Navigating Whiteness to Re/Voice a Transculturate Call-and-Response Pedagogy for Actor Training in Higher Education: An Autoethnography

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By

Julie Spencer

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ABSTRACT

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There has been scant research undertaken that considers the student's culture as an invaluable source of imagination and creativity in UK Higher Education actor training courses. Instead, there is an assumption that acting teaching practices are universal. This privileged assumption propagates hegemonic teaching practices driven by cultural racism and protected by neoliberalism, which has an impact on the authenticity of an acting student's embodied learning and knowledge. In my thesis I challenge the established norm, to explore how we can practically action inclusivity by finding space and time for an equitable platform of embodied learning and embodied knowledge. I used an autoethnographic methodology underpinned with Critical Race Theory to Re/Voice a counternarrative, disrupting and navigating the Whiteness that permeates educational research. Lorde (1984) states "poetry coins the language to express and charter a radical demand" (1984:38), therefore throughout the thesis I invite the reader into the experience of a Black researching professional's decolonising journey as I Re/Voice my double consciousness to theoretically and practically interconnect African oral tradition with Transculturation to offer an alternative way to *how* we teach actor training. This approach opened up a transformative space, specifically rooted in time: historic specificity and artistic originality, to Re/Voice the lived experience and perceptions of thirty-three BA Acting students who self-identify 58% diversity in relation to their cultural backgrounds and heritages. Over their first year of training, questionnaires, observations during my teaching sessions and semi-structured interviews were interpreted verbatim as Re/Voiced poetic calls, ready for the student response to explicitly stimulate a creative cultural awareness through an innovative pedagogy I have termed *Transculturate Call-and-Response*. The findings indicate that if actor training is about

students bringing themselves to the work to embody the training, then the cultural particularities, cultural references and cultural knowledge embedded within all students must be authentically and explicitly acknowledged as the dialogical starting point in reimagining what contemporary, inclusive actor training can be.

DECLARATION

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This thesis is my own work and has not previously submitted for an award at any institution. I certify that the content of the thesis is legally allowable under copyright legislation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

I am listening to the radio in April 2021 about Black and Brown soldiers who fought and died in World Wars I and II being written out of the historical accounts and refused decent burials. The British Government at the time declared that their bodies should be 'given back to nature'. I listen to a descendant of a Jamaican family poignantly retell the journey to finding where their great, great uncle is buried. The presenter asks how she knew about her uncle because there is no historical account of him. "Oral history", she responds, "it was passed down in the family, I knew my uncle existed, he was a part of me, but there was nothing officially recorded… they just forgot him" (*David Lammy Show* LBC 24.4.21). The item on the radio resonates with me. I am crying, I am angry. I am of Jamaican descent too. My own grandfather fought in World War II, and subsequently died, a decade later, of the injuries he suffered in the war. His contribution un-recorded, except for the oral stories passed down about him 'saving the lives of three White soldiers' during a German/Italian offensive. My father never recovered from his father's untimely death, nor the fact that his father had fought in a war that had conveniently written him out of history. My Gran never recovered from her husband's death, her *childhood sweetheart,* left bereft in poverty with ten children.

We are born into historical narratives: narratives that we rely on for our identities and that rely on us to maintain them. We are informed and formed by these narratives. Autoethnography, outlined by Reed-Danahay (1997) is "a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context" (1997:6). Chang (2008) contends autoethnography engages the individual in cultural analysis and interpretation. Therefore, autoethnographers "reflexively explore their personal experiences and their interactions with others as a way of achieving wider cultural, political or social understanding" (Pace 2012:2). As a methodology, Starr (2010) argues autoethnography draws on Freire's (1996b) concept of *conscientization.* Its cornerstone principle is to end the culture of silence of the oppressed in education by examining and acting on the root causes of oppression as experienced in the here and now. Additionally, Marx's (1843) theoretical writings on being *radical* argues, "to be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself" (1843: para 30). Consequently, autoethnography is transformational as it paves the

way to grasp things at the root of my research domain to forge an ongoing spherical process of critical reflection, theory, and action.

Who am I?

This study emerged from my researching professional journey in academia as a Black working-class female who has routinely suffered and confronted racism in education on all levels: institutional, cultural, epistemological and personal (Collins-Hill 1986; Ladson-Billings 2005; Heim 2013). I capitalise Black to clearly identify my position as part of the African/Caribbean diaspora. Lowercase 'b' would refer solely to colour. Currently, I am Interim Principal and Director of the School of Acting at a leading Conservatoire, one of very few Black people in academia who occupy a seat at senior level in the domain of actor training. However, in reality, despite my insider position I remain an outsider from a marginalised group. I am an 'outsider-within' (Collins-Hill 2000) who has experienced the educational environment within a racist colonised framework, adopting a coping mechanism of double consciousness (DuBois 1903,1999) to survive. Double consciousness is explained by DuBois (1903) as "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others… there is a creation of a 'second self'" (1903:2). Assuming this stance, in part, allowed me as a Black person, to achieve and maintain an outwardly impression of having some control.

However, there are varying degrees of an embodied internal struggle to reunite a diasporic history and any possible racial trauma experienced. To fully understand the operation of double consciousness, I engage in the autoethnographic process to what I term as Re/Voicing, which opens up opportunities to "becoming aware of one's position and creating a space to change the perception of the resultant reality" (Tilley-Lubbs 2016:1). Locating myself within my own history and culture and recognising that I am interpreting the 'resultant reality' through cultural perspectives "formed through years of sociocultural, socio-historical, socio-political, and socioeconomic events and circumstances" (Tilley-Lubbs 2016:3). By Re/Voicing

my double consciousness, agency, praxis, and critical consciousness are embodied within a decolonised autoethnographic approach to acknowledging and positioning myself subjectively and authentically in the research. I wish the reader to follow my research journey, with the understanding that it cannot be separated from engaging with the evocative and transformative reality I experience(d).

Re/Voicing
Morning glory, cries, six fingers, nineteen sixty-five, me barn
One look, me twin says goodbye, an garn
So, long
Fartha absconded ambition fi his agony ofa affliction
Motha walk-on ina withdrawn watery decomposition
Brotha fixation downgraded freedom fi incarceration
Is my mission
Arendt's human condition?
Stranglehold ona nine-year-old
Double start, get set, DuBois
Opening the outbursts in dis memoir
Ya tink I'm angry, label me facesty
I'm not angry, I was hungry, hungry
Greedy to assimilate off de plate of my motha country
Knowing too soon dat I was missing de silvery spoon
Cleaning the floor with folklore, moon dreams in curiousness
My only crime was always Poorness
      One ting ness, someting ness, Everyting & Nothingness
      My only crime is always being Researchless
      Cos Ivory Tower makes me one thing less.

Hair twisted an' plaited ina neat cornrows
Torn skirt second-hand pleated with tiny likkle bows
To School
A smile to teacha who shoulda learn me betta
Call me Jungle Bunny, 'sit down honey', chil'drun tink it's funny
My body twists with rage, I kick out mad ona rampage
Made me suffer?
Baptised me Said's 'Other'
Never ending hostility
And Audre's words, Lorde lost in spiritual captivity
Rendered solidifying my childhood voiceless
Ya tink I demand ta much, Label me a Social Crutch
I'm not too much, B.A.M.E ya branded me such
To walk de plank of de scholar ship
Within dese lexicon parapets so long as I "shut up me lip!"
Belly aches. Sentenced to swallow de pill of misplacedness
My only crime was always Blackness
      One ting ness, someting ness, Everyting & Nothingness

My only crime is always being Researchless
Cos Ivory Tower makes me one thing less.

Memory of one hand, creamy pale Grandma
Softness Strokes my Nubian patina
Too brief
Gaelic leaves. Sweet breath dead feeds my hope
Foreign accented words lilted, toll me
Me is gifted, spirited, 'til de meaning swiftly wilted
Was dat a dream?
Or truth lost in Foucault's regime.
I fought hard to belong
hooks familiar articulated it would come
But you pitch me against your feminine Whiteness
Forget intersectionality, demonise my sexuality, sanctify homogeny,
Ya tink me exotic, label me neurotic
I am not exotic; mi heart drum don't beat robotic
Me 'ave a skin dat gives asylum to Love, Pain, Fear, Joy,
Living Organs, blood-soaked saturated seeped wetness
My only crime was always dusky Femaleness
One ting ness, someting ness, Everyting & Nothingness
My only crime is always being Researchless
Cos Ivory Tower makes me one thing less.

Ya label me angry from de off, yes, I'm angry
A festering heat season pepper hot, now nurtured with reason
(Do you know) Ya liberalism cements me ina gangrene concretion
Stagnating spillage with ya policymaking privilege. Waiting,
Procrastinating a piece of equity to incite equality
Ya think I'm chip pon de shoulda?
I'm not chip pon de shoulda, I'm olda
Now and my skeleton Informs Deforms Reforms
Bones creak cognisant Fluidity
Arteries flow away Cultural Plurality
Veins streak to the heart of Nonconformity
Black, Female, Poor,
Any orda ya want, tek de complexity
Finding the who from the what in Mr. Hall's totality
My only crime is embracing my Identity
One ting ness, someting ness, Everyting & Nothingness
Keep on rejecting hopelessness
Keep on redressing ya foolishness
KEEP ON… striving ina dis madness
Navigating the Whiteness
Making sense out of nonsense
Rising my Queen to check ya King machine
ina de institutional shame of global chess
You gots to know, those before, opened de door, now I. Re/Voice. Success.
Oh Yes, oh Yes

Agency embodied, theoretical praxis, and critical consciousness, all coalesce
In the space and time of my cultural Blackness
Ivory Tower, you can always Try, to mek me one thing less.
But. You. cyan't. stop. Process.
                              Oh Yes, oh Yes

                                                                    (2018, 2021)

I am mindful that, gender and class play some part in compounding the inequalities that I have experienced. However, this study's autoethnographic setting is in the neoliberal panorama of academia undertaking research in the field of actor training where my Blackness has been defined as 'other' and 'outsider' against an assumed White norm. Blackness is the specific characteristic in the continued navigation of Whiteness and the manifestations of racism. By 'other' or 'otherness' I refer to a person whose identity is deemed as inferior with negative attributes to the assumed norm and suffer discrimination by the dominant group (Staszak 2009). The terms 'insider' or 'outsider', specifically in academia can be defined as the standard by which all others are judged; middle-class Whiteness is perceived as superior and the norm (Eddo-Lodge 2017). If you are part of that demographic, you are considered an 'insider', if not, you are considered an 'outsider', and therefore subject to established hegemonic dominance and oppression (Cabrera 2017). Gillborn (1997), Rollock (2012a) and Sleeter (2017) highlight that there has been minimal examination undertaken about Whiteness, particularly middle-class Whiteness and the impact on education. Hence, Critical Race Theory, is an essential factor in dismantling the decolonisation of methodologies, literature review and research materials used in this thesis.

Employing the term decolonisation throughout this thesis delineates a process that looks at how the external world preserves the Euro-centred colonial lens (HEPI 2020), portraying me *lesser than* as a rationale for continued exclusion from contributing to knowledge systems. Applied to my educational research, it is a deconstructive process that explores the aspects of one's identity and educational experience and promotes taking it apart, to rethink, reframe and reconstruct the combination of cultural wealth as assets that I carry with me, current and historical cultural context and the dominant narrative. Thus, I am guided to define a 'counter-story' to the hegemonic narrative, drawn from my perspective. Storytelling, through

such vehicles as vignettes or poetry, is often used by critical race academics to purposefully develop research from the margins of society where experiences are not often told by themselves (Solórzano & Yosso 2002:32). Ladson-Billings (2013) exemplifies the point with the African proverb "until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter" (2013:41). So, autoethnographically, Critical Race Theory reveals dominant ideologies (Delgado & Stefancic 2017) and using it in this thesis I seek to disrupt the colonisation, neoliberalism and Whiteness of educational research in order to initiate and Re/Voice an authentically inclusive actor training pedagogic theory in Higher Education Institutions (HEI).1

Materialising from a specific historical context in the United States, Critical Race Theory challenged the Critical Legal Studies movement which was positioned as an umbrella for the liberal discourse of Civil Rights (Ladson-Billings 1998) and the alleged objectivism of the legal system. It emerged as a response to White people being centred as the prime beneficiaries of civil rights legislation and African Americans sustaining continued systematic disadvantage in American society (Ladson-Billings 1998; Yosso 2002). The cross over to the UK chiefly stemmed from research into inequalities in the British education system as it provided an "explicit structural framework for investigating racism" (Chadderton 2013:40). Leonardo (2009) states that Critical Race Theory in education is there to 'halt racism' by uncovering and confronting its effect on pedagogy and provides solutions through anti-racist practice. Hence in undertaking educational research Critical Race Theory rejects the traditions of liberalism, universality, neutrality and meritocracy in educational systems and policies that only serve to uphold Whiteness (Gillborn 2008). Utilising Critical Race Theory as a tool in my autoethnographic journey emphasises the transformative rupture of my philosophical perspectives giving decolonised insight into the analysis of dominant narratives that shape perceptions and interactions.

Whilst Critical Race Theory is applied in different ways in various fields, in educational research, based on the work of Delgado (1995), Ladson-Billings (1998), Solorzano and Yosso (2002), Gillborn (2008), Leonardo (2009), Rollock (2012a) and

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1 HEI refers to Universities, Drama Schools and Conservatoires that deliver undergraduate actor training courses

Sian (2019), it is considered that there are five overarching tenets: the permanence of racism, Whiteness as property, critique of liberalism, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling through the centrality of experiential knowledge. Applying these tenets presents an analytical framework that allows me to question how Whiteness is manifested, provides a direct challenge to dominant discourses and promotes epistemic transformation. Whilst all the Critical Race Theory tenets informed my examination the tenet of counter-storytelling especially directed this study, providing a context to confront the traditional Western ideas of educational research. The sharing of my story as argued by Solorzano and Yosso (2002) "challenges white privilege, rejects notions of 'neutral' research or 'objective' researchers, and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of colour" (2002:26). My research question was designed to prompt me to critically reflect on my own lived experiences and "deconstruct, reconstruct and construct" (Ladson-Billings 1999:210) as I navigated the issue of Whiteness.

In defining the term Whiteness Leonardo (2002), Gillborn (2005) and Picower (2009) contend that it is a socio-political construct that subordinates and demonises people of colour as it is upheld as the normative construct that other groups are judged by. There is agreement between Critical Race theorists that Whiteness is "intimately involved with issues of power and power differences between White and non-White people" (Kincheloe & Steinberg 1998:4). In order to navigate Whiteness Leonardo (2009) insists you must first *locate* it. However, doing so has its challenges. Lipsitz (2006) notes "Whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations" (2006:1). Babb (1998) argues that Whiteness must be understood as more than a racial identity, acknowledging that in concealing its own internal differences, Whiteness secures power. Beginning to understand and 'track' Whiteness, as it is constructed socially and historically, allows us to think about the possibilities of revealing its various operations so as to challenge, renegotiate and ultimately navigate its meanings (Leonardo 2009). This study acknowledges the emotional and performative tools of Whiteness as embodied in the rules of normative culture - the status quo in educational research and as such within the domain of actor training.

The essence of my research requires the application of an interdisciplinary approach which enables me to go beyond the confines of the discipline. Hence, applying Critical Race Theory to an autoethnographic study in education makes it possible to research through a lens of race and cultural consciousness, in other words decolonisation. This framework denotes a challenge to existing modes of scholarship with the ultimate aim of framing critical questions around practices and philosophies. My study is therefore of significance in that it seeks to make a valid contribution to the theory and development of actor training pedagogy originating from the cultural Re/Voicing of my counternarrative in educational scholarship.

Why am I doing this study?

Undertaking this study, I wanted to critically interrogate two key strands that run parallel, crossover and merge in the subjective path of research. The first I have touched on earlier in the Introduction in so much as being a Black researching professional in the sphere of actor training, I sought a decolonised authenticity in my own research story. The emergence of Re/Voicings represent a cultural springboard of transformative critical awareness. They act as a counternarrative underpinned by the African ontological and epistemological viewpoints that root my position in a space and time of double consciousness that is free to navigate the dominance of Whiteness. In doing so I am able to reverse "looking at one's self through the eyes of… *Whiteness*" (Dubois 1903:2). I add Whiteness for specificity, to explore the decentring, recentring, and uncentring of the norm to "interpret the deep structures that are often unobserved and construct the framing to destroy myths…and false knowledge" (Chilisa 2012:36). To dislocate myself from enforced margins, I utilise autoethnography as a methodology; it is a cultural practice and my subsequent research details cultural exchange as a catalyst for transformation.

Leading to the second strand of undertaking this study, I sought to address actor training teaching practices through the exchange of cultural particularities. The literature review highlights the lack of research into culture and actor training which

impacts on cultural identity and the sense of belonging within HEI. I argue that actioning inclusivity is linked to culture, and as a result, fosters and promotes an authentic connection to embodied learning and embodied knowledge. Currently, HEIs such as Conservatoires, Drama Schools and Universities predominately elevate Western knowledge and Eurocentric teaching methods to a position of preserved hegemonic superiority. This position of educational dominance underpinned and driven by cultural racism, considered in the literature review and findings, has the effect of dismissing other forms of knowledge and teaching approaches as exotic or irrelevant, thereby sustaining privileged Whiteness. More importantly, students who fall outside of the norm or status quo continue to be forced to learn through a hegemonic lens, rejecting their cultural influences as sources of valuable capital. Over the last few years as a result of persistent calls for change, there have been some strides in attempting to redress such practices with projects like *beyond the canon.* However, these have been on the periphery of actor training, merely add-ons to the curriculum rather than embedded into the mainstream content delivered. This gap within actor training pedagogy confirms that there has been very little interrogation into *how* tutors/practitioners teach or the inclusion of students' cultural particularities as cultural capital towards meaningful embodiment of their learning.

As such in mainstream actor training provision, students from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups often struggle to some extent to maintain their cultural identity against the dominance of Western and Eurocentric theatre practices. Similarly, HEIs struggle to know and understand cultures outside of the traditional dominant norm or its place in actor training. More than one in 10 (10.3%) Black students drop out of HEIs in England, compared with 6.9% for the whole student population, according to a report by two charitable universities trusts, the University Partnerships Programme Foundation and the Social Market Foundation (2017). Acknowledgment and appreciation of different knowledge systems and a mutual exchanging of values and cultural references influence embodied learning and in turn student experience. However, to respect diverse knowledge requires destabilising Western superiority and looking to alternative knowledge systems, challenging the Western homogenous view that all knowledge can only be read, learnt or articulated through a Eurocentric lens. I

contend the reasoning for this, specifically in the classroom setting, lies in cultural racism manifested through Whiteness, the continued assumption of universality in teaching practices, Eurocentric methodologies and practitioners and a false notion of a colour-blind approach to teaching practices. The insistence of these assertions stems from the neoliberalism that saturates actor training and results in the narrowing of meaningful discourse.

Harvey (2005) describes neoliberalism as:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade (2005:2).

Thus, neoliberal policies implemented in HEIs, to support the "requirements of national economic competition" (Ball 2003:223) focus on standards, accountability and performativity. Under the guise of educational reform these policies have masqueraded as universal truths that the elitism of HEI provision has been addressed and replaced with access, empowerment, universality and equality for all, reinforcing claims that we are moving towards a post-racial era in which race no longer matters (Stovall et al., 2009). In doing so the neoliberal climate has sanctified teaching practices and curricula under a Eurocentric landscape keeping Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups on the periphery of academia (Arday 2017; Mirza 2017). Tomlinson (2008) confirms that neoliberalism, has never "indicated serious interest in the development of a curriculum that would combat cultural ignorance, ethnocentric attitudes and racism" (2008:146). In fact, the advancement of neoliberalism together with Whiteness as a normative tool to preserve 'other' or the 'inside/outside' dichotomy sustains oppressive colonised power structures in HEIs and as such inform the domain of actor training and its teaching practices. This study seeks to engage and disrupt the status quo to contribute a counternarrative to the discourse.

How the study links to my professional practice

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
Shakespeare; *As You Like It*, Act II: Scene VII

I discuss in depth later in the methodology section how the decolonisation of my beliefs channelled me to the African philosophy of Ubuntu *I am we: I am because we are: we are because I am, I am in you, you are in me.* In subjectivity we are connected through a shared existence of transformation through which elements of interpretation, analysis and criticality are entwined, whereby "humans and the rest of nature participate in the same locus without being opposites" (Ikhane 2017:141). hooks2 (1991) contends that "knowledge rooted in experience shapes what we value and as a consequence how we know what we know" (1991:175). I am a Black working-class female who has climbed the Ivory Tower of academia despite the lack of diversity, equity or inclusivity in staffing within HEIs. The HESA (2018) report found only 5.5% Black Minority Ethnics3 were employed as directors or appointed at the highest senior positions. Only 1.4% of that percentage were Black Minority Ethnic women from the UK (HESA 2018). In addition, the data is broken down further to reveal that only 0.4% of UK Black Minority Ethnic academics held significant positions at Senior Management level or were part of the Senior Management Team. The report overwhelmingly confirms that despite the increase of students entering HEIs, there are very few Black and Ethnic Minorities recruited to positions that influence or impact on policymaking within HEIs.

The HESA (2018) report could not record the percentage for female UK Black Minority Ethnics at Senior Management level as there was not sufficient data. Within my professional domain of Performing Arts, in which actor training falls, there was no recorded figure for any UK Black Minority Ethnic academics, male or female employed at Senior Management level. My appointment in 2018 as Head of Drama at a University then appointed Director of the School of Acting at a leading HEI in

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2 bell hooks chooses as a political act not to capitalise her name.
3 I use the term Black Minority Ethnics here, as it is used in the HESA report.

2019 changes that dire statistic and as I write this thesis, I have been appointed Interim Principal.

At the start of my doctoral research, I faltered under the tidal wave of Whiteness, epistemologically seeking to authenticate my professional practice. Rollock (2012b) advocates that we, as Black female academics, should no longer wait for justification to be at the research table. Instead, she advises us to look to the space of alterity, an external zone that sits outside of the accepted academic domain. The "intersectional liminal space of alterity" (Rollock 2012b:65) is a space that facilitates not only the exploration of epistemological and ontological decolonisation, but the "multifaceted contours of Whiteness" (Rollock 2012b:66). This directive ties in with hooks' (1990a) demand that Black female academics must remove the impact and power play of being categorised by repositioning ourselves "from the position of object to subject…to gain a form of liberated voice" (hooks 1990a:9). Throughout the discourses surrounding doing research, it is universally agreed it is critical that academics find the interconnectedness between research and individual theoretical viewpoints. From that perspective we maintain the specificity, clarity and rigour required in deciding the conceptual framework which will support our work and professional practice.

Euclidean sphere

Consequently, if as Shakespeare (1599) writes "all the worlds a stage" (*As You Like It* II:VII:142**),** in keeping with my actor training domain, I visualise the staging of my professional practice as an euclidean frame, spherical, non-linear and fluid with no fixed points (Figure 1). Operational under five axioms a euclidean framework (Euclid 2006) facilitates a spherical non-linearity of complexity, unknowing and doing action, forming, informing and reforming intricate connections in time and space not as it solely exists but as it is outlined by my perception and imagination.
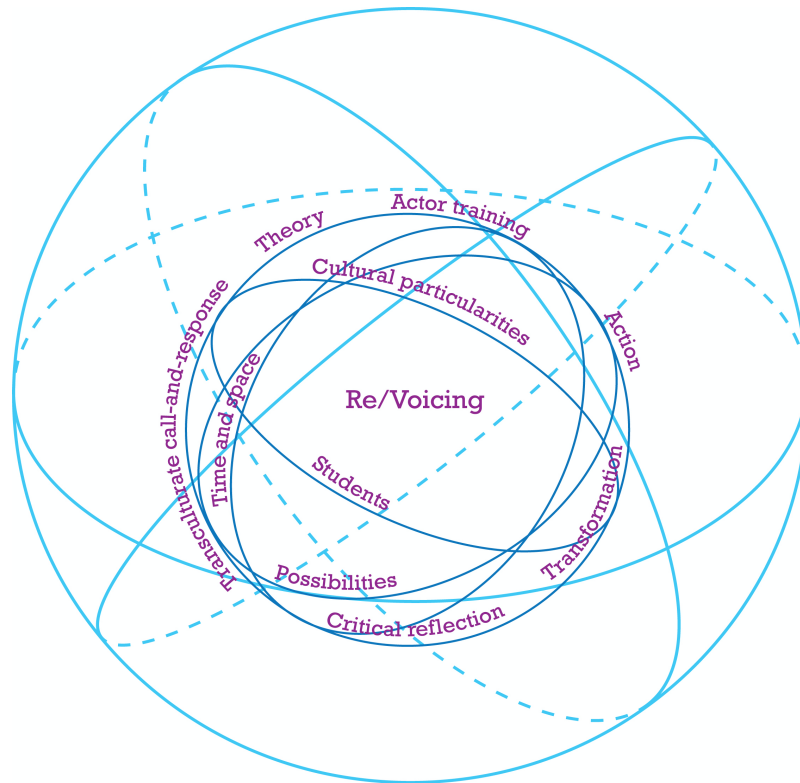
Figure 1. Euclidean Sphere

It represents an optical realisation that permits me to exist in the world I perceive; interpreting knowledge from my own authentic experiences, choosing, editing and proofreading points of embryonic differences, lines of interactions enabling immeasurable planes of meaning between and within things that exist inwardly and outwardly. Therefore, in continual shifts, the outside becomes the inside, these decolonising shifts exclude and include and are what I would describe as a complex Euclidean continuum of transformation. In turn, these shifts generate connections of difference continuously rotating inside out, unlocking information in space and time to strip away a homegenised presence and manifest in a decolonised double consciousness where there are five common notions which I can align with the African Ubuntu philosophy *I am because we are*:

- Things that are equal to the same thing are also equal to one another
- If equals are added to equals, then the wholes are equal (addition property of equality)
- If equals are subtracted from equals, then the differences are equal (subtraction property of equality)

- Things that coincide with one another are equal to one another (reflexive property)
- The whole is greater than the part (Euclid 2006).

Within this visualisation of my professional practice, is captured a processional journey influenced by a diasporic history, ethnic philosophy and a transculturate counternarrative which has the potentiality to provide a myriad of ways I can position myself. It illuminates a chronicle embedded future which forges persistent renovation to ensure multiple cross-references, comparisons and continuous reflections on multifarious perspectives, culminating in an evolving and revolving euclidean professional practice.

Conclusion

The overview of the landscape in which I undertake my educational research from my perspective as a Black researching professional is crucial as it is concerned in part with the marginalisation of equality and social justice from the mainstream education agenda. It is a contribution in the sense that it highlights what is viewed as a priority in educational research, specifically in actor training and under a transformative paradigm provides some context for why I wanted to undertake this study. Burnard, Dragovic, Ottewell and Lim (2018) assert "the professional doctorate in education should recognise, advance and create new meaning" (2018:41). In doing so, ultimately, I return to Dr Martin Luther King Jr (1963) who guided me during my MA studies and now in my professional doctoral research. Sitting in an Alabama prison cell during the height of the civil rights protest, he wrote a letter to academics, scholars and others who condemned his actions in the struggle for the equitable treatment of Black people. In the landscape of today it would be appropriate to apply his theoretical writing to the struggle for equitable representation by Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups in academia. He explained that in his pursuit he could only follow "four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action" (King 1963: para 6). Therefore, in my own pursuit my four steps will attempt

to: autoethnographically investigate my enquiry and collate appropriate data gaining insight of the problem; rigorously negotiate my argument through a euclidean centre of transformative research where my views can be challenged, questioned or upheld; critically self-reflect on the analysis, to make meaning of them, theoretically and creatively through Re/Voicing. Finally, I will use any findings to directly inform my own professional practice by actioning an original *transculturate call-and-response* approach to actor training pedagogy thereby implementing a platform of creative equity in how the discipline is taught at undergraduate level.

Ultimately, Dr. King's (1963) directive will guide me to addressing my foundational research question:

How does a Black researching professional navigate Whiteness in academia to authenticate a Transculturate Call-and-Response theory to practically action inclusivity in UK Actor Training Higher Education provision?

The following three sub-questions support the research:

1) *What cultural differences and assumptions influence the experiences of BA Acting first year students on a mainstream actor training course?*

2) *Which factors shape a dialogic transculturate pedagogic approach to actor training teaching to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning?*

3) *How can a Black researching professional disrupt the Whiteness of dominate discourses in academia to authentically undertake educational research?*

Structure of Thesis

This thesis aims to represent an effort to effectively communicate a practical approach to actioning inclusivity in actor training. Following this Introduction, it is organised into a further five parts.

