe to). The interaction is false in that it alienates the confessant into the world of the confession that the audience cannot gain access to (Terry 2006: 211- 215). Forgiveness is contingent on the self. These performances are “a pure axiological solitary relationship to [themselves]” (Terry 2006:216); a self-to-self performance. Turner (1987: 13) corroborates this idea; for him, in a ritual performance

such as confession, which is reflexive, the self is seen as revealing self to self (as well as to others) in a process that produces separation.

Forensic confession depicts projected guilt. The confessant hides behind the telling of confession. A self-expressive performance that is self-indulgent, revealing mask after mask of identity performance. It is like an illusion of the constitutive self where the performer is cast as the hero, victim and the constitutive self. An expression of societal roles and expectations - the villain. It supposes sincerity but it is an act of seeking pleasure where the act of confession is used to hide underlying problems. A disassociation of oneself from the act that one is confessing. Terry describes this as therapeutic confession. It is a process of self-evaluation. The performer sets aside the destructive aspects of themselves that they view as social projections (Terry 2006: 219-220). One is able to overcome themselves by breaking with the constitutive self. Here the process of reconciliation is characterised by rejection.

At this juncture, I beg the reader's forgiveness yet again. The information presented above is similar, though more extended, to what was presented in the introduction. Furthermore, there are several times I alluded to in previous statements in the paragraphs above. This was neither done to vex you nor is it a depiction of a lack of academic rigour. I repeated these elements as a means to provide a clear explanation of my actions, and to refresh and extend information needed by you, the reader – information on important theory to fully contextualise the research. Repetition, as will be discussed later is key to making sense of patterned behaviour.

The act of confession as a communicative form presents theatrical conventions of plot and narrative (Marlin-Curiel 2001: 78). In confession, the relation between the self and the confessor is dependent on its location in the cultural context (Terry 2006: 210). The confessant is compelled to validate their confession by delivering it in a certain way. The act must be dramatically realised through their words and subsequent actions (Foucault 1988: 41) to be taken as a valid confession. Terry argues that the forms of confession hinder effective communication. Confessions are performative, constitutive projections of the self; an act characterised by separation. This can be both physical and conceptual. The confessional literally separates the confessor from the confessant. The ritual of confession demands the confessor to stand apart and outside of the confession, observe it and to an extent pass judgement. The separation

of the audience from the confession hinders fruitful dialogue between the performer and the audience (Terry 2006: 209-215). As with performance the confessor assumes that their role in the relation is that of the privileged onlooker (Elam 1980:88). The dialogue is active only in so far as the social context and the expected behavioural patterns are concerned.

The confessor and confessant relation is based on a perceived intimacy which is illusionary. His premise that two selves are involved in the act of confession makes the confessor a third party whose role is merely to observe. Their influence on the dialogue of a confession is limited to the social context which they provide by listening (in this case reading). Though the confessor is not part of the dialogical as confessions are by form, in theatrical terms, a monologue process they are in fact an important feature in the dialectical process. The conscious effort of the confessant to speak to the confessor places the confessant in a precarious position, they are operating in 'space' between themselves and the confessor. As Kogler (1999: 94) states that intentional dialogue does not necessarily mean communication has taken place within an event of truth or truth claims. Rather, it is an articulation of power practices. These practices operate within a symbolic order which is a mix of ontological premise and social power practices. The separation caused by the confession is the space where the articulation of power takes place. Words from the confessant signal to the confessor to enter this relation. Signals are taken to constitute communication, which is goal oriented and directed (Turner 1987: 14) - in other words strategic.

I often shift from being self-referential as the confessant and to completely separating myself from that status. As stated above this is strategic. It places myself as researcher/confessant in a space, the conceptualisation of the confessant in another, and you the reader in a different one altogether. The separation is made more potent by the confessional of printed text. I as writer have exerted a certain force of will onto your understanding of the work presented by speaking about it in a specific goal oriented way. The purpose of separating myself from the concept of the confessant is to convey information; an objectification of the subject matter. When, however I decide to reinforce the illusion of intimacy I highlight that I, Palesa Matabane am speaking and confessing to you personally. This stimulates social behavioural patterns of one on one communication. I am signalling you to enter into different levels of relations with my words, each one directed to a particular purpose.

McHoul and Grace (1993:80) state that a confession can take the form of: interrogations, interviews, conversations, consultations or an autobiographical narrative. In chapter two the style of writing is conversational and as McHoul and Grace suggest a lot of confessional forms allude to conversation between two or more people. The conversational style does not detract from the understanding that I have provided in an autobiographical narrative which you the reader had no hand in. However, the fact that I stated that I am confessing changed the perception from which that narrative is read. Tell (2012: 1-4) affirms that even the look of a confession is enough to activate confessional politics which are underpinned by cultural politics; they are a “specifically rhetorical form of cultural studies”. The form of confession is theatrical and as such produces a set of ‘transactional conventions’ (Elam 1980: 88). These transactional conventions can be seen in the forms of confessions described above.

The relation of the performative self to the constitutive self in relation to the confessor set up the transaction. For example, in the extract below the relation is predominately in the form of a literary confession. I describe a world I wish the reader to enter:

“The rear view mirror is adorned with a pair of red dice linked to a heart shaped container. It is filled with water and an unspecified red liquid. Suspended within is a little red heart with an arrow through it. It floats on the red liquid being less dense than it is but denser than the water. Not sure what these little things are called but they are a popular cheesy trinket, found mostly in gift shops on Valentine’s day for those too lazy to think up something thoughtful for the one they 'love' (if you will excuse the bitter tone things like those peeve me.)” Chapter 2 pg 11

Elam (1980: 87) states that any activity depends on the frame from which the participants place around it. Confession includes social performances (social drama) and Cultural performances (including theatrical drama and aesthetics) (Turner 1987: 13). Elam continues to define a frame as conceptual or cognitive structures that are applied by participants to make sense of behaviour. Performance and confession are no different. In the following extract my words provide the reader with an admission of guilt. This, in a simple phrase at the end, shifts the form of confession from literary to religious.

“I really don't see how what I am doing differs from her driving to another province to go see her boyfriend. There is the same amount of risk in my view – although, admittedly I do get quite scared when I have to do this.” Chapter 2 pg 11

In chapter one I constantly revealed each phase of my confession as a mask, shifting from one manner of speaking to the next revealing a performance to the confessional act. This is a forensic form of confession and it allowed me to shift from a formal way of presenting my work (see page 3) to a conversational style (see pg 6 paragraph 2) to a narrative descriptive one:

“Caught between sin and righteousness, ready to die to the world and be reborn, a child of God. I like to think that in there I will lose all markers of this world, truly equal to my fellow humans. God, and by extension the priest, his agent on earth sees me as neither male nor female, young nor old, rich or poor. I am just a being. The old me withers away.” Chapter 1 pg 10

Toward the end of chapter 2 my tone becomes more philosophical as I evaluate my decisions and ponder their meaning. The effect is that my confession takes on a therapeutic form of confession. My tense changes, in the present moment of confession I am distorting time

I was never caught, I didn't stop seeing my boyfriend, I am not remorseful (well not in the way I should be if you ask me, but no one ever does)...In the silence of the taxi, broken only by its creaking as it speedily canters down the road, no epiphany came... Perhaps it's the reason I wrote it all down. Chapter 2 pg27

In the above extract I have underlined specific words that shift the action and tense of the confession. This distortion may be overlooked as a grammatical error but within the suspended frame of a confession one is engaging with a time flux, dealing with the past and present simultaneously as if both were happening at the same time. This is what makes a confessional a liminal space. Much like a theatre there is a suspension of reality. Repeated coded behaviour, liminality, aesthetics and social power dynamics make the confessional frame.

3.2 Satisfaction: Frame

3.2.1 Satisfaction: Frame and objectification

In ritual there is a stress on process, performance, movement, staging, plot, and action. (Turner 1987: 6) These frame a ritual as performative. In the confessional ritual these elements are paramount. Through them, the confessor and indeed the confessant make sense of the past action which is now being presented as a confession. These defining elements or cognitive restraints create levels of reality where conventions are established; they are reinforced by symbolic, special or temporal markers, brackets or frames (Elam 1980:87). Turner (1987:1-2) terms this as

perception: a *spatialization* of the world as a means to orient the eye in relation to space and time. *Spatialization* of visuals divides the world into a subject that does the viewing and object that is viewed: alien material for example words and time (time here is understood as isolated moments in a chronological continuous sequence) are the objects. The opening of chapter 2 frames the action as “between and betwixt biology and religion” the central tension and action is read through this spatialization. The narrative performance is staged in the tensions alluded to by this statement. It points to Galatians chapter 5 verse 17 which depicts the flesh and the spirit as being in contention. This is what drives the plot forward.

Society tends to view itself in isolated periods of time which causes the national conscience to refuse itself; a mimetic separation and review. In postmodernism and consumer society there is a transformation of reality into images and fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents (Schomer 1994: 169-170). That is to say, society distils its history into isolated images which it separates from itself in order to objectify it. This type of thinking is seen as logical order. It is evident in mathematical and ontological thought. The spread to visuals and grammar through the use of abstraction is taken to be signs and symbols; repeatable in variant forms, allowing logical locatability of sign systems and the objects therein (Turner 1987: 2). This allows for societal behaviour to be framed and read. The confessional ritual is a “performance of complex sequence of symbolic acts” (Turner 1987: 5) that varies from person to person depending not only on their society but on individual variants of behaviour or signals. The way that language is understood is through grammar; a representational tool (Nellhaus 2010: 116). I have bracketed this work, from chapter one in inverted commas, signalling that I am engaging in direct speech. This allows for the process of abstraction; where my words are objects with which to represent not only myself but my confession. They are read through this frame therefore allowing for a level of personalization. The naming of the ritual as confession defines certain parameters that allows for the confession abstracted into signals to be read; that is decoded and interpreted in a determined way.

In social drama which is acted out, that is an attempt to show others what has/is being done, there is an element of reflexiveness where will and emotions are unleashed to achieve goals. This is evident in the redress portion of social drama. Confession is

taken to be a ritual that encompasses the entirety of a social drama. It can be argued that it is inherently strategic. The reflexive nature of the confessional act builds a narrative or reality in which the confessant is remorseful and deserving of forgiveness. The will of the confessant is to impress upon the confessor their inherent eligibility for leniency as they voluntarily admit guilt (Turner 1987: 6). If one considers that confession is about the process of converting action to thought and vice-versa (if the assumption is that they are not the same thing, which is, a thought is an action) then the dynamics of power and control can be perceived. This is due to the cultural role of confession as a practice of personal power. The power is (works through/in) the disclosure of thought. As such the power of a confession is in its classification as a confession: as an act of interpretation that holds cultural norms. One can shift power relations if they produce a confession or depict it as coerced. This removes the idea of authenticity and claim to truth. A coerced confession removed from authenticity points to abuse of power around the confessional act. This shifts where the confession is situated in terms of context. If the proper ritual and procedure of a confession is not adhered to, then the confession is non-authentic. (Tell 2012: 11-13)

Tell (2012: 10) affirms that what constitutes a confession that works is: (1) a refusal to shift blame, (2) a clear statement of fault, (3) a show of remorse, and (4) pleas for forgiveness. In a confession, one lays down power only to pick it back up again. Contemporary confession has always been about power and politics. As a ritual, it deals more with micro politics which mirror macro-politics (Turner 1987: 25). That is to say, the strategic elements that are found in macro politics are deployed in the interpersonal politics of confession: divide and conquer, coercion and even violent force. The active reshaping of the boundaries of what constitutes a confession has allowed texts to be converted into a confession just by claiming them to be so. Often this is done for political purposes (Tell 2012: 5). This can be in an attempt to abscond responsibility as confessions can remove the confessant from the act. Furthermore, the political advantage of confessions is the claim authenticity. Due to this flexibility of boundaries, there is a level of uncertainty when it comes to confessions; an ambivalence that can operate as a political motivation to use confession as a form.

Schomer (1994: 168-169) states that confessional performance has an affinity to the contemporary culture of narcissism and postmodernism by imitating the spectator who

projects themselves in life as a performer. In the advent of the era of celebrity pop-culture there was a move to fragmentation, dissolution, ritual revenge and shamanistic vision. The truth telling urge is central to dramatic action and theatrical presentation. It has become a cultural metaphor - the image of the image; the vision of the vision. In postmodern confession, the individual experience is theatrical, where the object is image, produces the main mode of radiating the need for survival in a world of flickering images. Here the difference and ambiguity of postmodern experience is heightened. In postmodernity, the presentation of the processing of space is temporal in order to make inferences about competence of individual performances we have to abstract. This manner of thinking is modernistic. It assumes that a standardized pattern is not necessarily apparent upon observation.

Competency is defined as the mastery of a system of underlying rules and regulations. It is measured by (1) discounting chance elements within a performance and (2) discounting the variations between utterances attributed to personal and social factors. In the postmodern realm however, the elements that are discounted would be the very objects of discourse and investigation as they are subject to creativity, interpretation and context, which is what analysis of this sort requires. It is seen as the generation of new symbols and meanings by public actions (Turner 1987:6-7).

In operating the frame strategically, one must assume that the flesh and spirit are in binary opposition, as I have suggested. This would then force the reader to assume a stance for one or the other. This would slant their view of my confession differently depending on which side they pick. However, as a postmodern performance there is ambiguity as the confession itself does not reveal an outright stance. In terms of competency as defined above, my confession shows a lack of mastery of outright flesh hedonism and religious spiritual rigor. Therefore, an analysis of my frame which, includes all of the historical, cultural and social aspects of myself I have revealed thus far, would be that of internal tensions which include my upbringing, my sense of self in contemporary times and my personal thought process. I as actor become a real and artificial sign as postmodern theatre emphasises the frame of perception over the will of creation. Truth is reduced to one's private convection and it lies as a public performance of one's fantasy. The locus of motive is removed, functioning as a form of plausible deniability (Schomer 1994: 168). Confessional performance emphasises

tension between reality and confessional fictions, to break down traditional communication- relationships in theatre. Body imagery and intimacy disrupts theatrical distance. It confronts the audience with its desire for a passive commodified experience. The commodified self is a narcissistic strategy of remaking the world in one's own image while alienating the audience. Confession becomes a tool by which the boundaries of real and fantasy are blurred thereby aiding in this process (ibid: 166). Just as I have created a world that may or may not be, fictional in the realm of flesh versus spirituality

Bradbury and Miller (2010: 695) argue that life is inherently storied or narrative-like. Narrative structure connects actions through time and space. The make-believe world is the imagined, created and constructed world of performance where it is clear to both audience and performer that one is pretending. "Human life is characterized by the processes of meaning-making, reflexivity, or reflecting on and making sense of past experiences and intentionality" (Bauman & Tester 2001:126). Meaning-making is goal oriented, determined by will and valued at the end of an expression; that is a sign, performance, ritual, communication etc. (Turner 1987: 32). Meaning can be defined as the nexus of: (1) making whole: the process of fitting the sign into an ethos, moral code or world view, (2) cognition of the past: which deals with the ordering of history and culture and, (3) value (defined by the feeling and affect elicited by a particular sign/utterance/object). These three aspects depict meaning as a function of the frame of the sign. The form of the signs or symbolic system is similarly read through the frame. This process is self-reflexive, growing as it happens.

More and Myerhoff (1977:3) phrase it succinctly: "collective ritual can be seen as an especially dramatic attempt to bring some particular part of life firmly and definitely into orderly control". The 'force' of social drama is in its being as an experience or a sequence of experiences which significantly influence the form and function of cultural performative genre. This is done by mimesis and by reflections which ascribe meaning. Confession, which is akin the process of redress, is the collision of the past and the present; due to the interplay between action (now) and understanding reflection meaning making (the past) (Turner 1987:31- 35). The strategic use of confession is to control the process, which is the frame, and form of communication. This involves minute intricacies that are controlled not only by will but by chance. The post-modernistic, that is, the deconstructive and rhizomatic way of thinking that

emerged after the break from modernism (Jameson 1991:2) is a tendency of contemporary times which has collapsed boundaries between the conceptions of the make-believe world of performance and the make-belief performative acts of the everyday (Schechner 2006: 38-42) thus rendering confession as a powerful tool in theatrical and 'real-life' endeavours.

Language creates what is real through image, metaphor and interpretation (Cole and Graham 2012: 101). The practice of logos and words in relation to ontological logic rests on the political power of effecting one's purpose. This process produces archetypes which work by means of effective application of force (Turner 1987: 16). One applies their own will through use of language, which is effective due to pre-conceived troupes of what words mean. Confession as performative speech uses not only the political use of language but the ritualistic and social affects it produces to affect the confessor in a theatrical way. Confession is consumable and marketable because of the increase in awareness of one's own participation in events or experiences once controlled by an exaggerated morale code and conscious masking of the stage. Post-modernism and theatre blur the appropriation of forms by enabling them to hide behind one another disrupting the binary of political versus theatrical action, art versus commerce, past versus present, theory versus practice and beauty versus normality; similarly confession functions (Schomer 1994: 170-171). The power of confession lies in its ability to assimilate seemingly oppositional elements into the personal experience while blurring distinctions between them.

3.2.2 Satisfaction: Frame, language and power

Tim Eacheles (1999: 101) in his book of collected essays *Certain fragments* states that one must think of performative writing as a borrowing of power; using the language of another to be them, sampling and mixing their language with one's own. In the first two chapters I took on the language of the confessant. Indeed I will continue to do so, to actively portray how confession functions as a strategy. Words become a performance strategy for the writer. The act of speech as a performance strategy; the choice of words, the way they are constructed to portray and emphasize meaning does something. They create an effect and make an impression (Austin 1962: 6-8). The impression I aim to make in the passage below is a separation from my contemporaries' conceptions of 'religious people'. In so doing I adopt the language of

my contemporaries. By specifying myself as a 'believer' while simultaneously affirming my specific religious standpoint I have borrowed the impact of the power of claiming Christianity while attempting not to alienate those who don't follow that specific means of belief.