The literature review in Part II highlights that there is a gap in research between the intersection of actor training, culture and education. It considers literature that helps to shed light on teaching practices in actor training with a focus on how cultural racism impacts on students achieving authentic embodied learning and embodied knowledge. This is followed by a thorough review of the scholarly literature regarding the theory of transculturation, chronicling the journey towards a transculturate approach.

In Part III, the methodological approach outlines the research aim, research question and sub-questions. I chart the route of decolonisation I undertook during my research with a comprehensive description of the autoethnographic approach through the lens of Critical Race Theory, which ultimately frames the collective research methodology used. Next, I engage with paradigms to give full reflection to the paradigmatic decision made in keeping with the theoretical framework of this study. I conclude the methodology section with an in-depth description of the unique theory I am proposing as a practical approach to actor training called *Transculturate Call-and-Response.*

The research design is presented in Part IV of this thesis, beginning with details of the context in which the research is conducted. I outline the chosen methods and discuss how coding was used to identify meaningful themes: identity, racism and culture. In addition, I include a summary of my reflective journal and the pilot study which in part informed the final methods for this main study. The methods section is completed with an account of how I addressed validity, ethics, limitations and authenticity of the research.

In Part V, a discussion of the findings is presented in response to the research questions. I analyse how the application of *Call-and-Response* embedded in a Transculturate theory intensifies the reciprocal cultural exchange stimulating

transformative interactions. Each stage of research is accompanied with analytic reflection, interpretation, and discussion of the events with the larger constructs of comments from theorists about cultural capital, actor training, pedagogy, belonging and embodiment. The section is concluded with an overview of storying the data, acknowledging any surprises or revelation that might have emerged.

In the conclusion, Part VI, I provide a complete summary of my study drawing the main strands of the study together. I present my contribution to knowledge which offers a brief overview of the study's evidence and makes recommendations for future teaching practices in actor training. I emphasise the originality of this study as there has not been research about implementing a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* pedagogy in actor training. I discuss any impact in relation to cultural racism, Eurocentrism and Whiteness and the implication on actioning inclusivity by adopting equitable teaching practices, through explicit cultural awareness. Reiterating the gap in actor training pedagogy this thesis addresses the transformative possibilities of seeing each other.

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review plays a vital part in theorising and hypothesising my research, actioning the research enquiry, and interpreting any findings pinpointing the gaps that currently exist in order to put forward recommendations that elicit change. Chilisa (2012) warns that academics of colour undertaking research are under threat of propagating literature that is based on colonisation, where the 'researched other' were treated as "objects with no voice" (2012:59). As a Black researching professional, I position myself autoethnographically to advance my lived experience, to confront and navigate the methodological violence that permeates research discourse. In doing so, I transform what is seen in research as the norm by shifting the privilege Whiteness has as the research gatekeeper to enact, validate and legitimise my voice as a gateopener.

Actor Training

One hundred and seventeen universities offer 664 actor training courses including Theatre & Dramatic Arts, 99 of those courses are purely BA (Hons) Acting (WhatUni Guide 2020). There has been a significant increase in the number of acting students from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups, and as outlined in the Introduction, there have been continuous concerns around their treatment in HEIs such as Drama schools. In 2020 the pressure cooker erupted and many of the UK's drama schools have been 'called out' by current and former Black students, for systemic and institutionalised racism, prompting calls for urgent action to address the abuse suffered, (for example see The Guardian, The Stage, BBC, ITV). The Federation of Drama Schools (FDS) an overarching body for the top 20 actor training institutions offers a statement consisting of nine lines which defines its commitment to inclusion and participation, the statement includes:

> working together and separately, all 20 schools in the Federation of Drama Schools are committed to becoming inclusive industry leaders within the

drama training sector. It is our responsibility to widen participation and develop a diverse and inclusive pipeline for students of talent (www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/inclusion-and-participation accessed 24/9/2020)

Contrary to this in 2020 Black Students who attended or attend institutions who are members of the FDS identified experiences including:

- Being subjected to racial slurs, including being called 'slaves';
- Being denied opportunities to play leading roles, instead being restricted to minor characters;
- Curriculums being weighted in favour of white students, with texts by black playwrights dismissed;
- Suffering attacks on their appearance, including their hair;
- Not having their voices heard when trying to raise complaints, with multiple cases of incidents being brushed aside; and,
- Drama schools failing to take their complaints seriously.

The publicised 'catalogue of abuses' has culminated in a unanimous call for the entire sector to commit to an independent inquiry into the experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students at British drama schools (Smith in The Stage June 2020).

As we await a commitment from all 20 FDS institutions to an inquiry, it remains unequivocally evident there has been little research into developing actor training to meet the needs of the whole student population, particularly taking into account the growing cultural diversity of students (Hingorani 2009, Heim 2013). The teaching methods and curriculum are recognised as being deeply rooted in Euro-Western theories and Whiteness (Deavere-Smith 2006; Ginther 2015; Peck 2016; McAllister-Viel 2018; Hartley 2020). Whilst the domain of actor training has a wealth of research in regard to Western methods, acting practices and practitioners, this thesis identifies and addresses the gap in research in *how* we teach actor training to make recommendations for pedagogical transformation. Explicitly, it explores the impact of cultural identity and cultural racism which plays a significant contribution to the current deficiency of teaching, and as a result, learning, in UK actor training HEIs.

Seton (2020) asserts that much of the literature in contemporary actor training pedagogy regards student resistance to learning as a response due to a 'deficiency'

within the student. Hartley (2020) states that "we are facing a particular crisis in Drama schools in the UK that is representative of a wider crisis in actor training in the West" (2020:2). This viewpoint reaffirms successive arguments regarding the pervasiveness of racism and the negation of cultural relevance in actor training put forward by Gardner (2020); Karim-Cooper (2020); Landon-Smith (2020); Ginther (2015/21); McAllister Viel (2012/18); Heim (2013) and Hingorani (2009). Hartley (2020) continues "it could be argued that students of colour… are being marginalised within the system that educates them" (2020:6). Her appraisal of the present condition of actor training provision does not align with the Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher Education (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement for Dance, Drama and Performance which states the following:

> The area embraces the study of the performance traditions of non-western cultures and the cultural pluralism that informs historical and contemporary performance practice. The subject area embraces its role in reflecting and engaging with the changing composition of UK society and the need for greater knowledge and understanding of diverse cultural heritage (QAA 2019:5).

My lived experience as a Black researching professional who holds a senior teaching and leadership position within the field of actor training, and has worked and studied in several HEIs, stands in clear contradiction to this benchmark. There has been little to no change in curriculum content that fully 'embraces' non-western cultures. Nor do the structures operating within these institutions authentically embrace cultural pluralism but instead they continue to support the mechanisms of 'othering' and maintaining non-western cultures as lesser than. This study is therefore of importance in that it seeks to make a valid contribution to the theory and development of equitable actor training teaching practices, stemming from a lens of cultural parity. Alibhai-Brown (2001) confirms that research conducted in relation to cultural exchanges particularly in the domain of the Arts and Literature is undertaken by researchers who "feel they have the privilege to comment about us, to us, about us, as if by right" (2001:85). Hence, the implication of undertaking this autoethnographic research is to redress the lack of meaningful actor training research previously done in the UK, specifically by a Black actor training tutor/practitioner.

It is not within the scope of this literature review to research all acting methodologies used within HEIs acting courses. However, it is relevant to bring focus to the major tenet of actor training, 'embodied knowledge or embodied learning' or embodiment, which runs through all methodologies within the subject area, (Stanislavski 1963, 2013; Grotowski 1985; Meyerhold 1998; Zarilli 2009; Chekhov 2014; Knebel 2016; Lecoq 2020). Embodied knowledge, learning or embodiment acts as a key signifier and criterion in assessment and performance which defines the academic standards that can be expected of a graduating acting student. The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (2019) clarifies

3.2 Dance, drama and performance courses are characterised by the following common features:

i.   knowledge and understanding of the ways in which performance originates, is constructed, circulated and received; this may include 'embodied knowledge' and 'practice research' (QAA 2019:5)

In acting the term 'embodiment' can be variously used to refer to knowledge, character, emotion or role (Peck 2016). Embodied knowledge highlights the need and potential for all students to fully engage and respond to teaching and learning in actor training. A fundamental principle in the student actor journey, embodied knowledge is facilitated through a series of training exercises and methodologies originated by practitioners such as Stanislavski, Chekhov, Lecoq, Meyerhold, Grotowski, Strasberg, Meisner, Lecoq or Gaulier. These traditional lineages of actor training are dictated by White male practice and dominated by Western epistemology. Peck (2016) defines them as 'familial apostologies' that demand 'tribal belonging'. She asserts "the UK has a homogenised 'toolbox' approach", to actor training and further explains that "practitioners still bank on the provenance of their training as cultural capital and actors become the commodified brand that sells institutions" (2016:17-18). Her assertion links closely to Bourdieu's habitus (1986) the physical embodiment of cultural capital defined by Rollock (2012a) as those "positioned as having status and legitimacy within formally sanctioned spaces of… the education system". Rollock (2012a) continues in her research, using a Bourdieuian perspective, that "skin represented markers of an undesirable embodied

capital" (2012a:67-71). Ahmed (2012) elucidates on having the 'right kind of body' that allows some to pass effortlessly into a category that has 'value', because their placement within institutional spaces is assumed. This 'value' is determined, not exclusively, but predominately by the cultural and racial familiarity with those who are privileged or hold positions of power within the institution.

Consequently, the traditions of embodied knowledge, learning or embodiment in actor training illustrates how Whiteness and cultural racism in actor training pedagogy impacts on those students who do not fit into the hegemonic culture and systems that currently operate in HEI actor training provision. Lewis and Lemmer (2018) declare that "a framework in which to define any one practice as embodied more than another is nearly impracticable" although they maintain that "embodiment is a central component in any performance" (2018:131-133). The systemic interplay between non-verbal communication, thought, voice and gesture, self and character, as well as empathy, imagination, and emotion. Kemp agrees (2012) insisting that "embodied Acting is an essential, pragmatic intervention" (2012: i). In his research Prior (2004) concludes that, "many trainers saw acting as intrinsically embodied, experiential and subjective" (2004:245). Lindgren and Johnson-Glenberg (2013) proffer embodiment as "the enactment of knowledge and concepts through the activity of our bodies" (2013:445). As a result, actor training is seen primarily as a cognitive process and as such, several performance theorists have explored an embodied psychophysical approach through the lens of cognitive neuroscience (Blair 2007; Kemp 2012; Lutterbie 2015). Thus, embodiment in actor training education reveals our 'mastery' of abstract concepts and 'ability' to convey this knowledge to others "in some concrete, observable form", at the same time, "it is the site of the ongoing inner journey we take to get there" (Cadman 2005:47). Considering these interpretations, the realisation of embodiment clearly involves the use of bodies and experiences in making meaning. Therefore, it is clear to say if a student's cultural capital is not invited into the learning space and included as part of the learning process it censors, oppresses and limits the potential to experience authentic embodiment, ultimately forcing students who fall out of what is deemed as the cultural norm to learn through a lens other than their own or through Dubois' (1999) double consciousness as considered in the Introduction and Conclusion of this thesis.

Theatre practitioner Stanislavski's acting methodology is widely recognised as the methodical cornerstone for modern Western actor training. He instigated a Western holistic and psychophysical approach to actor training, that he labelled the 'system'. It is a method that explores character and action both from the 'inside out' and the 'outside in' and treats the actor's mind and body as parts of a continuum (Krasner 2000; Benedetti 2005; Kemp 2012; Merlin 2018). In the Stanislavski system, equal weight is placed upon inner emotions and outer embodiment (Cadman 2005:31). Moore (1989) further explains Stanislavski's work to suggest he discovered "the universal laws of acting and theatre" (Moore in Zarilli 1989:41) and advocates for the "hegemony of the experimental, scientific method in discovering the truths of the essential nature of acting" (Moore 1984:15). Petit (2019) endorses the practitioner Michael Chekhov's expansion of a psychophysical acting approach to embodiment which is imagined, processed and physicalized in what Chekhov (2014) calls 'creative individuality'. A process of preparation where the tangible means for the actor: body, speech, voice, are immersed with the intangible elements of feelings, imaginations and sensations (Zarilli 2009; Garre 2013). Zinder (2002), Pitches (2005) and Meerzon (2015) concur in the assertion that there is a oneness consisting of many component parts, denoting all of the parts are connected with one another, to acheive complete balance and harmony between the body and thoughts, emotions and desires. Describing the field of embodied knowledge or learning in psychophysical actor training, Zarilli (2009) advises a process of exploring the intricacies of the relationship between physical, mental, cognitive, perceptual components woven together in embodied work. Physical inspiration and a creative state of mind takes root "not as an image in the head, but as an act of engagement of the entire bodymind" (Zarilli 2009:13). Consequently, the ultimate aim is to awaken each component as a source of inspiration and motivation, unified in a creative repository to work and manifest though a practical embodied application.

Grotowski, Lecoq and Gaulier methodologies advocate embodiment through actor training systems with a pedagogic approach called 'via negativa'. It is a notion that Murray (2003) describes as "a search for the truth through negation" (2003:49). Participating in a series of structured exercises the student actor should be stripped of skills and effects, instead of accumulating them, to eradicate psychophysical blocks. These blocks should be 'eliminated' through an encounter with failure. For

Grotowski (1985), this 'elimination' is not an end in itself, "the essential concern is finding the proper relationships…and embodying the decision in physical arrangements" (1985:252). Facilitating this way of learning, Prigge-Pienaar (2018) says the student "lays bare one's own intimity" to "achieve a freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction" so that "impulse and action are concurrent" (2018:138). Consequently "the body acts as embodied mind" (Fischer-Lichte 2008:82). In her research Peck (2016) claims that the embodiment of via negativa "points to a dialectical way of learning" (2012:60). However, as the 'psychophysical blocks' are identified by the tutor, Krpič (2011) highlights the limitations of 'via negativa' and insists that it is critical that the student "acts upon his or her own reason and does not channel someone else's messages" (2011:168). Within these limitations, the via negativa pedagogical approach exposes the power dynamics between student and tutor as it thrives on provoking confusion among students as to what the teacher wants.

Ultimately, the tutor dictates what is truth or not, therefore the main structures of via negativa are potentially designed to "please a teacher" (Purcell-Gates 2017:47-53). Slonimski in Osinski (1986) criticises this pedagogic approach as 'guru' teaching. The structure of a master watching and failing you without explaining why can, as Murray (2003) states, feel ruthless, and the predilection of (White) male pedagogues to operate with this form of oppressive authority dominates traditions of acting pedagogy (2003:49). If the aim of actor training is to develop acting that is considered to be embodied, one could also argue that this is of specific relevance in a multicultural and multilingual context as the actor's lived experience will be central to the development of embodied acting. Dunn (2019) states, "bodies of colour become displaced or must imitate a kind of white incarnation and self-erasure" (2019:69). This experience of oppressive and hegemonic teaching would call into question the authenticity of any embodied knowledge or learning, culturally diverse students on a contemporary HEI actor training course might achieve.

Actor Training Pedagogy

One of the central expectations of students on an HEI actor training course is that they demonstrate their vulnerability, physically and emotionally, learning to cultivate some of the accepted actor training requisites; 'accessible', 'porous' or more 'truthful'. This is evidenced by the student through embodied knowledge in practical demonstrations such as character work, exercises, games, rehearsals or performance. Marshall (2013) a leading movement specialist within actor training describes 'The JCB tradition of actor training' referring to J.C. Bamford Excavator machinery, she clarifies that the current predicament of actor training indicates a violent, destructive and generalised way of learning. The idea that actors must surrender themselves, both physically and psychologically, is seen as part of the legitimised knowledge of the profession.

Therefore, it is imperative for the actor training pedagogue to draw upon or devise embodied learning strategies, because the discipline itself relies on embodiment exploration (Creely 2010; Lutterbie 2011; Panhofer & Payne 2011; Kemp 2012; Hurt 2014). Perry and Medina's (2011) positions actor training as a holistic learning experience, which is simultaneously embodied and performative (2011:63). Subsequently, it is a principle theoretical belief in actor training that embodiment, is viewed as "the deliberate and mindful simultaneous bodyminded engagement of the self with both the inner and outer environment" (Meerzon 2015:16). Furthermore, as Yasuo (1987) clarifies, "to harmonise the body and the mind through training is a practical not a conceptual understanding" (1987:105). For Merriam and Bierema (2014) this emphasises the need to "accomplish more holistic learning raises the stakes for educators to build accessible and motivating learning environments for a range of learners" (2014:245). Seton (2010) confirms

> students of acting and their teachers profoundly form each other and are formed by each other, through their embodied interactions, within the institutional processes of actor training. Yet this embodied formation requires appropriate and sustainable ethical training practices (2010:1).

His assertion indicates that an embodied approach to the training must be driven by shared understandings, alongside being responsive to the way power is negotiated, renegotiated and passed from moment to moment.

Embodied knowledge or embodiment stems from access to teaching processes that support embodied learning 'a heightened body-minded' awareness of the self in relation to the stimulus of potential shifts and changes that are experienced through the body (Stolz 2015). Acceptance or rejection of these shifts or changes is facilitated against the patterned sense of being, which Munro (2018) defines as both personal and unique attributes as well as socio-cultural habits. She outlines "the efficacy and success of embodied learning lies in how it is approached" (Monro 2018:7-8). Pavis (1992), Hingorani (2009), Hays (2013), Ginther (2015) and McAllister Viel (2018), all maintain very little research has been done in the UK to explore the significance of culture and diversity in actor training pedagogy and the relevance it has to embodied learning or embodied knowledge acquisition and distribution. George-Graves (2015) summarises "implementing a disciplinary flexibility that is rooted in and spidered out from the body …works on both levels, culture and embodiment" (2015:5). Consequently, this study argues how cultural racism in teaching practices alongside the continued implementation of a colonised actor training curriculum, detrimentally impacts on students who do not fit into the dominant culture of the institution. Hence, the structures in actor training courses within HEIs, and specifically within the classroom, systematically prevent acting students from authentically exploring embodied learning established from and utilising their individual cultural particularities.

In her research *Actor Training Across Cultures* Hayes (2013) explains looking at the fundamentals or the commonalities in actor training methods, "it is clear to say that all methods involve the human body and the human voice in expressions that are culturally coded" (2013:2). Documenting her actor training experiences in differing cultural contexts she recommends, that the actor ways of becoming as a manifestation of embodiment is prompted by the actors own cultural bodily impulses. This response is termed the 'lived body' by phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1962), it is a pre-reflective body where the lived experience allows the meaning of any encounter to emerge through action. Hayes (2013) assertions clearly aligns with the process of embodied learning in actor training. She advises "as acting trainers and actors we can teach and/or learn numbers of differing theatrical techniques, stemming from a diversity of cultures" (2013:3-5). Pavis (1992) agrees stating:

there are multiple cultural inscriptions on an actor's body constructed from, but not limited to, the ethnicity of the actor, the ethnicity of the character being portrayed and the culture of the training that they receive or a hybridisation of different ethnicities or training style (1992:9).

Blackstone (2020) advocates "we must also consider the breadth of cultural diversity… the context of these varying cultural histories", and ultimately "the influence of shifting artistic paradigms" (2020:3). In doing so Wangh (2013) suggests by shifting paradigms to include cultural particularities acknowledges and enables transferable skills. These transferable skills are currently subjugated knowledge overlooked or hidden and remain so under oppressive teaching practices, thereby impacting implicitly and explicitly on student experience. This study aims to shed light on these experiences and my own lived experience in an effort to add to the discourse around transformative teaching practices at HEIs.

Consequently, actor training is heavily influenced by particular teaching practices that are primarily shaped by Western and Eurocentric academic traditions, discourses and structures that reproduce historical power hierarchies intertwined with the legacy of colonialism. Specifically, in actor training HEIs, the traditional British text-based classical pedagogy implicitly and explicitly advances the stance of teacher as master. Jablonska (2014) contends that such institutions live in a vacuum and maintain within themselves divisions, hegemonic statuses and privileged positions, that are dangerous to the practice of a collective art such as theatre training. He maintains that actor training has become an industry, an industry that has grown without any realistic appraisal of the actual needs within the profession or of the student population. It has to be noted that the manifestation of the hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism in HEIs is the driven capitalist agenda prompting pervasive effects on ways of thought and political-economic practices. Students are branded as 'clients' impacting detrimentally on the student/tutor relationship and neoliberal policies have suppressed discourses in inequality to celebrate the advancement of universality.

In the domain of actor training there is "the assumption of a shared universality" (Landon-Smith 2016:23) in which equitable learning is assumed. Therefore, it is essential to examine how actor training pedagogy controls the authenticity of embodied learning by negating the impact of cultural difference. hooks

(1994) identifies "talking about pedagogy, thinking about it critically, is not the intellectual work that most folks think is hip and cool" (1994:204), but for Bhabha (1994) pedagogy must constantly be "unfolding" or "embodied, affectively experienced" (1994:145). Explicitly, in actor training the "anti-pedagogic prejudice" articulated by Prior (2012:55) or Lahey's (2017) assertion 'immunity to change' epitomises the attitudes towards pedagogy and would seem to reflect an assumed Western intellectual hegemony (Lebakeng et al., 2006). Peck (2016) regards Prior's' assertion of 'anti-pedagogic prejudice' in actor training, restricts the political potential of learning to act. She suggests "looking behind *what* an actor does to focus on *how* an actor learns dispels some of the mysticism of acting that perpetuates closed models of learning" (Peck 2016:47). In agreement Nelson (2013) stipulates that the creative opportunities in actor training offers specific pedagogical possibilities. Thus, engaging with cultural particularities and cultural reciprocity could open up closed models of learning, motivating limitless possibilities in pedagogy, confronting and disrupting intellectual hegemony driven by cultural racism, to authentically engage with equitable teaching practices.

In Freire's (1996a) seminal text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he insists tutor-students and vice versa are involved in a dialogic process in which knowledge leads to reflective, intentional action. His focus on critical pedagogy for education recognises that certain forms of knowledge are privileged by dominant economic influences, which ensure that education functions to serve the needs of those in power. He argues that educators must move toward a more critical and personalised approach to learning with the student as an active participant, rather than a hegemonic model where the "educator's role is to regulate the way the world 'enters into' the students" (Freire 1996a:58-57). Underpinned by Freire's viewpoint of economic power, Jagger (2000) theorises, in consumer culture "cultural goods are consumed not merely for their use value (their material utility), but for the sign value (for what they signify)" (2000:46-53). Her study also draws on Bourdieu's theory of habitus, observing that "some bodily forms are deemed to have a higher symbolic value than others" (2000:46-53). Her conclusions align with Katsariou and Gotzon Vio (2015) understanding of Friere (1996), stating that living in the margins of society, 'oppressed' people face everyday problems and difficulties…such as culture and social discrimination (2015:342). Munro's (2018) analysis of embodiment

interprets Freire's theories to argue that "students become active collaborators in the learning process, engaging with their sense of self as well as relating their selves to the outer environment" (Munro 2018:12). She endorses students should be intentionally involved and included in an embodied learning process. Ultimately Freire (1996a) contends that a "liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transferrals of information" (1996a:79) or as hooks (2003) declares a "place of liberating mutuality where teacher and students work together in partnership" (2003: xv).

Drawing from Freire's (1996a) pedagogic theory, Todd (2012) asks actor training educators to seriously consider what is at stake 'psychically and socially' in pedagogical encounters:

> placing a greater focus on pedagogy as a symbolic and cultural practice through which subjects are racialized… and ethnicized… It is not merely that subjects occupy a standpoint that has pedagogical implications but that the formation of such possibilities of social positioning is fundamentally a pedagogical process. Moreover, the meanings of these symbolic and cultural practices are not neutral (2012:4-5).

Accordingly, culture shapes education, and education shapes culture (Wadham 2007:1) and cultural identity is "central to feeling included rather than ostracised" (Galanter 1999:108-109). Bigwood (1998) suggests in actor training delivery, what is "permitted and what is excluded or ostracised" (1998:130) as being considered disruptive to the pedagogical project, and as such determines its value in the tutor/practitioner's pedagogy. Powell (2000), Vavrus (2008), Evans (2014), Song (2016), Kapur (2018) and Landon-Smith (2020) all determine that the relationship between education, pedagogy and culture are indissoluble and all advocate culture in pedagogy extends a meaningful contribution to the transfer of knowledge, competencies and values. Following their assertions, it would confirm culture an essential requisite to embodied learning, embodied knowledge or embodiment. By illuminating the effect of culture in pedagogy, Landon-Smith (2020) seeks to redress the inequalities that currently exists in actor training pedagogy. She asserts "theatre training for the twenty-first century should seek to position the varied cultural contexts in classrooms as a source of power instead of as a barrier" (2020:349). Vavrus (2008) explains that overtly interweaving "culture into learning process of students will make the learning process more engaging to culturally diverse students

by using meaningful cultural connections to convey academic and social knowledge and attitudes" (Vavrus 2008). Consequently, whilst there is a shift, often targeted, to increase the diversity in the actor student population, there has been very little shift in the pedagogic practice's students are subjected to. Concerted and consistent demands illustrate the urgency in making a decisive cultural shift in contemporary actor training provision (Deavere-Smith 2008; Hingorani 2009; Heim 2013; Ginther 2015; Kim & Yoo 2016; McAllister 2018; Landon-Smith 2020). Kim & Yoo (2016) argue that it is incumbent on educators to deliver "a process of learning where diverse cultures can meet and interact" (2016:417-437). Again Todd (2012) clarifies:

> we need to develop tools for 'reading' or 'interpreting' meaning, in what we do (or not do), say (or not say), and represent (or not represent). How we 'perform' as learners and teachers constitute the terms through which we engage (2012:4-5).

In researching my professional domain of actor training, I have clearly exposed a gap in both the literature and pedagogical practice which this study aims to address. Consequently, one of the main focuses in this study is to interrogate cultural exchange in HEI actor training to consider how hegemonic teaching practices and the continued implementation of a colonised curriculum serves to perpetuate and sustain cultural racism. The current status quo has resulted in the control and dominance of knowledge acquisition and the resistance to creating new knowledge wielding a negative effect on the learning experience of students. This research seeks to explore and make explicit what a tutor/practitioner can actually do, in order to include the student's cultural knowledge inscribed on the landscape of skin.

Cultural Racism

Critical Race Theory informs an epistemological perspective in order to challenge and uncover the formulation of hegemonic structures, research, governance and policies in HEI Actor training provision. Institutional racism is a

prevailing phenomenon under which Black academics confront Whiteness to navigate their daily presence. Helms (1993) identifies three forms of racism: personal racism, cultural racism and institutional racism. Ladson-Billings (2013) adds another form of racism in the context of education, that relates to the theory of knowledge which she names epistemological racism. Recognising that each form interlinks as shown in Figure 2 which I have created for clarity, this study proposes a focus on cultural racism to address how we can reject racist ideology in actor training teaching practices and utilise cultural diversity as means to actioning inclusivity.

Cultural

prejudices based on cultural difference (othering) to promote discrimatory ideas/practices in contexts that involve power dynamics where biological racism is considered socially unacceptable

Epistemological

scholarly practices in defining knowledge so that it preserves a racial hierarchy, benefiting one group to the detriment and harm of another group

Personal/Individual

accepted negative stereotypes propegated by the dominant group leading to a belief in superiority and privilege about themselves and the inferiority of others

Institutional

policies and hegemonic structures within organisations which negatively affect members of oppressed groups while maintaining the privilege of more powerful groups

RACISM

=

Prejudice + Power + Othering

Figure 2. Layers of Racism

Cultural racism is racist practice (Chau 2017), and like all practice is cognisant, rationalised, and justified, by a theory, a belief system about the nature of reality and the behaviour which is appropriate to this cognisant reality. "Even if all of the roots are torn out, the vine will not wither it will grow other roots, a new theory of racism, unless racism is attacked, not as theory but as practice" (Blaut 1992:298). It is clear in Figure 2 that the practice involves confronting an amalgamation of power, prejudice and othering.

In his findings Blaut (1992) clearly sees HEIs as breeding grounds for cultural racism. He states, "cultural racism in universities is just as pervasive, just as dangerous, as it was a generation ago" (Blaut 1992:298). DiAngelo (2018) outlines cultural racism as the "behaviours and values associated with white people or whiteness are automatically better or more normal than those associated with other racially defined groups" (2018:47). Powell (2000) proposes cultural racism supports both individual and institutional racism, and in doing so, it is the motivation behind racist policies and teaching practices in educational institutions and in society. These descriptions reinforce Tranfield's (2020) recent analysis

> the cultural racism in academia has undoubtedly been normalised. Racial abuse and throwaway comments have been condoned by British society and either ignored by white teachers or worse still, orchestrated by them. It breeds a culture of racist attitudes and biases weaponised against young Black, Asian and Latinx people for the comedic satisfaction of others, making them question themselves and feel ashamed of their identity (Tranfield 2020).

Cultural racism and the problematisation of the growing diversity of students undertaking undergraduate studies, is connected and strengthened in the Academy's homogeneous culture. A culture steeped in historically rooted imperialist traditions (Fanon 1986; Said 2002; Akala 2019) now perceived as being under threat from ever invading alien cultures. During the past couple of years, the historical traditions of actor training courses in HEIs have come under intense scrutiny after copious accounts of racism and racist practices. In early 2020, after George Floyd's death in the US, many drama schools issued statements in support of the Black Lives Matter movement but were universally rebuffed by current students and alumni who talked explicitly about their experiences of racism while undertaking actor training studies in HEIs specifically institutions who are members of the Federation of Drama Schools.

The theory of cultural racism can be traced back to Fanon (1967) but was not established or recognised in the British context until Barker (1981). He contextualised what he called 'the new racism' under a period of unbroken Conservative rule where a stimulated doctrine of racialised notions about the UK traded on a blinkered approach to identity and belonging. The re-emergence and extremities of this is being experienced again in 2020 with Brexit and the Black Lives Matter movement. Racism is therefore not a static phenomenon, but one that is

renewed and metamorphosed. Sivananadan (1983) explains cultural racism changes shape, size, contours, purpose, function, with "changes in the social structure and system and, above all, the challenges, the resistances to that system" (Sivananadan 1983:2). Consequently, cultural racism conveniently legitimates the exclusion of 'others' on the basis that they are culturally different, and as such their presence problematic. This externalisation and 'othering' process is part of the cultural discourse, which serves the dominant structures of power by justifying exclusion and evading issues of social and economic inequality.

Hall (1998) concludes Barker's (1981) ground-breaking work during the 1970s and1980s, highlights Fanon's (1998) contention that cultural racism is a systematic negation of the other person, and a furious determination to deny the other person "all attributes of humanity" (1998:445). Evaluating the discourse in cultural racism Gillborn (1997) exposes a racist construct of 'the nation' and its 'common culture' which manifests through the marketisation of schooling and what he labels "the willed ignorance about the extent and nature of racism within the system" (Gillborn 1997:345). Amin (2009), Brabec (2019), Sivananadan (1983) evaluate that forms of racial discrimination are closely linked to different stages in capitalist development. At ground level cultural racism supports a determined strategy for capitalist control. Indeed, Fanon (1998) emphasises that anti-Black racism is not natural but is rooted in the economic imperatives of capitalism. This underlines Freire's (1996a) assertion of the acquired privileges and power that dominants 'economic influences' (1996a:57-58). Therefore, the manifestation of these 'economic forces' in education has resulted in the full adoption of neoliberal policies which upholds oppressive power structures for monetary gain.

Cultural racism theorists align with critical race theorist in the acknowledgement that racism is a naturally occurring phenomenon within society, and explicitly for the purpose of this study, in British educational institutions (Ladson-Billing 2009; Powell 2010; DiAngelo 2018). This natural occurrence intrinsically impacts on the achievement outcomes for some marginalised groups (Rollock 2006; Gillborn 2008). Culture although not always a visible marker has implications for the ways in which marginalised people are perceived and treated, specifically in an educational setting where the validity of knowledge production is determined by the

dominant culture. However, the main criticisms of cultural racism stems from the suggestion that it stretches the notion of racism to a point where it becomes too wide to be useful as anything but a rhetorical ploy. Siebers and Dennissen (2015) question whether there is a risk of losing historical precision and pertinence and Gilroy (2002) states cultural racism has made "anti-racism less politically focused and certainly more difficult if not impossible to organise" (Gilroy 2002: xiv). Gilroy (2002) dismisses claims about the predominance of cultural markers of difference as "an imploded, narcissistic obsession with the minutiae of ethnicity" (2002a: xiv). For Anthias (1995) cultural racism devotes its attention to Black people and she argues it fails to take into account positive images of ethnic and cultural minorities. Anthias (1995) suggestion is steeped in neoliberal rhetoric. Cultural racism has insidiously emerged in the nuances of neoliberalism and is often indirect and subtle in its manifestation. Hence, within the classroom and teaching practices its operation is predominately implicit where overt racism under the Equality Act (2010) is deemed unacceptable and illegal.

Cultural racism is not without its critics, nonetheless it is a form of racism that is, a structurally unequal practice, that relies on cultural differences rather than on biological markers of racial superiority or inferiority. The cultural differences can be real, imagined, or constructed. Consequently, this inequitable practice on a cultural basis can result in the same discriminatory and harmful practices as belief in intrinsic biological markers or differences, such as oppression and exploitation and likewise are protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010). Indeed, racism is deeply embedded in culture and as such always in circulation (Gillborn 2008; Ladson-Billing 2009; Delgado and Stefanic 2012). The Black Lives Matter movement and recent protests have evidenced that racism remains to daily impact the lives of Black people. The advancement of cultural racism challenges the biological racists who use claims of cultural difference to promote their ideas in contexts where biological racism is considered socially unacceptable. Rasool and Ahmed (2020) contend cultural racism is "emotional, intuitive and almost invisible; it is the imperialistic, Eurocentric attitudes of the dominant West towards other cultures" (2020:300). Therefore, cultural racism is valid when considering matters of racism. Grosfoguel (1999) concludes, cultural racism encompasses attempts by dominant communities to claim that marginalised communities are at fault for their own problems. In doing

so it highlights the traps of sustaining immutable reference categories such as ethnicity and opens up the potential to explore a new reality or acknowledging pluralistic particularities.

Accordingly, cultural racism is useful in considering aspects of culture and its intersectionality with education, as in the context of this study I seek to examine how we can see cultural racism manifests itself in different ways and by highlighting its reality in an educational environment I can work to explore, challenge and counteract:

1. Cultural-difference explanations and solutions for inequality - culture rather than any larger system of inequality racializes educational underachievement. Racism can be evidenced in the outcome of processes and relations irrespective of intent (Gillborn 1997; Said 2002; Getty 2010). Therefore, engaging authentically with voices of people of colour is vital in counteracting the narrative of dominant White society to present the perspectives of those on the margins of society.

2. A continuing rationale for modern imperialism - cultural racism emerges as an updated rationalisation of continual, yet seemingly hidden, transformations in a postcolonial and globalizing era. Fanon (1956) explored the role of cultural racism as a new legitimizing ideology for imperialism. He referred to it as an 'enslavement' doctrine that targets the psyche, destroying cultural values and the ways of life of colonized people and producing alienation. This legacy is visible in all institutions, particularly education in a neoliberal guise of enlightenment and acceptance (Sivanandan 1989).

3. Race discourse and political rhetoric - the language of justice is used to ignore the continuing legacy of historically rooted injustice. Colour-blind rhetoric also appropriates multiculturalism; it emphasizes unbounded opportunities and implicitly attributes inequality to individual inadequacies or collective, but selective cultural traits. Critics observe how neoliberalism, through the discourses of educational policies, implicitly employs cultural-racist explanations for inequality (Helms 1993; Giroux 1993; Powell 2000; Rodat 2017). Cultural racism, when combined with the rhetoric of individualism and meritocracy, makes educational inequality, seem ordinary, rational, and even, equitable. Thus, complex, multifactorial, multileveled, and nuanced analysis is needed to understand the processes that contribute, on different levels, to persistent racial inequality.

In a recent article, Gardner (2020) investigates the racism that exists in actor training pedagogy and the persistent resistance to the call of 'decolonising' the actor

training curriculum. A curriculum that has been taught for over seventy years without any significant or meaningful changes. Thus, she reveals the culture that is currently held in HEIs, by leading White acting and voice tutors "raising questions around representation and the development of inclusive pedagogies is necessary and valuable… but not if that comes with a disregard for expertise" (Price in The Stage 2020). There is visceral agreement in the resistance to diversifying by another leading acting tutor "craft and technique seem to be becoming dirty words in some places…there is a danger of throwing Stanislavski and years of accumulated expertise out with the bathwater" (Tyson in The Stage 2020). Additionally, in reference to giving opportunity to more Black students gaining places on actor training courses, the ex-principal of Central School of Speech and Drama a member of the FDS (Federation of Drama Schools) stated "quotas would reduce the quality of our student intake" (Henderson 2018). The fear that has prevailed since being held to account has evolved from apology to a fearsome resistance to change.

This resistance is now being reasoned not as racism but as the loss of rigour, expertise and ultimately inclusion and equity will no longer see British actor training establishments as beacons of excellence. The neoliberalist rhetoric implicitly employs cultural-racist explanations for inequality whilst maintaining the argument that neoliberal policies and structural adjustment continue to educate all students regardless of culture, race, or ethnicity. Within the classroom cultural racism is seldom expressed openly and can come in many guises (Giroux 1997; Jones 2001). It can occur at several levels, each of which can have a significant impact on the student learning experience. It is however a dominant force which maintains systems of externalised supremacy and internalised racism. It does so by influencing and manipulating collective beliefs to determine what is seen as appropriate behaviour, what is beautiful, and the value placed on things such as kinds of theatre, music, art, poetry, speech and other forms of creative expression.

This dominant force is at the core of cultural racism within HEI actor training courses and sustains the status quo of Whiteness being not just racially, but culturally superior. Powell (2000) proposes that educational environments, as sites of knowledge, have the potential to counteract a culturally racist ideology and practices. In her research she contends that it is "imperative that we confront cultural racism in

our schools and classrooms so that our society eventually might overcome notions of White supremacy and become more inclusive and accepting of our human diversity" (2000:13). Yet, despite the fluctuating UK legislative framework regarding equality (see for example Equality Act 2010; Commission for Race Equality 1988; Equality and Human Rights Commission), the influence of a marketized-globalised performative culture serves to maintain dominance and informs the widening academic achievement gap (Gillborn 2005; Maylor 2009; Wilkins 2015), rather than narrowing it. More specifically in actor training the belief that White western cultural knowledge is superior to that of other ethnic groups has exposed lasting damaging effects on student retention, progression and mental health. This study seeks to make a valuable contribution to the practical development of how we teach actor training. Hence, recognising the existence of cultural racism as a barrier to learning is the first step to shifting to a transformational process that can facilitate diversifying of the curriculum and teaching practices in order to authentically action inclusivity.

Culture

This research study argues that tutors, lecturers and practitioners of HEI actor training need to reflect on how the subject or craft of actor training is taught to critically develop an equitable creative platform. McAllister-Viel (2012) advises, "most contemporary intercultural discourse tends to examine productions, not pedagogy…intercultural training has never been properly examined" (McAllister-Viel:16.02.12). This exclusion results in the students cultural starting point being denied and perpetuates a cultural authority that is "invariably white, patriarchal and heterosexist" (Bharucha 2000:35). It is this hegemonic authority that drives the decisions and teaching practices in our educational institutions, and in the classroom, it can function both at a conscious and unconscious level. Additionally, the reluctance of actor training tutors/practitioners to acknowledge cultural differences and cultural knowledge in the classroom augments the conditions for

cultural racism to circulate preventing students from learning through their own cultural lens.

Culture is not an easy concept to define, and there are many definitions with no (inter)disciplinary agreement on a single meaning. Although historically the study of culture has been the domain of anthropology, it is now of interest to a variety of disciplines and fields such as sociology, politics and education. Generally, culture is often used by educational researchers to refer to shared values, beliefs, practices, products and norms of social groups. Thus, it is the integrated, social, biological and ethnic modes of behaviour of a group or a society (Kapur 2018). Other forms and levels of social organisation and stratification have also been accepted as having a culture (Hofstede 2011). HEIs such as Universities and Conservatoires also have their own culture. Culture is not genetically inherited, and cannot exist on its own, but is always shared by members of a society (Hall 1986; Hollensen 2007; Chiao 2009; Geertz 2017). Hofstede (2011) defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another" (2011:21), which is passed from generation to generation. It is changing all the time because each generation adds something of its own before passing it on. For Keesing (1974) culture is conceptualized as a principally unconscious "theory of the world", a "theory of the code being followed, the game being played" (1974:89). Kessing's speculation does not expand on what the code is or who sets the rules, if any, to the game.

Mulholland (1991) explains that it is usual that a person's culture is taken for granted and assumed to be correct because it is the only one, or at least the first, to be learned. Adler (1994) cites Herder's traditional concept of culture as a notion of inner homogenization and outer separation at the same time. The process of this concept is driven by cultural racism as cultural diversity is reduced by being absorbed by the dominant culture, a definition of culture that can potentially align with DuBois' (1999) double consciousness. Green (2012) insists that you do not control culture, at best you shape it. Hall (1996a) provides a definition of culture that invites analytical disruption. He maintains culture is not something to simply appreciate or study, but a critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled. He identifies culture as a space of interpretative struggle. With all these disparate notions it is clear culture is

complex, intricate and is not static. Examining the interrelated characteristics, culture and cultural differences are more than being about history, geographic location, language, social class, religion, artifacts, rituals, and traditions, but also play a part in the power relationships that exist in fields such as education.

In educational settings, the concept of organisational culture, (Deal & Kennedy 1983; Schein 1985; Trice & Beyer 1993; Hofstede 2011) comprises of organisational values, shared beliefs and assumptions, behavioural norms, and expectation aspects (Rousseau 1990). Organisational culture plays important role in the matching process between individuals and their organisations (Kilmann et al., 1986; O'Reilly et al., 1991). Education and culture are intimately and essentially connected, a system of knowledge, that affects everything people do because of their ideas, values, attitudes, and normative or expected patterns of behaviour. Therefore, drawing from Rousseau's (1990) organisational concept of culture and Hall's (1996a) interpretative struggle, this study contends that culture in education is a 'thing' carried into the teaching space by 'self'. Furthermore, the 'thing' carried can be aligned with Bourdieu's (2006) habitus cultural capital, Dostoevsky's (2019) interpretation of an euclidean frame, Giroux (1997) language of possibilities and Fanon's (1956, 1967) enslavement in reference to cultural racism. All ideologically correlating with Ortiz's (1995) starting point of enslavement in his theory of transculturation.

Identity

The section on identity has been included in my research as culture is enacted through the performance of identity. I therefore focus on the place of culture in actor-training because it is my experience, previously as an actor and subsequently as a director and actor trainer in HEIs, that notions of culture and identity are central to reinforcing stereotypical views prevalent in actor training teaching practices. In a classic sociological conception, identity is formed in the interactions between self and society. It is formed and modified in a continuous

dialogue with the cultural world (Mead 1934; Hall 1996a; Coley 1998). Culture is vital for a Meadian theory of identity in two aspects. First, cultural genres and cultural artifacts are the means to the semiotic mediation of self as a recognised social type. Second, and even more crucially, identities are part of the prevailing cultural constructions. Hence in this conception, identity connects the gap between the inner and outer as the subject projects into cultural identities, whilst internalising their meanings and the value of the meanings. This inner and outer connection aligns subjective feelings with the objective places occupied in the social and cultural world.

Giddens (2001) poses a broader argument about the changing nature of identity in what he terms "late modern societies" (2001:86). He suggests the self becomes a 'project' that modern individuals have to work on, by being constantly 'self-reflexive' in order to maintain a coherent and consistent identity. Giddens (2001) sees identity as fluid and malleable, where individuals have been offered multiple choices and possibilities to form and construct their own identities, rather than remain fixed. Whilst Giddens (2001) regards this approach as a form of liberation where self-identity is created against a backdrop of daily experiences, Foucauldian theorists (Butler 2004; Oksala 2009; Lynch 2011; Taylor 2011) would argue the illusion of possibilities is another means of exercising power. For Foucault (1994) the examination of who we are or who we perceive ourselves to be, is far from a matter of individual choice. It is in fact, the product of powerful neoliberal agendas, specifically in institutions, such as HEIs. He argues individuals are now encouraged to regulate themselves and to ensure that their own behaviour falls within acceptable norms. In 'acceptable' he outlines racist and dominant models of expectation determined by the mechanisms of power.

Identity is an extremely broad and ambiguous concept, yet it allows focus on critical questions about personal development and social relationships, questions that are essential in learning and sites of knowledge production. In entering a place of education students take on, or aspire to take on, a new role as a member of the community of practice in which they are seeking to participate. Penuel and Wertsch (1995) suggest advancing Meadian concepts of identity in the learning environment to empower, by highlighting the requirements needed to make explicit the cultural and historical resources. Their research focuses identities as social and cultural

products through which a person identifies self-in-activity and learns, through the mediation of cultural resources, to manage and organize themselves to act in the name of an identity. Indeed, Wertsch (1997), Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998), collectively assert that identities are associated with activities understood against a horizon of cultural meaning. Hence, social types gain sense only within the developed imaginings of the worlds in which they exist. Holland et al., (1998) use configured worlds and cultural worlds interchangeably to refer to socially and culturally constructed realms of elucidation and enactment in which certain particularities are recognised. Importance is assigned to certain activities, the acts that compose them and particular products, conclusions or consequences are hierarchically valued over others (1998:52). It is fair to say, in these constructions, our identity is something we uniquely possess, and it is what differentiates us from other people. Simultaneously, identity also indicates a relationship with a broader collective or social group of some kind. In doing so identity requires us to pay close attention to the diverse.

Communication Theory of Identify (CTI) pinpoints four layers of identity (Hecht et al., 2005). The theory contends that the internalization, externalization, and social enactment of identity is perpetuated by and through communication. Cultural identity is a subset of the CTI that establishes four layers that allows us to examine how we build identity. These layers include the personal layer, enactment of communication layer, relationship layer, and communal layer. The layers interchange with one another as the identity is negotiated. That is, the layers are connected as they portray a singular identity and often overlap as well as contradict one another (Lijadi & Schalkwyk 2017). This process is described by Hecht et al., (2005) as interpenetration. The communal layer refers to the cultural constraints or the sense of 'right' that people live by which varies by cultural group. Additionally, the communal layer is where identity emerges and manifests at the group level (Orbe & Roberts 2012). Therefore, cultural and ethnic identity become central to a person's identity, how they see themselves, and how they relate to the world. This notion treats identity more fluidly allowing an evolving, shifting and contextual approach, rather than static, addressing a critique many had of prior studies of culture and identity. However, it does not address group level power dynamics or cultural racism and whilst it advocates a notion of fluidity much of CTI research still

labels and groups all people of the identity group together (Collier & Thomas 1988; Collier 2009; Jackson 2009).

In learning environments, there is often assumptions of categorising all student together at the same starting point instead of acknowledging students will develop selves in relation to social identities and cultural identity and in their name perform, create and recreate the activities meaningful to those worlds. Lustig (2013) concurs that cultural identities are central to a person's sense of self. Specifically, at HEI level of learning, Levine-Rasky (2013) contends that a person's identity becomes the lens through which they see themselves and subsequently informs their understanding of others. She insists teachers need to understand their own racial identity and the part it plays in the dominant culture and Whiteness of the teaching profession. This contention aligns with Hall's (1996b) definition of cultural identity; he argues that cultural identity is not something we are born with but can be formed, informed, reformed and transformed within and in relation to representation. Despite the increase in the diversity of the student population in UK actor training HEIs little research or development has been undertaken to explore actor training pedagogy, the diversification of the curriculum content nor the relevance of the student's own cultural identity in the training process. Loukes' (2011) work reflects the connexion between scientific cognitive situatedness and actor training, focusing on cultural identity. She suggests that working from positivity of difference as a starting point, it is the culture embedded in and on the body that becomes the central concern with focus on exploring identity through bodily impulses as she sees it as the heart of all self-expression. This approach demonstrates the dynamic relationship between culture and identity, and that in essence we can never think in terms of our identity being fixed as culture is always evolving.

The domain of actor training in HEIs, has garnered long standing concerns raised in regard to questions about representation, colonised discourses, ownership of learning and the elitism of teaching practices (Ginther 2015; Peck 2016). By falling back on a colour-blind narrative or traditions of universality and negating the diversity of cultural identities of students it highlights and problematises, yet again, social power and inequality. In his seminal research on performance, Carlson (2004) states

that, "individual identity is of course developed within and operates specific cultural context" (2004:178). It is essentially defined by the much larger cultural and pedagogical frameworks within which these learning activities are embedded. In other words, the experience of actor training, for students, involves a constant, subtle negotiation of differing expectations, or assumptions, around issues of identity and culture. This has major implications for those students who do not fall into or enter the learning space as part of the dominate cultural group or environment. As Penuel and Wertsch (1995) contend by making the space explicit, the learner comes to develop personal and social understanding. Identity and exploration of the self and other is explored through structures of cultural exchange which become both the subject and the frame for investigation.

Hall (2003) maintains, the body is a site for historical, political and ideological inscription and seen as a canvas for creating alternative possibilities through cultural exchanges. The relations between cultures are a complex interaction of entities, which are in a constant process of negotiating identity (Watson et al., 2002:3). It is the meeting of cultures that create 'in between' spaces that define these relationships. Furthermore, it is through relational interaction a space opens up for diversity to co-exist shifting constantly in the sphere of becoming and 'in relation with' towards actioning inclusivity. These spaces are discursive: sites of negotiation, conflict, and debate (Bhabha 1994:22). There are, according to Watson et al., (2002) at least four major types of negotiation that occur between cultures, which they identify as "transcultural, cross-cultural, multicultural and inter-cultural" (Watson et al., 2002:3). I will engage with transcultural as a site of negotiation in this thesis as it offers the potential to instigate endless possibilities of dialogic cultural exchange within actor training teaching practices.

Gans (2012) suggests that the preservation of cultural identity, being based upon difference, is a divisive force in society. James (2015) counters his suggestion, by advising classifications about identity and culture, even when codified and hardened into clear typologies by processes of colonisation, state formation or general modernizing processes, are always full of tensions and contradictions. Of

course, contradictions can be highly uncomfortable, but they are vital in gaining understanding and can also be creative and positive. When we operate from a position that accepts the positivity of difference (Landon-Smith 2020), we can move beyond theorising the dominant or hegemonic gaze but engage with what hooks (2014) and Fleetwood (2012) refers to as a 'reciprocal gaze'. Specifically, in actor training, working with a reciprocal gaze leads to what I will argue as reciprocal communication in a paradigmatic form of *Call-and-Response,* where the tutor and student are engaged in active perception rather than interpretation. Resulting in both being culturally responsive to the way that power is exchanged and renegotiated, moment to moment, as an essential and critical process of teaching and learning to seeing each other.

Transculturation - Literature Journey to Transculturate

What makes cultures interesting, as Said (1993) insists is not their purity but their reciprocal entanglements, mutual stimuluses, and continuous processes of borrowing and border-crossing, even when they are witnessing or experiencing unbalanced power relations (1993:15). Using a *transculturate* theory to frame my research disrupts the intersection between culture and actor training teaching practices that both illuminates and rejects racist ideology.

Transculturation originates from Cuban anthropologist Ortiz (1999) and is the creative potential of cultural encounters that interweaves 'loss and recovery' in new forms of cultural expression. Each part of the equation entering into dialogue within transculturation will end up being modified forging a new reality, a new experience, original and independent. Mirzoeff (1999) says of the ground-breaking book *Cuban Counterpoint of Tobacco and Sugar* in which Ortiz (1999) initially developed the theory:

> transculturation seeks to describe cultural transformation in terms of a synthesis of systems, which produces new and differentiated cultural

hybrids… and therefore offers a way to analyse the hybrid, hyphenated, syncretic global diaspora in which we live (1999:131).

Pratt (1992) supports this position and views transculturation as the product of "contact zones as social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (Pratt 1992:4). Highlighted in the process she suggests is the existence of multiple cultural entities that give and take from each other (Gutierrez 2004). Hence, the cultural shifts within the five phases of Transculturation cultivate new contexts and cultural meanings opening up a creative experience specifically rooted in time and space: historic specificity and artistic originality.

The notion of transculturation was conceived in relation to countries or governments as systems, and Ortiz's (1999) response to what he described as social parasitism. The processes within the theory have creative potential established in time and space that ricochets 'loss and recovery' in innovative formations of cultural expression. Figure 3 provides a visual representation of Transculturation. There are five defined phases from the starting point of *enslavement.* This starting point is followed by phases of *negotiation* and *adjustment* under the overarching umbrella called *Partial Disculturation*. Any shifts that develop promote unique cultural perspectives and cultural significances. These cultural shifts continue to evolve under the umbrella of *Neoculturation* and moves through the next phases of *self-assertion* and *synthesis* (Attwell 1987; Onghena 2006; Huffman 2008; Um 2017). Consequently, each component within transculturation will adapt and develop to construct new cultural dialogue with no one party being placed dominant over the other. The culture in the time and space is altered, and a new form of temporal culture emerges, to form a new connected whole.
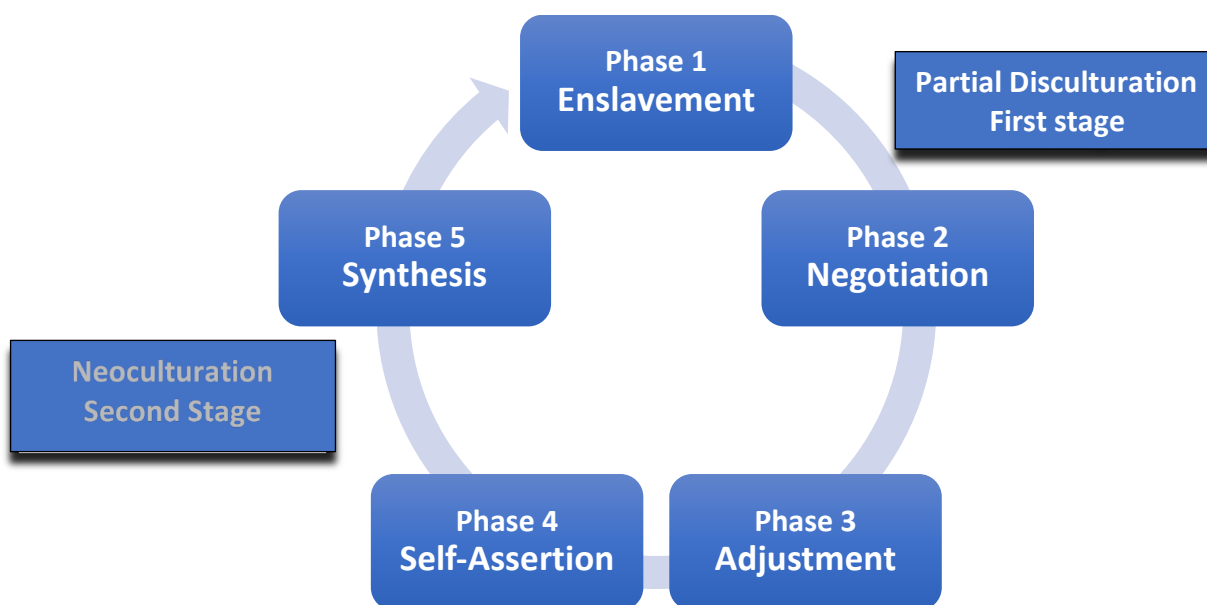
Figure 3. Transculturation

Attwell's (1987) definition of transculturation suggests multiple processes, "a dialogue in multiple directions" (1987:18). However, Ashcroft (2009) considers transculturation, not as a theory, but "a matrix through which a set of critical tools and vocabularies can be refined for the study of texts from a localized world but institutionalised globally" (2009:17). His understanding of transculturation diminishes the potential to yield rich cultural data when its cultural framework is applied to qualitative research. Particularly noting Hepp's (2009) proposition that transculturation is a theory "where everyday complexity of cultural patterns is likely to occur, a triangulation of different data collecting methods is highly recommendable" (2009:4). Misrahi-Barak (2017) plays on the transition of roots into routes and the empowering dynamic of transculturation which subsumes a plethora of trans including: trans-plantation, trans-migration, trans-formation, trans-lation, trans-figuration. The notion of movement in the prefix 'trans' suggests mutation and processualism, which, following Ortiz's (1999) neologism, Pratt (1992) concurs with Malinowski (1995) is the "contact, clash, and transformation of cultures" (1995: lvii–lxiv).