"If it's not clear from that, yes I am a believer, a Christian, and an Anglican to boot. People like to say I am religious. I would agree with them except for the negative connotations the word carries these days: narrow minded, hypocritical, ungodly in all respects." Chapter 2 pg12

Communion including communication is intrinsically dynamic, never quite being realized, specifically because people try to control it by imposing individual will. It is dependent on process, a process which is a dialectical communicative frame (Turner 1987: 16). Collectivism is defined by agency which generates its failure; the collective experience in postmodern art converts itself into an isolating internality of individual truths (Schomer 1994: 167-168) thereby causing a clash of forces as individual agents try to impose their will on the communion. Thus there is a paradox in the performer-audience relationship in mass communication. In performance, the communion is consistent of dialectical oppositions of processes of violation, cognition and affects (Turner 1987: 11). These are primary factors. Violation is in reference to social drama where the performance, driven by conflict, creates a violation of the status quo leading to crisis. Cognition deals specifically with the frame in which the performance or communion takes place. Affect is understood as an agent of inter-determination, joining/bringing together of elements which deal with variance from general sources. It happens in a space of becoming; attending to the movement of desire in language and power (Cole 2012: 1).

Affect and embodiment are important in post-modern considerations of power and understandings of subjective change (Ringrose 2012: 48). If one takes understanding to be an event or action in space and time, influenced by will and chance, one appreciates the unpredictability of language, which comprises part of understanding; it resembles the process of becoming; of play (Kogler 1999: 49). The creative use of language functions as a theatrical mechanism in structuring social possibilities ; it is the medium through which reality is communicated and interpreted. By stating: "Thankfully they were not beaten up- all South Africans SHOULD know what beat up Allstars look like. I think we can all agree what an affront to the eyes they are."(chapter 2: 15) I allude to a common understanding. The use of the words 'all', 'know' and

'agree' I attempt to create a collective reality where commonality is shared. The use of the word 'should' in capitals acts as an indicative, further emphasising a shared social understanding.

To achieve common understanding there needs to be an agreement on basic terms or a willingness to accept possible proposals of meaning as more plausible than others mean. This results in a level of uncertainty in relation to meaning and interpretation. In interpretation, truth is an illusion; it does not directly translate to reality but functions more like a metaphor. There is an idea of transference of meaning (Cole and Graham 2012: 101-104). The content of perception functions as empirical order, its operating assumptions depend on prior homology, symbolically intelligible entities posited as real (Kogler 1999: 95). On page 15 of chapter 2 I state:

"I pay the driver his R5.50 for the trip. Public transport is ridiculously high priced! (an interjection here: the South African transport system which is more expansive and also if might I add rather less reliable than that of Lesotho mostly because of the taxi drivers but let's not get into that)."

I draw attention to the lack of homology with people outside of Lesotho and make reference to possible conversations that Basotho in Lesotho have about public transport in comparison to South Africa. The truth of these allusions cannot be verified. It may be a creation of the author furthermore, it requires the reader to buy into and/or have a conception of public transport systems in order to recognise the comparison (and if I might add the intended slur of those words).

Codes of culture are the governors of language. They are the schema of perception, exchanges, techniques, values and hierarchy of people and practices. Language or words are signs or symbolic agents that are grounded in experience and interaction with social, personal and natural environments. For example in chapter 2 on page 15 I say, "If you haven't figured it out, a 4 plus 1 is a cab." This functions as an explanation of a situation where I used the term "4 plus 1". It is a common way of referring to a taxicab in Lesotho; the term 'cab' is hardly, if ever, used. 4 plus 1 refers to the number of seats within a taxicab vehicle. As for many people, the term 'taxi' refers specifically to a 15 seater commuter mini bus. These terms are all signs. Signs do not exist on their own. They are relational and a level of 'placing' happens in how they are used to create new relations. These new relations can also serve to re-interpret the social, personal and natural conditions from which the sign came. The symbolic production

of concepts, thought patterns and descriptive realities relate to the self in a certain way ; it leads to the practical constitution of subject (Kogler 1999: 95- 100). As I uses these terms I identify myself in a specific historical, geographical and social space.

Postmodernism is a culture in which particular cultural manifestations are part of an extended and disorienting montage of social texts. Artifice can be counted as truth and a familiar sign can signify itself (Schomer 1994: 170). This culture challenges icon formation due to the oversaturation of confessional texts. To understand how the power relations in this work, one must understand the idea of a situated subject. That is to say, to have a sense of the 'worlds' of the subject with respect to their explicit, innate and intentional activities. The understanding of the concrete situated historical rationalities of the subjects is context (Kogler 1999: 3-5) or frame. There is an interplay between the social and political formations of language, culturally situated in history, emerging as aesthetic and linguistic moments within hegemonic narratives (Baldacchino 2012: 31). Political subjects can be seen as collective wills; historical and contemporary. In understanding the situated subject as performative there is a sense that every act of understanding discloses another meaning that is against the shared historical background that binds text and interpreter together (Kogler 1999: 25).

Social activity is a mesh of order and practice: an arrangement of entities and organised activity. It presents ongoing novelty and recognisable continuity (Cole 2012: 4-8). In confession, identity is presented by sameness and repetition. It is used as a means of recognising social functions in repeated behaviour that is consistent with the imagined community (Schomer 1994: 159). Imagined communities refer to a group of people who may have never had direct interaction with each other, but rely on their imagined shared qualities to have communion (Anderson 1983: 49-53). Language is one of the primary means of creating communion. It synthesises, analyses and is a representation through practice. It is not only a repetition of time but through it, variable rules are created and localised in (geographically and temporal) 'lingo'. This lingo can undermine the circulation of social meaning. There is a passage of power from speaker to the spoken to and vice-versa (Cole 2012: 10). As seen in the passage below, 'lingo' can effectively create separation between the reader and performer, disrupting the continuity of the world created. This can shift the power of interpretation as the reader becomes solely dependent on the cues given by the performer.

“Their place is small; it’s a one room... Um flat? Um... Hut? Apartment? No, none of these work, eish! O lula *malaeneng!*-sorry if you are not a Mosotho and don't understand what that means, just goes to show you should have been born a Mosotho” Chapter 2 pg 26

The advent of print publication and silent reading helped constitute the private and public split, it replaced an individual’s direct personal ties with others to an abstract imagined community (Nellhaus 2010: 116). This means that imagined communities were no longer bound to geographical markers but to conceptual ones as well. One can argue that the spread of the printed bible allowed for Christians to have a shared means of communion across geographic borders just as a diaspora might read the above and share communion with myself and other Basotho people who may come across the text.

Language is imbued with the continuity of time: of memory and creativity which constitute power through and in formation. In this sense, language can be seen as an artefact. It assumes power; a combination of repetition of time and energies of will which drive one’s life (Cole 2012: 1). This contributes to what Kogler (1999: 22) terms pre-understanding. Pre-understanding is a combination of previous social and cultural and historical information that helps one interpret new information. Pre-understanding is permeated by social practices (Kogler 1999: 94). In the mediation of historical meaning one must also consider that pre-understanding is based on lived experience as much as ontological knowledge, possibly more so (Kogler 1999:22). Symbolic agents, signs and subjects should be thought of as operating within a specific framework; a ‘pre-understanding. In as much as the pre-understanding of the sign is important one must not be too quick to correlate the sign to its frame. There is an experimental dimension to the situated subject; one cannot reduce the power of the sign to the experience, or the meaning and phenomena associated with it. So, even as I have emphasised the need for one to understand my words in relation to life in Lesotho I cannot assume that the reader will not understand and appreciate the meaning that may be conveyed by my words. Furthermore it is the role of the writer to make intelligible those things (signs/symbols/utterances) in their work which the reader may not be familiar with.

Power can be perceived as a network of relations, strategies and power struggles amongst which antagonistic interest groups operate (Kogler 1999: 96). One may understand “that power is conceived not as a property but as a strategy, that its

effective dominion is attributed not to appropriation but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings that one should decipher in it a network of relations constantly in tension; in activity” (Foucault 1979: 26-27). One does not have power but uses it. Power produces things it induces pleasure, forms knowledge and produces discourse (Kogler 1999: 99). It is a complex of strategic relations and actions in society that structure the field of other possible actions. As such, if power is in and is in turn used through language, how we speak establishes what we consider possible; how we relate to social norms (Cole and Graham 2012: 101-102).

For example, the sentence: “We just watched a series while lying in bed - the appropriate term now would be Netflix and chill” in chapter 2 page on 26 not only relates to temporal lingo but limits what the interpretation of the actions associated with these words are. For those who know what the contemporary cultural meanings of ‘Netflix and chill’ are, there is only one real proceeding action. For those who do not, there is the literal and obvious proceeding action. How I have used language here, ambiguously for me, puts the reader in relation to their own perceived social norms. They use the frame I provided and their specific epistemological, historical and theoretical standpoint. As the performer I am aware of the possible interpretations of my words. In the possible interpretations of my words that I am aware of, a picture of intimacy is set up which is seen in relation to the confession as a whole.

Power practices are determined by domination. They are anchored in embodiment and are represented by modes of behaviour and forms of action they form in individuals; identifying them as social subjects. These modes of behaviour encompass symbolic dimensions in society (Kogler 1999: 99). Strategies and tactics of dominion are discursive, hidden beneath everyday language (Ringrose, J 2012: 48). We can thus state that language is strategic in nature. Strategy by definition uses, but is not limited to, binary opposition. A useful method of analysis of strategy is to compare it with base and superstructure as positions from which, and in which power operates. Baldacchino proposes a linguistic approach that he relates to catharsis.

If Baldacchino’s interpretation of the definition of catharsis in relation to power as a move from self-passionate to ethico-political that is, seen as the move from base to superstructure, within human consciousness: a move from object to subject, then catharsis is a necessity to freedom. In this conception base is the external force that

crushes man and assimilates him with itself. This allows for passivity, capitalist concerns and selfishness (Baldacchino 2012: 31-33). That is to say, the cathartic moment can serve to reinforce hierarchies of power ; this is the same when it comes to confessions. Catharsis extended to formative aesthetic such as language, is not limited to an operative moment of possible transformation but also as a moment for manipulation from and within base/superstructure which can reinforce binary opposition (Baldacchino 2012: 33-34). If one is to breakdown Aristotle's (1987: 7) definition of catharsis: "a complete action [confession] which has magnitude [force] in embellished speech ... accomplishing by means of pity and terror [affect]", this action is a formative vehicle for change and creation. Gramsci's (1978:48) notion that "Catharsis, then is not simply a moment of synthesis but a moment where dialectical onus of social and individual existence is signified by the personal testimony of social change" becomes relevant to understanding the power of confession. Catharsis in the confessional moment leads to possibilities of change and operations of power on the self and confessor. It is an action or moment with great affect.

The confessional moment functions much in the same way as the cathartic moment, it is often used that way in confessional performance. In some respect, a relation to truth can be achieved through the lived aesthetic of catharsis. Aesthetic experience does not take place outside of reflective knowledge; it is in reciprocal relation to it (Kogler 1999: 53). Thus truth, knowledge and aesthetics are linked in the use of language. In confession, they are tightly woven; the 'look' of the presented knowledge must ring of truth otherwise it is considered invalid. The power of catharsis lies in the dialect in language, which operates in how people live their lives. It is a synthesising moment.

To escape causality, formation can be read through an aesthetic. In this relation, form (of confession) and act (the act of confession) take a dialectal turn i.e. they are a dialogue as opposed to forming a dialogue. Here expression and representation are prominent in the consideration of truth. Truth becomes an event; an opportunity for existence in post-modern conditions (Baldacchino 2012: 34& 29). The confession is its form, content and action that serves to expose truth as an event, an event that is formed using words. With post-modern ideals there is no one truth but many truths, individually valid and created in the moment of catharsis : confession. Thus, there is

no question of verifying a confession but instead a confession must 'work' as a confession. It works through the use of the power in and of language.

So what is the point of all this, the significance? After all I know I didn't just go through all this by accident...This however, this slow, measured look and reflection gets under your skin and remains there every day...My focus became my sin and those who cause it, instead of God (guilt is the biggest lie the devil ever told- guilt is obsessive, self loathing, obstructive, fear inducing, and love abusing. It is a soul eating virus)... to accept responsibility for me and my actions. Maybe this is why the epiphany didn't come." Chapter 2 pg 27- 28

These words are from the concluding words in my confession. They are the cathartic moment in my confession. It is in these words where personal social change takes place. Furthermore, it is a moment that shifts the interpretation of my confession; the reflexive moment where tone and style change, creating a different relation to my confessor. It can be seen as the moment where they judge my actions through the frame and form I have provided but also, their personal experience of it, deciding their relation and overall impression to my confession.

The embedded operative assumptions about being, nature and subjectivity also determine the experience of objects, speaker roles, thematic options and conceptual field. These rules determine what can be viewed as object; who may speak and what is said (Kogler 1999: 96). With the above in mind, the operating factors that govern the symbolic orders can be used to free the speaker and in doing so allow the speaker to control the power relations within what is being said. A possible solution would be dialogue that transcends meaning systems. But is such dialogue intelligible? The writer may not determine this. As Barthes (1977: 148) states, unity is found in the reader. However, events, narratives and histories can never be synthesised into one system (Baldacchino 2012: 31) therefore language becomes a moment of conflict, exposing the tensions. In following the dialectical nature of language, a critical discourse analysis is helpful.

Critical discourse analysis focuses on what statements do; it examines how certain statements emerge from others. Where simplicity and clarity of meaning is an illusion, the claim to truth is a rhetoric practice. Taylor (2004 :436) states that critical discourse analysis is "particularly appropriate for critical policy analysis because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes and how language *works* within power relations". In critical discourse analysis inferences

are drawn from structural and linguistic features in text. There is no absolute position. However one must not assume a relativism because a specific reading is a version of a text done from some theoretical, epistemological and/or ethical standpoint. As such it must respect post-modern ideas: the aim of critical discourse analysis is to determine the intelligibility of truths (Graham 2012: 114-116). One must have clear objectives in what one is doing; the theoretical, epistemological and ethical stand point of a reading leads to the cultural politics of the sign. When conducting critical discourse analysis of performance strategy one must anticipate the theoretical, epistemological, ethical and social standpoint of the reader and have an appreciation of the relation between them to influence possible avenues of perception.

If one considers that truth is the fiction we build around ourselves then change is possible in the manipulation of the 'building material' namely: the words on a page, utterances, symbols and signs and statements (Graham 2012: 1115). Foucault (1972: 80-100) defines statements as the 'atom' of discourse, a function; the intersection of words and things, where they become invested with particular relations to power. The result is an event [statement] that can be recognised and isolated. It is an act of formation, a special mode where groups of signs exist that enable rules and forms to manifest. Statements makes things nameable, manifest and describable, transforming them to an object. This object can be located and it is recognisable. (Graham 2012: 118).

Judith Butler (1997: 5) corroborates; one only exists by being recognisable. A confession taken as a statement by the confessant makes them recognizable. The political effects of statements are functional and they are not concerned with validity. The political effects extend to movement, behaviour, performance, gesture, art, symbols and text. They open up statements to possibility, producing a discursive frame around any given position. However, these political effects coagulate to form rhetorical constructions that present a particular reading of social texts (Graham 2012: 116). In my final words of the confession I say: "Where an epiphany lacked inspiration hit; I am on my phone starting my book *Red Dice*". It comes easy, and the words flow out of me spontaneously." This statement places my confession as a possibly pre-considered revelation. Created to be read and not necessarily an attempt for reconciliation. The book ending creates the impression that I purposely did what I did so that I could have

something to confess. This has the ability to change the perception of the entire confession.

By changing perception, not only are aesthetic elements or political effects changed but also the context and atmosphere must be changed so that the tools used to read the statement change. One changes context by changing description, recognition and classification. For production to occur, an object must be definable therefore locatable. Successful communication relies on description and specification. To see what objects do: the relationship between things and words, how do the words conceptualise the object; produce objects from statements is description. When things are described they can be recognised and classified. Thus, we can trace the process of the constitution of things and words in order to analyse them. To identify a statement in a field of regulation functions with constitutive effect is recognition of an entity. It highlights the technical aspects that deal with it, the way it is described, particular phenomena around its perception; bodies of knowledge associated with and that validate it. To classify is to identify the discursive traces that lead back to the knowledge-domain upon which a statement is intelligible. Language works do not only produce meaning but particular kinds of objects and subjects upon whom and through which particular relations of power are realised. Objectification acts as a locating device which puts objects into grids of social regularity, hierarchies and place (Graham 2012: 116-120).

Chapter 4 Forgive me father, I would rather go online: Online performance and Social media.

4.1 Background and contextualization

4.1.1 Internet and performance

The internet has been in existence since the 1960s, now it is viewed as a human right. Unlike other mediums of mass communication it is interactive creating a space (Papagiannouli 2011: 274), what is now referred to as cyberspace; a communal space where information is found. Spaces are created by events (Pearce 2001: 21). Events happen through or in time and the experience of the space informs the space (Maar 2012: 252) so the interactivity of the internet defines it. With its capability for gaming, videos, text, audio and many other forms of media it is now a leading means of entertainment (Papagiannouli 2011: 275). Community is what the internet is seen as

being about. With the advent of smartphones, online communities have developed to political social platforms (ibid). As such, social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and many others are an essential part of contemporary life. They are a reservoir of social, political and economic information. Not surprisingly then has theatre and performance also moved to the cyber realm.

Performances that take place in cyberspace have been termed many names, digital theatre, virtual theatre and *cyberformance* as coined by Helen Jamieson. For the purposes of this research all of the above are encapsulated in one term, *online performance*. I define online performance as all performance works where computer and internet technologies play an essential role in content, techniques, aesthetics, creation or delivery of the performance (Dixion 2007: 3). It is a form of performance that brings together performers to near and remote audiences (Jamieson 2008: 91); where the audience may interact in both real and virtual realms (Giannachi 2004: 19). Online performance is live/ly. Performers and audience members may be present in the same moment when the performance takes place. The work may be or it may contain pre-recorded elements such as: audio, video, animation and scripting. These elements may be combined and presented as a performance in real-time. As well as being live/ly, online performance is: playful, dynamic, responsive and energetic (Jameison 2008: 33). It is all performances that take place on the cyberstage.

Papagiannouli (2012: 6) defines cyberstage as “a meeting point for the audience and performers, where distant people will be connected and stories will be shared”. The internet functions as a communication or thematic tool and more importantly as a language for art expression, a medium, a platform which dictates content (Papagiannouli 2012: 8). According to Burgheim (2016: 9-10) the roots of contemporary digital performance can be found in the notions of puppetry where there was a questioning of the need for the physical presence of the actor for mimesis and catharsis to take place. These are the precursors of the ideas around an avatar and virtuality.