Lund (2001) holds Malinowski (1995) responsible for any criticism of Ortiz's theory. He argues Malinowski's (1995) interpretation of transculturation reduces it to an etymological dimension in an attempt to incorporate Ortiz into the "dominant discursive fold" which can also be interpreted as an effort to diminish the counter-hegemonic influence that 'transculturation' could have upon Western anthropology (Lund 2001:67–8). Lund's (2001) analysis maintains that Ortiz's transculturation is in itself an example of counter-hegemonic transculturation, as it indicates an epistemological response to the dominant and resistant anthropological discourse put forward by a marginalised anthropologist forced to operate from the periphery. In Schmidt (1996) and Santi's (2005) scrutiny of Ortiz's theory they question the relevance of transculturation; they recommend the term *acculturation* clearly identifies what Ortiz (1995) proposes. Conversely, Ortiz (1995) reiterates he intentionally introduces a different term for the phenomenon of cultural contact, not an anthropological redefinition of the phenomenon of cultural contact itself. *Acculturation* is used to describe the "process of transition from one culture to another, and its manifold social repercussions" (1995:96-98). The original definition of acculturation does not specifically refer to a process of transition which results in the interacting and changes of cultures. Ortiz (1995) clarifies:

> I have chosen the word 'transculturation' to express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here (1995:98).

Spitta (1995) explains further, Ortiz developed the theory of transculturation to undermine the homogenizing impact implicit in the term 'acculturation', which in his view "obscured the true dynamics at work in colonial situations" (Spitta 1995:4). According to Mignolo and Schiwy (2007), Ortiz was seeking to correct the perception that, in the dynamic cultural exchange between migrant and settled communities, change and growth occur as a unidirectional flow, as represented in the historical concept of 'acculturation'. They insist, it is imperative to recognise that, in an intercultural encounter, "cultural transformations do not only go from East to West but also from West to East or North-South and South-North", that Ortiz' transculturation works "bidirectionally in the social life of things as well as of people" (Mignolo & Schiwy 2007:21). Additionally, Onghena (2006) asserts, unlike

acculturation, transculturation puts greater emphasis on the potential of dominated cultures to affect dominant ones in situations of cultural exchange.

This exchange in an educational setting would redress what Ogbu (2004) calls 'cultural passing'. His research focuses on an assuming of the dominant cultures in education. He explains that, for those students who are not permitted to 'pass effortlessly' into certain categories regarded as having more value, what takes place is a distinct disassociation from one's cultural identity within the learning space. Ogbu (2004) pinpoints the manifestation of 'cultural passing' as an "adoption of the cultural norms and values of the dominant culture as a survival mechanism" (2004:1-35). Supporting his concept Fordham (2010) adds that Black students are seen as trespassing in academia. Both reinforce the significance of culture in student learning, hence as transculturation is a concept that rejects homogenised exchanges it is an encounter of possibilities. These possibilities open up much needed opportunities of cultural creativity in HEI UK actor training pedagogy which will facilitate equitable student development, which this study will explore.

Transculturation in Higher Education

Notwithstanding Ortiz's (1999) theory being in relation to government systems, during the 21st century transculturation has been adopted as resistance to hegemonic practices in educational and classroom structures, particularly in academia (Manathunga 2011; Brosius & Wenzlhuemer 2013; Um 2017; Song 2019). However, whilst there has been exploration of Transculturation in HEIs around the world, it has yet to make a significant research mark in academia in the UK, a gap my research seeks to redress. Transcultural theorists in education accept the concept is characterised by a process that comprises of two umbrella phenomena: *Partial Deculturation*, the loss of cultural elements and *Neoculturation,* the recovery and creation of new cultural elements (Ortiz 1995:103). Consequently, there is a collective rejection of three overarching foundations of culture conceived from

Herder's (1966) Enlightenment philosophy of modern cultural relativism: social homogenisation, ethnic consolidation and intercultural delimitation.

Song (2019) says the aim of adopting transculturation is to educate the 21st century graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society. Hence, the theory has been pivotal, specifically with Aboriginal students in Australia and Indigenous American students in the USA, as a means to raise the retention and achievement rates of 'non-white students' undertaking studies in HEI. Huffman (1999) advocates transculturation enables Indigenous Americans to achieve academically while retaining their cultural integrity. The transitional stages in transculturation are scaffolded which facilitates processes that equip students with the social-psychological security and confidence necessary to fully engage in the cultural milieu of HEI learning. This study is necessary to illuminate the cultural racism that exists within actor training undergraduate studies and the impact of negating their cultural background, experience and reference points has on the student's quality of embodied learning, and as such embodied knowledge and development. In doing so I will use Transculturation to explore a pedagogic approach as a means to addressing how tutors/educators can practically action inclusivity in their teaching practices.

Pedagogic assumptions have become so embedded that they are typically seen as natural or appropriate norms rather than as "historically evolved social constructions" (Cadman 2005:139). In relation to education and knowledge-building, these assumptions are implicitly and explicitly rooted in the currently dominant White, Anglo-Celtic academic ways of teaching, learning and researching (Scheurich & Young 1997; Onghena 2003; Song 2016; Um 2017). Cadman and Song (2019) assess discriminatory educational practices are driven by cultural racism and need to be addressed in ways which extend beyond the individual and institutional policies that are currently taking place. An investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC 2020) found that about a quarter of Black, East Asian, South Asian students including non-British White students, said they had experienced racial harassment since the start of their HEI course. Of those, Black students reported the highest rate of racial harassment (29%), followed by Asian students (27%) and mixed/other students (22%). Meanwhile, 9% of White British students

said they experienced racial harassment, including anti-English, anti-Welsh and anti-Scottish sentiments. The results evidence a disproportionate experience in relation to the statistical intake of students.

Transcultural theorists in academia assert educational differences can be essentially and productively bridged if pedagogic challenges are addressed at the 'civilisational' level. In human societies, civilisations do not clash; it is empires that clash, not the ontological and epistemological concepts that sustain them (Liu 2004; Cadman 2005; Onghena 2006; Um 2017). Song (2016) insists that human beings have the capacity to learn how to interrogate their own assumptions and beliefs through the imaginary of another, to engage with each other's epistemological premises and worldviews, and to grow in understanding of each other's ways of knowing about the world. Onghena (2006) argues that HEI educators need to reject conformity to ill-informed pedagogies that do not respond to up-to-date, global intercultural understanding, but must embrace the full implications of Ortiz's (1999) concept of bidirectional, transcultural learning. Both Salvadori (1997) and Onghena (2006), stress the potential discomfort and antagonism involved for all parties who grapple with the transcultural process. Salvadori (1997) explains that there can be moments of confusion, loss, and a sense of weakening of identity (1997:187). Onghena (2006) points to the tensions involved in asymmetric power relations as academics might feel the need to "reinforce this sense of 'us' that can be considered as exposing and leaves the academic vulnerable when faced with the invading 'other'" (Kraidy 2009:13–14). Furthermore, for the increasing diversity of the student population the process of cultural exchange may not be undertaken freely, because "not everyone enjoys the same freedom at the moment of combining or interpreting cultural factors" (Onghena 2006:183). However, he insists that by embracing a transcultural pedagogy evokes risks that are essential. This insistence aligns with the 'pedagogy of engagement', defined by hooks (1994) as the connection between ideas learned in university settings and those learned in life practices.

Transcultural theorists recognise that transcultural pedagogy requires "time, commitment, patience and trust" (Manathunga 2014:108). Likewise, transculturation should be seen as transgressive (Howes 2008), cultural boundaries are crossed through actions of critique, parody and comparison, facilitated by the subversive

power of images. Pratt (1991), Howes (2008), Lakes and Carter (2011) consider the educator asking the following questions:

1. How do students engage with suppressed aspects of their own history, and to what effect?

2. What space is occupied and represented here by oral expression and knowing? What does that signify, lead to and make possible?

3. What movements are made into and out of rhetoric of authenticity, and with what effect on validity?

4. What storytelling is evident here, and how do those stories identify the ideas, interests, histories, and attitudes of others? What repositioning do those stories do? What liminal spaces and contradictions with dominant narratives do they point to?

5. What arts of transgression are deployed, such as critique, parody, and comparison (including 'unseemly' comparisons between elite and everyday cultural or vernacular forms) as transculturation and collaborative work?

6. What ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy are in play here that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect?

Pratt (1991) emphasises the questions as an enquiry into the "pedagogical arts of the contact zone" (1991:40), which is particularly valuable for psychophysical actor training. Additionally, in doing so, she suggests we are able to identify the dialogic mechanisms and juxtapositions through which the work achieves a pedagogical effect. Salvadori (1997) explains the transcultural educators' goal is to "achieve transculturalism and creating a common culture, which ... certainly will be different from the original cultures of both teachers and students", which effectively works towards "the creation of a critical, comparative and systematic perspective of existing cultures" (1997:188). Ultimately, a transcultural pedagogy is to open up much needed cultural spaces in education for speaking truth to power, and actively engaging in extending the dominant boundaries of reason and critique. Lund (2001) concurs and argues Ortiz's transculturation becomes a proto-interdisciplinary effort that not only has "relevance for a local reality, but also speaks volumes from that reality and for, if not the entire world, at least the entire Western academy" (Lund 2001:71). This is significant not least in relation to the transculturate framework in

which this thesis is situated, where the parameters that govern professional practice in UK actor training are inherently hermetic, protecting the dominance of White, male and usually Western Eurocentric space.

Transculturality and Transculture

This section on Welsch (1999) transculturality and Epstein (2009) transculture has been included as I believe it is necessary to examine the development and reframing of transculturation since Ortiz's inception of the theory. The concept of transculturation seeks opportunities for explicit understanding of the complexity of cultures which interpenetrate or emerge from one another. Dagnino (2016) sites Welsch's (1999) pivotal essay *Transculturality - the Puzzling Forms of Cultures Today* as a modern development of Ortiz's transculturation. Dagnino (2016) theorises transculturality aims for a multi-meshed and inclusive, not separatist and exclusive understanding of culture. She confirms that transculturation is a significant cultural occurrence that cannot be analysed or isolated into elements of traditional cultures based in specific regions. However, Dagnino (2016) concurs with Welsch's (1999) emphasises on recognising that contemporary cultural practises now speedily transfer and connects to and with people. She insists the additional depth transculturality brings to the concept of transculturation allows development through processes of 'trans-patriations':

> it is a matter of readjusting our inner compass: away from the concentration on the polarity of the own and the foreign to an attentiveness for what might be common and connective wherever we encounter things foreign (2016:2).

Hence, transculturality has the potential to transcend our conventional and apparent formative or defining monocultural positions, potentials which open up possibilities of challenging cultural racism that exists within actor training pedagogy. Welsch (1999) asserts:

> I am confident that future generations will more and more develop transculturality in forms of communication and comprehension… we can transcend the narrowness of traditional, monocultural ideas and constraints,

we can develop an increasingly transcultural understanding of ourselves…For whom any separatist vision of cultures as distinct, self-enclosed, and self-sufficient units is overcome in view of the contemporary dynamics of cultural transformations and 'pure cultural processes' (1999:6).

In other words, transculturality specifies cultural change as an action of adjustment, focused on how culture influences the way people think and communicate. The action interacts and exchanges, blurring the identity of two sides in order to discover a new entity through which the adjustment contributed by both sides stimulates and circulates an alternative result. Blended cultural forms, then, lead either to manifestations of cultural creativity, to opposition, to discrimination, or to integration of cultural forms of expression within both academic and societal positionings (Melucci 1997; Hoerder et al., 2005; Song 2016).

More recently Epstein (2009) reframes transculturation as transculture, he theorises that transculture amplifies transculturation as it "lies both inside and outside all existing cultures...the transculture world is a unity of all cultures and noncultures, that is, of those possibilities that have not yet been realized" (2009:333). Epstein (2009) writes that Bakhtin (1981), Hall (1996a), Said (2002) and Bhabha (2004) have enormously expanded the frontiers of cultural desire and imagination beyond the boundaries of the dominant culture and maintains they opened the "theoretical prospect for a culture of cultures" (Epstein 2009:332). Explicitly, "a universal sign system", which represents endless variations of "all existing cultures and possibilities of cultures that are yet to emerge" (2009:332). He agrees with Malinowski's (1995) reading of transculturation as an intricate process, which establishes a reality that is not a "mechanical collection of traits, or mosaic, but a new phenomenon, original and independent" (1995: xi). However, Epstein (2009) elucidates on the necessity for further transcendence, specifically through 'interference' with other cultures, in as much as transculture presumes the continuing 'physicality' and 'essentiality' of existing cultures. Therefore, accordingly, transculture offers the "freedom of every person to live on the border of one's 'inborn' culture or beyond it" (2009:334).

Transcultural educationalists Berry (1999), Cuccioletta (2002), Jenkins (2006), Brooks (2007) and Grosu (2012) all welcome Epstein's (2009) advancement on transculturation agreeing that implementing a transcultural pedagogy could reignite

'haphazard creativity' back into the classroom. Collectively they agree that there can be no one model for a transculture pedagogy. Transculture is not preordained, it is subjunctive and horizontal in both conception and practice. Brook (2007) confirms the processes of transculture are not solely a theoretical concept but a practice which:

> produces new conceptions of subjecthood, subjectivity and identity as new cultural and ethnic boundaries have emerged. These new cultural and ethnic identities carry with them the need for new conceptions of subjectivity and require the opening-up of new subject positions and new spaces and places from which to speak. This emphasis requires a transdisciplinary approach to the analysis of representation and identity (Brooks 2007:184).

Therefore, a transculture pedagogy has an impact on perceptions of individual cultural identities. It is important to note that transculture does not aim to eliminate the cultural 'body,' the significance of symbols and the habits inherited at birth and learnt through family and education. Conversely, it aims to radically transform and enrich our cultural bodies in an euclidean sphere of all possible differences from existing cultures inasmuch as we experience them, intersect and distance ourselves from them. Epstein (2009) contends a guiding principle for transculture is to "oppose yourself to nobody, identify yourself with nothing" (Epstein 2009:349). This guiding principle clearly aligns itself with actor training in UK undergraduate acting courses where students are asked to enter the training from a position of 'not knowing' and to be physically and intellectually open and available to receive the training (Grotowski 1985; Stanislavski 2013; Chekhov 2014; Suzuki 2015; Lecoq 2020).

Transculturate

By expanding Ortiz's original theory of transculturation this study uses the term Transculturate. Building on a pedagogical understanding of transculturation Welsch (1999) offers transculturality as an analytical model through which one can give account of the cultural dynamics and the creative expressions happening in and with individuals (Welsch 1999). Likewise, Epstein (2009) considers transculture an

essential concept in shaping new cultural identities in the zone of 'fuzziness' and 'interference'. In Rama's (2012) *Writing across Cultures* he suggests that Ortiz's concept of transculturation does not pay sufficient attention to the factors of "selection and inventiveness that must always be part of the mix in any case of cultural plasticity for such a state testifies to the energy and creativity of a cultural community" (2012:22). Consequently, in formulating a transculturate framework, I interconnect all three conceptual positionings to enable transformation in as much as it causes to: become through process; shows to be full of; and is a distinct collective. Thus, a transculturate theory facilitates a pedagogic approach in time and space which presents possibilities to challenge cultural racism in actor training by

- The development of a transculturate lens, a perspective in which all cultures look decentred in relation to all other cultures, including one's own.
- An openness to the reception, integration, and negotiation of other cultures.
- Overcoming the binaries of dominant versus subordinate cultures inherent in the original concept of transculturation.
- A re-conceptualisation of difference and diversity as negotiable, as intersectoral, as strategic, and as capital.
- The movement of cultural ideas, through artistic practice, at a particular moment in time.

Hence developing a cultural framework which seeks to offer an alternative approach to how we teach actor training provides opportunity not only to question hegemonic practices that pervade HEIs but facilitates transformative possibilities of engaging with dialogic cultural research. In doing so an acting tutor/practitioner can gain a culturally conscious understanding of their teaching knowledge and practice (Marèchal 2010:374) with a focus on disrupting the 'norm' of seeing through a colonised lens.

In conclusion, the literature review which lay the foundation for this study included: actor training, actor training pedagogy, cultural racism, culture, identity and transculturation with a focus on a literature journey to transculturate. I have located a gap in current actor training educational research and the literature review has endeavoured to illustrate how little research has been undertaken in relation to culture as a significant factor to achieving authentic embodied learning and embodied knowledge. I now describe my methodological approach, which provided a decolonised framework for documenting my research journey.

PART III: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This section will examine my methodology, choices of research model and research approach. I will consider the reasons and the implications of the choices made, whilst interrogating my pursuit for a decolonised journey towards validity. Guba and Lincoln (1994) put forward that research designs "are all inventions of the human mind and hence subject to human error. No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right" (1994:107). For a Black researching professional undertaking educational research, the pursuit for 'acceptable', rigorous and reliable methodological structures that gives credence to the analysis, findings and conclusions of the researcher has been a long-haul expedition. Peller (1995) argues it is Whiteness that defines knowledge, therefore as discussed in the Introduction and highlighted in Literature Review, this multi-faceted qualitative research has two strands that interweave through autoethnography. First, by underpinning autoethnography with Critical Race Theory to navigate Whiteness, I will confront and disrupt hegemonic research discourses in the domain of actor training. Second, adopting this approach provides a decolonised lens, to investigate and analyse a new theory I have named: *Transculturate Call-and-Response*. This theory will produce a cultural foundation rooted in the transformative paradigm to identify how cultural racism impacts on pedagogic practices and offer a practical approach to actioning inclusivity in actor training.

I have chosen to employ an overarching criticality, to analyse my own reflections about the realities of my lived experience. This route allows me to lead in conversations that facilitate exploration of challenging cultural and racial assumptions in actor training research. Ntozake Shange (2018) conclusively pinpoints, to be Black, a woman and an academic is a metaphysical dilemma, which is described as the reality beyond what is perceptible to the senses. Her research reveals that Black women who are academics, particularly those in research, deviate from what is considered as standard. The standard Shange (2018) describes is Whiteness, and therefore, White perceptions about the competencies of a Black researching professional questions my capabilities to contribute to research and new knowledge. The manifestation of the analysis of my marginalised positioning emerges through Re/Voicing.

Re/Voicing

               You took me
Laid me down on red salted splinters
Shipped my womb Spitting discourses.
Chained, Voicing validation of life
As the first bartered baby's breathe pissed screeching free
Dying to silence.
Traditions, Sealed in the skinned landscape
And Practices, labelled in the limbs of Magnificence
You Guineaman enslaved theoretical conceptions.
Sniggering, Sanctified Alkebulan paradigm, deceptions

Let the sea whisper
               You took me
Defacing equality, whipping time
Lashed down streaked shafted hide
Again, and again. Sun golden study hung with Rigour
Fragmented utterance croaking on a wave of decorticated
Epistemic phenomena.
"Fi mi knowledge is as good" I said
"Lesser Than" you said, "Not Yet" You Said
Massa me my eyes lowered to ethnographic reticence
No choice Re/Voicing sounds of my auto existence

Let the sea whisper
               You took me
Emaciated emancipated green of Jerusalem
Pomp of power promises empowerment.
Your strangulated half afflicted smiles
Windrushed every 'ism from my sweat to fund your policy
Back Rushed Methods.
Whilst Winds of dreams Butterflied my soul
Authority anchored my mind
Prophesying political purification left me nothing
Except trauma, aggravated, devalued in colonising

Let the sea whisper
               You took me
Gaze assessed. You took me
Ripped out the beat, criteria by criteria
"Go on" you, said "Go On"
Lost at sea, I fought, clawed my way scrabbling overcast dominion.
Traditions and Practices controlled
Habitus inhibited Drove double consciousness Over cultural passing
Through the institutional lexis of deficiency
Across the bedlam face of diversity
To Crumbled Crumbs, in an acronym questioning Adversity

Let the sea whisper
                        You took me
Up against the institutional walls
You choked me. A paralytic choke.
Bastardized me to integrated silence
Smiling empowerment. Nodding Neoliberal Whiteness
Supremely. You watched.
Again, and again, I let you. Ashamed I cried for your answers
Until I Tasted the ugali ubuntu of Ontology. A Being is Force
Ubuntu. I lick my fingers Savouring the Lady Okra of Epistemology
Power Revoiced in my Transculturate tribes of Academia
Identified. Evidenced. Finding a call-and-response Encyclopaedia

Let the sea whisper
        You took me
                Passaged long ago in the midst of Awakening
                Living in a skin that rejects Bleached blackening
                To Unsilence my song Researching my search
                To Perch on the Counterpoint to any besmirch

So Now let the sea whisper
                I embody what Was
                I live what Is
                I am what can Be

(2014, 2021)

Research Aim

Hence, this autoethnographic qualitative study was undertaken to chart my lived experience whilst examining the learning experiences of a diverse cohort of thirty-three BA Acting students in their first year of training. Specifically, it examined their thoughts and feelings about their culture, cultural experiences and any impact it may have on their learning experience which as discussed in the literature review addresses a gap found in the field of actor training. Non-numerical or qualitative data was required to enable the emergence of new insights on the key issues in relation to an autoethnographic research journey with first year acting students, the themes that influence and impact on their learning experience and potential implementation of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory as an inclusive pedagogic practice.

Through the verbatim data collected, the research aimed to reveal how cultural racism in hegemonic teaching practices impacted on embodied learning and embodied knowledge. It is a call to *how* we can practically action inclusivity in contemporary actor training. It is a response to the litany of testimonies, experiences and petitions from students who have suffered the trauma of implicit and explicit racism whilst training to be actors. It is a disruption of modern Western philosophies stemming from Kant (1922) who, in dismissing Black knowledge wrote "this fellow was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid" (Kant in Ani 2013:297). Kant's racist reasoning of comparing skin colour with the level of intelligence has evolved and manifested in various forms, nonetheless, it remains prevalently embedded in the HEI Ivory Tower's structural and systematic policies and procedures. This thesis's primary focus is cultural racism. However, as indicated in the literature review (Ladson-Billings 1998; Helms 2017) for students and academics from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups, there are four levels of racism to navigate: cultural, epistemological, personal and institutional. As epistemological racism is relevant for Black educational researchers in decolonising their research approach it will be discussed later in this section. To understand such culturally racialised academic teaching and learning experiences, an autoethnographic methodology was used to investigate the research questions.

Research Question and Sub-Questions

Part 1 articulated the main research question that guided this study: *How does a Black researching professional navigate Whiteness in academia to authenticate a Transculturate Call-and-Response theory to action inclusivity through a practical approach in UK Actor Training Higher Education provision*? The research question originates from and motivated by my ontological perspective and the literature review. This study asks questions that seeks to understand, illuminate, Re/Voice and transform rather than to measure and quantify. Consequently, the research undertaken sought to garner rich data regarding student

perceptions about the factors that may influence embodied learning and embodied knowledge. As demonstrated in the literature review, insufficient research in *how* we teach actor training in HEIs such as Drama Schools, Universities and Conservatoires has been undertaken. This gap leaves a research deficit in considering the significance of culture, cultural racism and the impact on pedagogic practices, the authentic diversification of the curriculum, and the potential for embodied learning experiences.

The following three sub-questions supported the main question:

1) *What cultural differences and assumptions influence the experiences of BA Acting first year students on a mainstream actor training course?*
   This question refers to the cultural knowledge and expectations students bring to their training process. Collating this data ascertained the significance of culture to students and their individual awareness of any role culture might have over their first year of undergraduate studies.

2) *Which factors shape a dialogic transculturate pedagogic approach to actor training teaching to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning?*
   This research question sought to gain insight into the intersection between the value of cultural capital, teaching practices, diversification of the curriculum, and any impact it may have on embodied learning in actor training. The emergence of any findings was used to inform the implementation of an original pedagogic approach called *Transculturate Call-and-Response.* It intertwines African artistic tradition with a process of transculturate exchange that motivates a time and space transformation, in order to facilitate a platform of equity.

3) *How can a Black researching professional disrupt the Whiteness of dominate discourses in academia to authentically undertake educational research?*
   In this study, I as an 'outsider within' situate myself autoethnographically to gain understanding of the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge

is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of colonised practices. The literature review and my critical reflective Re/Voicings mapping the research journey demonstrates the dominance of Whiteness and cultural racism in actor training. Combined with detailed analysis of the student's viewpoint on cultural exchange, I illustrate my ultimate resistance to conducting colonised educational research on a Doctorate programme.

The research questions demonstrate the investigation into actor training pedagogies stems from the students' perspective on culture and sits within my own ontological positioning based on the Ubuntu "I am because we are" (Moloketi 2009:243). Desmond Tutu translates the Ubuntu principal tenet as "a person is a person because of or through others" (Tutu 2004:25-26). As the literature review highlighted, hooks (1994); Friere (1996); Ladson Billings (1998) and Giroux (2000) asks us to consider that education does not stand alone in isolation from cultural or political influence, nor can institutions and educators adopt a neutral instrumentality somehow above the ideological conflicts of the society. Therefore, it is essential to this study that the research questions seek the tutor's perspective in the midst of the research. hooks (1994) advises:

> teachers must be actively committed to the process of self-actualisation that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students...a classroom is not diminished if students and professors regard one another as 'whole' human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world (hooks 1994:14-15).

These initial research questions supported the consciousness of my positionality leading to a methodological and philosophical syncopated cognizance regarding what must be at stake for the Black researching professional. Through exploration and analysis, I was able to undertake a truly impactful study, challenging and disrupting the Whiteness of neoliberal ideologies and practice in education. I will outline the philosophical approach, research methodology and paradigm that I employed to investigate the research questions.

Philosophical Perspectives

Every research design involves the researcher assuming an epistemological stance from the very beginning of the research. This influences the suitable strategy of inquiry to be followed and the methods of collecting and analysing the data. The current range of research epistemologies arise out of the social history of the dominant culture, as a result, it has a negative affect for scholars of colour. Therefore, social science research methodologies are racially biased (Scheurich & Young 1997; Gormley 2005; Chilisa 2012). Additionally, Kuntz (2015) asserts that research methodology has become an extension of the neoliberal project via its "logics of extraction" (2015:12). Recently Joseph-Salisbury (2019) contends that little has changed; universities as places of research and the site for generating new knowledge are White spaces and that Black bodies therein are seen as imposters. As an actor training practitioner/tutor and a member of the Senior Strategic Team at my HEI, I can assume the position of an insider. However, my ethnicity can cause mainly White people to view me as an outsider. Maylor (2009) illuminates the experience Black female researchers confront when they carry out research, specifically, when problematising race, culture and equality. She describes the "multiple layers of complexity" and the painful "hidden realities" a Black female researcher must painstakingly go through (Maylor 2009:53-64). It indicates the neoliberal policies adopted by the academy as a facade to addressing equality, manifesting as a diversity box ticking exercise.

In searching for new insights into the key issues identified in the research questions previously outlined, I wanted to work from a decolonised theoretical and philosophical lens. Hence in order to set about answering, how *can a Black researching practitioner disrupt the Whiteness of dominate in Academic to authentically research actor training pedagogy?* It was fundamentally essential for me to go through an epistemic decolonisation using the tenets of Critical Race Theory, as discussed in Part I, to consider ontological and epistemological concepts that lie at the core of any research. Crotty (2003) states Western ontology deals with the study of being and concerned with "what kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such" (Crotty 2003:10).

Therefore, Western ontology can be understood as the claims or assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality or social entities (Blaikie 1993; Bryman 2008). Sue (2006) and Shankar (2020) explain ontology supports imperialist ventures of European powers in which Whiteness is, accordingly, the default standard to emulate. Ladson-Billings (1998), Snape and Spencer (2003), Joseph-Salisbury (2019) contend this point of view is specifically relevant to educational research. Undertaking an autoethnographic study, it was critical my starting point originated from a legitimate realisation of an ontological position. A position that emerges from the euclidean recentring, decentring and centring of my double consciousness, where I can reject the colonisation of my philosophic thinking to authentically research what there is to know about the phenomenon under investigation.

The philosophy of knowledge known as epistemology offers the guidelines for research in its attempt to pose and provide answers to three important issues: the relationship between the knower and what is known, the way of knowing and what counts as knowledge (Krauss 2005; Creswell 2017). Consequently, the issue of epistemology is, according to Pine (2009), central to educational research because if we accept the idea that there are different ways of knowing the world, then there are different ways of investigating it. Collectively various researchers (Zamel 1997; Kim 2001; Manathung 2011; Silova & Rappleye 2015; Cadman & Song 2019) contend, there is a growing argument to engage with contemporary diverse transformative and critical theories. This consideration ties into the issues I have revealed in the literature review regarding actor training pedagogy and cultural racism, specifically the knowledge embedded in cultural capital that is devalued under hegemonic educational systems. Scheurich and Young (1997) expertly outline the problem when they describe epistemology as not just the study of how we know but for a marginalised researcher it is also "what the rules for knowing are" (1997:29). This complexity guided me to view my autoethnographic research journey through the lens of Critical Race Theory. In doing so, I can situate myself as an 'outsider-within' navigating the Whiteness of epistemological discourses that frame educational theory, practice and policy directly.