Avatar is a borrowed word from Hindu texts meaning to descend or a down coming. It is derived from the verb *tri*, meaning to crossover or save and the prefix *ava*, meaning down. The common idea of an avatar operates as an in-between: a cyborg and

amalgamation of the corporeal and the virtual. The Avatar is not a mask but a brand in commercialised space (Sue-ellen Case b 2009: 174-178). The internet works with consumption and the avatar allows the consumption of a person through representation (Poster 1995: [sa]). It can be argued that, profile pictures are the avatars of contemporary internet usage. In terms of interactivity it follows Brecht's notions of circus clowns who would disrupt the continuity of the performance by commenting and giving their interpretation of the performance. Online performance materializes the Brechtian idea of a new relationship between performer and audience, where the participants are afforded the freedom to interact, in real time and provide feedback by offering specific tools (Papagiannouli 2012 9).

In online performance, digital media and information technologies are pushed to their limits by means of creative experiments, discovering insights in computer-mediated communication, social interaction and the impact of technology on human life. (Jamieson 2008: 6). What happens in online performance is the immediate embodiment of the imagination; where what one thinks is materialized in real time (LaFarge 1995: 421). Today's digital technologies provide many means of hybrid theatre/performance, and the freed expression of art and ideas within the liminal space of the internet. Online performances can be understood as theatre that has seized and united digital technologies in a vast form of artistic expression (Jamieson 2008: 23-24).

Media changes and correlations in art are important. In the development of art, there is a tendency to move to hybridization. There is an increasing tendency to self-reference and self-reflection of art as media resulting in new forms, new dramaturgical strategies, new principles of structuring and staging words images and sounds, new ways of positioning performance bodies in time and space of creating space-time relationships, new modes of perception and generating new cultural, social and psychological meanings. Technological innovations play a large part in the development of art media and interaction between all modern and post-modern media (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]).

Auslander (1999: 57) states that "... performance is founded on difference, on separation and fragmentation, not unity ... [live performance's] very occurrence presupposes a gap between performer and spectator". Bennett (1997: 16)

corroborates, “[d]istance ... is intrinsic to art” and explains how the careful manipulation of this distance, such as Brecht’s *verfremdungseffekt* can affect the audience’s perception of a performance. These notions of alienation aim to shift the audience’s position so as to invite a particular perspective on the work. As a form of theatre within the digital realm, online performance maintains both the co-presence and distance between artist and audience. This lends it to finding itself in another liminal space: between the traditional codes and conventions of theatre audiences (though fluid) and the over activity of online audiences (online audience, who may be anywhere in vastly different situations outside the control of performers). Not only do they participate but they, to an extent, have authorship and agency within the work. (Jameison 2008: 71-75)

In the confessional box, a fantasy box: we are untouchable, invisible so we roam our unconscious, unbridled an escape from the justification of ownership (Furse 2010: [sa]). Public and private spheres are no longer distinct binaries because theatricality informs our era. Theatre deconstructs binaries of art and life and as an art form it is medial - that is to say, it can incorporate all other art forms without changing them (Schomer 1994: 170). The occurrence where there are many media in the same system (word, image, sound) and different disciplines as distinguished as different (literature, visual art, music, theatre, film) usually audio and visual are what creates distance. Distance in time and space are how we distinguish one medium from another. Theatre is truly multimedia - a physical hypermedium (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]).

The internet is a visual hypermedium. It provides a stage for intermediality “the performer is the player of the different media who acts in the empty spaces between the media” (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]) The concept of intermediality presents a way to approach the audience in the process of becoming, evolving with the work as they engage with it. The passive spectator becomes integral within online performance, without abandoning the fundamental gap between performer and spectator. Intermediality also recognizes the mental multitasking that online performance demands of its audience and the paradigm shift that undermines traditional codes of audience behaviour (Jamieson 2008: 79).

Intermediality is a correlation of media mutual influences between media resulting in the redefinition of the media - a refreshed perception. Specific conventions are

changed, allowing new dimensions of perception and experience to be explored. It is operative in-between space from which mutual affects take place; a montage of attraction crash on each other with the result that new energy is released. A radical separation of the elements in order to thwart a melting together of borderlines clears spaces in which the spectator actively falls in. Intermediality constitutes fragments and montage strategies, which are understood through interpretation techniques. It refers particularly to the correlation between art, science and ethics (politics), as a conscious striving for breaking open cultural value spheres or action domains (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]).

Transmediality is a transfer from one medium to another. Transmediality may apply to content or form: principles of constitution, stylistic procedures and aesthetic conventions (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]). The prefix 'trans' suggests the idea of 'beyond', an overcoming of disciplines, which translates, in the arts, into hybrid or unclassifiable artistic forms (Burgheim 2016: 7). Here, form means that one medium takes up and imitates the representational principles of another medium. There is an emphasis on process; constituting and conditioning events of hybrid aesthetic phenomenon (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]). Multi, inter, and transmediality are the modes of media relations that function in performance especially in online performances which has the capacity to encompass them all.

4.1.2 Internet and power

In the post-modern era, there is motion from the ontological fixation of modernism. A radical democracy has to be considered which opens new speech of previously silenced groups. There is an active decentralization of communication systems, a new regime between humans and matter and between matter and non-matter, reconfiguring the relation of culture to technology and undermining a starting point of discourse development by rallying issues of affect (Poster 1995: [sa]). There is a new relation between power and people; online assemblages can intensify power hierarchies (Ringrose, J 2012:52). Democracy, the rule by all, has failed to fulfil its promise of freedom and equality. Online, a new understanding of democracy must take effect. Affect is achieved by building the internet; a creation of an electronic geography. It is a social complex so its effects are difficult to pin down. The politics of the internet have no spatial aspect as they are disembodied according to what and

who are the signifiers of a new public sphere. There is a destabilization of the autonomous national subject as the base for democracy. Ideological fiction of liberalism reduces the public sphere to the existing democratic institution. There must be a breakdown of re-presentive universality (Poster 1995: [sa])

New social functions do not fit into modern organisations. They are not intelligible unless if seen through a new framework; a non-limiting one. In the political project, that is control and power, there are no 'post-modern theoretical conceptions of politics in the sense of governance and in the democracy. They are limited due to democracy's modernistic influences towards concepts and space. The problem arises in ideas of linearity, progressive exclusionary history (women and non-western), metanarratives and hegemonic historic constructions. In these conceptions, the individual is an outsider (Poster 1995: [sa]). The web colonises and de-territorialises space; often it transcends geographical boundaries (Sue-ellen Case 2009: 158) where transmission is achieved through typing. Accurate typing skills are an important asset for the online performer and the audience as all things happen in real-time (Jameison 2008: 39). 'Digital culture' is a complex; a transversal occurrence moving through different domains of society. It is particularly prevalent in the cultural sector where digital culture is considered as the development of new information and communication technologies. It includes public policies, encouraging the access and participation of the audience, in particular, regarding young audiences (Burgheim 2016: 8).

The ideas of the public and by extension the private, are problematic as politics are no longer spatial. How can the public be distinguished from the private in cyberspace? It is non-recorded, non-observed and unmonitored by the political machine. The public sphere in the sense that it is a locus of talk, a space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, is essential to democracy. This is the problem with the politics of emancipation. Machines now enable new forms of decentralized dialogue and create new combinations of human-machine assemblages (cyborgs), voices, spectres and interactivities. Due to its discursive nature, it is viewed as a threat to democracy; moral and private decay (Poster 1995: [sa]). In cyberspace, paradoxical intimacy and physical absence extend beyond controlling mechanisms. Machine mediated signifiers, hypertexts, which are reconstructed in the act of reading, render the reader and author destabilising authorities. With the advent of technology in our everyday

lives the cyborg performs a hybrid of machine and organism. A creature in a post gendered world, operating outside and beyond the purely physical material reality. This is equal to the imagination and material reality (Furse 2010: [sa]).

The notion of the cyborg is created by the interfacing of the human body with the computer, a mediating agent that transforms the physical body to interact in the virtual world. Interface is a description of connection between systems, including human interactions. There is no transcendence of the human mind but rather it constitutes wetware, much like software but water based. This allows for contact through outer space; the connection between technology on bodily and social organisation. Flesh is the threshold upon which subjectivity is processed; through external interaction with technology, not an inner psychological process. The working body produces social subjectivity and agency in technology. There is a blurring of borders between the social interior process and the technological one. There has been a disassociation between manual gesture and the psychological identifying process ; the rather repetitive motion of mouse as metonymic indirect sign of self (Sue-ellen Case 2009: 149-156). In postmodern theory there is freedom of the subject, repetition, compulsive signs of resisting the agent and a propagation of gestures of position through online interfacing (Poster 1995: [sa]).

Live online performance is the performing technologized body, also seen as the pixilation of the image of the body (Sue-ellen Case 2009: 151). Gender ambiguity allows for gender play. Gender becomes textual. Thusly, online, certain modes of establishing hierarchy are disassembled then reconfigured (Poster 1995: [sa]). Kogler (1999: 98) explains that the exercise of power is made effective by access to the body. This is achieved in structure of thought, perceptions and action. New cultural imagery of the body allows for a theatre of operations; the flesh reveals how it is altered by operations in consonance with new technology. A new array of performance techniques illustrates the widespread sense of the body where body alteration can constitute a performance (Sue-ellen Case 2009 150-151). Celebrity culture has emerged as self-actualization; body alteration through editing, being realer than real by simulating what one helped create is an omnipresent postmodern performance (Schomer 1994: 162-166). This culture is bolstered by the confessional turn of postmodern identity politics and online self-representation. Online confessional performance includes post modernistic strategies such as: pastiche, intertextual

double coding, ironic detachment through self reflexive reportage, appropriation of forms, coy deployment of ambiguity including authorial disclaimers imagery of gender reversal or androgyny. It also includes 'flow structure', that is, the promise of no structure, nostalgia for the impossible, primacy of image, aesthetic of consumerism, strategy of ambiguity, exhaustion of history. This represents the fashioning of history into a fictional troupe a play of surfaces and mythologies made extinct by the act of naming them. All this disrupts dominant cultural mythologies and defies critical modernistic explanation (ibid: 160).

In the textual and visual mediums of confessional performances, internet reading, reshaping and transmitting interpretation, are an active fashioning of the self. They are like so in reaction to an on-going process(dialogues) not as acts of pre-consciousness; 'democratization of subject constitution' (Poster 1995: [sa]). Historically, avant-garde created necessary conditions for media change/correlation; an exchangeability of expressive means and aesthetic conventions between media (playful staging of signs, which post-modern arts derive pre-eminently as performative self-critical aspects) (Kattenbelt 2008: [sa]). Postmodernism needs the constitution of identity in language and social interaction (Case b 2009: 170) where freedom is not a conclusion but a non-fundamental discursive pretence (Poster 1995: [sa]).

4.2 Online social media performance

Papagiannouli (2011: 275) states that, experimenting with free software applications like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, an online artist has the opportunity to experiment with interactive performances. This research is such an exploration. As an autoethnographic work I shall provide examples using my own interaction on social media.



Image 1.6 A

screenshot of my Facebook profile

This is my Facebook Profile. It allows for multiple means of expression from text, images and emoticons, to live broadcasts and a feature called Direct.

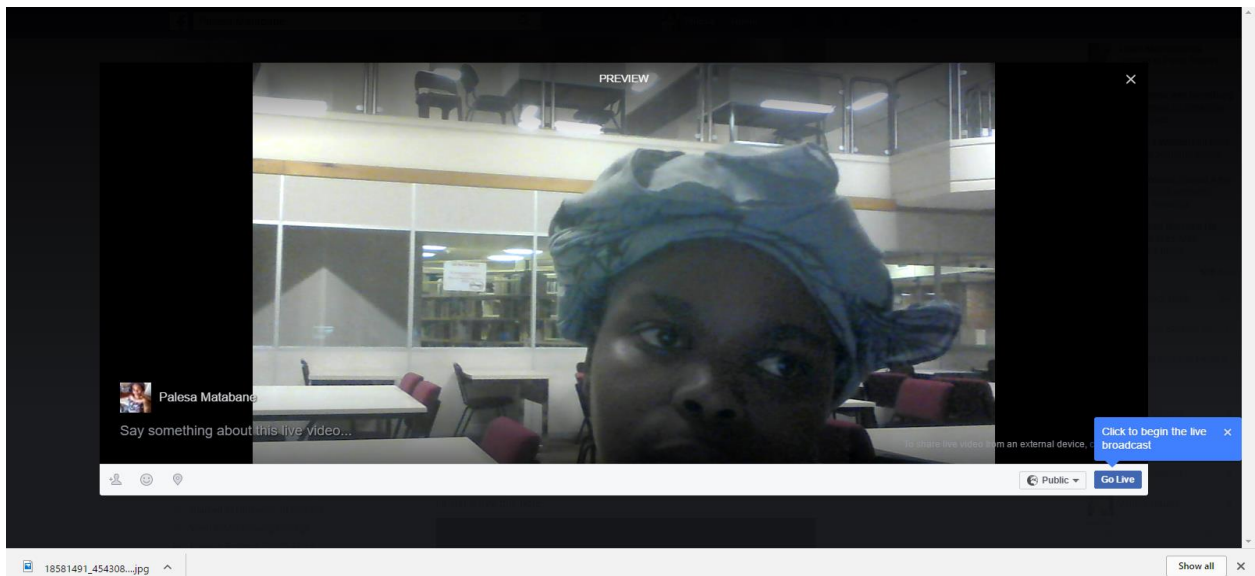


Image 1.7 A screenshot of me demonstrating a potential live broadcast

Below is an explanation of how the direct feature on Facebook works. One can post videos which can be directed at people and commented on. They subsequently disappear.

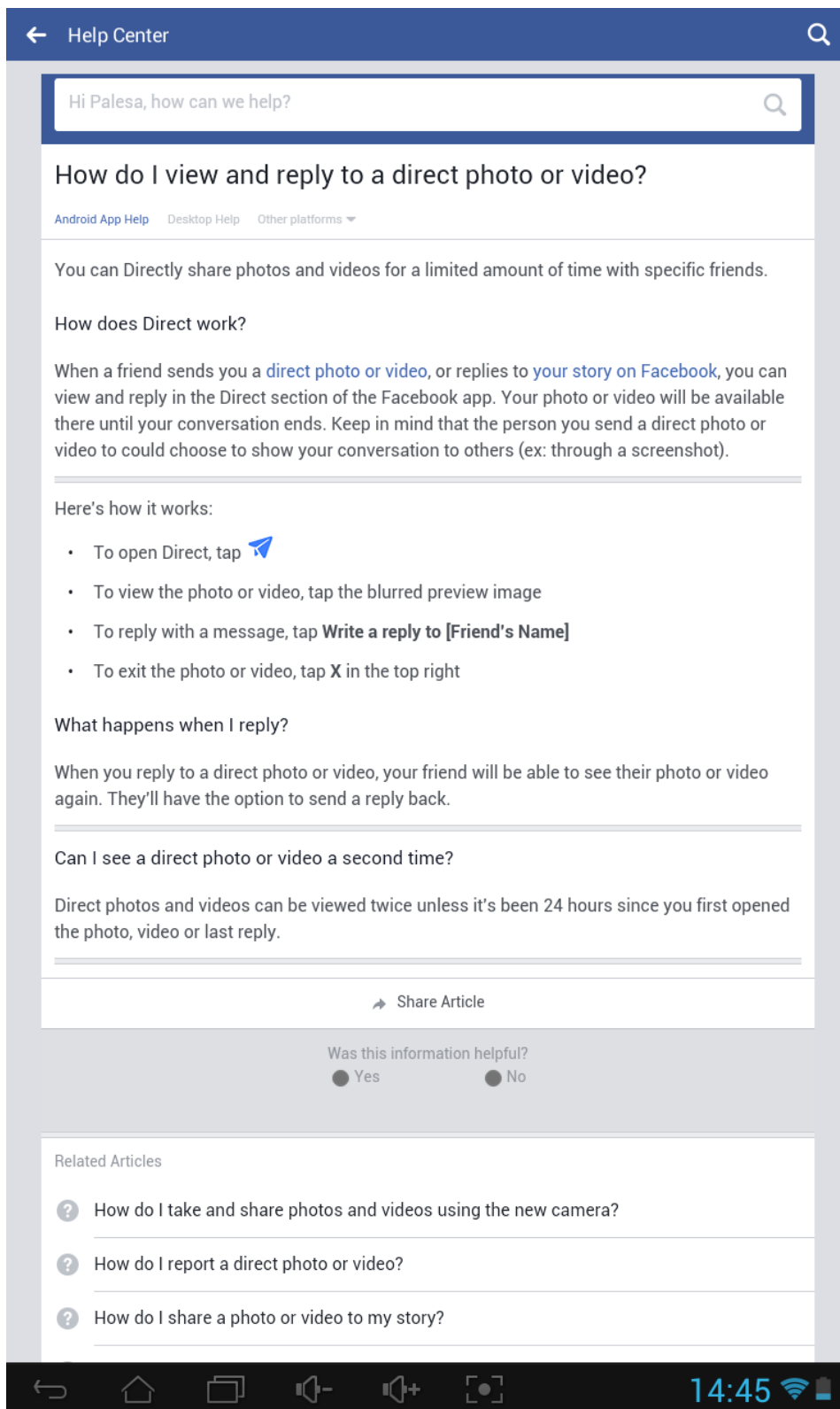


Image 1.8 A screenshot of the explanation of a live broadcast accessed from my account

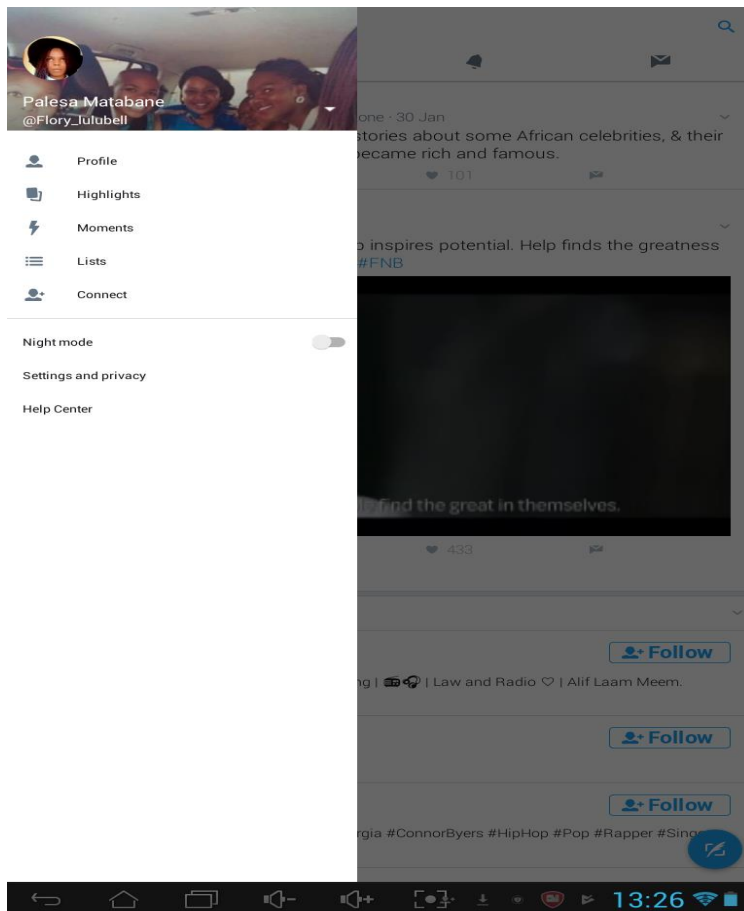


Image 1.9 A Screenshot of my Twitter profile

Moreau (2017: [sp]) states that, “Twitter is known as the real-time, public microblogging network where news breaks first”. Image 1.9 is a screenshot of my personal Twitter account. Twitter accounts can be linked with Instagram and Facebook, allowing users to create more and more varying forms of social interactions. Some social media sites will even request you to link your Facebook account with them. If you are using a smartphone the sites can request you to link your contacts list to your social media apps so as to enable seamless communication with your network as seen in the image below.

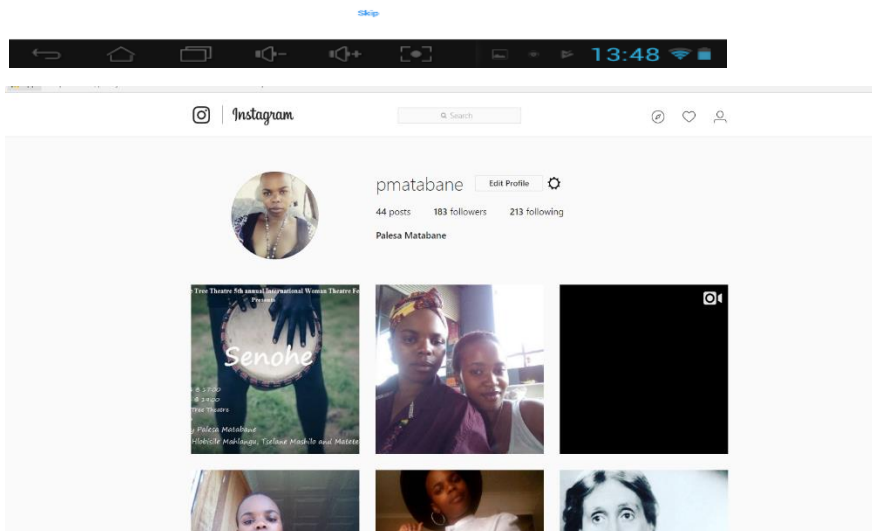


Image 2.0 and 2.1: A Screenshots of my access to my Instagram account

Instagram was created in 2010. It allows users to share images and short videos which may be accompanied by captions. One's network or followers can 'like' and comment on the images. Recently, Instagram added two new features to its app, Instasnap and Instalive. These features allow one to take and post temporary videos. The Direct feature or story feature like the one on Facebook allows one to create short movies using clips and images that are likewise temporal.

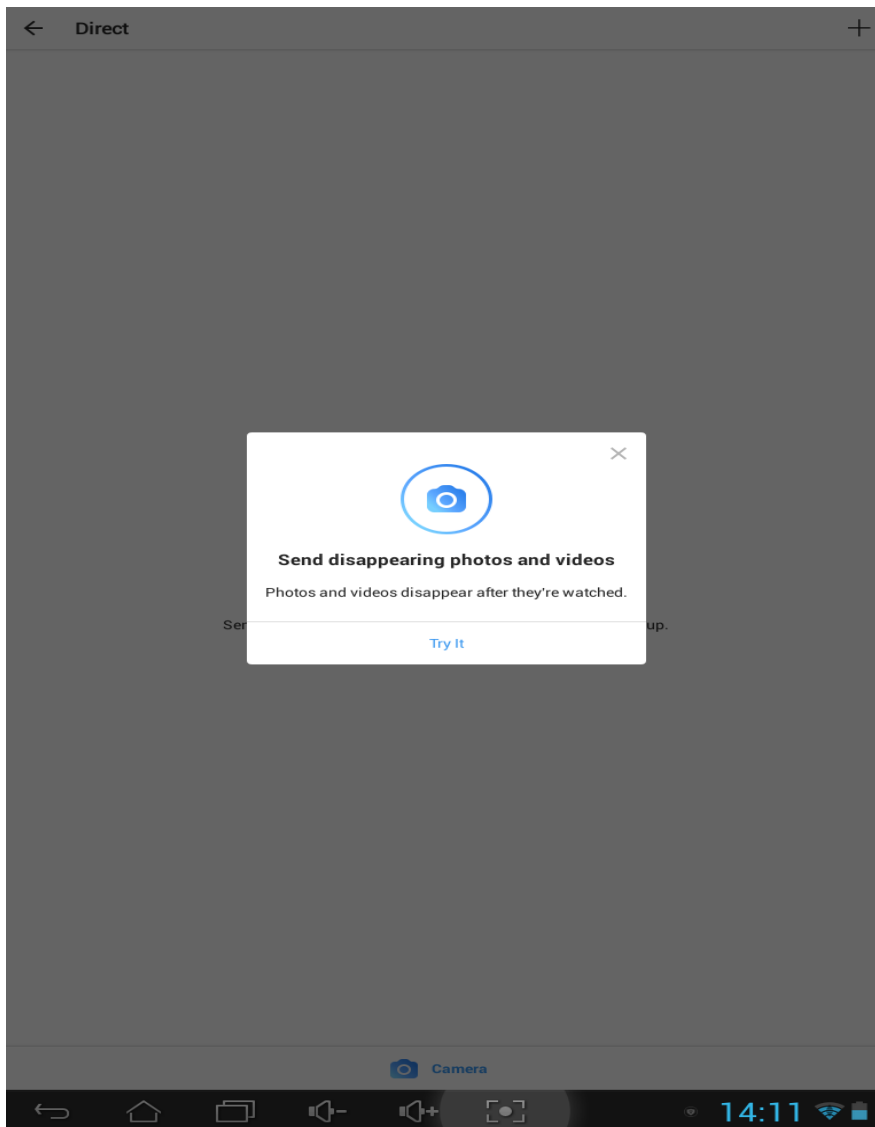


Image 2.2-2.7 Screenshots of a disappearing photo and video functions on my Instagram account.

All these functions can be used in multiple ways not only to 'post' about what is going on in one's life but to create expressions and artwork- performances. Added features like effects, stickers and photo filters can expand the look and reception of these expressions.

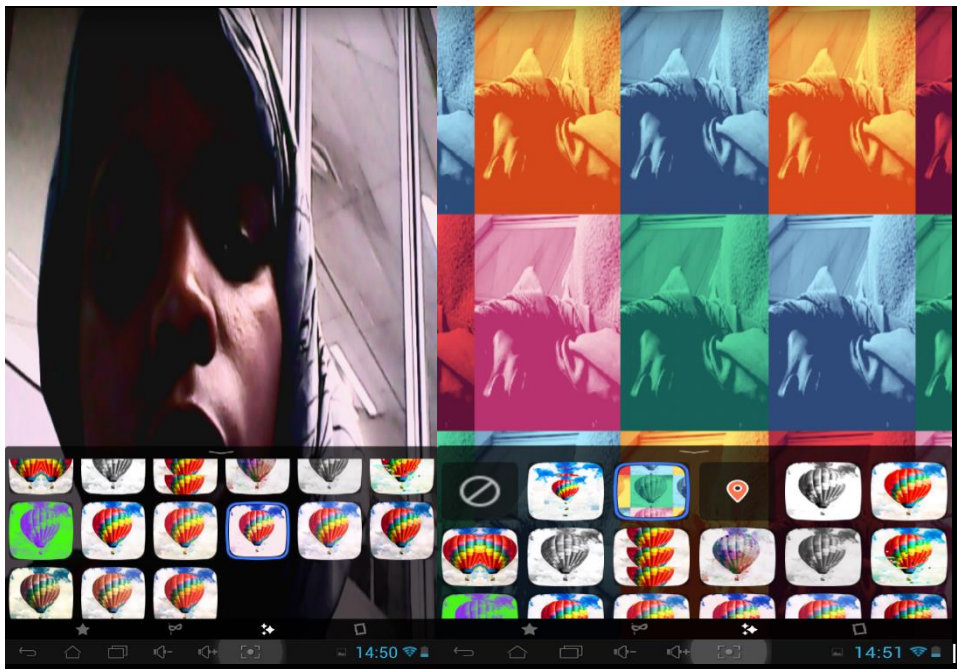
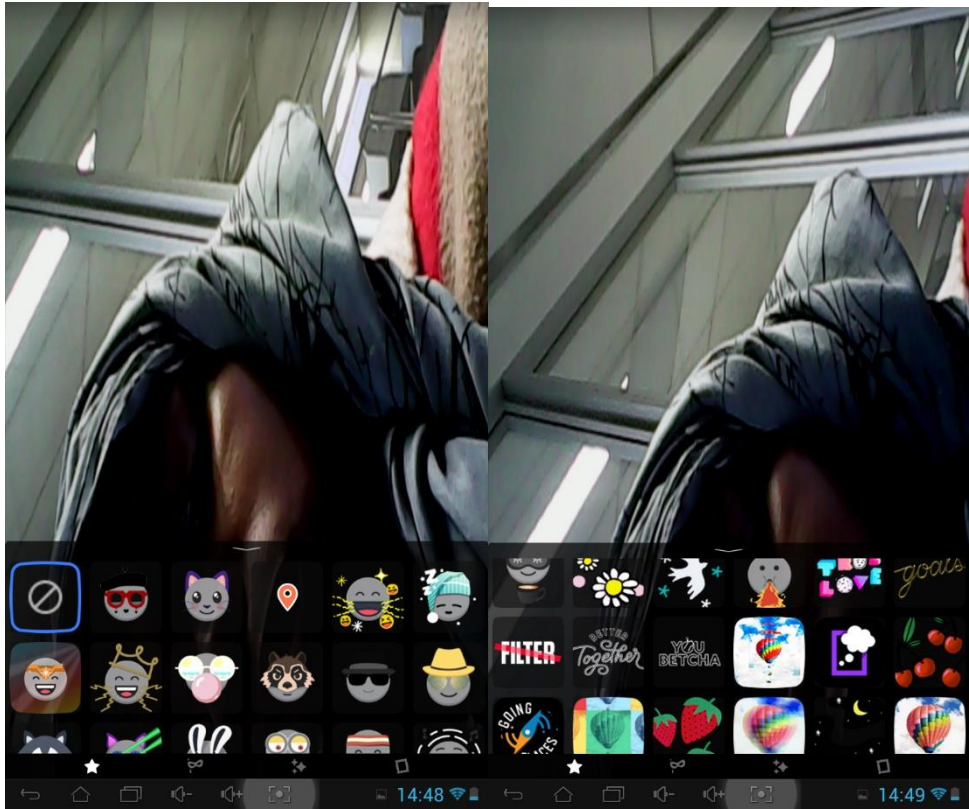
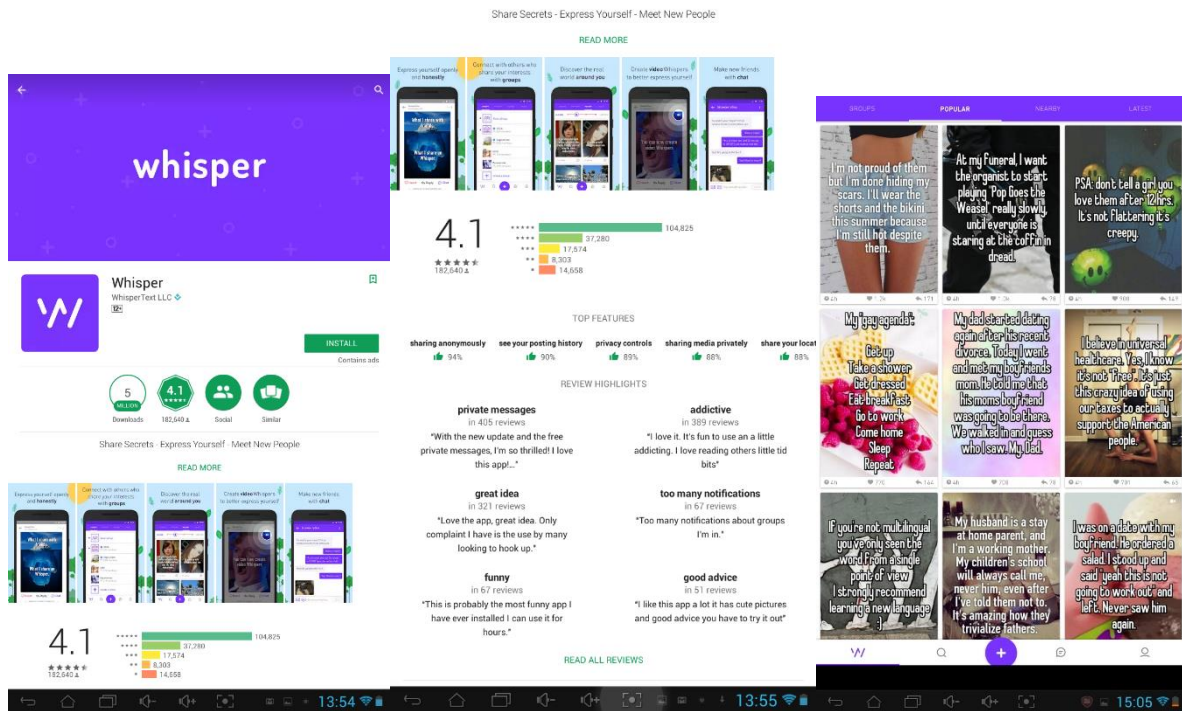




Image 2.7 A screenshot of the Post Secret site

Post Secret is an online community art project where people can send home-made postcards with their secrets on them. It has links to Facebook and Twitter where people can leave comments and share postcards. The site was created by Frank Warren in 2005 (Amazon books). These homemade postcards function in a similar fashion as memes though sometimes without the humorous intention. They add a personal touch to the use of memes. The creation of the postcard can (according to the creator's taste and intention) include cultural symbols and signs, expressive images and words, personal words and drawings, all of which present their emotion within the confession.

The notion of sharing secrets online has spawned an app called Whisper. Though not popular in South Africa it is increasingly gaining popularity. It allows for more personalised intimate issues of individuals to be open for public consumption.



Images 2.8-3.0 Screenshots of the download page and the home page of the Whisper app.

Above is the installation page of the Whisper app including examples of the whispers that may be found there. It functions much like Post secret. Instead of mailing in homemade Secrets - Express postcards, users of the whisper app can create whispers that are given a background either by the app or a picture or video taken by the user. These whispers are then posted on the app.

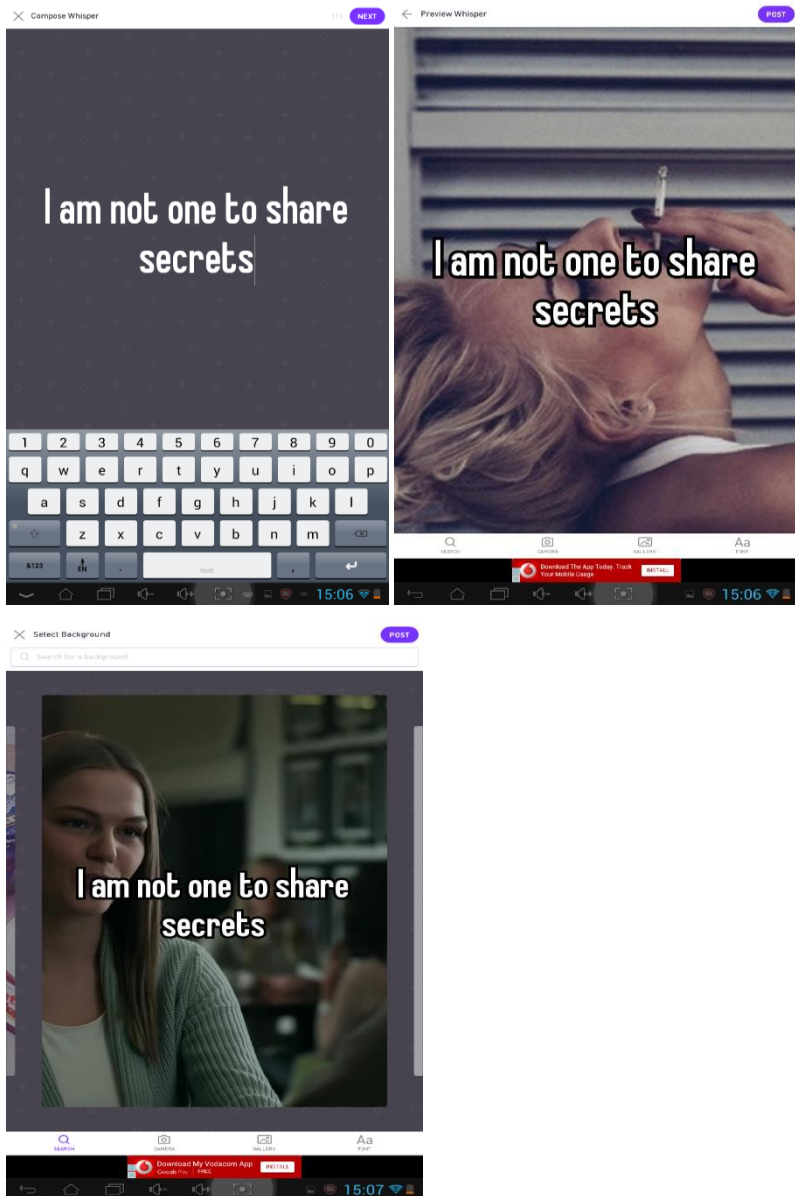


Image 3.1-3.3 Screenshot of my creation of a 'Whisper'

The Whisper app displays one's secrets to an online community, as I have done above. The last image is a still image of a video. The site gives users an anonymity option so that when their secrets are shared or replied to no one would ever know who you are unless if you opt to take a video or picture of yourself as part of the secret. As seen below I have been given the name Corn_Monster.