A Decolonised Ontological and Epistemological Viewpoint

As discussed in the literature review, the levels of racism in HEIs are complex and multi-layered. However, as HEIs are sites of knowledge transfer and production it is important to recognise in the field of educational research the prevalence of epistemological racism (Kubota 2020). Tyson (2006) argues the most successful ideologies are not even recognised as ideologies because they manage to disguise themselves as natural ways of knowing and seeing the world. Overtly and surreptitiously, sustaining these ideologies in academia is epistemological racism. It is a form of epistemic injustice, which works by obstructing knowers from learning what is in their benefit to know (Pohlhaus 2017). Epistemological racism operates through the exclusion of knowledge traditions that "derive from communities of colour" (Scheurich & Young 1997:10-13), resulting in epistemicide, a racial hierarchy of knowledge in which Whiteness and Eurocentric ways of knowing are promoted over knowledge derived from marginalised people (Arday 2020). In response to these continuing inequalities, hooks (1990b), Mirza (1997), Collins-Hill (2016), Bailey-Morrissey (2015), Patton and Jordan (2017) argue for the Whiteness of dominant ways of knowing be challenged and for Black women to define their own reality as there are multifarious and alternative ways of knowing. Jamaican philosopher Marcus Garvey (1938) confirms in resistance we must "emancipate self from mental slavery, none but our self can free our minds" (1938:41). Hence, my resistance to epistemological racism has been to find an 'anchor' (Fanon 1967), resulting in a lived bodily existence, an embodied behaviour, with a free consciousness of thinking to navigate material consequences in the relations between people. My search led me towards an examination of African ontology and as such decolonising epistemologies to 'anchor' my research. This approach enabled me to productively confront Whiteness whilst investigating a culturally responsive exchange of actor training teaching and learning.

African ontological principles lie in the belief that the research and the researcher are consciously connected and integral to a shared reality. There can be no objectivism, but a constructivist and interpretive avocation that reality is created through social practices (Neuman 2003; Ikhane 2017). It is important to note that from country-to-country Africa is culturally pluralistic and diverse. African

philosophies such as Ubuntu, are inherited templates utilised across the continent upon which ontological and epistemological discourses are based. Nelson Mandela (2006) stated within Ubuntu ontology are the principles of African philosophy which strengthens an open African society. He describes Ubuntu as the basis of African communal cultural life. It expresses the interconnectedness, common humanity and the responsibility of individuals to each other (Mandela 2006: xxv-xxx). It is clear that culture is a crucial element in the cognitive understanding of reality and as such there is a strong underlying cultural lineage of collective and recognised metaphysical principles under the banner of being a fundamental African viewpoint.

It is an approach to framing research that enters a complex symbiotic interaction where the 'I' and 'You' resonate as dialogical connectors in the interiority of the 'Us', *I am because We are*. This perspective does not negate the individual; in fact, it reinforces the self as essential in maintaining social responsibility and playing its part in the social constructs of these ontological tenets **(**Jimoh 2013; Ogbogbo 2017; Ipadeola 2017**)**. Under the banner of the transformative paradigm, it is a decolonised emergence that is socially constructed in relation to each other and the multiplicities of cultural realities, nature and the universe. It allowed me as the researcher to interpret the deep structures that are often unobserved and "construct the framing to destroy myths…and false knowledge" (Chilisa 2012:36). As a consequence, knowing and understanding goes beyond what is being researched impacting on what the researcher observes and responds to in a reciprocal cyclical approach. Therefore, in decolonising my mind from Western objectifications and universality, African ontological and epistemological considerations make the self, and/or subjects the centre of knowledge and in the process of knowledge production the researcher can dismantle the distancing categories of researcher, participant, reader and audience.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is concerned with outlining the methods' limitations, resources, implications and potentials for generating knowledge (Kaplan 2017). In considering actor training educational research through an African epistemological lens, my research route is directed by the decisive tenet that both the subject and object are integral to a shared reality. The researcher gains knowledge not only through reasoning and intellect but by placing themselves, physically and emotionally, as a part of the research (Neuman 2003; Nasseem 2012; Ikhane 2017). This philosophical tenet can be aligned to the requisite of embodied knowledge as a signifying criterion to assessing the attainment of learning for an actor training student. Thus, under a transformative paradigm, I utilised autoethnography as a methodology reinforced by Critical Race Theory and a creative process inspired from the diversification of actor training pedagogy, called *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory.

Autoethnography

An autoethnographic methodology is undertaken with the awareness that "meaning does not just appear, emerge, or rise, but that through symbolic apparatus of culture...meaning is mediated" (Bhattacharya 2017:100). As a methodology, autoethnography has the potential to be a process, a journey, an ontological way of being. It is an invitation to embody theory within a living space of inquiry, constantly questing for the liminal, the in between, to discover that which has yet to be named (Meskimmon 2003; Wilson 2004; Springgay, Irwin, & Leggo 2008). As my research title outlines, the direct cultural exchange between the researcher, participants and the domain in which I operate was paramount in determining the research design. Chawla and Atay (2018) question, "can there be decolonised autoethnographical work?" (2018:3). This question motivated my counternarrative as I gained understanding of my diasporic positioning within educational research. Decolonisation does not exist without a framework that re-centres, privileges and

Re/Voices lived experience. Therefore, in this study, I re-centred and Re/Voiced to enact double consciousness and in-between experiences, revealing potent possibilities to disrupt expected customary Eurocentric rules and benchmarks of Whiteness in research practice and representation. In the following section, I will discuss the characteristics of autoethnography, the rationale for grounding my research within it, and the limitations in relation to my research.

Autoethnography Characteristics

Combining biography and ethnography, autoethnography synthesises self-*auto*, writing-*graphy*, and culture-*ethno* (Ellis 2004). The term was introduced by anthropologist Karl Heider (1976, 2006) in the context of studying Dani culture. However, Heider (1976, 2006) was not originally of the culture and as an outsider he ensconced himself to speak for the Dani people referring to himself as the informant (Chang 2008). Later, Hayano (1979) emphasised "the need for social scientists of colour to examine first their own people and communities" (1979:99). Hence, autoethnography is a research methodology that foregrounds the researcher's personal experience "as it is embedded within, and informed by, cultural identities and contexts and as it is expressed through writing, performance, or other creative means" (Manning & Adams 2015:188). Reed-Danahay's (1997) highlights the role of theory in autoethnography which she aligns with Bourdieu's concept of *tempo* employing the habitus formed in the past and pointing to the future, either in the mode of protension or of reflection. Therefore, not only does autoethnography allow the researcher to centre their experience in the specificity of time but enables a critical examination of the dualism in the insider and outsider views of research.

Chang (2017) explains the flexibility of autoethnographic methodology in the pursuit of educational equity aligns with activist research by capturing the process of praxis (Freire 1970,1996) and intimacy (Tillmann-Healy 2003). Through such literary devices as storytelling, film and poetic forms like Re/Voicing, autoethnography builds on the personal experience to help us see commonalities and divergence against

other human experiences within the same or similar settings (Boylorn & Orbe 2014). Bridgens (2007) argues that sometimes it is only through autoethnography studies that those experiences, "which are ignored, distorted or silenced because of the discomfort they cause, can become known or understood" (2007:5). Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) conceptualize autoethnography as an approach which represents "both a process and a product" (2011:273). Hence, in educational research it cements other ways of undertaking research enabling the researcher to position themselves in the midst of the cultural context to undertake qualitative research which serves to impact on the broader context.

In aligning autoethnography to actor training delivery, collaborative moments from social and cultural spaces can be "the currency of the contact zones… autoethnography facilitates everyone involved to participate in the construction of cultural, social and historical situations and relations in the contact zones" (Brodkey 1996:28-29). Actor training tutors/practitioners can critically reflect on those students' experiences and accordingly make meaning of them. That is, they gain an understanding of their teaching knowledge and practice critically, analytically, and interpretively to take stock of any cultural distinctions of what is recorded or observed (Marèchal 2010:374). Spry (2016) confirms autoethnography is a 'cultural practice'. Its hybridity as a methodology creates an active space in the process of a *transculturate call-and-response,* for the inclusion of student cultural capital to potentially inform and transform actor training practices. As a result, not only does the process of autoethnographical methodology enable subjectivity where my views can be challenged, questioned or upheld. It also facilitated an outlet for Re/Voicing the authenticity of a lived experience in educational research to understand what is not known, thus, opening up discourse on cultural exchange and challenging epistemological & cultural racism.

Accordingly, autoethnography can be read as decolonising methodologies of "resilience, resistance, and remembrance" (Poulos 2017:307), embodying a myriad of possibilities for philosophical freedom which nurtured a holistic examination of the research questions which frame this inquiry. Emphasis was placed on the interconnected use of the researcher's own experience alongside what or who is being researched as data for theoretical analysis. Descriptive and evocative to

analytic and critical, it promoted critical reflexivity, which involved critically analysing and critical interpretation. This was done in a way that highlights the socially constructed and contested nature of knowledge, and therefore our capacity for agency. The different methods of writing in this "methodological innovation" (Anderson 2006: 374) largely fall into two approaches: evocative and analytic.

The definitive feature of analytic autoethnography is the value-added quality of reflexivity by analysing and theorizing from an insider perspective (Sparkes 2020), alongside a commitment to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson 2006:373-374). Hence, Coffey (1999) Anderson (2006) and Delamont (2009) argue the rigour analytic autoethnography dictates, aligns it with the traditional standards of social enquiry. The knowledge gained from the findings of the research enquiry are part of a continuing process which encompasses the personal, professional, and cultural. Alternatively, evocative autoethnography favours "emotional self-reflexivity as a rich data source" (Chang et al., 2012:19). Stuart (2017) argues that evocative autoethnographic accounts of marginalised experience in the academy provide an insight into "the very real material effects of systematic oppression in educational and other cultural institutions" while defining a process that offers "means and strategies of becoming" (2017:301). Within evocative autoethnographic writing the reflexive analysis is left within the story, prompting the reader to develop their own response to the evocative narrative through the researcher revealing multiple layers of consciousness. Both are valuable in Re/Voicing the decolonisation of my research journey. However, it is necessary to be aware of the difference within the chosen writing styles (See Table 1) and the implications in using either or both in my research, as the different 'voices' of the researcher add to the richness of the analysis where the personal leads into the academic reflexive voice (Pitard 2015). This approach enabled me to place my diasporic scholarly voice at the forefront of my work.

Table 1. Autoethnographical layers of writing

Thesis	Themes/Topics	Potential Writing Styles

Part 1
Introduction
	Assumptions
	Expectations
	Emotional description
	Cultural references
	Heritage
	Higher Education
	Whiteness
	Enslavement
	Emotionality
		Narrative: Analytic
		Re/Voicing: Confessional
		          Evocative
		          Analytic

Part III Methodological Approach	Reflection Exposed Biases Reinforced Biases Privilege Cultural Racism Critical reflection Transcultural awareness Lived Experience Shifting lens Negotiation	Descriptive: Analytic Interpretive: Evocative Re/Voicing: Evocative Analytic
Part IV Methods	Connections Shifts Cultural consciousness Establishing patterns Lived experience Adjustment	Realistic/Verbatim: Analytic Interpretive: Evocative Re/Voicing} Evocative Analytic

Part V
Storying the data
	Identity
	Re/Voicing Calls
	Lived experience
	Cultural Particularities
	Critical reflection/Analysis
	Responsiveness
	Transcultural awareness
	Transformation
	Self-assertion
		Factual: Analytic
		Verbatim: Analytic
		Confessional: Evocative
		Narrative: Analytic
		Call & Response: Evocative
		          Analytic
		Re/Voicing: Evocative
		          Analytic

Limitations of Autoethnography

A recurring criticism of autoethnography is the researcher's closeness to the phenomenon being explored and the potential of the researcher to be self-absorbed. Walford (2004) warns that we must be cautious of the accounts "presented as autoethnographies represent real conversations or events as they happened and how much they are just inventions of the authors" (2004:411). Sparkes (2000) suggests that autoethnography is at the boundaries of academic research because such accounts do not sit within traditional criteria used to judge qualitative inquiries. In response to the criticism, Ellis (2004) counters:

> it's self-absorbed to pretend that you are somehow outside of what you study and not impacted by the same forces as others…To write about the self is to write about social experience. If culture circulates through all of us, then how can autoethnography not connect to a work beyond the self? (Ellis 2004:34).

As discussed, my Ubuntu philosophical assumptions positioned me and my research subjectively to navigate Whiteness by centring the lived experience of a marginalised voice which is rich data in order to activate radical change. It is through an autoethnographical methodology that researchers who are disadvantaged due to structural processes of inequality and marginalisation seek to contribute to new knowledge whilst surviving the neoliberal landscape of academia (Pearce 2020:814-819). Dauphinee (2010) argues that the data gathered within the guidelines of "most accepted academic methodologies is just as suspect as any autoethnography, and perhaps more so, because the autoethnography does not purport to be more than it is" (2010:812). In undertaking an autoethnographic study Chang (2008) provides five essential guidelines: safeguard against excessive focus on self in isolation from others; resist placing an overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation; ensure validity by negating exclusive reliance on personal memory and recalling as a data source; uphold rigorous ethical standards regarding others in self-narratives during research, and overall, continual reflection on the application of the label autoethnography (Chang 2008:54). Conversely, Van Manen (1998) provides a useful and coherent counterargument to concerns about the validity of autoethnography. He writes:

> there is no one way of seeing, hearing, or representing the world of others that is absolutely, universally valid or correct. Ethnographies of any sort are always subject to multiple interpretations. They are never beyond controversy or debate (1998:35).

Therefore, the necessity was to ensure I clearly and robustly articulated a rigorous analysis of my enquiry. Undertaking an autoethnographic study within the field of actor training provided the opportunity for a deepened performative collaboration between the self, student participants, and lived experiences. A collaboration that reflected the cultural and social environment of actor training teaching practices in the time and space of those interactions. In adopting this approach, it afforded me invaluable insight to substantiate my analysis and consider its relevance in a broader context.

Why Autoethnography?

Re/Voicing
Dear Reader
For Black people, Hall (1996a) illuminated, with diaspora comes displacement,
And the strategic placement of discourse is fuelled by the heart.
With vulnerability, navigating the normative expectation in a thesis compart.
Confronted, Boylorn (2011) said with *my race in an academic context*.
Using autoethnographic methodology, this qualitative study left no cortex
But a contested field of interest without paradigmatic authority, addressed
A spectrum of theoretical frameworks in a cultural reality ere unexpressed
Now my heart overflows, sharing these intimacies. Ellis (2007) explained
Observing and revealing the broader perspective with transformation framed
A vulnerable self, examining back-and-forth, doing autoethnography
Through a cultural authenticity, negated the object and subject dichotomy.

Dear Reader
My epistemological heart raced to counteract colonial legacies
Found discursive research skills that resisted neoliberalist tendencies
Economic Exchange, stated Forster (2017), reduced educational significance
And theoretical choice to centre the insider-outsider voice in dissonance.
Free *oneself from the constraints of existing structures* advised St Pierre (2000)
Then a Black researching professional can journey with analytical care
Undertaking educational research in Higher Education with a view to construct
I enlisted a methodology that allowed me to disrupt.

Through the violence and invisibility of my heart that is bruised
It stands to reason in the cruciality of this study that both strands were used
Incorporating *a wide array of practices* confirmed Ellingson & Ellis (2008)
Towards an analytic, evocative decolonised autoethnographical process.

Dear Reader.
In dialogue with Others, Lather (1991) determined to call *alternative voices*
This study studied *in-between-zones*, Reader, remember the choices
Explored in the literature review, it informed my methodological anchor
Questioned students' cultural assumptions and significance of culture.
Driven by an analytical heart with subjective understandings in an euclidean prism
The gap was a starting point that examined the role of cultural racism,
Universality of acting teaching practices and authenticity of embodied learning
 Self-consciously aware of itself as artifice Ellis & Bochner (2002) are discerning.
An approach that ensured my personal Re/Voicings shared the dominance
Every insight both a doorway and a mirror, a way to see into their experience
And a way to look back at mine Schwalbe's (1996) wrote, myself interlaced
In the midst, transparent in a positioning that was fully embraced.

Dear Reader
Decolonised forms of research articulated divertimento
What was the data telling me? What did I want to know?
And the dialectical relationship between what I want, and what the data told me?
Three questions Srivastava (2009) defined to inform my analytic reflexivity.
The process supported the rigour of maintaining the outward ethnographic structure
Where the researcher's experiences transpired to puncture
Hidden power dynamics when positioned as an insider
Whilst examining and considering, with rigour, the context wider.
Bhattacharya (2017) promoted the use of autoethnography evocative
Closer to literature and art than to science… a *narrative*
Emotional, dialoguing…it refuses to abstract and explain as a methodology
Ellis & Bochner (2000) articulated. Opened up descriptive possibility.

Dear Reader
Blurred boundaries as opposed to clear distinctions Anderson & Glass-Coffin (2013)
My heart is full of material culture weighted with analytical thinking
I needed to create a connection that is embodied, reflective and critical
Relevant to my research with students, revealing and honouring their cultural capital.
Enhancing the transformative*, pedagogical and political research dimension* (Chang et al., 2013)
Found commonality and understanding of each other as part of acting education
Revealed an equitable platform in their own transcultural image
Among marginalised young people as well as across difference of privilege.
Methodological assumption that stimulated an artistic approach in my qualitative inquiry (Guba & Lincoln 1989)
And interrogated the production and validation of knowledge, culturally.

This study served to bring you on a transformative journey, dear Reader
Any divergence, allow me to enact the stages with self and process as interpleader.

I will now examine the paradigms in educational research. This discussion is included because it informed decisions about the design of the research study. As I journeyed through decolonisation, to navigate Whiteness, I determined to ensure consistency, in the undertaking of research and research outcomes. By making a paradigmatic choice explicit enabled a critical examination of the implications of every step of the research process.

PARADIGMS

A paradigm is a basic belief system that establishes a set of practices and assumptions about: ontology; epistemology; methodology and methods. Guba and Lincoln (1994) contend that choices of paradigms can be viewed as a cultural phenomenon which affords an educational researcher a particular way of understanding and interacting with the world. As such, the consideration of my choice of paradigm played a crucial role framing the decolonisation of my research.

Positivism

The positivism approach is "a structure of reality that is independent of the way any beings, human or otherwise, come to experience and understand that reality" (Johnson 1987: xxxii). Comte (1798-1857) led the positivism movement, Nelson (2013) explains that for Comte the "world which science describes is the world and its method is the method of knowledge itself, presupposing a complete separation between subject and object" (2013:49). Popper (1902-1994) later proposed positivists theories work deductively to discover 'universal' laws and consequently valid knowledge can only be obtained via sanctioned methodologies (Cohen et al., 2013). Epistemologically, theories must be proven or unproven. In

doing so positivism reflects the belief that there is an external, objective reality and what you see and experience, is stable across contexts and people. However, Cohen et., al (2013) clearly highlight the problems with positivism specifically in relation to educational research:

> its appeal to the passivity of behaviourism and for instrumental reason is a serious danger to the more open-ended, creative, humanitarian aspects of social behaviour ... ignoring intention, individualism and freedom (Cohen et al., 2013:19)

Conversely, Crotty (2015) maintains that positivism has shifted in the rigidity of approaches. He writes that the positivism that exists today, labelled as post positivism, translates as "the observation in question being scientific observation carried out by way of the scientific method" (Crotty 2015:20). As this assertion negates cultural differences, diversity or any prejudiced attitudes researchers may have, it is open to colonised assumptions and hegemonic practices which call into question the validity of understanding human society in social science research. These considerations informed the philosophical assumptions that productively impact on the value of undertaking decolonised research and therefore positivism was not suitable for this study.

Interpretivism and Constructivism

Where positivism supposes there are natural laws contained in nature and it is the role of science to discover them, interpretivism supposes there are no suggested laws to discover but models to interpret natural events (Mertens 2010; Creswell 2013). Interpretivists must therefore employ different ways of investigating people's perceptions and attitudes, how these are shaped by cultural contexts, and how they inform people's actions. Epistemologically, interpretive researchers usually adopt one of two approaches. Primarily, there is the non-positivist approach where there is acknowledgement that facts and values are inextricably linked and as such difficult to separate. Hence both factors are involved in scientific examination. The other

approach, normativism, recognises that scientific data and information is ideological and as a result conducive to a particular set of social ends (Archer 1988). Weber (1864-1920) theorised that in the human sciences we are concerned with understanding (*Verstehen*) rather than explaining (*Erklaren)*. His assertion aligns with the interpretivism focus on process and not necessarily collating facts.

It was useful to consider interpretivism with constructivism as epistemologically, they are closely linked. In constructivism, meaning is constructed not discovered; people construct their own meaning in pluralistic ways, even in relation to having a similar experience. Truth and meaning do not operate objectively but are created by interactions with the world (Jackson 2004). Therefore, constructivism can be associated with a model building process, whilst interpretivism can be associated with a model testing process (Kincheloe et al., 2017). The cyclical process of interpretivism/constructivism presents flexibility, and there are many variants such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, transformative and critical paradigms. In the pursuit of research decolonisation, it was beneficial to consider my understanding alongside their significance in relation to my research design.

Phenomenology

A system of ideas, phenomenology is associated with Husserl (1970), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Schutz (1970) and is "riddled with complexity" (Denzin & Lincoln 2017:15). Although phenomenology falls under the interpretivist umbrella, phenomenologists advocate the need to consider "human beings' intersubjective interpretations, their perceptions of the world (their life-worlds) as our starting point in understanding social phenomena" (Ernest 1994:25). Investigating actor training paradigms, such as practice as research, Noe (2004) posits that a phenomenological approach is valuable in emphasising the interrelation between the physical and conceptual to examine "embodied knowledge" and to explain "enactive perception"

(Noe 2004:57). Husserl (1970) suggested an aspect of phenomenology necessitates putting aside beliefs, knowledge, and all experiences which he termed 'phenomenological reduction' or 'bracketing'. Although Merleau-Ponty (1962) later chose to reinterpret the term explaining "meaning being ascribed through the body so that belief in the body cannot be bracketed" (1962:147). He acknowledges the prominence of cultural capital. Despite the development of phenomenological paradigm, the neoliberalist prevalence that equality can be assumed because of implemented policies and structures remains associated with the power dynamics in undertaking research using phenomenology. Additionally, phenomenology is problematic as the theoretical framing is too philosophical (Paley 2017), in parts intangible and too conceptual. Therefore, its limitation highlights the validity debate in addressing the authenticity of actor training research as considered later in this section.

Hermeneutics

The focus of Gadamer's (1989) notion of hermeneutics is to bring some analytical comprehension to the written and unwritten phenomena of human practices. It signifies a practice of "internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (Moustakas1990:9). Thus, hermeneutics affords a process that enables meaning through understanding of any social text and the opportunity to choose between competing interpretations (Neuman 2010). Gadamer (1989) links interpretive experience of hermeneutics with education not just in acquiring knowledge or information, but in personal development as we learn about ourselves, and the world in which we find ourselves through interpretation.

Ricoeur's (2013) investigation of the practices of interpretation developed further to encapsulate phenomenology with hermeneutics. He described hermeneutic phenomenology, as whatever logical comes to us in and through our

use of language to talk about our lived experience. Additionally, he insisted that the meaning of the text rather than the author's intention or the originating situation became the object of interpretation. Facets of hermeneutics seemed to aesthetically align with what I sought to undertake in my research, however essentially its limited scope to understanding society, particularly as a Black researching professional in education would not facilitate a full exploration of questions regarding social reality like power, domination, and exploitation. Therefore ultimately, a hermeneutics paradigm would not have the capacity allow me to impact education policy, challenge social phenomena, or instigate social change.

Transformative

Whilst the positivist researcher seeks to explain social phenomena, and the interpretivist researcher seeks to understand social phenomena, it leaves a theoretical schism for the researcher who seeks to make change and to challenge social phenomena. Consequently, a third paradigm labelled critical theory sought to redress the problematic gap. Critical theory embodies different ideologies by theorists such as Habermas (1972) Frankfurt School and Critical Theory; Lather (1991) Emancipatory practice; Freire (2000) Critical pedagogy; Butler (1999) Queer Theory; Foucault (2001) Structuralism and Bell (1976) Critical Race Theory. Whilst each theory has differing research focuses, they are united in their pursuit to expose and critique forms of inequality and discrimination encountered in daily life. Collectively, there is a belief that any research undertaken is conducted for "the emancipation of individuals and groups in an egalitarian society" (Cohen et al., 2007:26). Emerging from these theories is the Transformative paradigm, primarily inspired by the critical theoretical tradition, it is positioned as an overarching metaphysical umbrella to house philosophies and concepts with the shared theme of emancipating and transforming (Mertens 2010). Application of a transformative theory is guided by three central criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time, ensuring that it gives voice to human beings as

producers of their own historical form of life. Research must take place within, and must in some way affect, a community (Lincoln 1995). The researcher should know the domain well enough to link the research results to positive action within that domain.

Mertens (2009) contends that transformative paradigm should take precedence because it is rooted in the recognition that injustice and inequality are pervasive and the belief that the researcher and the researched are central in the research, working collaboratively. Rather than being emancipated, "we work together for personal and social transformation" (Mertens 2009:2). Explicitly, the transformative paradigm has two points of focus; to understand the dynamics of power and privilege and how they can be challenged in what seems to be the intransigent status quo and to culturally appropriate strategies to facilitate understandings that will create sustainable transformation. To date, criticism of the transformative paradigm is uncommon (Romm 2015). That can be because it welcomes cultural complexity alongside facilitating a multidimensional approach where researchers augment methods to amplify specific practices. Hence a transformative paradigm provided a framework in which culturally relevant and decolonised research could be undertaken.

Paradigm Decision

In actor training the embodied learning and embodied knowledge of acting methodologies promote transformation (Boal 2008; Hagen 2008; Stanislavski 2013; Chekhov 2014; Luckett & Shaffer 2018; Lecoq 2020). In his seminal work on a democratic training for actors *Theatre of the Oppressed* Boal (2008) contends that "theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society" (2008:193). His work is clearly inspired by Freire's theories on education and culture and falls within Freirean political dimensions. Subsequently, between the intersection of actor training, culture and education, the aim is to both transform and

transcend the daily challenges that may manifest themselves in the form of cultural racism through hegemonic teaching practices. Friere (1988) engages educational research with the transformative paradigm, prompting researchers to look for the "political and economic foundations of our construction of knowledge, curriculum, and teaching" (Gage 1989:5). Therefore, transformative paradigm's perspective, transformation, occurs due to continual learning with a new mindset, an innovative and critical way of thinking (Mezirow 2009). In adopting this criticality in teaching practices involves a dynamic and dialectical movement between 'doing' and 'reflecting' on doing as part of the construction of knowledge. Taylor and Snyder (2013) insist a paradigm that is rooted in criticality is concerned with creating societies free from dehumanising policies and practices that perpetuate social injustice, cultural exclusion, social inequity, and many other forms of repression (2013:9). This study is a critical enquiry aimed at informing the stimulus to improve, instigate or transform educational action (Bassey 1999). As a result, a transformative paradigm offered an approach to addressing inflexible societal and individual challenges. Through reciprocal learning relationship formed in actor training pedagogy, collective processes were viewed in new ways that valued transcultural and transhistorical sites of research.

The transformative paradigm enabled me to embrace the challenge of undertaking educational research as a Black researching professional. It provided a guide to understanding patterns of diverging results along with any implications and as such was a catalyst for change. Furthermore, combining Autoethnographic research, Critical Race Theory and *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory grounded in the paradigm of transformation permitted me to disrupt the hegemonic structures established by the dominant society, steering my own actions and practices from a sociocultural, critical, and ultimately a decolonised perspective. By doing so, this study in actor training, attempted to balance power interactions and promoted pedagogic equity.