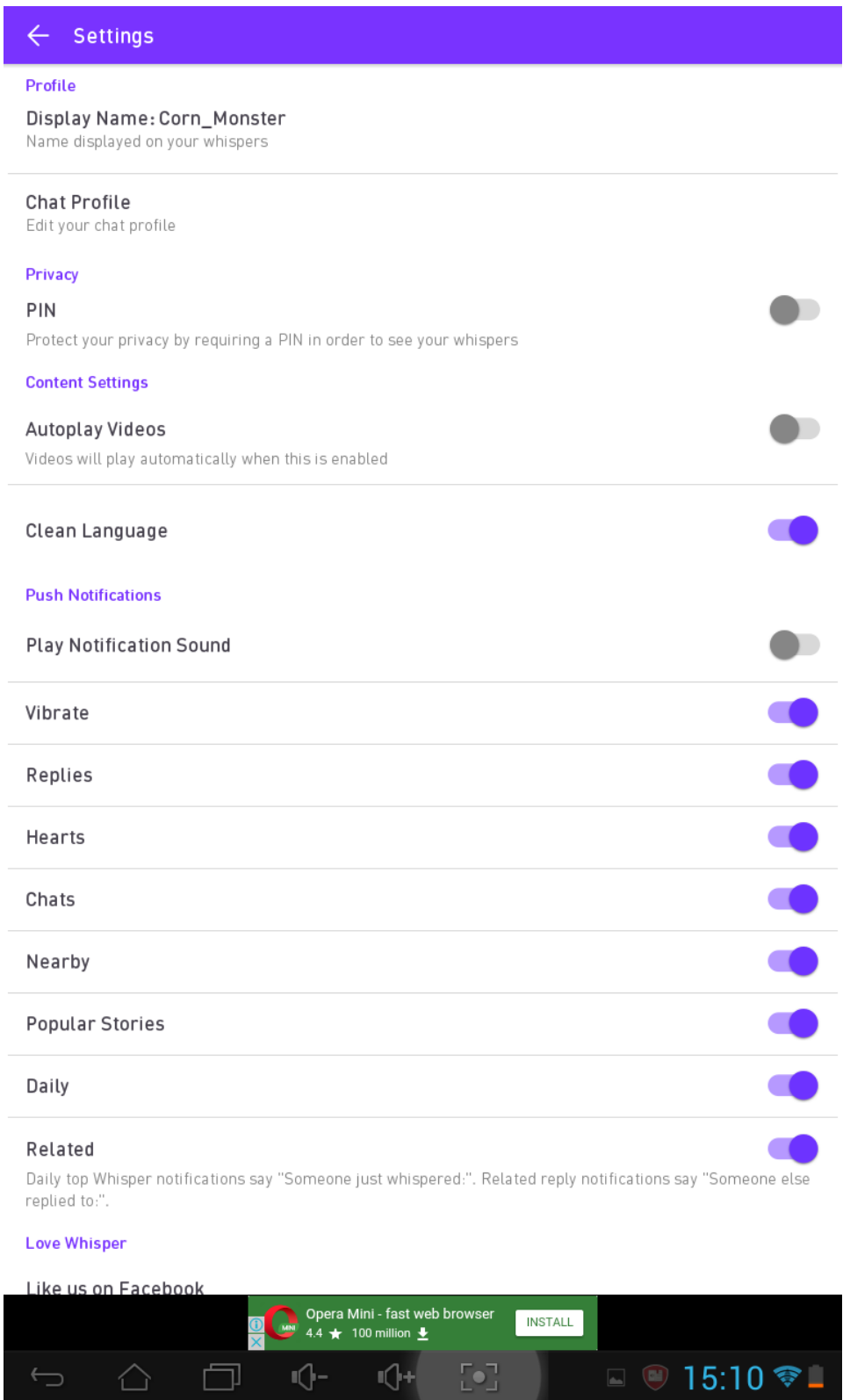


Image 3.4 A screenshot of my profile settings for the Whisper app

Included are the options to chat with other users anonymously, see who is nearby, and even options to hide your secrets using a pin. Any of the open access posts can be shared on Facebook and Twitter (as seen below) as images or videos. In addition

to the functionalities, one can link several social media accounts, essentially allowing for a multimedia, transmedial and intermedial performance of the self.

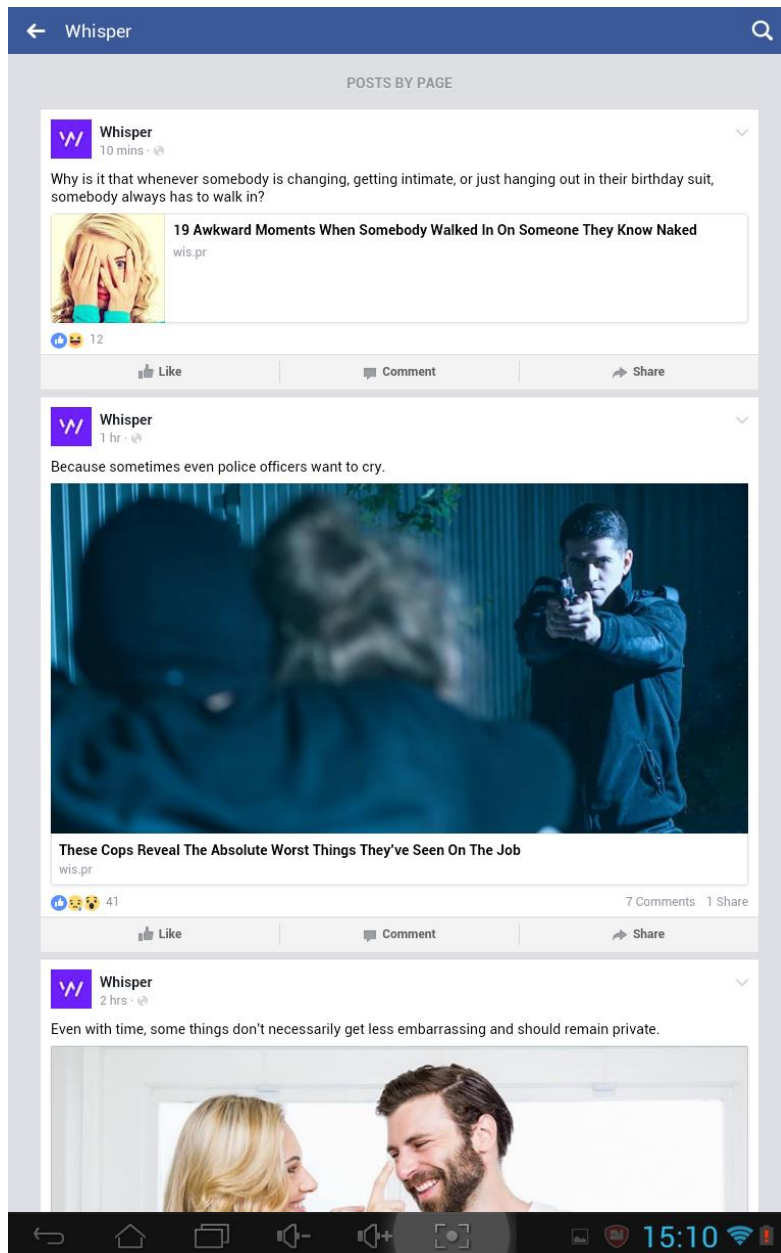


Image 3.5 A screenshot of the Whisper app's Facebook page

The performance of self and expression of confessions online is a broad multimodal field which provides many tools for one to performatively express a confession using one or all of the social media platforms available. I have used only a few examples but there are many platforms, with each providing different tools. It is no wonder then, with the multitude of expressive tools available, that people prefer to go online to expunge their transgressions.

Chapter 5: To war! Using online confession as a performance strategy.

5.1 Understanding the strategy

To start off this chapter I would like to refresh the reader's memory on what performance strategy is. As stated in the introduction, performance strategy may be understood as the position from which activity is set out in order to influence a set of observers towards a pre-determined aim or goal. It is the control or sum of the force relations between the observed and the observer in a demarcated space-time (De Certeau 1984: 36). One may understand performance strategy in terms of inertia. The audience presents a body wanting to sustain its current state of being. The performance represents an unbalanced force that aims to disrupt this state of being. The object is to move the observer to a new state. This may include moving them emotionally, spiritually, intellectually or physically. Therefore, the performance strategy is the specific site of power from which the performance exerts its will to move the audience.

In creating a strategy, what is paramount is to identify the overall goal. This should be considered in special terms; it should look at how one wants the relation between the one exerting will and the other to be. I state: with my confession the aim is to place the reader in a position of reflectiveness, not just of my work, and if it was successful but of their own confessional habits. The secondary aim is a lot more tenuous as it cannot really be conclusively determined. The first aim is of course determined by: (1) how persuasive the reader finds my argument and (2) how well I do in this dissertation. For me to determine if my argument and style (as the two function as one) are persuasive, I have to fulfil the following: (1) producing the study as a valid confession, (2) use of the confessional form and frame as I have explained them, (3) providing enough literature to support my claims and (4) providing a viable strategy model for online confessional performance.

In the study I identified three aspects of my argument on performance strategy; form, frame and power relations. All three are determined by aesthetics specifically using language/sign/symbol as a means of representing content and orienting the eye to create the desired effect. Affect, 'moving' the audience, which is what strategy is about, is achieved by utilising these elements. To distil moments of affect I have used Foucault's notion of a statement, statements that work. The intelligibility of statements

which utilize aesthetics and thereby encompass form, frame and power relations will determine the success of the strategy. The intelligibility of these statements as stated earlier is based on lived experience, ontological knowledge, ethics and the history presented by the performer and interpreted by the audience. The first function of the statement is to establish the performance as a confession. This is found in chapter 1.

The reader may have noted that throughout the confession I do not use the word confession. This is done outside of the performance text of chapter 2. Just as one does not usually refer to the fact that they are confessing while they do it (this study as an obvious exception) so in the performance text it is not mentioned. When one enters a confessional they do not need to explicitly mention that they are about to confess. It is framed not only by the action of entering the confessional but by the confession ritual which is performed. I claim the same for my confession. I symbolically entered the confessional in chapter 1 page 10: "I imagine myself stepping inside... I start my confession:". Furthermore the ritual of confession is adhered to; contrition, confession and satisfaction. This statement determined the behaviour, performance, gestures, and symbols and framed all subsequent statements. As such, the first strategic step is to make a framing statement. This sets out spatial boundaries between the confessant and confessor.

Space and time create the content, form and frame of confession (or any narrative for that matter). Furthermore, they are the operative dimensions in performance strategy, thus they are the tools which are used to create a performance strategy. Strategy is concerned with power and mastery as described by Turner (1987:6) is utilised in strategy formation. This requires an ontological approach.

Confessions operate as a time machine. Confessions break chronology, allowing for the past and the present to take up the same space. The time of the action of confession collides with the action of the narrative of the confession. There is an understanding of the confessant in the present (performative self) and the confessant in the past (constitutive self). These selves exist in the same time frame in the confessional-past and present embodied in one. Confession also functions as a wormhole. It blurs the public and the private sphere. There is no clear 'personal space' or an absolute public as the two are assimilated in the confessional mode. Furthermore, the confession moves the audience from the confessional space to the

place of the action of the confession. This is done through the narrative and the dramatic and theatrical aspects of confession. With regards to space-time, confession acts as a capsule; it has the ability to freeze time and space. It suspends the space-time within the confessional. It is a liminal space suspending the audience in this space-time relation.

The image below depicts the spatial relation of the confessional. If the present is seen as a continuous flow then the confessional operates outside these bounds.

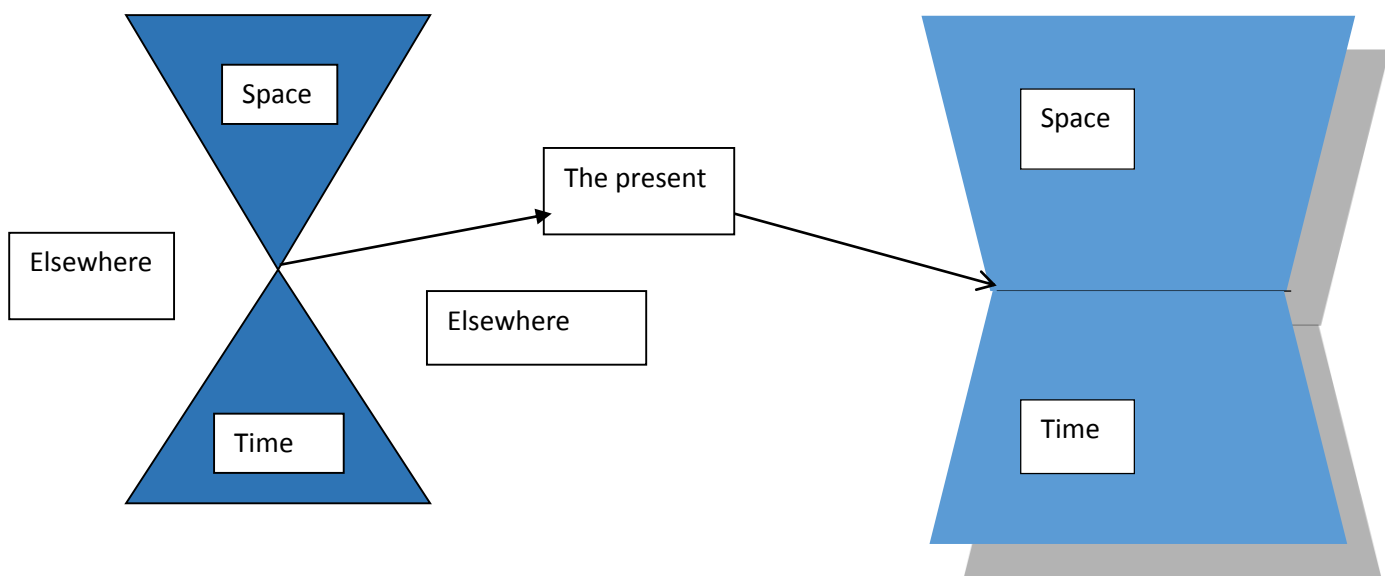


Image 3.6 A diagram explaining the liminal space of confession in relation to space and time.

The point where time and space meet is the present. The confession is situated in the 'elsewhere' apart from time and space. It is able to shift freely between and through both. This functions specifically in the narrative and plot aspects of confession. These elements are made effective through separation. The separation enables space-time to be manipulated to situate the audience where affect can take place. According to Elam (1980: 99), in the construction of dramatic logic and dramatic worlds the spatio-temporal elsewhere must be presented to the audience as present. In confession, the elsewhere is present and the narration needs to be presented as present.

As mastery deals with ontological thought processes I have viewed the power relations in a similar manner:

A relation of force leads to work being done, which is power. So F =force and W =work and P =power using the physics equations for the above:

$$F=ma$$

$$W=Fd$$

$$\text{And } P=W/t$$

$$\text{Therefore } P=Fd/t$$

Where d denotes distance (space) and t denotes time. Therefore power relations are a function of space and time. Simply put, power is used by applying force in order to control space and time. Furthermore if affect is like inertia as stated in the introduction then:

Where I = inertia m =mass and r is the radius (measure of distance in a circle, therefore space)

$$I= mr^3$$

Using the force equation we deduce that $m=F/a$ where m denotes mass and a denotes acceleration (a function of velocity and time, where velocity is a function of distance and time).

$$I= F \times r^3/a$$

This means that affect is also a function of force applied to space and time. So if strategy is the sum of force relations, strategy must deal with control of space and time. The location of a confession in the 'elsewhere' enables force to be applied to space and time where mastery takes place.

In strategizing for a performance, one must then always be aware of the spatial and temporal relation of performer and audience. However, because performance and confession deal with chance and individual influences these aspects are seen as approaching the ontological thought process; always in flux and leaving space for play. Elam (1980: 101) claims that the worlds of logic and abstract are empty constructs, but a fictional world is full. This is the importance of the chance elements of performance and the aspect that leaves space for play. Therefore, a performance

strategy is always in a state of possibility, it is a map where locations may shift and individual determinations are crucial, thus it is an approximation of a map.

5.2 Performance strategy: The approximate map

To that end I propose a strategy for translating my confession in Chapter 2 on to social media. I have specifically chosen Facebook. Facebook is currently the largest social media platform. According to Most Famous social network sites worldwide as of April 2017, ranked by number of active users (2017: [sp])on the Statista website, Facebook has close to 2 billion registered users and over 1 billion users monthly. Not only is its popularity favourable but it allows for links, images, videos, graphics (GIFS), stickers and emoticons to be clearly seen. It is also linked to multiple social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram. These links could be used tactically to incorporate features which are not available on Facebook into one's use of social media. Personally, I also find it the easiest to use and navigate. As the performance text is too long it cannot simply be copied and pasted as a Facebook status update or, it can, but it would be too long and it will not allow for the use of other available social media technologies. I will have to break-up the text into smaller parts. The main strategy is to keep the sections that function as the bulk of the narrative together. They are the narrative through line and as the confession follows, to an extent a continuous narrative. It cannot be too fragmented as it loses intelligibility.

To overcome this I will adopt the method used by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2010 in their online rendition of Romeo and Juliet entitled: Such tweet Sorrow. The plot was presented by a series of tweets (micro blogs) presented by the performers as the characters.