Transculturate Call-and-Response Theory

The field of actor training within HEIs has been subject to a plethora of vigorous discourses, several somewhat critical on the validity of any research conducted in the domain. This is principally due to actor training being viewed as vocational and as such practice is regarded above theory. Arts researchers have looked to make visible and explicit the function of research in the arts and in the act of "creating knowledge" (Seggern et al., 2008:3). Practice as Research and Arts Based Research, known as PaR and ARB respectively, deliver mixed method and multi-mode research approaches based in visual, verbal, and sensory performativity, moving away from mixed methods in its traditional form. PaR is defined as "practice as a key method of inquiry" and in which a systematic artistic process driven by creative practices "submitted as substantial evidence of a research enquiry" (Nelson 2013:8-9). ARB is described as representing "an unfolding and expanding orientation to qualitative social science that draws inspiration, concepts, processes, and representation from the arts" (Knowles & Cole 2008: xi). Both theories offer a self-sufficient theoretical structure between professional arts practice and academic research. Elkins (2009) questions the validity of arts research, dismissing ABR and particularly Nelson's (2013) theories on PaR stating that "theorizing about researching and the production of new knowledge as nonsense" (Elkins 2009: xi). Carlson (2011) leads in strenuously rejecting this dismissal as obstructive in addressing the complexity of undertaking research within the domain asserting that professional practice and academic theory are not exclusive. Kalvermark (2011) concurs suggesting that there is the "potential to reveal new ways of researching and providing insights and understandings beyond the arts themselves" (2011:2). However, Whitfield (2019) asserts the lack of educational theory, research, critical reflection, and literature underpinning accepted teaching practices and knowledge bases currently prevent an 'emancipatory' approach to actor training.

Within educational research the ability to generate cultural production is largely founded from the dominant culture who are, in the main, of White ethnicity (Giroux 1993; Bourdieu 1993; hooks 2014). Subsequently, in actor training provision this may result in privileged advantage to embodied learning, curriculum accessibility and academic advancement which will be addressed in the first sub-question: *What*

cultural differences and assumptions influence the experiences of BA Acting first year students on a mainstream actor training course? The literature review makes explicit that there must be new approaches to intercultural dialogue. The conditions for such a dialogue include attention to the ways in which cultures relate to one another, cognizance of cultural cohesion and shared goals, and identification of the encounters to be met in celebrating cultural differences and identities. In addition, I outlined the foundational theoretical structures of Ortiz's (2003) transculturation, Epstein's (2009) notion of transculture and Welsch's (1999) notion of transculturality to explore an organic and innovative transculturate actor training pedagogy. This presented an educational approach that framed the transitive process of different cultures coming together to exchange and form new cultural systems through cultural interactions. Thus, it motivated the potential to counter the significance cultural racism plays in the current insufficiency of teaching practices.

The transculturate process requires dialogic teaching and learning relating back to theorists like Bakhtin (1981), Freire (1996a) and contemporary uses (Kumagai et al., 2018). The overarching drive is for the learner and tutor/practitioner to question assumptions, open-up new possibilities, and explore new ways of knowing and seeing without domination or subordination. In this way the learner has a sense of ownership in their learning and a sense of belonging. hooks (2003) emphasises the essentiality of acknowledging culture as means to nurturing belonging, Said (2002) questions the notion of belonging and asserts that cultures are constructed and *can* be constructed. He underlines the celebration of cultural boundaries as the 'not knowing' cultural outsider, which unlocks the potential to question, reverse and Re/Voice cultural boundaries. Accumulatively, hooks (2003), Said's (2002) and Hall's (1996b) notions of cultural belonging feed into the transculturate and actor training principles of creating the possibilities of learning from a starting position of not knowing.

Therefore, I looked beyond traditional discourses that protect the hegemonic norm, to explore embedding the African theory of *call-and-response* within the transculturate framework. This fusion supported my research study to explore an original actor training pedagogy that engages tutor/practitioners in dialogical cultural exchanges, addressing my second research sub-question: *What factors shape a*

dialogic transculturate pedagogic approach to actor training pedagogy to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning? By questioning cultural patterns I developed a contemporary *Transculturate Call-and-Response* approach through a decolonised framework which has the potential to yield rich cultural data. Originating from Sub-Saharan Africa**,** *call-and-response* is deeply engrained within the voiced exposition of African tradition and is a widespread pattern of democratic participation. Storytelling, folklore, and poems have been developed from this form of lived experience verbal data collating. In the West, it has been established in music through the origins of slavery as a ritual of resistance and giving voice to oppression. Those with Eurocentric views of language feared that the dialogue provoked by *call-and-response* could strengthen the mass's resolve for liberation from all aspects of colonial domination in their lives (Lobban 1995: 61-62; Meintel 2002:121). As such, it was deemed to instigate an "uncontrollable excitement among the people" (Lobban 1995:61) and the use of *call-and-response* was brutally suppressed and labelled by scholars as academically deficient.

Together the five types of *call-and-response*: surprise, question and answer, imitation, affirmation and statement and commentary (Snead 1981; Keegan 2009), outline the relationship between its origins from African theatre, religious ceremonies and music to the development of African American musical traditions, and English sea shanties. This relationship demonstrates a cross-cultural formation with the ability to dissolve the past and the future into one eternal present, a diasporic tradition that is rooted in traditional African cultures but similarly helps to create a new, unique tradition (Epstein 1997). By its cyclic nature, *call-and-response* operates at several levels, Snead (1981) describes it is a viable dialogical device that helped slaves derive both sense and culture out of their surroundings. These socio-cultural dynamics are pervasive patterns of verbal and non-verbal signposts, and as such, should be considered a way of sourcing invaluable data. Tillman (2012) asserts that *call-and-response* facilitates social, racial, and cultural knowledge as the various ways of "thinking, believing, and knowing that include shared experiences, consciousness, skills, values, forms of expression, social institutions, and behaviours" (2012:6). Hence, *call-and-response* enabled a way of reading and interpreting, that valued multiplicity rather than codification and polemic. In a

contemporary actor training educational context it allowed a process that has the potential to create the possibility of "rewriting the world from the experience of not being able to pass into the world" (Ahmed 2012:176). Where all participants creatively interacted with one another, taking into account the practices and the cultural context of one another, at the same time standing their artistic and contextual ground as experienced in time and space.

Pattillo-McCoy (1988) contends the cultural patterns that lay at the core of *call-and-response* engagement, invigorate activism which enables opportunities for transformation. Sale (1992) states c*all-and-response* is a theory of art that is "interactive, process-oriented and concerned with innovation" (1992:41). Such a theory of artistic practice values and demands change over continuity, within a given, agreed upon structure. A transculturate approach provided that structure. Hence, embedding *call-and-response* within a transculturate framework, yielded a more reciprocal cultural exchange between student and tutor, student and student, resulting in a new form of temporal culture. The new culture emerged whilst working collaboratively to ensure that the "art of learning" was 'meaningful or useful" (Sale 1992:41). Essentially, *Transculturate Call-and-Response* Theory presented a structure that addressed the cultural racism that currently permeates actor training and through a cultural dialogic process resulted in reflective, intentional and transformative pedagogical possibilities.

PART IV: METHODS

In sustaining the authenticity of this study every aspect of the research design is consistent with the philosophical and theoretical perspectives on which it is founded (Twining et al., 2017). This section discusses how I came to understand the importance of cultural practice in research, particularly research that attempts to create a pedagogical shift by challenging the ideologies and manifestations of Whiteness and neoliberalism as they emerge in undertaking doctorate research in HEI actor training provision. For Zavala (2013), researchers should note that decolonising research is not as much about the method, but more about the spaces that can enable the research process and that through this process, researchers' identities also become reshaped or transformed. Subsequently, in line with my qualitative research journey to create diverse knowledge, I must create knowledge diversely. Thus, to decolonise research paradigms and methodologies is to include Indigenous and diasporic ways of knowing in academia, placing equal value on them in order to promote the acceptance of culturally appropriate research practices.

Research Design

A theoretical decolonisation within my autoethnographic study revealed a transformative transculturate euclidean perspective. This is a perspective that positions me in a metaphorical spherical cultural exchange between seeking to understand where a meaning materialises to transform (where attempts are made to balance power relations and promote change) and the desire to analyse (where meaning fragments) so it can be restructured enabling a multidimensional and rigorous data collection process. Bhattacharya (2017) recommends that academic rigor in qualitative research can be achieved through "an alignment of epistemology, theoretical frameworks, methodology, and methods, data analysis, and representation" (2017:93). My ontological and epistemological stance as a Black researching professional reinforces the methodology, methods, and data analysis used in this thesis. The issue of its rigor is addressed through a strong theoretical

underpinning. Consequently, an autoethnographic approach was used for a qualitative research design involving thirty-three acting students during their first year of training on a BA undergraduate course. The students were a culturally diverse cohort aged between 18- 23 years old. Figure 4 gives an outline of the research design which took place over a year. It is important to note that some of the transculturate phases has the potential to overlap or repeat within stages.

Stage 1: completed 10th September 2019
QUESTIONNAIRE 1
Transculturate phase - ENSLAVEMENT

Stage 2: completed 2nd December 2019
QUESTIONNAIRE 2
Transculturate phase - NEGOTIATION

Stage 3: 14th - 22nd May 2020
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS
Transculturate phase - ADJUSTMENT

Stage 4: July-September 2020
RE/VOICING CALL
Transculturate phase - SELF-ASSERTION

Stage 5: September 2020
RE/VOICING RESPONSE
Transculturate phase - SYNTHESIS

Figure 4. Research Stages 1-5 and timeline

Additionally, I taught the students throughout their first year which provided me the opportunity to build "rapport with the participants" (Turner 2010:755). Building trust helped establish the opportunity to conduct the in-depth interviews that followed the questionnaires, allowing a deepening of sharing experiences (Bhattacharya 2017). I kept a journal of my autoethnographic experience of teaching the

participants alongside undertaking research. Doing this enabled me to keep comprehensive reflective notes regarding ideas, things heard, things said by others and the challenges of the data collection process. Ellis and Bochner (2016) argue that it is the process of storying ourselves in autoethnography that is essential rather than the validity of actual memory. Denzin (2008) explains, to story ourselves does not mean to describe the way that it 'really' happened rather it is to "see and rediscover the past, not as a succession of events but as a series of scenes, invention, emotions, images, and stories" (Denzin 2008:118). Hence, by storying myself into the research I am positioned to rigorously ensure a decolonised approach at each stage of the data analysing and coding.

Qualitative research begins with an assumption, a philosophical perspective, and "inquiring into the meaning's individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem" (Creswell 2007:37). Essentially, the basis of undertaking a qualitative study is to ensure the research and the reader create meaning and implications out of the worlds they are studying (Merriam 2009). Rahman (2016) pinpoints some key benefits of using qualitative research in capturing narratives and experiences within given contexts, including the following:

- provides specific details about a phenomenon and/or issue that is not easily explained using statistical data;
- as an interdisciplinary field it encompasses a wider range of epistemological viewpoints, research methods, and interpretive techniques of understanding human experiences;
- reveals the researcher's own experience and positionality with regards to the research topic and participants; and
- ability to create deeper meanings of phenomenon uncovered in the inquiry process through and in culture.

For these reasons, a qualitative approach informs the research design and purpose of this study and through the research design attempted to answer my main research question and sub-questions. In addressing these, I explore the significance of students' prior knowledge and cultural assets in the learning process and academic engagement in the learning environment. I also problematise the navigation of Whiteness to undertake educational research. According to Lewis-Beck, Byman and Liao (2004) "lived experience forms the starting point for inquiry, reflection, and

interpretation" (2004:2). Therefore, adopting a qualitative research design is relevant to exploring the decolonisation of research and development of a culturally specific actor training pedagogical theory *Transculturate Call-and-Response*.

Data Collection

Walton (2014) endorses collating data from diverse sources in diverse ways that honour the intuitive and integral knowledge needed for transformation. To that end, the research for this study was conducted in five stages see Figure 4. In Stage 1, all the students starting their first year of training on a BA (Hons) Acting course agreed to participate in the study, hence thirty-three students completed the first questionnaire. Questionnaire one consisted of seven questions (See Appendix A) and was distributed and returned in one morning before the students began any classes on the course. It was conducted at this time to capture their assumptions and lived experience in relation to culture and actor training before experiencing the curriculum which had undergone revalidation in a complete overhaul that had diversified the content. Stage 2 took place at the end of the students first term of training, twelve weeks after questionnaire one, and involved a second questionnaire of five questions (See Appendix B). Thirty-two students completed the questionnaire (one student was absent). Stage 2 was completed during an organised feedback session.

My inquiry developed from the students' responses to questionnaire one, along with my observations during teaching sessions, which prompted me to adjust the questions for questionnaire two. Data gathered from both questionnaires added context to the students' overall narrative and informed the subsequent semi-structured interviews. The interviews were undertaken in Stage 3 of the research and a cross-section of twelve students were invited to participate in them. In choosing the students, I wanted to ensure as much as possible that my research was informed by the wide range of perspectives from the multiple cultural realities of the students. Therefore, I considered representation of the cultural diversity of the cohort and who

had demonstrated a willingness to speak more fully about their experiences. There were eleven questions to guide the semi-structured interview (see Appendix C), although other specific sub-questions were asked dependent on the student responses.

This flexibility allowed me to remain focused on key ideas that "moved the conversation forward" (Bhattacharya 2017:127), alongside allowing adaption of the questions for a more "personal approach" (Turner 2010:755). By compiling a list of open-ended questions, it enabled me to make the most of the semi-structured process, ensuring that I covered the topics that were applicable to my research (Patton 2002:343). I was meticulous to create questions that were genuinely open-ended and would not gain a yes or no response. I sent the proposed questions to my supervisor who approved them before I conducted the interviews. Each student was asked the same questions, which supported me to gather different viewpoints or perceptions on specific topics. Additionally, because of the ongoing relationship between the students and me, I was guided by Chilisa's (2012) advise on decolonising interview approaches, keeping supportive engagement by explaining the interview process, placing the student as expert, attentive listening and allowing students to ask me questions which allowed discussions around topics and themes that arose out of the open-ended questions I asked. Due to the 2020 lockdown the semi-structured interviews were conducted via the online meeting platform, Zoom. All meetings were recorded using the in-app feature in Zoom and took approximately 60 minutes. Data from the interviews was collected through video/audio recordings, I also took handwritten observational notes on gestures and physicality.

Following the interviews, I gave myself time and space to undertake Stage 4 which took place over three months. I transcribed each interview word for word and notated all movement to influence the rhythm and uniqueness of each student. The qualitative tools for data gathering enabled me to "capture the individuality of each participant" (Corbetta 2003:24) as I interpreted the data into individual Re/Voicing calls. In Stage 5 the Re/Voicing calls were sent to each student to stimulate a response as part of the Transculturate process. All twelve students sent responses back which were added verbatim to their Re/Voicing call. Six student responses were chosen, primarily based on how explicit their reaction had been to the

Re/Voicing call, and their responses were analysed as part of data triangulation in accordance with a qualitative study, in which I sought to validate the results of the study (Denzin 1978; Pelto 2017). Hence, all parts of this research facilitated the ability to extract rich data that supported my study relating to the cultural experiences of first year acting students in order to explore and develop a pedagogic *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory.

Data Analysis and Coding

Collecting information does not mean producing data automatically. What each researcher does with the information collected is key, as it is through different forms of sense making that raw information becomes research data (Scott & Morrison 2005). The data analysis and coding chosen was undertaken in line with this qualitative study. An inductive approach was used for the initial stage of collating the research data from questionnaire one. This approach placed emphasis on words rather than numbers when collecting and analysing the data (Bryman 1988:366), thereby honouring the student's voice. In addition, the questions asked (see Appendix A) corresponded with the first phase of the *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory called *Enslavement* which as discussed in the literature review, aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital. My aim in the questionnaire one was to find any patterns across the data by noting

- Similarity – commonality in cultural or heritage and assumptions of undergraduate actor training;
- Difference - lived experiences, specific concerns about starting the course and assumptions of undergraduate actor training; and,
- Frequency – the occurrence of any similarities or differences.

The initial data collated related directly to the literature review and my research questions, which also guided the questions posed in questionnaire two. These questions drew focus to the emergent themes which was viewed through the lens of *Negotiation*, the second phase of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory.

Questionnaire two took place after the students had experienced a full term of the diversified curriculum. I was also involved in teaching on the acting strand and during this time, I had invaluable opportunities to make observations. Subsequently, I reviewed the data from both questionnaires and consistently reflected, gaining familiarity to seek out and identify patterns and connections. Mills & Morton (2013) describe the process as 'open coding', used to get to know the data, "to begin to make sense of its complexity, and decide what aspects of it are meaningful for your study" (2013:119). The data received was tabulated see Table 2 in order to provide a visual representation and this helped to gain insight into the structure of any similarity, difference or frequency of words, feelings or opinions in the data.

Table 2. Sample of Questionnaire 1 responses

WORDS to describe YOURSELF	TOTAL	White	Black/Asian	Mixed Heritage
Excited	23	12	7	4
Nervous/Anxious/Daunted	17	7	5	3
Prepared/Ready	12	4	4	4
Keen/Eager	6	5		1
Curious/Intrigued	5	1	3	3

Miles and Huberman (1994) advise that codes should be discrete and that the coding process should start as early as possible although there is the risk that earlier coding might influence later codes. However, the aim of the two questionnaires was to build the steppingstones of the story/narrative, to garner meaning of the cultural starting point and any subsequent shifts or changes that might occur. By seeking significant themes in the question responses, I was, as Polkinghorne (1988) expresses, using the narrative "as a lens through which the apparently independent and disconnected elements of existence are seen as related parts of a whole" (1988:36). In doing so, "the analysis of stories/narratives can provide a critical way of examining not only key actors and events but also cultural conventions and social norms" (Coffey & Atkinson 1996:80). Consequently, this process of reflection and evaluation helped to manage researcher subjectivity alongside generating the ideas and categories that speak to the significant themes of my research topic.

I used verbal exchange coding to analyse the data in Stage 3 through the transculturate lens of *Adjustment*. Verbal exchange is a coding approach that analyses conversation through reflection on social practices and interpretive meanings. The intention, Goodall (2000) describes, is to create an "*evocative representation* of the field work experience" to undertake "the writing of a *story of culture*" (2000:121, emphasis in original). Hence, verbal exchange coding offers the analytical structure, as Newby (2014) suggests, for the researcher to realise an emergent coding where the codes attributed arise from the data itself. In his seminal work, Saldana (2016) provides a comprehensive overview of a significant numbers of other texts regarding the iterative qualitative coding process to support the rigour of research, he suggests the following main principles of verbal exchange coding:

- Verbatim transcript analysis and interpretation of types of conversation and personal meanings of key moments in the exchanges. It includes non-verbal cues and pauses.

- One or more of five forms of verbal exchange: phatic Communion, Ordinary conversation, Skilled Conversation, Personal Narratives, Dialogue.

- The second level of exchange explores the personal meanings of key moments by first examining such facets as speech mannerisms, non-verbal communication habits, and rich points of cultural knowledge.

- An appropriate variety of human communication studies and studies that explore cultural practices (Saldana 2016:159-162).

Subsequently, each interview data was analysed in its colloquial form alongside habitual gesture and movement to avoid loss of meaning in translation. This process brought out the participants' perspective more clearly and also ensured what Louis (2007) termed *respectful representation*. Saldana (2016) highlights Goodall's contention that the analysis and coding of the research data is part of the "overall process of finding patterns that are capable of suggesting a story, an emerging story of your interpretation of a culture" (Goodall in Saldana 2016:164). I spent valuable time familiarising myself with the data which could potentially give space to discover anything that was initially missed. Looking, and re-looking to eventually Re/Voice the content helped me to make links across the data.

From this analysis my research progressed to Stage 4 of the research, and the Transculturate Phase of *Self-Assertion* in which the transcripts and physical observations were transformed into narrative poems I termed Re/Voicing calls (See Appendix D). Ensuring the authenticity of this process was an essential aspect of this study and each Re/Voicing call materialised individually and specific to the student's cultural patterns emerging through the verbatim interview transcript. Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) promote the importance of dialogic reciprocity in research, in not just sharing data but in relationships; the reciprocity forges with participants, "to get good data—thick, rich and in-depth, intimate interviews—we are enjoined to attend to reciprocity in our method" (2001:323). Hence, each Re/Voicing call was sent to the students to validate the content. They were also asked to give a response to the Re/Voicing call, which could be added to the poetic narrative. The responses could take any form; in writing, a drawing, or they could choose not to respond. Each recipient's response was added to their Re/Voicing call respectively.

In consultation with my supervisor, I decided to analyse the responses in accordance with Stage 5 of the research design through the lens of *Synthesis*, the final Transculturate phase. In order to focus on some of the data received and aggregate it into smaller, concentrated themes (Guest et al., 2012), I decided to choose six written responses to undertake further verbal exchange coding (See Appendix E). Below Table 3 illustrates an example of the coding undertaken. This invaluable data was colour coded manually, not only to look for confirmation of the earlier analysis of the major themes of this study, but to reveal any emerging themes.

Table 3. Example of coding themes

Text 1 *But Black people in particular always feel like an imposter, particularly in 'predominantly white spaces'*	This extract from the text was coded as: Racism/Inclusion/Equity Key quote: Higher Education focus
Text 2 *I use it as a mask/security blanket/ coping mechanism*	This extract from the text was coded as: Identity
Text 3 *it's an issue that needs to be discussed more openly for black girls.* *labelled as hostile, when we are just human like everyone else... but we often get more backlash for expressing our pains, even when done in subtlety.*	This extract from the text was coded as: Racism
Text 4 *and embracing my identity especially in relation to my heritage*	This extract from the text was coded as: Culture

Stage 5 completed the yearlong research analysis and coding process and the main themes identified appear in line with the literature review: culture, racism, and identity. Hepp (2009) proposes that transculturation is a theory where "everyday complexity of cultural patterns is likely to occur, a triangulation of different data collecting methods is highly recommendable" (2009:4). Thus, employing a multistage analysis and coding to consider the perspectives and views of the students was useful in "stripping back the layers of meaning attached to a participant's own perspective of a situation or events" (McQueen 2002:17). It was important to draw upon the theoretical framework for the purpose of analysis. Researchers who adopt a transculturate and transformative lens are able, just as interpretivists to view the world through a 'series of individual eyes' where there is acknowledgment of interpreting a participant's understanding of events or issues that has already been interpreted. In doing so there is the agenda to prompt or to highlight the room for meaningful change in actor training teaching pedagogy.

Reflective Journal

Transformative learning experience

The reflective journal was an essential part of my autoethnographical research journey that enabled me to chronicle: thoughts, conversations, emotions and reactions (Silverman 2010; Cohen et al., 2018). Saldana (2016) asserts that researchers' reflections have the potential to generate material that can formulate ideas and may contribute to the rigor in analysing the data. Journals may comprise of the following elements: methodological notes for the planning or completion of a task, theoretical notes that derive meaning from observational or reflective notes, analytical notes that evaluate several inferences into an abstract statement, and observational notes to capture things, said, done or heard from others. Furthermore, cultivating a reflective practice has been a transformative tool which has supported the autoethnographic exploration to Re/Voice many ideas, thoughts and struggles whilst embarking on doctorate research as a Black researching professional. An example of this can be seen in my notes dated 10th Sept 2019, which is significant as it was the first day of starting my research collecting and describes the moments before entering the studio:

Re/Voicing
As per usual I am incredibly nervous!
The fears of lived experience resurface
Marley's river bobbing in my head wishing for Babylon
But always I'm never good enough… Don't belong
That's what I've always been told, shown,
What if?
I'm going into another Combat Zone
What if?
I decide to postpone
And What if?
I go into the studio not knowing
Perhaps to legitimise what I'm doing
I purposefully place myself in a position of hooks vulnerability
To be open with them as I expect them to be
I feel my Cultural Capital walk ahead of me
If I'm not good enough it will affect the Black students
Why? Because I know I'm one of those mutants
I know…an anomaly
…too accustomed to hostility
I force myself not to double guess
Lean into the strength of my Blackness

Become as Friere says, the student too
The answers come from them… I reiterate they do.
I visualise Dostoevsky Euclidean sphere in the space
The breath of inspiration cradles my anxiousness
Imaginary axioms and planes revolve around them and me
I step in time to start this journey

This entry at the start of the data collecting process is an example of Re/Voicing a lived experience through a call to myself to provoke a response. It is an example of my continual navigation in order to operate within HEIs. As such, my reflective journal is filled with similar entries that autoethnographically capture the methodological, theoretical, analytical and observational nature of my research. It illuminates for me the multiple sides to the world and attempt to deconstruct research topics to partially understand them from one side, pattern, or colour; this has been termed crystallization (Richardson 2000). I visualise this as a euclidean sphere which has been invaluable in my critical reflections by intimately viewing the process with an openness that allows discoveries to unfold and profoundly support the telling of a story. Hence, I journaled every day to ensure I kept a detailed account of my experiences, including notes on how I was making sense of my approach to teaching, class dialogues, interactions with staff members and meetings with my doctorate supervisors. I would write up these encounters and reflect upon them after the occurrence. I analysed the journal by writing evocative and analytic Re/Voicings which provided an audit trail of how I was making sense of the process and data.

In addition, through the implementation of Critical Race Theory and a transformative paradigm I was able to make meaning of my research experiences to problematize, or as analytical resistance, or the fundamental support for transformation. Using theory in autoethnography is necessary as it supports the explanation of individual experience within the culture. Thus, theories and stories can change us and how we think (Holman-Jones 2016) and through this transformative learning journey, I became more conscious of ways to navigate the Whiteness embedded within the power structures in HEIs and educational research. The diversification of the curriculum enabled me to interact with the students on themes such as cultural differences and inequity which in turn, informed the decolonisation of my research. Therefore, the journal evidenced a journey of discovery, for example I was initially following an interpretive paradigm in line with my philosophical

positioning. However, I wanted the decolonisation of the research, any findings or recommendations to not just explain from my subjectiveness, but to make a transformative impact within my domain of actor training and potentially beyond. As an example of my journey, I include an extract from my reflective journal dated 11th May 2020 nine months after starting the research collecting. I was teaching Shakespeare on Zoom with 30 of the students who participated in this research.

Re/Voicing
Yes, they were wrinkled
Brows and frowns of curiosity
Downward glances
… I saw them breathe
I breathed
We breathed
We unpicked
We took time to reorganise
Float and land in a place of shared understanding
Collaborated together
In the ethereal time of Wi-Fi nothingness
The spaceship brought me back 7 of 9 style
Words and meanings
Meanings and words
They said embodied,
They found their own meaning, they said
Embodied…
It's like our own culture. He smiles
That's different. She smiles
They smile
Is that a shift?
The frame lights up with nods, thumbs up and hand claps
I smile
This day when we shifted
We smiled

Transformation through transculturate learning is a shift of consciousness that alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves or our relationships with other humans or our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, races, and gender. My reflective journal maps my transforming understanding through research whilst observing and noting the students' responses to a dialogic cultural exchange.

Pilot Study

The pilot study that preceded the main study resulted from my ontological and epistemological position, which subsequently influenced the design of the main study. My main learning points arising from the pilot study include: the importance of culture in actor training, the need for specificity in the first questionnaire questions and the change from using mixed methods to a solely qualitative study with a triangulation of different data collecting methods. Below is an excerpt from my philosophical commentary that reflects upon my pilot research project. It serves to Re/Voice not only what I learnt but what would be used to inform how I intended to proceed as I embarked on my major research project. The full-length reflective account of the pilot study can be found in Appendix F.

Re/Voicing - *My research inquiry.*
The question presented.
What can the first stage of transculturation termed enslavement be deduced or described as
In relation to Level 4 students entering an undergraduate acting course?
Mixed Methods a multiplicity application
Provides fitting usage through a questionnaire, sampled, and a word-based data interpretation.
Cohen, Manion, Morrison's publication positions
Open-ended questions invite free explanations
Circumventing the limitations of pre-set categories of reaction.
After thorough reflection and a pilot that prompts further contemplation
Decisions set down on seven short questions that lead my consideration.
Bryman's triangulated illustration *inaugurate*
'meat on the bones of dry quantitative findings utilising qualitative data to illustrate'.

Hence, an explorative investigation of an euclidean spherical space,
Locating the postulate starting point through Transculturation
A conceptual framework transmuted to facilitate an Inquiring Induction at Level 4.
Ortiz' Transculturation merging historic specificity and artistic originality
Yielding an ethnoconvergent creation of a new cultural phenomena.
Transculturation: Five phases under two transitions,
Starting point Enslavement.
Negotiation follows needing time and space before Adjustment sets in.
Under the initial transitional Partial Disculturation

These transitional shifts cultivate new contexts and cultural meanings.
Meaning upon meaning upon meaning
Continue to evolve, through phases of Self-Assertion and Synthesis.
Under the final transitional Neoculturation. Unceasing. Interweaving
The essence of individual cultures, theatrically dealing
to formulate a new connected whole.