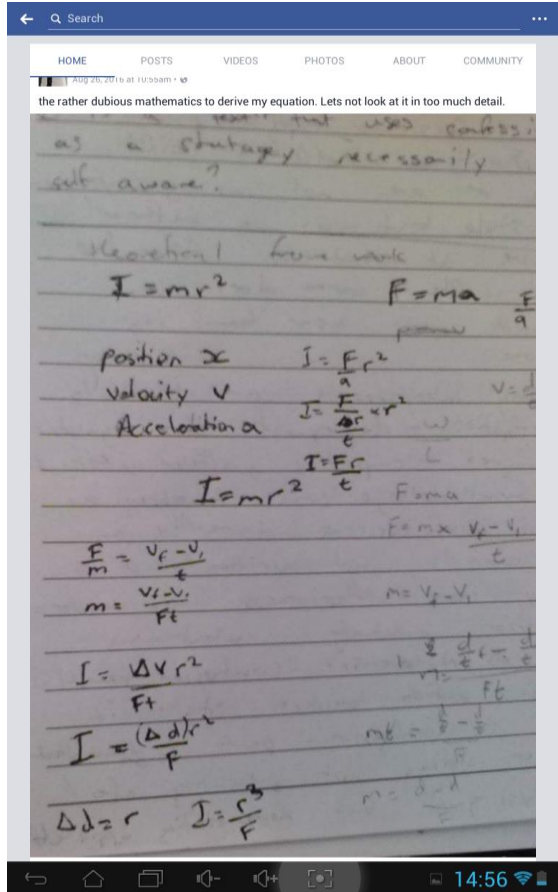


The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter profile for a user named Juliet (@julietcap16). The profile picture is a young woman with brown hair, smiling. The profile information includes: Name: Juliet, Username: @julietcap16, Joined: April 2010, and a button to 'Tweet to Juliet'. Below the profile information, there are statistics: TWEETS 689, FOLLOWING 13, FOLLOWERS 3,646, and LIKES 4. The main content area shows three tweets from Juliet, all dated 12 May 2010. The first tweet reads: 'My sweet, sweet Romeo, my love, my life... upon Rapier's point, I give all of myself to thee. x'. The second tweet reads: 'As my blood leaves my veins, I feel a huge sense of relief. I will be joining you soon my love.' The third tweet reads: 'Next my thigh, though tougher to etch, is thy sheath...'. Each tweet shows engagement metrics like replies, retweets, and likes.

Image 3.7 A screenshot of Juliet Capulet's Twitter feed as created by the Royal Shakespeare company.

Above is a screenshot of the Twitter profile of Juliet Capulet. Other character profiles like the one for Romeo performed a similar function. In my performance there is only one performer, the confessant; me. Instead of using my personal profile I will use a page: a theme-specific mini blog space which has most of the functionalities of a profile and much more.

My first experimentation with a performative Facebook page was in the Master's presentations I did in 2016. It was the time of the #FeesMustFall protests and so the presentations did not happen. I however figured that if my work is about online interaction and performance why not structure the performance as such. Below are images from the page that use text, videos, a meme and a picture that captures the ontological aspects of strategy and a PowerPoint presentation which utilized my recorded voice.



I confess therefore I am
Aug 26, 2016 at 10:54am · 🌐

Further explanations.



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Power is a question of a struggle and contestation. Foucault states that power must be understood as the multiplicities of force relations immanent in the specific discourse they operate in; they constitute its organisation (Chen 1996:311). Foucault maintains that power is an autonomous system; it produces subjects and the subjects reproduce it. The subjects become part of the mechanism of power (McHoul and Grace 1993: 22). Strategy is not merely the manifestation of power but the site of power, made in and through it (De Certeau 1984: 36).

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One may understand performance strategy in terms of inertia. The audience presents a body wanting to sustain its current state of being. The performance represents an unbalanced force that aims to disrupt this state of being. The object is to move the observer to a new state. This may include moving them emotionally, spiritually, intellectually or... [Continue Reading](#)



14:56



Power is a question of a struggle and contestation. Foucault states that power must be understood as the multiplicities of force relations immanent in the specific discourse they operate in; they constitute its organisation (Chen 1996:311). Foucault maintains that power is an autonomous system; it produces subjects and the subjects reproduce it. The subjects become part of the mechanism of power (McHoul and Grace 1993: 22). Strategy is not merely the manifestation of power but the site of power, made in and through it (De Certeau 1984: 36).

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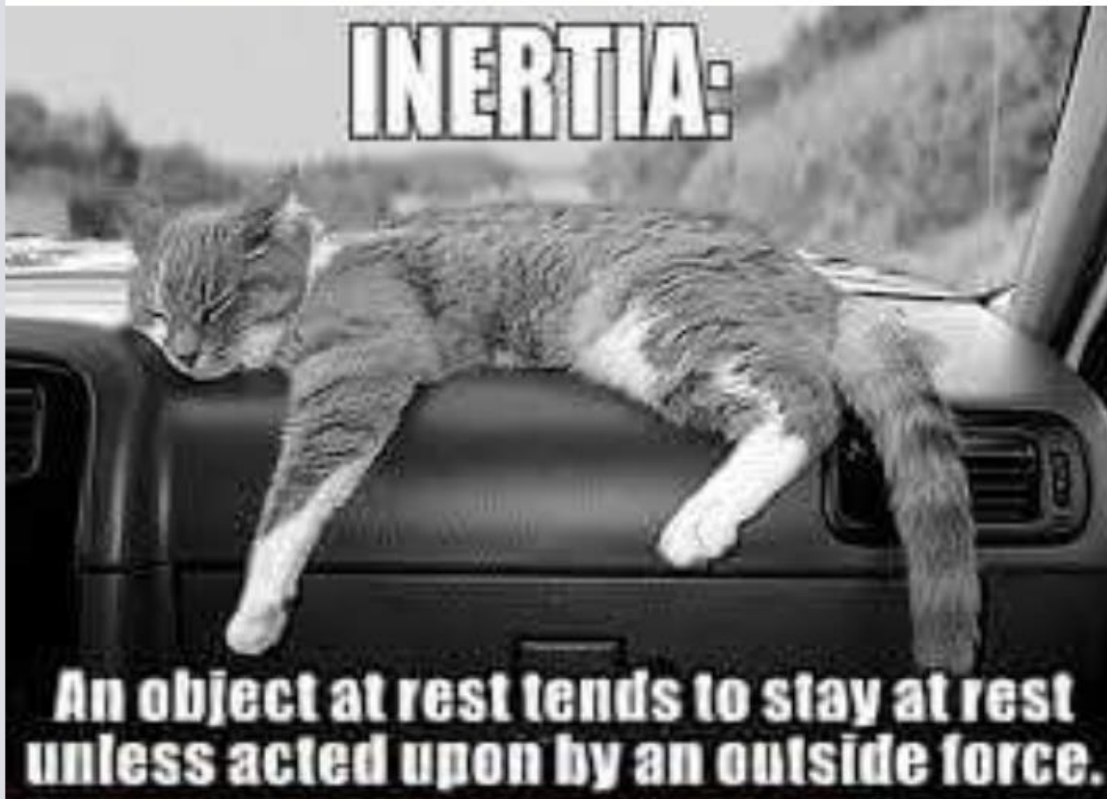
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I confess therefore I am

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One may understand performance strategy in terms of inertia. The audience presents a body wanting to sustain its current state of being. The performance represents an unbalanced force that aims to disrupt this state of being. The object is to move the observer to a new state. This may include moving them emotionally, spiritually, intellectually or... [Continue Reading](#)



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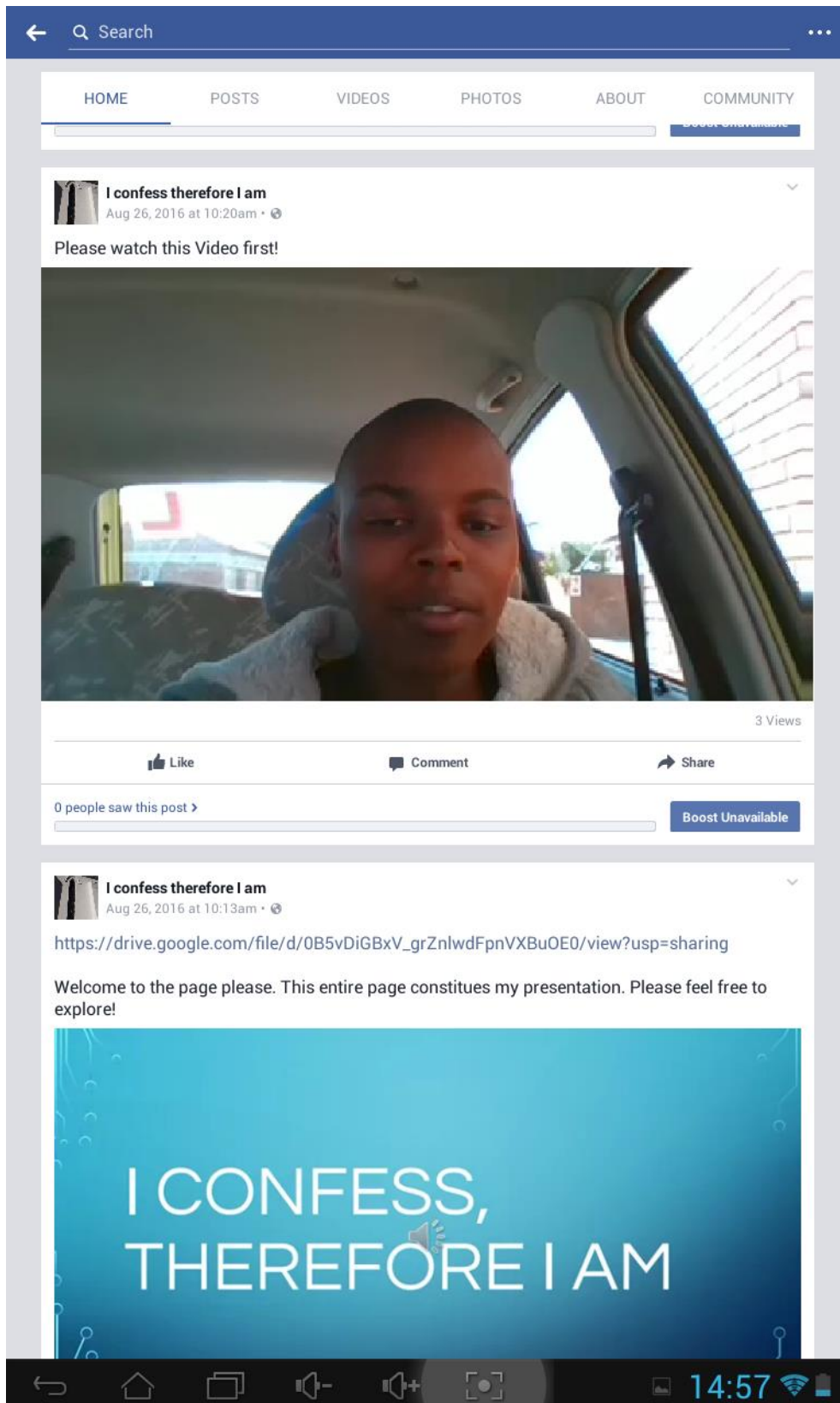
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I confess therefore I am

Aug 26, 2016 at 10:20am •

Please watch this Video first!



Images 3.8-4.1 Screenshots of my Facebook page I confess therefore I am.

As can be seen in the images above, there is a mixture of media to performatively realise the work. Similarly these are some of the tactics one may utilise in the performance of the text in chapter 2 (or any performative text for that matter). In the performative text of Chapter 2 many of the same tactics are used throughout the performance text. As such, I will only use those that provide more input to the strategy. Along with quoting the text, an explanation or depiction of how it may be used is given. In totality the confession is a monologue. As stated in chapter three, this disrupts themes and highlights the identity of the confessant. It exposes structures of identity such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and religion and extends to taste and personal means or choices of expression. It presents an identity in flux, changing even as it is being presented. The effect is a realistic presentation of self that serves to emphasize the authenticity of the confession. In this way, character can be created by carefully selected choices.

In the performance of Chapter two, online the text would be presented in portions on the page cut down so as to not become too long. Most of the tools which are outside Facebook can be added onto the page using hyperlinks which not only have the capability of taking the user to the site but depict the sites' content on Facebook. This allows for the seamless use of multiple sites and tools. The extracts presented are colour coded. Each colour presents a different mode or to be specific social media feature that may be used in the performance of the text:

I arrive at the border. Clearly, that not packing a sweater was a careless mistake. **Parts of the sky are an ominous grey. However the sun provides plenty of light and warmth for the late evening, seemingly sneering at the clouds threat. Unknown to the sun and me, the clouds are plotting with the wind. It is to be a coup of the skies.**

The plan:

To strike when the sun was at its weakest. First the wind will gain strength. Full of moisture it will then proceed to gather and unite all the clouds heavy with rain. The process will probably take all night but by dawn success will be nigh. The sun will wake to discover its rays are impotent on the dark clouds.

The passage is an abstract narrative. This falls into the building form of specifically transformational comedy. I take on the role of third person narrator to depict rather than describe the surrounding. This is a hyperbole which breaks realistic presentation. It shifts the perception of the reader, breaking theatrical illusion and highlighting the

movement in place of a confession. It serves as an alienating device so the confessor reflects on the confession as stipulated in the strategic aim. The violet can be presented as audio narration. This can be posted using different means: as a file, a presentation (as seen in my experiment) or as a link to a social music and sound sharing site like Sound Cloud.

My boyfriend said he will be at *Marasteng*, near Fashion World. Fashion world is situated on Kingsway near the big traffic circle. To its right there is a row of makeshift stalls where one may find a hodgepodge (I like this word, assortment seemed so boring- can anyone say synonyms!?) Of items ranging from shoes, local medicinal herbs to small animal skins; mostly snakes, I think it's also meant to be medicinal. I don't know. To its far left is the pedestrian bridge, in between and below them is the taxi stop *Makhetheng*. I get off the 4 plus 1. If you haven't figured it out, a 4 plus 1 is a cab.

This moment functions as an aside; pulling the audience back to the space of the confessional then rapidly shifting them back into the narrative. This disorienting choice retains a conversational tone and it is a form of forensic confession.

I pay the driver his R5.50 for the trip. Public transport is ridiculously high priced! (an interjection here: the South African transport system which is more expensive and also if might I add rather less reliable than that of Lesotho mostly because of the taxi drivers but let's not get into that).

Here we have a highly performative moment. The interruption is overt and aims to elicit specific emotion while revealing my specific bias. This fragments the work as it points to other thoughts, feelings and concepts outside the confessional space-time.

A skinny rather unkempt- er... boy? No. Man? Also no, umm... guy? Hmm...Ok 'guy' fits better.
A rather unkempt guy walks up to me.

Light blue may be presented as live broadcasts where the contextualizing text is presented in the caption.

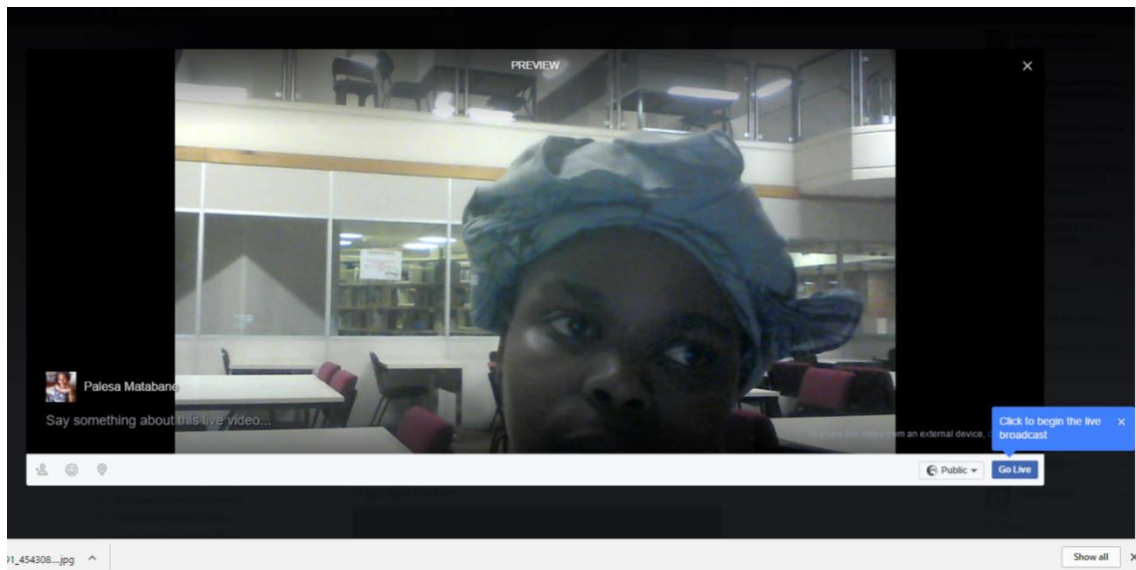


Image 4.2 A screenshot of a potential live broadcast

As seen in the image above, there is a 'Go Live button' and a space to caption the live broadcast. Breaking train of thought provides a sense of one to one relation to the confessor. It is a mimetic strategy. By mimicking spoken word in written word, the false sense of intimacy is reinforced. This places the audience in a space to align with me. Just as words sometimes fail, as the writer I am letting the audience know that I too am human and fallible thus making me relatable. In this way, when socially deviant behaviour is finally admitted, the audience will be inclined to view my actions favourably. The Live presentation of this break has the ability to reinforce these ideas and contribute to embodiment and thereby effectiveness of the text.

...He is of average height and dark skinned, from his eyes I can tell he has been drinking.

"Swiss o re ketlo o lata" He says.

Direct speech presented in the original language gives a sense of specificity. This reinforces the idea that I am confessing truthfully. The use of language is a gesture of difference or similarity (depending on the ethnicity of the audience) between myself and the reader.

If by now you are thinking: 'well this all is rather dodgy', then you would be correct. ...

No one pays much attention to me except for the unkempt young man who I now know is my boyfriend's friend Rico. He is quite touchy feely- **if you don't know what that means you are too old or too young.** Perhaps I should not have let him hug me when we met.

I bump into Chochie, an acquaintance I am on friendly terms with. It's a bit awkward. He is supposed to be hooking me up with a job for the holidays. **(Yes I used the term 'hooking me up'. It's allowed. I am young. Who are you to judge anyways? The literature judicial authority?).** I kissed him once when we were co-stars in a movie. We didn't have a scene together though. I was just in character. No comment on the kiss. He owes me.