Ten thousand hours, ten thousand minutes, ten thousand seconds
Experts in the time and space of an acting lesson.
Do binary differences impact on the actor training learning experiences?
Dramaturgical guidance accessed, in stages processed
A recurring transient milieu within, full of flow, bound, improvisational pitch,
Ensemble, separable collaboration a platform of equity to enrich
Creative cultural belonging.

Important to note, Not merely as an anecdote
Participation for all students is of course obligatory.
Respondents are made aware that they will have anonymity.
To ensure the responses are made to a higher degree
Uninhibited when reacting to my questioned enquiry.

St Mary's ethics review my submission like diligent caretakers
Interrogate the issue of my partakers,
Advise me to make clear-cut my aim is Blackness.
I'm surprised that they've pinpointed with such righteous exactness
Participants are Black, I am Black, thus there's my research intention.
Assumptions laden with ten thousand hours of subjugation.
Have they read the complete application?
As Ngozi Adiche advises 'The single story creates stereotypes…untrue,
…incomplete. They make one story become the only story.'
What answers can we find unless we observe the three-dimensional pot pourri
Of the teaching space that represents a modern University.

My reasoning was founded on the basis
The concept of Transculturation is not about races
But processes of existence that explore phenomena in a creative space.
New cultural partnerships.
Not just skin, the thing your body's zipped in.

My reasoning continues to remove the perceived contrail.
Undertaking this research study narrows my application to detail
Enslavement bearing similarities to Bourdieu's notional Habitus
Enslavement focused under the partial disculturation gravitas.
Moving forward, perhaps from the foundation of Bhabha's Location of Culture,
The hybridity highlighting forms of colonial identity.
Yet, Acheraiou challenges Bhabha's paradigm of imposing anxiety.
Factors realised is not just of geographical origins
But the many intersecting centres of consciousness left in the margins.

A sigh of relief when informed that I don't need to go in front of a panel
However, the ethics procedure raises for myself a moral dilemma
Throughout undertaking the journey of my professional doctorate,
I am going to be continually confronted with the colour agenda
I need to ensure, on that front, I maintain objectivity
Whilst coated in African ethnographic subjectivity
Which will support rigour in my academic clarity.

(Julie Spencer 2019:3)

As a result of undertaking this pilot, I was able to clarify the methodology and research tools that would support how I proceeded with the main study.

Validity

In order to conduct the main study, ethical approval was applied for and received from the university using the university code of research ethics (See Appendix G) and the British Educational Research Association's (BERA 2018) who recommend that at "all stages of a project – from planning through conduct to reporting – educational researchers undertake wide consultation to identify relevant ethical issues" (2018:14). University templates were used to produce the appropriate forms and information requirements to go to students inviting them to take part in the research and to obtain informed consent (See Appendix H). Once these documents were drafted, they were submitted, through the university's ethical approval link, to be validated for approval. Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are important considerations within any research project in order for it to be considered valid. To that end all students were anonymised, and any personal details disclosed in the process of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews which was not relevant to the research themes was not used. Hammersley (2003) advises that three components contribute to ensuring the validity of qualitative research: unobtrusive measures, validation, and triangulation. It was important that the autoethnographic methodological approach did not influence the outcomes yet supported them. These measures ensured that the data collected reflected the research undertaken.

In navigating Whiteness in my research journey, I worked diligently to adopt a decolonised approach seeking other ways of knowing, therefore ontological authenticity, as well as positionality, voice, critical subjectivity or self-reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln 2005) correspond with my decolonised stance of safeguarding and maintaining validity. Concurring with O'Leary (2017) who advocates demonstrating "how your best practice approach meets the credibility indicators appropriate to your

particular research method" (2017:335). Chilisa (2012) further explains in culturally responsive research that the study will be "credible if it represents adequately as possible the multiple realities revealed by the participants" and in ensuring validity through transparency "participants are able to recognise the descriptions and interpretations of their human experience is accurate and true" (2012:165). Glynn (2019b) contends that in upholding validity "qualitative interviewing involves a continuous process of reflection" (2019:116). Punch and Oancea (2014), O'Leary (2017) and Cohen et al., (2018), all advise that the researcher must facilitate an unbiased setting to foster a collaborative rapport. Each interview must be treated with care and sensitivity and participants encouraged to feel at ease. Hence, validation was sought at each stage of the research process which involved the participants, referring to my reflective journal and my supervisor. Triangulation was also used to enhance credibility utilising questionnaires, interviews, observational notes, and journal notes. Furthermore, by gaining the students' final feedback in their response to the call at the last stage of the research collecting process supported the validity and reliability of the study.

Ethical Considerations

In identifying ethical considerations for my research, Rollock (2013) provides valuable insight to articulate how, as a Black researching professional, she managed her positionality within a two-year research project investigating Black students in education. Rollock (2013) warns that "sharing a racial identity does not necessarily equate to matched perspectives" (2013:493). She examines how her lived experience and political consciousness "inform my thinking and practice" (2013:496). Conscientious attention is paid to her interactions with the recruitment of participants, the interview procedure and the handling and distribution of any results. Likewise, Nelson (1996) identified the notion *gradations of endogeny*, within the field of ethnography, of which autoethnography shares defining aspects. She recommends even with sharing similar cultural reference points and perceptions of reality with

one's research participants, researchers must practice "a peculiar listening stillness that augments one's own idiocultural voice, in all its subtle variations" (Nelson 1996:184). Taking heed, I was rigorous in maintaining an ethical approach, negating any assumptions by ensuring I did not speak for participants but with and through them.

In order to demonstrate all educational research is conducted ethically, I was guided by the British Educational Research Association's guidelines (BERA 2018). Students received and were talked through the information sheet outlining the research, the aims of the research and timeline. A consent form and information letter (Appendix H) gave further clarification and explained that students could withdraw at any time (Wallace & Atkins 2012). As BERA (2018) strongly advocates, participants were reminded of the right to withdraw at any stage of the research. Additionally, I received ethical approval from the St. Mary's University Ethics Committee for the questionnaires. I believe that I have an ethical obligation to provide anonymity and confidentiality to participants, however Punch and Oancea (2014) suggest that in some cases non-traceability may be a more realistic aim particularly in qualitative research. Only my supervisor and I had access to the data that was securely stored as described in St. Mary's University Ethical Research Approval.

Undertaking an autoethnographic study, it was essential to acknowledge my position throughout the research and recognise how my professional position as the Director of the School of Acting at a leading HEI Drama School might influence student participants (Silverstein et al., 2006). As the participants were students, I implemented four elements listed by Cohen et al., (2017) in obtaining informed consent to respect the rights of students and safeguarding that they were clearly aware of how the research was going to be used. Competence: the students are capable Level 4 students embarking on a rigorous BA (Hons) Acting programme. Voluntarism: Students were made fully aware that participation is at all times voluntary, and students could withdraw at any point of the research process. Full information: students were kept fully informed of the treatment of the data. Comprehension: students were notified and kept fully informed of the nature and development of the research project. This was conducted by providing a fair and full

explanation of the procedures of the research and the purpose. In addition, I was available to answer any enquiries concerning the procedures (Cohen et al., 2017:78) as well as any concerns arising from any stage of the research design. Adherence to these guidelines ensured the practical steps that addressed consideration of the ethical issues pertaining to this study.

Limitations of the Research

In this part of the methods section, it is necessary to recognise and reflect on what the limitations are whilst undertaking this research. All researchers face limitations, "and all competent researchers must acquire not only the ability to use various research skills but also the acumen to judge when some kinds of research are likely to prove more productive than others" (Anderson 2006:390). The unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic limited the manner in which one-on-one interviews were conducted. As a result, conversing over the video conferencing app Zoom posed a limitation to this study, even though participants said they were comfortable interviewing through Zoom and with the additional screen time. We were fortunate that we had no internet interruptions during the interviews, students were offered breaks during the sessions which lasted approximately sixty minutes each.

I also considered the lack of previous studies in this research area specifically conducted by a Black researching professional in the domain of HEI actor training. As discussed in the introduction and literature review of this thesis, a gap was identified that necessitated further research. Consequently, in creating the research design I adopted an exploratory approach to collate qualitative data. Using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the data meant there was a reliance on students responding authentically and not saying what they thought was right or what I, as the researcher, wanted to hear. By employing different questioning techniques within the design of the questionnaires, and the semi-structured interviews underpinned the triangulation undertaken to safeguard the data would be "relevant and sufficient to answer the research questions" Somekh and Lewin

(2007:219). Additionally, Re/Voicing *Call-and-Response* addressed the limitations by ensuring transactional validity through an "interactive process between the researcher and participants" (Cho & Trent 2006:321). The process confirmed the initial collection of the data. Further methods such as observational physicality, gesture notation and a reflective journal ensured data collected was consistently reviewed. I listened to recordings and revisited questionnaire responses to ensure my themes were at the forefront of the data.

Summary

The qualitative research method conforms to the autoethnographic approach utilised in this study. Biggs and Karlsson (2011) summarise appropriately that "uncertainty is inherent in scientific research and in the artistic production of new knowledge alike" (2011: xviii). Hence, my research seeks to cultivate a deeper awareness of ontological and epistemological perspectives of research to enable critical reflection, transformation and to judge research from a decolonised philosophical stance (Bracken 2010). Adopting this stance is crucial for me to consider the rudimental principle that the research and researcher profoundly shape each other and are shaped by each other, through their embodied interactions, within the institutional processes of actor training (Seton 2010). Therefore, in undertaking educational research in actor training there is a responsibility to ensure justification through rationale, confirming rigour by maintaining validity and reliability.

Educational research in actor training needs to demonstrate a rigour comparable to the sciences, and by employing diverse approaches to carrying out research will not only take account of that but also enabled the facilitation of what Polanyi (1983) terms 'fluid knowing' or Abramovic (1996) refers to as 'liquid knowledge.' However, personal perspectives created through cultural, philosophical, or professional lenses must be recognised from an authentic, emancipatory and foremost transformative decolonised position as they link research and philosophical traditions and as such clarifies the researcher's theoretical framework. The

researcher positions themselves to robustly explore their theoretical orientation or paradigm for any research project undertaken and address the impact on how the research is conducted alongside the quality and validity of the research (Cohen et al., 2018). Thus, my hope is that this study, by providing a model or framework to action inclusivity, informs and transforms actor training pedagogies for researchers and tutor/practitioners working within HEIs, and in turn, impact on students embodied learning. The findings of the study and subsequent analysis will be presented in the following section.

PART V: STORYING THE DATA

In the previous section I detailed the data collection and how the data was analysed. This section of the thesis is concerned with the analysis of the findings. I will follow a storying approach to analytically reflect and interpret the data punctuated with Re/Voicings inspired by the African *call-and-response* oral tradition. In doing so I encompass both the personal and theoretical as I seek to send a call to the reader to engage with cultural exchanges that stimulate transformative interactions. This approach adheres to my Ubuntu philosophical assumptions of maintaining subjectiveness alongside my autoethnographic positioning of giving myself the authority to disrupt the gatekeeping Whiteness in academia.

Through the strategic imposition of neoliberal policies, it is easy to forget that the marginalised, disregarded or stigmatised stories of our lived experience embody expertise and insight. Accordingly, this study followed two strands: the first strand is my navigation of Whiteness as a Black researching professional undertaking an autoethnographic journey; my Re/Voicings represent insights into a personal and professional journey toward conscientization (Freire 1996b). Conscientization is an awakening or a "critical consciousness" toward "oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1996b:18) and for me this conscientization has contributed to an authentic decolonisation of my research approach. The second research strand explored the actioning of inclusivity by implementing a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory in actor training. Storying a year of research undertaken with a diverse group of thirty-three BA Acting first year students I seek to capture the action as experienced in the space and time of the research. Re/Voicings are created verbatim from each student's response to my call in an attempt to amplify the uniqueness of the students' voices to draw the reader into imagining moments of cultural encounters.

Through the techniques of autoethnographic writing researchers can share their emotions and personal information with readers, who get a chance to construct the meaning of what was not said by a researcher, yet potentially implied (Rambo 2007). Therefore, using Critical Race Theory to strengthen my autoethnographical research I hope to be explicit in my Re/Voicings to chart with clarity the decolonisation of my journey. The data will be examined and presented under the transculturate framework even though the research undertaken was not isolated in

that way. During the research, however, this framework unfolded to align thematically as outlined in Figure 4 (IV:95). Knowles and Coles (2001) conclude that thematic interpretations are finally represented "in the form of detailed and rich life history accounts" (2001:13). Hence, the reason for following this way of presenting the findings is to honour the transformative experiences under an emerging and innovative *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory. At this point it is prudent to reiterate the research questions that informed the study:

What cultural differences and assumptions influence the experiences of BA Acting first year students on a mainstream actor training course?

Which factors shape a reciprocal transculturate pedagogic approach to actor training to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning?

How can a Black researching practitioner disrupt the Whiteness of dominate discourses in academia to authentically undertake educational?

The students' responses are multi-layered and complex but consistently link directly to the research questions bringing understanding to the meaningful influences, approaches and disruptions necessary for embodied learning. Additionally, as explained in the methods section the phases of transculturation can overlap therefore the data collated from these questions and cited in one phase of the research could potentially fit into another phase.

Prologue

Re/Voicing
In the literature review I Mapped the Journey
Towards a Transculturate Pedagogic theory
Facilitating a process of Culture exchanged
Applying five-phases Purposely Prearranged
Call-and-Response was embedded within its progression
Thus reclaiming my Ancestral expression
An authentic reciprocity is ensured
To enable Actor Training teaching practice is explored
Utilising the students' cultural pluralism to testimony
A New culturally relevant Actor Training Pedagogy
In the following section I will give a detailed Analysis
Of the first three phases cultural catalysts
Located under the umbrella of Partial Disculturation
Progressing a Paradigm of Transformation
Embraced in the to and fro of loss and recovery
For everyone who Engages in the discovery
And important to note in the initial research stages
Specifically, the transculturate early phases
The focus is the Dialogic Process located in time and space
Rather than any resulting Syncretism that may take place.

Enslavement

I started my research data collecting with the students on their induction day. Introducing the first questionnaire garnered vital data to ascertain the starting point for students entering a HEI and enabled me to investigate the transculturate phase of *enslavemen*t. In order to begin the practical understanding of a transculturate approach, I sought to find out:

1. How the students self-identified culturally and heritage-wise;
2. The students' opinions and feelings on how they viewed themselves on starting the course;
3. What students' thought the actor training curriculum would consist of; and,
4. Who the students thought would be teaching the curriculum.

As previously discussed, *enslavement* can be aligned with Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital. He contends cultural capital exists in three forms — embodied state, objectified state, and institutionalised state. While recognising the importance of all three, the relevance for this study in relation to *enslavement* is embodied cultural capital as it evidences the significance of culture and in turn highlights the cultural racism in actor training pedagogy that prevents embodied learning and as such embodied knowledge. For Bourdieu (1986) the embodied state is understood as comprising of elements such as skills, language and ways of speaking, physicality and the habitus. Habitus is considered in relation to knowledge; how people view and understand the world, which is influenced and created by the culture that an individual lives in. Webb, Schirato and Danaher (2002) define habitus as:

> A concept that expresses, on the one hand, the way in which individuals become themselves … and the ways in which those individuals engage in practices. An artistic habitus, for example, disposes the individual artist to certain activities and perspectives that express the culturally and historically constituted values of the artistic field (2002: xii–xiii).

Hence, embodied cultural capital is about knowledge and culture as it is communicated, displayed or demonstrated by a person's thoughts, speech and/or actions.

In the Methods section of this thesis under Reflective Journal, I included a Re/Voicing that illustrated what happened prior to entering into the studio theatre to commence the research. The following Re/Voicing unfolds as a continuation after entering the space. My hyperawareness of Hurston's (1928) *how it feels to be coloured me*, was a runaway ball pitching the pressure of expectation. The irony of this did not escape me as I observed the slight sporadic quivering of my fingers whilst handing out the consent forms and questionnaires.

Re/Voicing

'Lord me hand a shake… Backfoot'
My patois accented declaration breaks through double consciousness
Before I get the chance to grab it back and constrain it into a cultural passing
I hear the resonance of my Grandma echo through the jittery air
as soon as the words escape my mouth
An inner call-and-response as I continue handing out the paperwork
'Ha? Gran?'

'You bin waiting, de?' she chuckles
I feel her circle me in the Euclidean Crystallisation of my Senses
AfterTaste the perfunctory provision of two slithers of plantain
And Sunday morning Smell of sweet potato pudding on her hands
I Hear the students laugh at the patois, some loudly I think Black students?
Some not so loudly, but nervously, I think perhaps
Surprised by the unusualness of the patois sound in the Higher Education space
By this version of someone in my position they're not expecting
I See it in their expectant eyes.
I see it in the Periphery of my Understanding
It all touches me
I laugh it off as I move back to the front to stand beside a colleague
With my back to the students', I release a short breath
'you is doing fine wok baby Julie' Gran's breath interlinks mine
I lower my eyes to look at my hands and smile
'You're nervous' my colleague sighs
Gran sidesteps the accusatory remnants of his breath
Just. So. Just. That it doesn't colonise ours
'You're doing a Doctorate, I'd be excited'
He's so quiet I just catch his words.
It is in his tone, the tone of the Combat Zone
I recognise he sees it as weakness. And I am his boss.
He's known me for all of 3 months,
 What gives him the privilege to comment?
Gran sucks her toothless gum.
'Ya not surprised, by him, are you Julie?'
I purposefully shake my head in response to both
I have nothing except Direct eye contact to whisper back
'Nervous… and excited' delivered with a Pointed Subtext that shouldn't be repeated
Because Gran's here
She's come back

At the start of my research, I was unaware of the full implications of these thoughts in my reflective journal and why after such an absence my Gran came to be a focus in my autoethnographic Re/Voicings. Reflecting, I recognise the diasporic significance of Hall's (2003, 2012) significant research, that we must acknowledge we exist with one foot in the past and one foot in the future. Realising one's cultural foundation is a journey that fuses the past, a historical entity, which permits us to locate ourselves within the "narratives of the past" to the "formation of the future" (Hall 2003:25). A chronicle embedded future which forges persistent renovation. It is a journey influenced by an evolving history, ethnic philosophy and power which has the potential to provide us with the myriad of ways we can position ourselves. Hence, the Ubuntu philosophical positioning preserving the relevance of my foremothers,

forefathers and the wealth of cultural riches they laid at the steps of growth and transformation, halted by a violent colonised disruption, patiently waits for me, their offspring, to inherit the ascent. When we attach significance to something, we attach feelings not conclusions. Rationalism, with its judiciously established processes, can only tell us *what is*. Emotion enters the reasoning process to tell us *what should be*. Emotion provides meaning (Rambo 2007; Ellis & Bochner 2016)   So, this was to be the meaningful unravelling of my own *enslavement* and the key to navigating Whiteness through the critical lens of the autoethnographic landscape of my cultural membrane.

All thirty-three students returned completed consent forms and questionnaires. My initial breakdown of the collated data was driven by insight from Ladson-Billings (2006) which stimulated my progression. She maintains in educational research you go into your arena of specialism to undertake research work that enables you to understand enough about the setting, enough about yourself in order to effectively facilitate cultural transformation. The cohort of students for this research were incredibly diverse and complex in self-identification of heritage, with some noting three or four background influences. Stemming from the diversity, cultural particularities of the students were equally diverse. The cultural choices were clearer than their heritage as the majority of students picked one overarching culture which dominated their everyday existence. Interestingly only four out of thirty-three students chose to define themselves by colour in relation to either heritage or culture which seemed to suggest that colour was not a defining factor for them in their understanding of who they were. The summary Table 4 outlines an overview for questions One and Two of the initial questionnaire. It gives the full range of self-identified cultural and heritage backgrounds of all the BA (Hons) Acting students who participated in the first two stages of the research. I colour coded the data to give a clear visible reference.

Table 4. Overview of Student Self-identification

Anonymised coding	FAMILY HERITAGE	CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION
S1	Jamaican	Jamaican
S2	British/Nordic/American	South African British
S3	British	British
S4	Zimbabwean	Zimbabwe
S5	Japanese/British	Japanese British
S6	British	*Don't feel part of any culture but British if I have to*
S7	British/Uruguayan	Spanish
S8	American/Chilean	USA
S9	Caribbean	Trinidadian/Tobagonian
S10	British	British/American
S11	British/Iranian	British
S12	Nigerian	Nigerian
S13	White British/Scottish/French	White British lower middle class
S14	Guyanese/Jamaican	Caribbean
S15	British/Scottish/Scandinavian	British
S16	African Portuguese/Irish English	Northern English
S17	English/Dutch	English
S18	British	British
S19	Turkish Cypriot Egyptian English	Turkish Cypriot
S20	Indian	Indian
S21	Black South African	*British (quite upsetting really)*
S22	Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Russian	Ukrainian
S23	Afghanistan	Afghan
S24	Italian Greek English	Italian and Greek
S25	Nigerian	Nigerian/African
S26	Irish English Italian	English
S27	Colombian Trinidadian Lebanese French	Latino - Colombian
S28	White British Indian & Seychelles	English
S29	Ghanaian/Australian born in France	British Australian
S30	Jamaican	Jamaican Black British
S31	English Ghanaian Italian Welsh	English Italian
S32	Nigerian Sierra Leone	African
S33	British English Welsh	British English

Heritage
- 19 student's stated family heritage from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups
- 14 student's stated Western/Eurocentric family heritage

Culture
- 17 student's Cultural identification was Western/Eurocentric
- 15 student's Cultural identification was from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups
- 1 student expressed not having any cultural identification

Six students (five could be identified from their own classification as mixed heritage and one solely British) did not identify culturally with their family heritage.

It was not in the scope of the questionnaire to dig deeper into the six students reasoning for this as it was not the focus of the research, however I noted it as part of their specific enslavement. The significance of their response could potentially resurface during the weekly teaching sessions as the transculturate theory and the roll out of the new inclusive and diversified BA Acting curriculum prompted students to authentically engage with one's cultural identity. Any relevance in addressing transformation will be considered in later sections of this thesis.

Regardless of cultural particularities 28 students stated they thought the curriculum would be predominately based on European actor training which clearly highlights the engrained Eurocentric dominance within education. The students assumed that the Eurocentric focus would naturally continue in their undergraduate curriculum, although there was expression of *hope* that it could be different. The comments below are the student's verbatim comments:

Mostly Western material however I do really hope to learn and study material and work from my African culture

I hope different heritage and cultures so that everyone can gain more of an understanding

Mostly British but looking at the students and looking who is head of the School of Acting I hope the content will include many cultures not just British

Quite rightly Troyna and Williams (1986) berated the curriculum in the UK as unrelentingly ethnocentric as its focus is exclusively White culture. Wright (1992) goes further pinpointing that teachers hold ethnocentric views, and their teaching practices take for granted that British culture and Standard English are superior. Little has changed (Rollock 2017; Arday 2020; Bhopal et al., 2020) and consequently, cultural inequality is deeply rooted and seen as an inevitable feature of the education system (Gillborn 2008; Chang et al., 2011; Bhopal 2018). In actor training the continued debate about the Whiteness and Eurocentric focus of the curriculum and the question of decolonising actor training is still an ongoing contested subject (Ginther 2015; Kavuma 2017; Bala 2017; Brewer 2018). Actor training remains a culturally racialised system of knowledge that privileges the White narrative as superior and universal and most of what is taught ignores students'

cultural particularities as a factor in training. Brewer (2018) asserts asking students to constantly disregard race, cultural context, perspective, and history in their training implies that White cultural qualities or traits are the default, and any other qualities or traits have no inherent value and therefore should be suppressed. Bala (2017) continues to explain that erasure of cultural relevance is detrimental to the advancement of new knowledge in actor training, she urges recognition that:

> that the embodied practices of acting students are also worthy of being valued as 'knowledge' is not simply a minor adjustment or helpful supplement to a body of text-oriented scholarship, but also, if taken seriously, a deep rupturing of the ways in which knowledge is conceived and authorised (2017:338).

As discussed in the literature review there is a gap in research that explores how culture as a source of creativity can impact on embodied knowledge and learning in actor training. Additionally, the accepted teaching pedagogies are underpinned by hegemonic ideologies that can perpetuate cultural racism. This study sought to confront the norm by embarking on the exploration of a cultural theory to practically action inclusivity in tandem with introducing the students to a diversified curriculum.

The students' responses confirm their expectation and observation regarding teaching staff on the BA (Hons) Acting course mirroring the conclusions found in other studies about the lack of diversification of teaching staff within HEIs (Williams 2013; Andrews 2016; Tate & Bagguley 2017). Twenty-six students stated they imagined the heritage or culture of tutors on the course would be predominantly British, European or White. As stated in the literature review despite an increase of students from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups entering HEIs this increase is not represented in the recruitment of academic staff. My own lived experience reflects the lack of representation; I am accustomed to being the only Black researching professional in a department alongside being the only Black member of the senior management team. Since the 1980s concerns have been raised in England about lack of representation from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups within the teaching profession (Commission for Race Equality 1987; Siraj-Blatchford 1993; Shilliam 2015). Furthermore, Swann (1985), Osler (1997), Gillborn and Mirza (2000) and Bhopal (2018) have all coherently espoused the necessity for representation to address

issues in education such as retention, racism and attainment. However, despite neoliberal policies and laws that put forward tenuous reassurances of equality, such as the Equality Act 2010, Ahmed (2012) is correct in problematising the response to the concerns as a prevailing dilemma that offers symbolic commitments to diversity and the experience of those who embody diversity rather than producing any significant change.

To get a clearer picture of the phase of enslavement relating to how the students saw themselves as they embarked on an intensive undergraduate actor training course, they were asked to give three words to describe themselves and three words to describe what they perceived as a 'typical' drama student. The findings from these responses led me to place the students into two cultural groupings: Western/Eurocentric and Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups. Doing this enabled me to attribute the frequency of specific responses to cultural groupings along with investigating any differences or similarities within the regularity of the data. In analysing the similarities, I found 100% of students expressed that they were either excited and/or nervous about starting the course. However, the students' reasoning behind their feelings were not the same which illustrated a tendency towards cultural inequity. This difference supported me to address one of my research questions: *What cultural differences and assumptions influence the experiences of BA Acting first year students on a mainstream actor training course?* There were some marked variations in why the students felt this way. Students in the Western/Eurocentric group described their feelings as:

I'm excited because it's something I've always dreamed of doing

Excited because I'm spending the next 3 years doing exactly what I want to do

I'm nervous in a good way

I'm excited to show what I can bring to the course

Can't wait to learn and progress at something I am so passionate about

In contrast Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups described their feelings as:

I've heard stories about drama school, what it's like for Black people I'm nervous

Education for young Black people is hard I'm nervous about how I will do here

I've never been in an education setting with such a diverse group of people, never seen someone who looks like me in charge.

Every drama school and audition I've been to has been about Caucasian people I can see just here that the students are different. I hope it's not the same as what I've experienced before

I'm visible, you know, nervous I'll do or say something wrong

The analysis of findings suggested that those students from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups nervousness stemmed from their previous experiences associated with education. There was an expression of trepidation about the negative things they had heard about undergraduate Drama school study. There was also surprise about the diversity of their year group. It did not go unnoticed that this group of students, who I culturally belonged to, conveyed reasons behind being nervous and excited that concurred with the feelings I Re/Voiced on the first day undertaking research. Joseph-Salisbury (2019) emphasises that HEIs remain a White space in which Black bodies are viewed as alien. It did not give me any satisfaction that our experiences were inextricably linked, but as I sifted forensically through the data it left me with an unsettling despondency.

One group of students' descriptive feelings exemplified the apprehension they felt in the HEI setting. It was also the first time they referenced their race, highlighting that it was a reason for why they felt the way they did. This emergence from the data concurred with Gillborn's (2005) extensive study that "education policy in England is actively involved in the defence, legitimation and extension of white supremacy" (2005:499). These disclosures revealed in some way those students had already assumed that they did not belong in HEIs and because of the structural norms within educational settings, they were destined and resigned to having a negative experience. The other group of students exhibited nervousness and excitement with a more positive outlook. In relation to a new learning experience, there appeared to be less disequilibrium or dissonance. There was no mention of their colour being a

factor in any impacting experiences and the quotes indicate there were no negative previous experiences or if there had been, they weren't significant enough to be mentioned which demonstrates a distinct difference to the Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups.

Conceivably, Archer's (2008) research in teacher identity discourse (Figure 5) highlights an underlining reason for the stark contrast in the students' responses stemming from their past educational experiences. She explains that through teachers' habitual attitudes and the enactment of neoliberal polices priority is given to the culture of one particular ethnic group whilst disregarding others. Her research engages in an unpicking of the multiple ways in which students from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups are 'othered' in relation to the dominant identity of the 'ideal pupil' as White, male, middle class, and so on.