Directly referring to the reader disrupts the illusion of separation thus furthering the confessional project. A cavalier tone, which suggests a level of familiarity gained through the process of confession, presents shifts in time. That is to say, it brings the audience back to the 'now' as if they were talking to an acquaintance or a friend. The turquoise would be presented in the form of memes or GIFs.

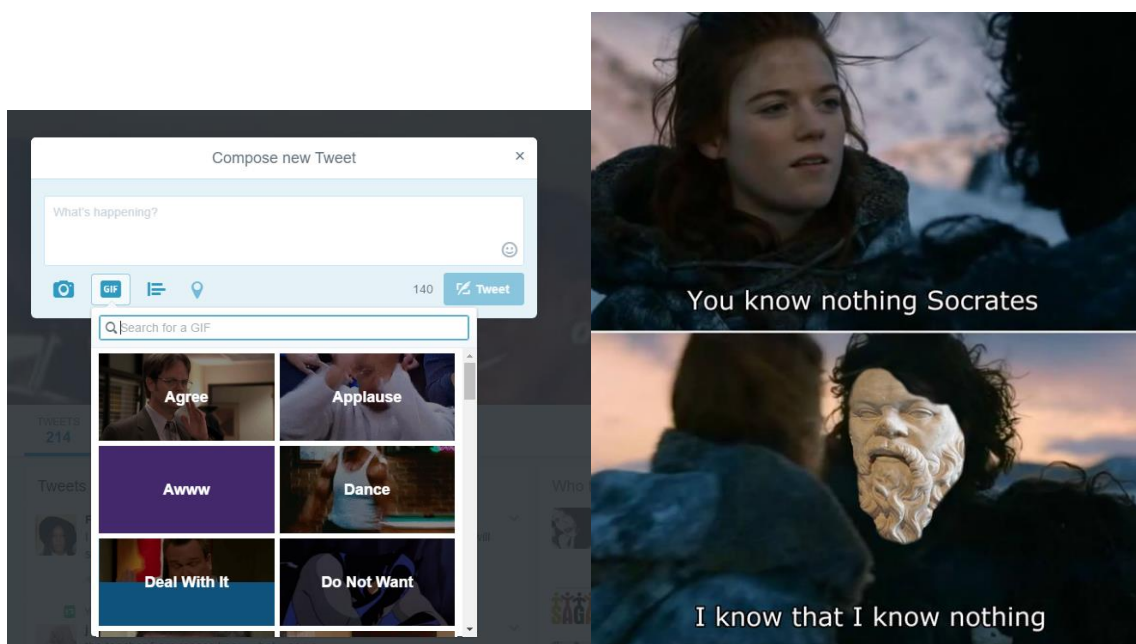


Image 4.3-4.4 A screenshot of an example of potential Twitter GIFs from my feed and a meme from my news feed

The humorous element of both forms works to create the stated effect. The break in continuous text also adds to a sense of shifting. Admittedly I could have used a better meme to illustrate my point but I could not resist this one. It is so funny- if you understand the references in it you should think so too. As memes and GIFs work on pre-knowledge in order for one to comprehend their full effect, they serve as a unifying

or distancing device. There is a risk in their strategic deployment. One may alienate where one sought to create a sense of community.

I have neglected to give a description of my boyfriend. Forgive me I am not willing to give a description.

This statement is the first plea for forgiveness an aspect which Tell(2012:1-4) describes as one of the four factors that make a valid confession. The plea functions as a power monopoly. The confessor is given power by the confessant by claiming to have the power to impart forgiveness if they so wish it. Furthermore, by refusing to provide all the information there is a heightened level of risk surrounding the denied information: a key element in confessional politics.

I put on a pair of sandals and make my way to the outhouse. It has no door. Great! I have two options: pee in my pants or use the outhouse and pray no one sees me. Well, there is no one around and it's pretty early. No harm in doing what must be done.

This aside is intended to give the audience an impression that they are not only privy to my thoughts but that they are also my confidants. The narrative gives the audience the illusion that they are part of my decision making process - present in the time and space of the narrative. This gives them a sense of closer proximity to the confession which is completely removed from their space-time. Pink would be presented in captioned memes or a whisper possibly accompanied by a poll. This provides an increased level of engagement where the result of the poll may add to the audience's view of the performance (my decisions in the narrative) and assist them in making a judgement of the confession. This illusionary sense of agency adds to the confessional power dynamics. The audience of course do not affect the decision I had already made. What could be effective is to run a poll about how wise the decision is or if there is another option. This can spark further engagement thereby adding to the audience's sense of agency.

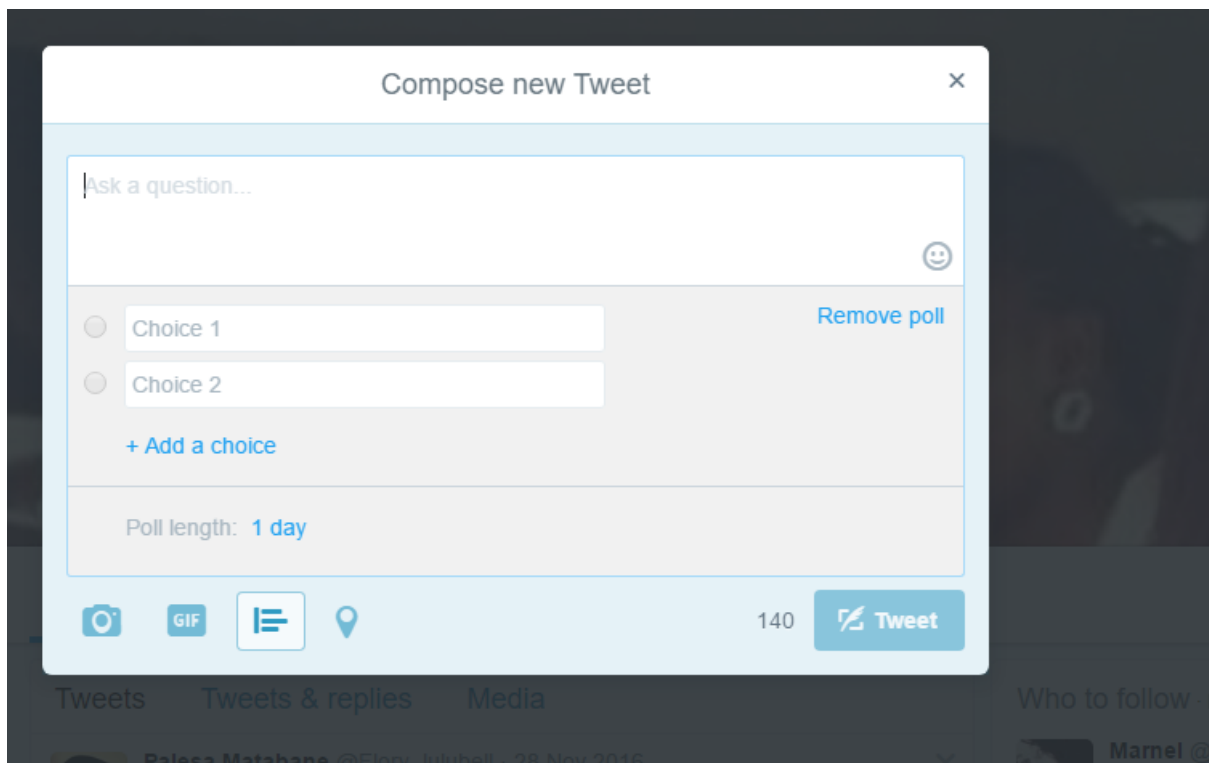


Image 4.5 A screenshot of an empty poll from my Twitter feed.

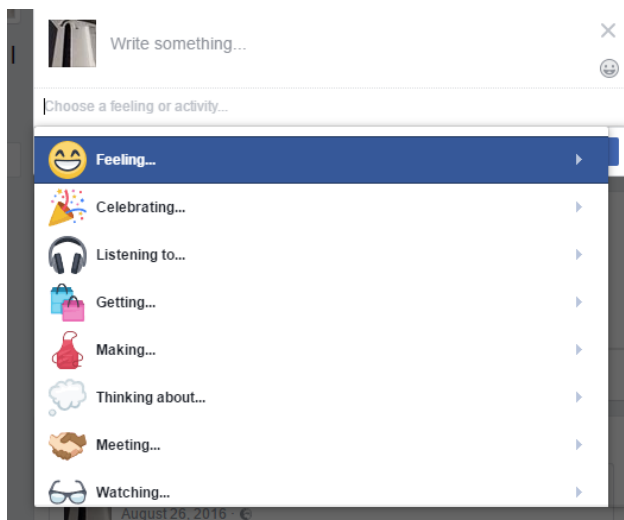
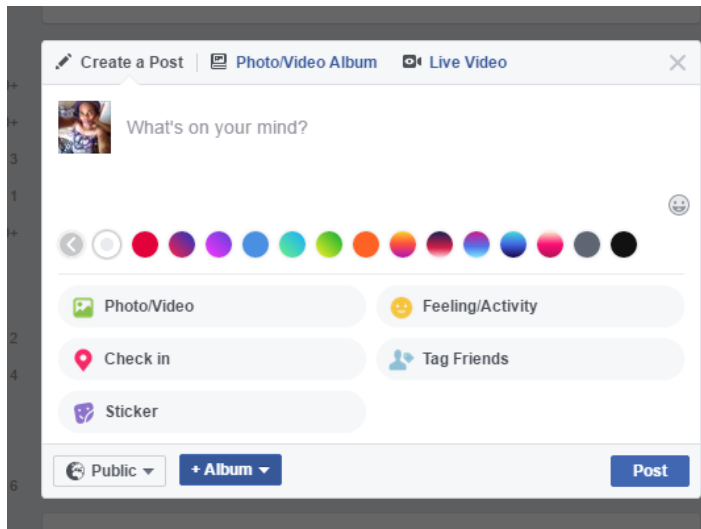
(Now if I may I would like to add here that I have this ability to make myself at home wherever I am, I don't have to be used to a place to fall asleep or to take a dump- I hear some people have this problem; travelling must be a big problem hey? - My ability is a gift and a curse).

With every interjection I make I ensure that I ask the leave of the reader. Through this gesture socially inscribed behaviour is again a means by which power is seemingly given to the confessor. They have no option but to pardon the interjection as they do not control the plot or what will happen in performance. However, this play heightens the sense of dialogical dynamics which place the audience in a position to believe the reality being created; that of a conversation where they have agency.

The man is wearing a black blazer and an orange and white vertical stripes shirt. He has a brush haircut sleeked down giving off an aura of money, he looks clean (I am not saying that this man is not good looking, he is, but he is very clean, squeaky clean)but for the fury.

This statement encompasses multiple tactics used in my performance strategy. What is useful to note here is the use of language. It not only serves as an aesthetic element but a framing one as well. The man being squeaky clean and giving off an aura of money sets his persona up. He is one of the modern day prophets, who in contemporary culture, are known to be making money from their congregants. It also

serves to set up the idea of his moral high ground not only in the situation but in his status. The importance of this lies in the dramatic tension it sets up. My view of this man as being morally superior - set up from cultural expectations and systems in my specific situated reality which is presented to the reader contributes to the internal tensions I present around my belief and my actions, allowing for a cathartic moment at the end of the confession. The dark green would be in the form of text that is accompanied with a sticker or emoticons.



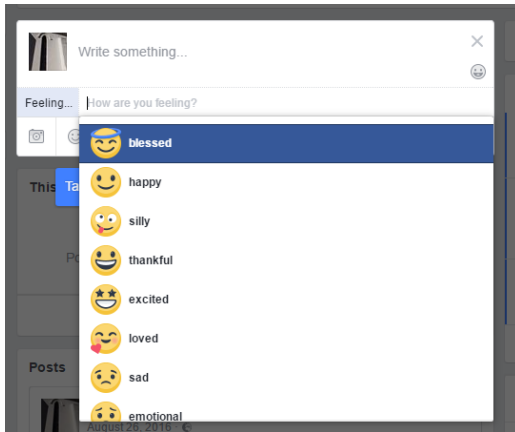


Image 4.6-4.8 Screenshots of examples of Facebook, stickers, emoticons and feelings.

As seen above, images, stickers and emoticons are used to express emotion and activity. In this sense, my feelings towards the situation can be expressed without the use of words. The coloured backgrounds that can accompany these moments (as seen in the first image) can heighten this effect or create shaded and complex emotions by using contrast and juxtaposition. This would require a sense of colour symbolism and semiotics. It would have to assume the cultural context of the audience as different colours hold different symbolic meanings in different cultures. It must also hold true for my own cultural background. If the focus is placed too highly on the audience then the idea of an authentic and, truthful confession is lost.

"Yes." "How do you know them?" "Well I have known one of them for a long while, from when I was in high school." "Pause." "And are you in the habit of doing such things?" "No"...He walks out the room. I can tell he is disgusted with me. I get up and make the bed. When I am done I walk out the room. He is thundering around the house. He is a pseudo Minotaur, half man, half pounds of fuming animal flesh; storming through his territory. I take my things and make myself as small as I can in the living room. He walks in. "Do you have air time?" "Yes I do" I hand him my phone and he calls his brother. He walks out and the conversation is lost to me. Obviously my accommodation here was not properly organized. He walks back in..."Do you come here often?" "You're a good girl; I can tell you are a good girl." "Thank you" I reply, smiling slightly.

Unlike the sections preceding it, this section of direct speech is narrated in English. The importance of this is political. The historical privileging of non-indigenous languages makes this speech stand out, not only stylistically but in terms of importance to the reader. They are provided with a language they can understand at a dramatic moment in the confession as well. This makes it a pivotal conversation, one the audience is likely to remember. To be honest the reason I wrote this conversation in

English was because I could not remember the exact words that David; the prophet; the man who's bed I was discovered in were. It was easier to fabricate the direct speech in English than Sesotho.

He tells me he is a pastor, not only that but a prophet as well, and his name is David. Ok, sorry how many times can this happen in one's life? It's bad enough the man found me in his bed, but he is a man of God too? And knowing what happened in it didn't make me feel too great about myself, and does his name really have to be David? As in: 'A man after God's own heart,' David! I should be mortified.

The style of this interjection is different from the last two. It is far more emotive. This is depicted by the discarding of the gesture of politeness which was so important previously. Furthermore, this interjection is not bracketed by punctuation as with the other two thus making it seem more immediate. This serves to heighten the emotional intensity of the scene. As a statement, it is making the reader aware of the significance of the name David in my specific epistemological and ethical background. If they share these concerns they should be equally mortified. However, if they do not, the frame and set up of the moment makes it clear even if sentiments are not shared. The light green would be presented in pre-recorded videos of myself.

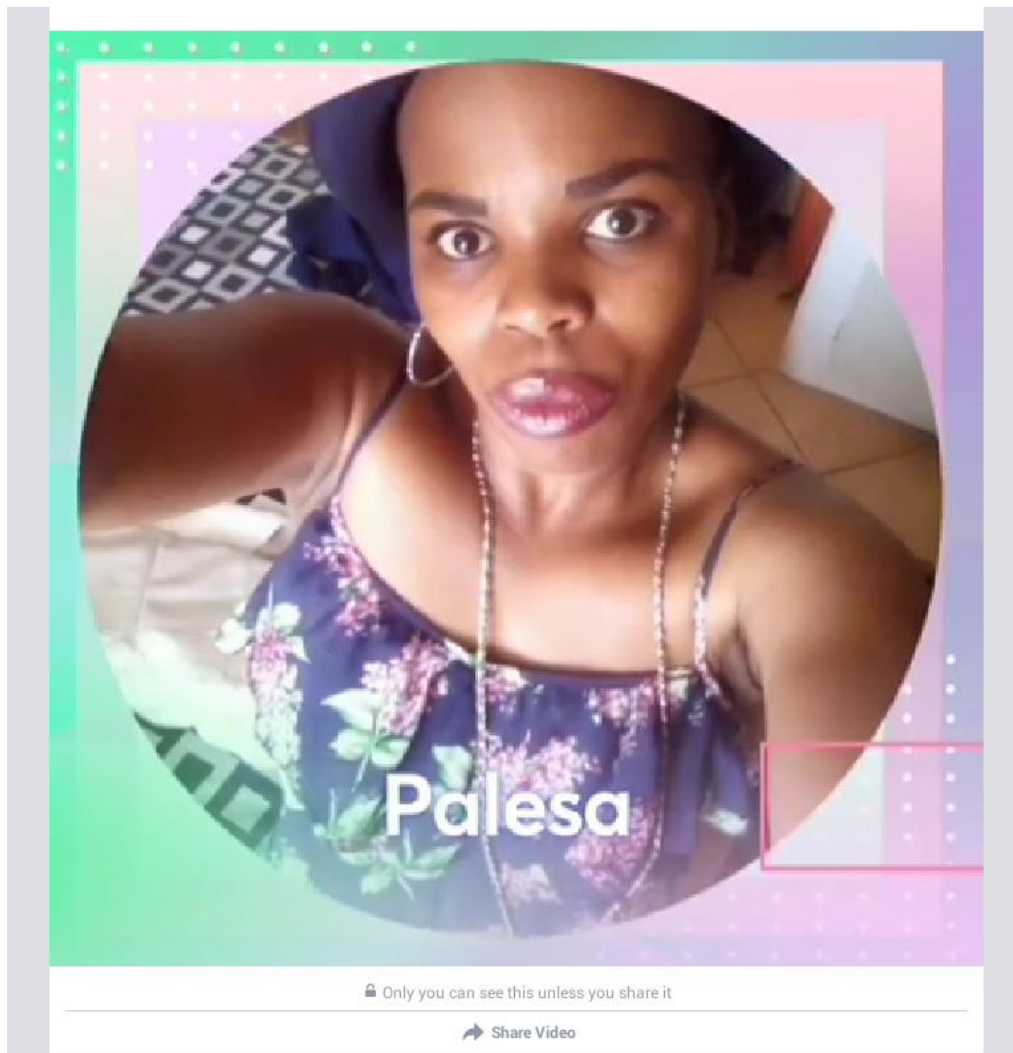


Image 4.9 A screenshot of a Facebook video off my profile

This a form that allows for a great amount of manipulation. As with the screen grab above, the video has been edited to show certain moments and images. Here, carefully selected reactions can be used to maximum effect. These interjections present the performative self in a way that seems very relatable as they are emotional interjections which reveal a lot about my character. The ability to edit these moments would allow for the optimal emotional effect to be achieved.

He prophesies about my life, my parents, and the financial situation at home. Some of it was quite accurate. It's not all sunflowers and daisies though; he says he sees a lot of Satanists around me. – 'Um... ?????? Sorry did you say Satanist?????????' As in Devil worshipers?'Those people makes no sense to me. It's like deciding to eat a piece of shit over a slice of really amazing cake. How do Satanist justify what they do? I don't get it! So if you worship the devil who is God to you? Is he evil to you? My brain does not compute. Logic malfunction!

This break in the train of thought is presented as if I am speaking to David, which I was not. This allows the audience into my private thoughts that are presented as active in the moment. Here, what is most important is the build in dramatic tension which was set up by the frame, subsequent behaviour, gesture and language.

I immediately ask him to talk- he hates it when I say those words to him: 'can we talk?'. His face drops. I push on."Kebatlhokhutlasekolonghonajoale""Butle, joale o reng? Ha o tla moo o no rerilehokutlaneng?"..."Butle."Pause "Re saeaho Rico kehlokahokopana le eena."

The language has shifted back to Sesotho. This frames for the audience that the story has passed the climax. The red would be in video assemblages where images are used to make a video but what is important is the voice over which is the direct speech or in moments presented in a similar fashion.

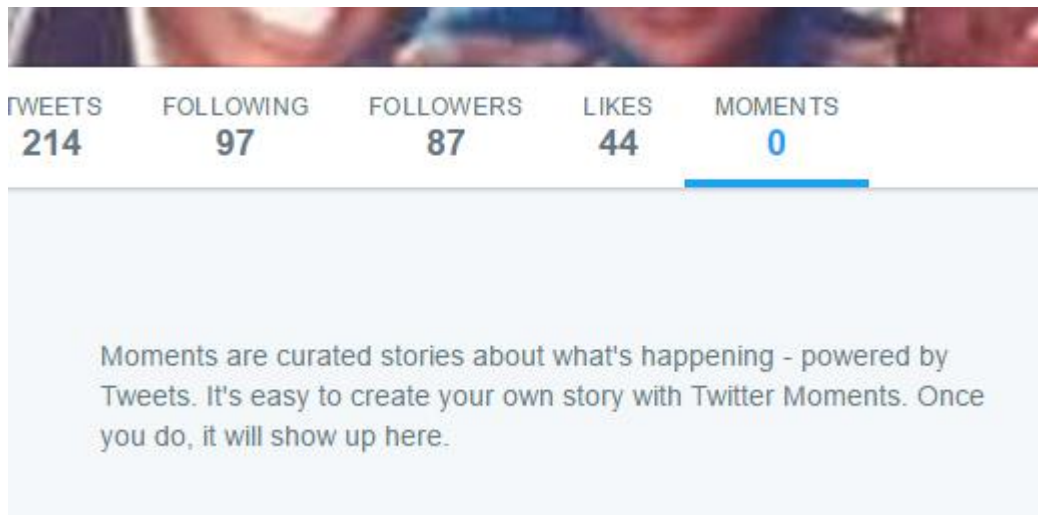


Image 5.0 A screenshot of my Twitter profile displaying the moments function.

As seen above, in order to use the moments function one would have to go onto Twitter. Facebook produces a link to the page where one may access the Twitter content. The break also provides a sense of importance to the direct speech as an incident that happened that conveys emotion, action and carries forward the narrative. The illusion of two or more characters sets it apart from the other forms of expression allowing for an immersion into the reality of the narrative.

I open my bag and take out my wallet; I should have one hundred Rands in there. I open it and it stares back at me as if to say 'did you want something? Oh? Sorry I can't help you.' WTF!!

This presents something that is not seen in conventions of narrative - a third act complication. That is to say, a rise in action after the climax. This presents a more

realistic aspect to the confession. Like life, unexpected turns happen at any given moment. This serves to break theatrical reality but reinforce a 'real world' element, depicting the blurring nature of confession.

At the very least I need to get clean, the day is getting along and it's not right for me to be dirty at the ripe old hour of 10 am (sarcasm doesn't translate well on paper).

A self-aware, self-referential moment which speaks to the post-modernistic nature of the confessional and the writing. This offers the audience an opportunity to see that the writer is aware that they are engaging in a performance. The power of this lies in the discursiveness it suggests. It presents the audience and the performer as being on the same level.

The last two colours, moss green and grey may be presented in the forms of captioned emoticons. They express emotion easily encapsulated in image form. For example:



Image 5.1-5.3 Examples of Emoticons

The choices used in the performance of this text online are not concrete or set in stone but they present a means by which one can map out a strategy to situate the audience in a way that they intend to, hence a performance strategy.

6. Conclusion:

In the practice of writing the confession the plan changed. The shape of the research as set-out in the introduction had to shift as the political motivations came into play. For the praxis of writing to be cohesive and academically comprehensible and acceptable I made the necessary changes. The methodology itself as described is difficult to adhere to. As one reflects, as is the nature of confession, changes are made. Furthermore, using a post-modern assemblage from fragments, writing non-chronologically shifts the methodology of the research. The result is that one is

continually moving forward and backward to progress the research. I am aware that the writing style of this research may not necessarily be unified. This I accept as a consequence of and a depiction of personal progression so that my research may in some way show my growth through it. It is after all my confession: a process. I entered at once someone else and emerge different, transformed and afforded the freedom to change in this liminal ritual.

6.1 Summation

In answering the research question: How can online confessions be used as a performance strategy in a cyber performance? The following summation can be made: confession as a cultural practice is seen as a way of producing truth. According to Givener (1999: 5) the etymological trace of confession is *confessus* which means incontrovertible, certain, beyond a doubt. Just so that when one confesses it is expected that they are divulging the absolute truth. Confession in everyday western pedagogy comes with the understanding that a full confession means a clean soul and the possibility of mitigated sanctions. In this sense, it can also produce guilt (Brooks 2000: 45). Confession equals revelation of sin. It is within itself a punishment, making visible shame, humility, and modesty and proving suffering (Foucault 1988: 42-44). On the other hand, confessions can perform innocence through the admission of absolute fault (Heddon 2006: 21-22). This relation to truth, innocence and guilt positions confession as a powerful tool for control. The elusion to transparency which can lead to better social standing means that as a tool for perception it can be deployed strategically. Confession or disclosure allows for reconceptualization or cognitive changes as experiences are shared from different viewpoints (Heddon et al 2012 :25) further situating it as an effective means of control.

Power relations determine the status of language (Ivanic 1998:118). Dominant social groups determine how people and things are described. This affects how people speak to each other and it determines what is seen as appropriate and normal. This decides what can be included in different discourses; those who do not use the right language in the right situation do not get to decide what constitutes that discourse. Similarly, language shapes social practice. This is subject to change constantly, adjusting to social pressures. These changes can result in language variants or lingo. Confession has the ability to resist dominant narratives (Heddon 2006: 4). As such, using confessional language can change how an action is perceived. “[T]he good

language user understands how language is shaped by social forces and in turn affects other people” (Ivanic 1998:119). Similarly, the good confessant can shape a narrative to produce desired effects, producing a springboard for new language variants and cultural narratives. Confession provides an opportunity to craft a tale, “to deliberately select, order, edit and perform” ; it is “making up stories to make sense of the world” as a response to lived experience (Heddon 2006: 24-25). It therefore shapes the lived experience.

Context (that is, place and mode) makes all the difference when it comes to confession. This includes the knowingness of the spectators (Heddon 2006: 8). The multiple places one can confess and the different types of self-speaking make containing them all in the ‘confessional’ problematic (Davey 2008: 8). Adopting the desired position of both confessor and confessant is important. “Our culture is saturated with confessional opportunities, ranging from “Reality TV” and internet blogs to social networking sites such as Facebook” (Heddon and Howells 2011: 1). There is a contemporary appetite to confess and consume confession (Heddon 2006: 2). As such, the strategic implementation of the myriad of confessional texts determines its success. There is also an achievement of the perception of being confessional rather than merely autobiographical. The confessional provides an ‘elsewhere of political public discourse...’ - a haven for ‘the damaged humanity of mass society’ (Heddon and Zerihan 2012: 16). As a space, the confessional must provide a sense of freedom and transformation in order for it to be viewed as effective or appropriate.

Confessional performance is a way of becoming, amplified by ritual which can be liberating, changing relations between the self and the world and making more real one’s experiences (Driver 1991[sp]). In the interpretation of autobiographical fragments, one is aware that only certain types of stories need to be told in each narrative locale. As such, the ‘good’ audience: aware of performance and theatre conventions (Heddon and Zerihan 2012: 9-11) is instrumental in determining the appropriateness of confession. Moreover, the audience works with the performer to create the confessional space. Heddon and Howell (2011: 4) confirm what Bauman (2001: 125) suggests to be a gesture of openness which encourages disclosure. In confession, this is heightened by the use of familiarity, a sense of privacy, frequency and security. The audience must accept the cues given by the performer (Goffman 1969: 51) in order to engage the confessional sphere. These cues are linguistically and

aesthetically realized. "In a world of inter-racial and inter-ethnic conflict , global inequities and injustices we might live together better. Performances of intimacy in their very staging seem to demand performances of trust, mutual responsibility, mutual openness and mutual receptiveness... being as being-together" (Heddon and Zerihan 2012: 13) - a remapping of a space (through event) in order to achieve the desired effect. The event is led and shaped by the performer, making careful consideration of essential tools.

However, in confessional performance, there is always an element of chance due to varied audience reactions (Heddon and Howells 2011: 5). A further layer is added to this as the confessional exchange positions the performer as a spectator as well. Both parties engage in a subjective dialectical exchange (Heddon and Zerihan 2012: 3). The confessant watches, sets up the event and watches the cues from the audience in order to determine if the confession is appropriate. The confessant then decides how to make the confession in order to suit the context of the confessor. In pre-set instances like reality TV, an understanding of the desired audience is necessary in order to make meaningful confessions. It can be concluded that confession represents a competition of the versions of the self. Ultimately confession is a strategy of getting the audience to actively identify or know the performer (Heddon 2006: 12-14) through their participation in the creation of the confessional space.

In the interactive medium of the internet, participation becomes more evident. Here the event, cues and narratives set up by the performer need to take on a more flexible shape. The confession provides this by having set narrative pillars, which is the ritual of confession: transgression, contrition, relaying and transcendence. There is a politics to participation ; historical and cultural constructs which facilitate the easy adoption of ready-made narrative templates set up by culturally designated biases are a viable strategy (Heddon and Zerihan 2012: 22). This could be due to the fact that audiences do not have to focus too much on both the narrative and the dynamics of participation. In the interactive realm of cyberspace with masses of information, streamlining makes performances easier to consume.

This is not to say that one cannot deviate in order to implement strategy. For example, when one disrupts confessional conventions uncertainty is created. This adds more to the confessional personae: the performed and the non-performing self, making them

seem more real. Conventions can also be used to create parody by layering cultural symbols, stereotypes and identity politics (Heddon 2006: 8-12). The refusal to disclose all in confession can be a strategy, as it makes the audience wonder, forcing them to fill in the gaps. It encodes distance, disruption and warning; it increases the level of perceived risk (Heddon 2006: 16-17). In confessional performance, there is a strong aspect of intimacy, an element of transaction and transformation. Confessional performance in this sense is an exchange (Heddon and Howells 2011: 1-2) ; frankness for and abdication of power. It is to be understood that intimacy does not equal closeness or safety for the confessor thus causing a sense of vulnerability in the audience who may feel exposed (Heddon and Zerihan 2012: 22). A number of strategies may be used to heighten different effects of confession. Used in conjunction with the medium of performance, confessional performance can be used to greatly affect audiences.

6.2 Evaluation

The web has become a key platform for performance. A new proscenium as it were. It affords new modes of expression and creation of interactive genres. Further it is the subject of, and a vital dissemination space for research. The creative multidisciplinary performance and research space allows for new theories and methodologies to emerge. The most important contribution technology has made to art is arguably the improvement and reconfiguration of an aesthetic creative potential of interacting with and reacting to the physical body. It creates tension filled liminal spaces of physical and virtual interface, allowing for opportunities in new experimental forms and practices (Dixson 2011: 41-43). Dixson (2011: 55) argues that, with digital interactive performance research, the researcher faces new challenges and demands even if the researcher deploys the use of traditional literature review. However, he suggests that narrative arcs and dramatic progression are still maintained for coherence in performance. This I think is what allows for a performance as well as linguistic and narrative analysis to happen even if the interactive space intrudes on time and space.

Performance works where computer and internet technologies play an essential role when it comes to content, techniques, aesthetics, creation or delivery of the performance (Dixson 2007: 3), then online performance is a form of performance which brings together performers to near and remote audiences (Jamieson 2008: 91); where the audience may interact in both real and virtual realms (Giannachi 2004: 19). Online

performance is live/ly. Performers and audience members may be present in the same moment when the performance takes place. The work may be or it may contain pre-recorded elements such as: audio, video, animation and scripting. These elements can be combined and presented as a performance in real-time. As well as being live/ly, online performance is: playful, dynamic, responsive and energetic (Jameison 2008: 33). It is all performances that take place on the cyberstage. One may use this definition to evaluate the study as a proposal for online performance. Below I have also compared my proposed performance to the Whatsapp performance *Uk'shona Kwelanga* and to a lesser extent *Such Tweet Sorrow*. *Uk'shona Kwelanga* is significant in that it is a social media performance. It is the first of its kind in South Africa. As a researcher and theatre maker in South Africa it intrigued me. It offers me an opportunity to compare my work to similar endeavours in my geographical and cultural context. *Such Tweet Sorrow* as a work that preceded my research provides insight and inspiration.



Image 5.4 The cover image for the Whatsapp drama series Uk'shona Kwelanga

Image 5.4 is a poster of a drama series which uses the social media instant messaging application Whatsapp as its medium of broadcast. I registered, in a manner of speaking, to 'view' this series. I was struck by the lack of interaction it afforded its

audience and the limited use of the tools available on the application. This series which is presented by Sanlam is a means of marketing their funeral cover by telling the story of the Langa family after the death of the family head, Bab'Langa. It gives you a glimpse; a fly on the wall point of view, into what the creators want you to feel as members of a Whatsapp family group as they try to organise Bab'Langa's funeral. Instead of being part of the group I witnessed the family drama from the outside. This for me was a failure in performance since Whatsapp is an instant messaging medium which affords instant connection and multiple chatting capability. For the first three days the creators used text and images only. It was evident that these performance fragments were sent by the creators and not the characters as they came from one source and not multiple sources as would happen in a Whatsapp group.

Later on, audio and video elements were added, still coming from one source. This did little to help me buy into the world that the creators were trying to sell to me, especially as someone who is a regular Whatsapp user. *Uk'shona Kwelanga* could have easily been a series of adverts or a mini-series on TV. The Whatsapp series combined voice notes, pictures and videos but elements which create a sense of connectedness like on most Whatsapp groups was missing. The exclusion of the audience had an alienating effect, which for me, created a disconnect with the story and its characters. I suppose for the sake of administration and control they had to make it a one-way relation. This for me defeats the purpose of using a social media platform. Unlike *Such Tweet Sorrow* where the audience could interact with the characters and become part of the narrative *Uk'shona Kwelanga* was simply a retelling of a story I could have watched on TV.

This performance I think exemplifies that, with online performance, what matters is not only use of technology but how the technology is used in a manner which audiences recognise and can relate to. What is also important is the ways in which the administrators themselves use these tools to add to the believability of the world of the performance. I discovered this performance toward the end of my research but it served to prove that I am on the right track. In a realistic representation of the world on social media, one must make the performance seamless as if the audience themselves are in control by not ignoring or preventing interaction. I tried to intervene in the performance by sending a message to the number I had signed up to but I did not get a reply. According to Skade (2017: [sp]), the writer admitted that she

approached the writing of this story as if she were writing for television. I am of the opinion that, if creators and writers set up clear rules of how the group would work, it would have opened up the performance and still be manageable and economically viable. This performance did not use instant messaging as a strategy; a method which I propose in this research, as a means of achieving effective online confession strategy.

An evaluation of my research using *Such Tweet Sorrow* and *Uk'shona Kwelanga* as benchmarks, I would conclude that my proposal of possible ways to use online confession as a performance strategy is to a large extent successful because:

- Confession though dialectical is not dialogical so the narrative is set and even with heightened audience reaction cannot be altered as it depicts personal past events.
- Elements of interaction are afforded the audience without compromising the narrative.
- The means by which the chosen social media platform can or may be used is not compromised.
- All interactions can be found in a central place, making it user friendly and easier to navigate and keep up with the narrative presented.
- Management risks and considerations are minimised as there are no limits to how many people can like or follow a page and access it. Furthermore, one does not necessarily have to manage all the people who access the page as interaction does not disturb flow.

However:

- The technology was not necessarily used to create content.
- The real life interaction is minimal.
- There is little room for the audience to become part of the narrative.

In working with the expanding and multimodal medium of the internet there are myriad possible ways of creating desired affect. Even as I worked on the research I discovered new tools on different social media sites and at times I was overwhelmed by the possible ways I could use them. Careful selection of tools works in tandem with strategy. So for the purpose of the study I limited myself to tools which I am more familiar with, which do not require a coder or someone who is technologically savvy to

create or operate. There are I think other possible trajectories of study which the work could have taken. I was very clear to distinguish the strategy as happening online. This however does not mean that there could not be correlation between 'real' world performance and online performance. In such instances and even in my work, issues of liveness or lively-ness may be addressed as a factor in strategy in relation to audience perceptions and interaction. The work continually mentions time and space but it does not delve into the conceptual and theoretical conceptions of both. Deeper interrogation of both may lead to new conceptions of strategic implementation of online technologies. A fair consideration could also be, asking what would happen if the parameter of confession is removed. What strategies may be derived from looking at other narrative forms and devices in the online platform?

I must at this point make one final confession. I do not think that this work is in the least anywhere near complete or explored fully in the form I have presented it. I wonder often if I could not have done this research online, fully embodying as it were the suggestions I have made. Would not then the work resonate more? I will admit that if I had tried this at the beginning, the work would not be what it is now, more thought out, more academically acceptable. For now I am content to let this text: words and images on paper be my confessional.

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