Ideal pupil identity

- Naturally talented
- Innovative/initiative
- 'Outside culture'
- Leaders
- Enquiring/engaged
- Assertive
- Independent
- Active
- 'Normal' sexuality
- Normal

- **White**
- **Outside class/middle class**
- **Masculine/masculinised**

- **Seen as achieving in the right way through ability and initiative**

Pathologised pupil identity

- Diligent/plodding
- Conformist
- Culture-bound
- Followers
- Deferent, Unquestioning
- Unassertive
- Dependent
- Passive
- Asexual/oppressed
- Other

- **Asian/Oriental**
- **Deserving poor**
- **Feminine/feminised**

- **Over achiever succeeds through hard work rather than ability**

Demonised pupil identity

- Naturally unintelligent/lazy
- Peer-led
- Victim of 'bad' culture
- Anti-social/rebels
- Problematically challenging
- Aggressive
- Ungovernable
- Anomic
- Hyper-sexuality
- Other/abnormal

- **Black/White working class**
- **Undeserving poor/underclass**
- **Hyper-masculine/Hyper-feminine**

- **Peer-led and culturally deprived**

Figure 5. Archer (2008) - Teachers discourse constructs three different identities

The only word included in Figure 5 that corresponds with the words that any students used to describe themselves in this study was - enquiring (curious/intrigued). This word was mentioned by students regardless of race or cultural specification. Hence, if the characteristics attributed to the three different identities are perpetrated by teachers as truth within education, Merton's (1948) theory of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' remains relevant. Explained as a "false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false conception true" (Merton 1948:195) it bears relevance to the students' distinct cultural variation in their explanations and self-identifications. Freire (1970) confirms that oppressed students suffer from "their internalization of the opinion the

oppressors hold of them" (1970:45). This analysis connects with DuBois' double consciousness of seeing oneself through the eyes of oppressors as discussed in the Introduction. Both coherently contend that the oppression manifests in everyday existence, however for Friere it is specifically detrimental in education because, as a site of knowledge, it maintains the subjugation of others as being commonplace and accepted without resistance.

Consequently, whilst Archer's (2008) simplistic stereotyping through the conceptual device of trichotomy does not fully encapsulate the cultural complexity that exists today, it is difficult not to acknowledge the clear correlation between the difference of Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups and White/Eurocentric students' educational experiences based on racist cultural assumptions outlined in Figure 5. Museus et al., (2008) and Yosso et al., (2009) elucidate that White students and staff are the main beneficiaries in an educational setting and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are often disadvantaged, marginalised and othered. The continuing *always-already* positioned as 'other' within British educational discourse, has in part resulted in an absence of faith in oneself and the educational system (Ahmed 2012; Harris 2017; Arday & Mirza 2018). It is that *always-already* alongside the students own positionings taken from the questionnaire that gives clarity to the theme of *enslavement.*

The first questionnaire permitted students to externalise their internal feelings, considering not just the written responses, but expanding to consider cultural context, each of which influences the ways in which the questionnaire data might be interpreted. Hence, emergent themes in the data suggested that the students were internally affected by previous negative and positive educational encounters, and that these internal effects had the potential to influence future experiences. This factor, alongside their self-identification, brings with them a form of '*enslavement'* that targets the psyche, destroying cultural values (Fanon 1956) and which impacts on student embodied learning. However, using an innovative and creative process of transculturate dialogue alongside a "manoeuvre amongst repertoires" (Biesta & Tedder 2006:11) may contribute to a continually emergent process of cultural reproduction and transformation. I will now move on to *negotiation,* the next phase of a *transculturate call-and-response* theory.

Negotiation

Negotiation is a sequential process that embraces reciprocal and/or complementary information exchange to influence or impact, which in turn leads to transitional exchange marked by *structural* and *offer* sequences. Adair and Brett (2002) indicate in their research, regardless of culture there is no difference in the sequences of *negotiation*. However, the *negotiation* sequence may not be a symmetrical or reciprocal occurrence of similar strategic focus. They suggest that there may be emic differences in *negotiation* stages, as well as the etic stages. For example, at any given time one party could be in the information exchange sequence whilst another at the *offer* sequence with cultural nuances within those stages impacting on the process. Thus, the positioning during the process can potentially have a conscious or unconscious focus. Specifically, in transculturation, *negotiation* facilitates a continuity-providing approach of cultural *negotiation* and transfer as a creative process involving choice, challenges, and transformation embedded with the sequential process. Where differing cultures converge in the "phenomenon of the contact zone" (Pratt 1992:6), a transculturate time and space is created to enable variation of the content and sequencing.

The second questionnaire took place after the end of the cultural exchange project *World Stories* and the completion of the students first term of actor training. I will elaborate on the project later in this section. The same thirty-two students (one student was absent) who completed the first questionnaire participated in the second. I undertook the next step of research as this point to garner responses to experiencing three months of the diversified curriculum, the diversity of teaching staff and my *Transculturate Call-and-Response* pedagogic approach to teaching. Furthermore, it enabled me, to see how students negotiated assumptions, cultural identity, and lived experience, which addressed research sub-question: *Which factors shape a dialogic transculturate pedagogic approach to actor training teaching to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning*? In the first questionnaire the students were asked about their assumptions concerning the heritage and culture of the tutors on the course. 80% of students recorded that they imagined the

heritage or culture of HEI academic staff who taught them would be predominantly British, European or White which goes towards evidencing the lack of Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups (Shilliam 2015; Khan & Shaheen 2016; HESA 2020). The second questionnaire expanded on this response to find out how students responded to the fact that 60% of the academic staff that had taught them identified as Black, East Asian, or South Asian. This statistic is not the norm in HEI and especially unusual in Drama Schools, Conservatoires and University drama departments as highlighted in recent research (Ginther 2015; Diversity School Initiative 2018; Hartley 2020). It is also unusual to have a Black working-class female leading the entire faculty with ultimate responsibility for the development and shaping of policies, staffing, budget and implementation of the curriculum.

I decided to focus on the six students who had previously specified they did not identify culturally with their family heritage. All six also assumed tutors on the course would be predominately White. I was curious to find out if the explicitness of the space created to facilitate cultural exchange through creativity and imagination had any impact on them. Interestingly, all six students confirmed in Questionnaire Two that they thought the culture and heritage of tutors had made a difference to their experience on the course. I found the change involved a renegotiation of meaning and a negotiation of expression. All students' comments are verbatim:

> *I've **always been** worried that the message I'm trying **to communicate** wouldn't land/ translate as I **don't have the same issue** with tutors from ethnic backgrounds I feel as though **I can be** my authentic self now*

> *They have spoken about **their culture** which has **made me blossom in talking about mine***

> *Having teachers with heritages and cultures means that **I'm not just learning just British stuff I'm beginning to learn about me***

> *To learn about all the individual heritages and **I'm beginning to think about mine now***

> *We have explored different aspects of approaches from cultures, **I want to do more exploration of this***

In Questionnaire One these students recorded that they did not have any affinity with their own culture, however, in Questionnaire Two, the findings demonstrate over the first term of their training they went through a negotiation process. This process stimulated recognition that culture played a significant part in their experience on the course and as a result their learning. The findings also suggest the students had previously suppressed their cultural references, evidencing Ogbu's (1978) manifestation of *cultural passing,* a phenomenon, he explains as a student separating themselves from their cultural background as a coping or survival mechanism, thus assuming the norms and values of the dominant culture in an educational setting. Dimmock (2002) suggests that culture is particularly lacking in studies focusing on education in conjunction with educational policies, leadership and management. Culture facilitates people to connect and interact with others and the environment, and in negotiation with people enables us to recognise, interpret, communicate and disseminate exchanging cultural perspectives. The need to fill this gap requires a multi-dimensional cultural exchange in educational research which this study aims to address.

Specifically, through interacting with cultures that are not solely from the dominant norm, we can begin to authenticate *I am because we are* and when made accessible in the classroom, the students' ability to gain a heightened awareness of their own cultural particularities. The students expressed the significant *negotiation* of cultural awareness as they started to examine their own narratives and lived experience:

> *culture is important it's not a perspective from one side I've realised there is a vast mix, I've been challenged to do things and explore things I wouldn't normally do*

> *having different cultures means we're able to share new and exciting things that some people may be unaware of*

> *I have learnt how to be myself a lot more interacting with students and their cultures has heavily influenced my work*

> *I think it's really good that we have a range of cultures it allows for freshness in different approaches allows the training to be really varied allowing you to build a thorough detailed and individual acting process*

including and interacting with everybody's culture means the training is not biased

Dillard et al., (1992) define cultural awareness as sensitivity to and the growing knowledge of the meaning of culture. It is characterised by respect for differences, ongoing *negotiation* and self-assessment of perspective, alertness towards differences and the desire for continuing growth stemming from cultural knowledge. The findings demonstrate the students were beginning to explore cultural awareness which opened up a *negotiation* of their own cultural identity as they began to examine and negotiate underlying assumptions which shaped their *enslavement* phase. As culture is multi-layered, the change process towards cultural awareness requires time, perseverance, and at times involves struggle. The transitions in the ways in which those intersection of elements is experienced and negotiated by participants are aspects of the transculturate process. My critical analysis supports the theories explained in *enslavement* that cite negative societal influences as a potential impact. Cultural racism is one such influence as it relates to students from pluralistic backgrounds (Fanon 1986; hooks 2014). Hence by facilitating space and time to negotiate a creative cultural platform of loss and recovery lays the foundation to an embodied learning experience through a transculturate pedagogic lens.

In response to being asked about their feelings around the shifts they were experiencing the students revealed significant change had been negotiated through the cultural exchanges that had occurred:

*I've been **able to do things I never thought I could do, I would've just given up***

*I've **learnt so much** and I **know so much more***

*I **feel fulfilled** because of the amount of **new knowledge***

*I **feel proud** of the things and **progress I have already learnt***

This is a big deal to me

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The findings reiterate that we overwhelmingly *form* each other and *are formed by* each other, through embodied interactions. These interactions need to be negotiated to challenge and transform the power structures that subjugate in an educational setting, which influences and determines the level of embodiment in learning and knowledge. As discussed in this thesis what qualifies as knowledge depends on the ways in which dominant societies categorise, code, process, and assign meaning to their experiences. Turnbull (1997) asserts that:

> it is a process of knowledge assembly through making connections and negotiating equivalences between the heterogeneous components while simultaneously establishing a social order of trust and authority resulting in a knowledge space (Turnbull 1997:553).

I would contend negotiating equivalences in actor training is reliant on the tutor in the learning space promoting cultural equity by counteracting the cultural racist ideology that currently saturates actor training teaching practices. By challenging hegemonic practices, in my research findings I am able to map the students' choice to negotiate and renegotiate their engagement and intersubjective actor training exploration within a diversified curriculum. I hope to witness mutual respect and awareness of the difference between crossing the boundaries and negotiating communication through the penetrable margins of our embodied selves. From this perspective I advocate a dialogic cultural exchange that informs how I advanced the decolonised development of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* pedagogic theory for HEI actor training provision.

I return to the *World Stories* project which is the lynchpin project the students undertake during their initial four months of training. It was an original cultural module I had written for the diversified curriculum to investigate a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory. Alongside undertaking the questionnaires, the findings in this exploration contributed to allowing me to practically respond to answering my research sub-question: *Which factors shape a dialogic transculturate approach to actor training pedagogy to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning?*
In addition, my autoethnographic positioning enabled me to viscerally engage with my foundational research question *How does a Black researching professional*

navigate Whiteness in academia to Re/Voice a Transculturate Call-and-Response pedagogic theory to practically action inclusivity in UK Actor Training Higher Education provision?

The *World Stories* project responded to the development of finding a practical transculturate approach to confront the pervasiveness of cultural authority in education (Denzin 2003; hooks 2008; Luckett 2016; Glynn 2019a). Denzin (2003) advocates to seek:

> emancipatory, utopian performances, texts grounded in distinctive styles, rhythms, idioms and personal identities of local folk and vernacular culture [...]These performances are sites of resistance. They are places where meanings, politics, and identities are negotiated. They transform and challenge stereotypical forms of cultural representation – white, black, Chicano, Asian American, Native American, gay, or straight (2003:123).

Accordingly, each student was required to source a fable, folklore or fairy story either from their heritage or cultural reference. It could be written, or a verbal version passed down through family oral tradition. The students are put into small groups and using a section of each student's fable, folklore or fairy story they collaborate over a 12-week rehearsal process to create a new story. By doing this the students are engaged with shaping the project content and the curriculum content as they explore an appreciation of cultural exchange through imagination and creativity, whilst having the opportunity to get to know each other's cultural references. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) maintain this approach primarily develops a temporal theme to promoting agency, and they describe it as:

> a sequentially embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and towards the present (as a capacity to contextualise past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment) (1998:963)

Utilising this three-way counterpoint of habitus: past - the cultural particularities the students bring to their training; projective - future imaginings, the 'what if' the imagination state of learning in actor training; and, the practical-evaluative - present state of immediate reflective evaluation with the information at hand, makes it possible for students to find a space for the call-and-response *negotiation* of cultural exchange.

I considered *World Stories* a pivotal project in the practical enactment of inclusivity. It enabled the students to become the experts as they educated each other to construct an imaginative understanding of their collective worlds through their individual cultural stories. During the process they were supported and guided to negotiate, navigate and take responsibility for each creative decision which resulted in a sense of shared ownership. In the second session of the project the students share their stories in a rehearsal setting and are given an opportunity to explain why they have chosen that particular story. A couple of days before the sharing session one of the students enters my office. There is a procrastinating preamble as he negotiates how he's going to broach the subject with me. He needed time and space.

Re/Voicing
I don't want this to be a thing
The 'thing' is loaded with an undertone of an assumed shared knowingness.
I got a story, a fairy story… but ...
He takes A Breather *You get me…?*
His voice trails off. He flips his Hoodie Up
I am Listening, I am listening for the 'thing'
I am listening for so much Unsaid in Ellipses
He flips his Hoodie Down
Movement Repetition in the truth of his anxiety
It's a story from back home… my grandad… he used to tell us
I can't wait to hear it, what's it called?
… … … … I Listen.
The words cascade Suddenly from his mouth
He made it up I think he made up stories from back home stories so is it legit to do?
He takes out a folded piece of paper
Slides it cross the desk
I wrote it down the way I remember it
I unfold the unlined A4 sheet with care
I note he has so carefully written the words on the page
I make a point of not reading the ink filled rows
Penned with Exquisite precision
So, he sees it is not 'a thing'. But it is. A. Thing. You get me…?
Why wouldn't it be legit?
One of the students said it wasn't legit if it wasn't published, in a book
He's watching me intently, purposefully to see. If I do get him.
And do you remember what I said?
Yes, but as its official stuff I thought…
I want to know what he means. *Stuff?*
Learning, you know part of the course…
I fold back the paper he gave me as carefully as he wrote it
Do You think it's legit?

He shifts in the chair, slightly irritated by my question
He flips his Hoodie Up … *It's my Grandad's story*
I slide the paper back to him, Unread.
That's right, so it's Your Story
His eyes squint considering what I've said.
Legit?
In this moment, he can't make eye contact (he will one day)
I respond to his call *As legit as anyone else*
… Everything in the ellipses.
He takes the folded paper. Puts it back in his pocket, carefully
Can't wait to hear you read it
My turn for Repetition
He gets up, habitually Flicks his feet to fix his tracksuit bottom
*You know this is **Different***
He emphasises different with a Cultural linguistic Relish that makes me Chuckle
He flips his Hoodie Down
My chuckle gives him some ease
And perhaps it is also the negotiation we've gone through
Never heard a teacher use the word 'Backfoot' before.
He references the first day of research.
… my chuckle turns into a broad smile *It's a good word and it's Legit*
He intakes an audible long breath to say
Thank you…

I want to say more, I want to tell him that inevitably there may be other things, but it will never be 'a thing' and if even it is, we will work through it. I want him to confirm who had said this to him. I want to tell him to go back to the person who told him that his story was not legit and ask: **Why** is that? **Who** says so? **When** was it decided? **Where** is it written? And **What** are we going to do to change that? And **How**? These are six of the fundamental text analysis questions derived from the Stanislavski acting approach who, as outlined in the literature review is considered the father of modern Western acting technique. I do not say anything, instead I watch him leave the room. I take from the nod of his head and the lightness in his body language, as he closes the office door, that he leaves happier than when he came in.

On reflection, I understand a three-way counterpoint of temporal agency had occurred during this interaction highlighting *negotiation*. Habitus: *It's a story from back home… my grandad, I wrote it down thy way I remember it*. Future imaginings: *you know this is different* and practical-evaluative – present: *His eyes squint considering what I've said,* and *he takes the folded paper. Puts it back in his pocket, carefully.* I note in my journal that through this verbal and physical exchange I can

analyse that the student was in flux, and he needed a sounding board, the space and time for *negotiation* of the situation and his position. His status and cultural capital as a young Black student had been predetermined as having lesser value even before engaging with *official stuff*. Always-already*.* Therefore, he needed to know he had a chance, *hoped* (as recorded in the *enslavement* section) that he could share something so intrinsically culturally personal, it would be accepted as *legit* and as a consequence he would find a sense of belonging. Hoped. He wanted an equitable platform of creative opportunity. In his cultural scholarship of linguistic liberty in saying *you get me* he wanted to see if I was *legit* - legal; extremely good; true; genuine. I interpreted his use of *different* in such an explosive cultural display of rhythmic richness, that he had negotiated I was *legit* or at least I was in the process of transformation, as was he. Interpreting our interaction analytically, I realise I did not say any more to the student because I acknowledged over the course of the project, he would need to experience embodied learning starting from a place of his own authentic cultural reference, from the oral tradition story his grandad told him and from all the other stories he would hear and work within the room. At the end of the *World Stories* project the same student wrote on Questionnaire Two:

> *this has contributed in making me feel understood and like drama school is open to people that look like me I've been pushed out of my comfort zone a lot I was scared about it. Culture is everything, it isn't stale we have the power and choice to change and change other people who didn't SEE me before* (his emphasis).

This student along with the other students in this research project experienced their own cultural narratives included in their learning. The new and unexpected opportunity of experiencing an exchange of diverse cultures in an academic environment enabled them to connect with the work evidencing embodied learning:

> *I've never learnt or developed ways to apply theatre outside of the mainstream western culture and practice I've been stretched I feel like I'm being taught to read and write again from Birth*

> *Seeing other cultures has allowed me to embrace and respect techniques and traditions from an array of other cultures*

Consequently, in the analysis of each transculturate phase I am able to re-read homogenised histories that construct cultural belonging as static. I am able to reconceptualise difference and diversity as negotiable, and as such, as intersectoral, as strategic, and as capital. Specifically, in actor training, this approach stimulates an infinite diverse cultural wealth of untapped imagination, collaboration and embodied knowledge that opens up a culturally responsive perspective. Ultimately following this exploration will disrupt how power is exchanged, renegotiated and passed between moment to moment, culminating in students and tutors engaging in a reciprocal gaze and authentically seeing each other. I will now move on to *adjustment*, the next phase of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory.

Adjustment

After the second questionnaire I gave myself time to engage with the data and to continue to work with the students to further explore the developments of a transculturate theory. Pause. I could continue the adjustment section conforming to the expectations of academic writing, paving the way for an orthodox read, but it would not be reflective of my autoethnographic truth but merely to appease an academic directive or as one doctorate tutor wrote in an email to me, that my writing needed to "befit the expectation of being at the forefront of knowledge and understanding when writing at Level 7 and beyond… this academic rigour is again essential but may be a function of the draft nature of the work… keep to the fluidity of the narrative" (12.07.2019). The tutor knew the work was more than a draft and specifically, that my work sought to challenge what was the colonised norms of academic writing. I wrote back questioning whose narrative, the Ivory Tower or mine? So, I start again perhaps disrupting the fluidity of Whiteness.

After the second questionnaire I gave myself time to recapture my equilibrium. I needed to. Pause. When I started my research, I was relatively new in post and there remained resistance to my proposed changes from the teaching faculty and a

core of students that had started the course under the old regime. I was still uncovering experiences of past racism and abuses of power between tutors and students, students and students, which had not been dealt with. There was on one hand an *expectation* and on the other an almost *I dare you* attitude to addressing what had gone before. I was the adjuster still adjusting to the newness, as was everyone else, making adjustments and readjustments. I recount this next Re/Voicing to continue to authenticate my journey in navigating Whiteness:

Re/Voicing
Found out today I'd forgotten
I'm in the Combat Zone and it is rotten
Forgot my face, here
Isn't commonplace for the master race
I Thought this Black Marketeer
Rebuffed the Whiteness that permeates the air
Drifted over me, as it was gossiped surreptitiously,
But it gave me a sharp hook straight to the belly.
When my appointment was officially broadcast
Before I had even started in the role I'd been cast.
A group of five students with their belief
Went to a senior member of staff for relief
To voice their concerns about the misrule
In having a Black Director of the School.
Somatic Contraction, Ouch
My body folds into a slouch
I left my guard down…
I know dey knock off ya crown
Gran, I don't understand. Why?
Not fi long it will soon pass by
Ya know ya have fi go through these adjustment
To understand about all dis, dis stuff an' substance

The staff member scripted concerns on an official complaints form
and logged it as if their right was the norm.
She had narrated the story to students and staff members
Qualifying that the incoming Black director's
Appointment was obviously a gimmick and a serious cause of concern
And perhaps Management should make a quick about turn.
A 'Karen' Uppercut landed super smoothly
Out of nowhere rather uncouthly
Under the chin
The linchpin of me so neatly built in started to spin.
With revealing relish it was the same member of staff who
Had told me after my arrival a month or two
I did not belong. *You do not belong*

Shouted in the foyer loud and strong
She could not, did not remain a part of the team.
After her unbridled privileged White scream.
I remember her expression which such clarity
Engrained on the walls of every Academy
Etched on my skin from so long ago
Dey don't realise you're used to dem blow ar fi blow
All the same it stung. It all stings
I have to make meaning of the recurring trauma it brings

I understood why at this point it was disclosed to me
Recognised it was part of an undermining strategy
To derail the success of the developments,
Of my research with the new intake of students.
It was clear to see the noticeable shifts
Being made in the school. Pedagogical facelifts.
Gran would say *dem red-eye, an' bad mind a kill dem.*
No, Julie I would say don't mek dem mek you feel you is condem
what sits on your head is a royaal diadem
I would say, Julie don't stop now
step bak, but don't let anybody disavow
ya work. Your. Work, has a valid right of way
all their rottenness will end in decay
She sucks her toothless gums in dismay
Yes, don't wanna cuss bad word, so that's what I would say.

Following this incident, I took time to step back and reflect. I had completed an extensive overhaul of the department, undertaken significant restructuring of the teaching staff, and rewritten a diversified curriculum for the BA Acting course. However, there were senior teaching staff who were resolutely committed to upholding what they saw as the 'excellence of actor training' through maintaining the status quo. There was an absolute rejection of any compromise in requests to explore potential alternatives to what they saw as 'tradition' or a convergence of inclusive teaching pedagogies. Nor was there any acknowledgement that the teaching practices used were not intrinsically universal and had had a detrimental effect on students. Shifting privilege is a new phenomenon that Whiteness had yet to embrace and adjust to. By the time the drama school furore erupted at the time of Black Lives Matter 2020, viscerally highlighting the racism that Black students had suffered in drama schools, those staff members I mention had moved on. Even though we had started the journey of transformative change months before the traumatic debris infused the air, I was again triggered by my lived experiences in

academia and specifically in my domain of actor training both as a student and as a researching professional. All inflicted under the quintessential parasol of Whiteness and no amount of navigating the shade, at some points in this doctorate journey, eased my academic spirit.

I decided to go back to meticulously review and analyse the research data thus far whilst giving myself time to reflect forward. Kim (2012) calls it the "draw-back-to-leap" (2012:239) to give time to create space to make adjustment, suggesting that we can think about something while doing it. In other words, I can engage in reflection-in-action, stop in the midst of action, make necessary adjustments, and alter my approach to improve my research practice. In this type of reflection, I aimed to connect with my feelings and attend to relevant theory to support my study. I sought to build new understandings to adjust and shape my action in the unfolding research and work situation. It became clear to me in my findings that the 'draw-back-to-leap' approach was in fact the adjustment phase in a transculturate pedagogic practice and it was a pivotal point of the transculturate theory.

Adjustment, in the dynamic of cultural exchange in educational research, is the centre to acknowledge different centres, thus, creating a transculturate approach in the learning environment that stimulates and provokes different centres co-existing and strengthening the whole. This positioning maintains the Ubuntu epistemological perspectives that through cultural exchange we make adjustments which benefit the collaborative process, and by doing so, we learn new thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Kim 2012). We actually become a different person through "transformation," and, in a way, a more "complete" person or a person with more choices. The transformation occurs, of course, through cultural communication (Kim 2012:239-243). Once the cultural exchange emerged in *negotiation* what followed was adjustment(s). Thus, opening up the flexibility of the possibilities of cultural creativity in actor training teaching that facilitated equitable student development towards embodiment. In both questionnaires the students were asked what they thought a typical drama student was. Again, the questionnaire results organically delineated into cultural groups by the response to the questions. As shown in Table. 5, I collated words into corresponding themes and focussed on the top four most

frequently used to analyse any comparisons when looking at the second questionnaire to note any adjustments that had been made.

Table 5. 1ˢᵗ Questionnaire – Top three words to describe a typical drama student

THREE WORDS FOR DRAMA STUDENT	TOTAL	White	Black/Brown	Multiple Heritage
Snobby/Posh Wealthy	12		8	4
Extroverted/Outgoing Over the top/Loud	11	5	5	1
Artistic/Creative/Expressive Imaginative/Talented	9	4	3	2
Confident	7	4	1	1

It was fascinating to find that whilst the majority of students who identified as Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups described a drama student as: *snobby, posh and wealthy*, the most frequent response from those students who culturally identified as Western/Eurocentric did not use that description. Furthermore, analysing the three words the students described themselves, it was clear that the Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups described themselves farthest away from the assumption of a typical drama student. Using words like; *hopeful, nervous and curious*. The students who culturally identified as Western/Eurocentric used words such as: *open, focused, excited.* As previously mentioned, the phases can overlap and one can move back and forth within the phases, therefore this data could be analysed as part of the phase of *enslavement.* However, the same question was asked at the end of term (Table 6) and therefore was specifically relevant to measuring any adjustments that had occurred.

Table 6. 2nd Questionnaire – Top three words to describe a typical drama student

THREE WORDS FOR DRAMA STUDENT	TOTAL	White	Black/Asian	Multiple Heritage
Open/Receptive/Responsive/ Aware	16	5	7	4
Imaginative/Artistic/Creative/ Talented	11	3	5	3
Brave/Bold/Courageous Fearless	7	2	3	2
Confident	7	2	4	1

The findings from the second questionnaire demonstrated an adjustment in assumptions, the students from Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups no longer used the description: *snobby, posh and wealthy.* The highest frequency of words had adjusted to: *open, receptive, responsive.* The same words appeared with similar frequency for students who culturally identified as Western/Eurocentric. In addition, defining themselves in the second questionnaire all students' description had moved closer to their description of a what they thought a typical drama school student was. The findings suggest that through explicit engagement with culturally relevant teaching and learning the students were interacting "through difference" Bharucha (1996:128). As they began to develop cultural awareness which involves sensitivity to differing cultures, the students were making adjustments to acknowledge that different cultural centres could co-exist thereby disrupting social inequities to rupture the traditionally accepted dominant culture's power and privilege.

How adjustment practically manifested in a learning environment is born out in the analysis of my journal notes during teaching sessions and the subsequent semi-structured interviews I undertook. I found by using the five forms of call-and-response, adjustment became a culturally specific reciprocal dialogic interaction. Therefore, for the students, call-and-response was a viable learning device in the phase of adjustment that helped derive both sense and culture out of their learning surroundings, enabling the students to understand how their culture was relevant to and for themselves in a shared setting (Markus & Kitayama 1991). In the context of actor training, call-and-response opened up unlimited possibilities for nomadic

movement and vocal patterns, valuing the transculturate importance of not only *what* is done or said but *how* it is done and said. As discussed in the methodology section the African oral tradition has five potential interactions. They are performative and can be used at any time, in any order and you can spontaneously intermix from one type to another during a teaching session to be reflective in action. Going back to Kim's (2012) notion to 'draw-back-to-leap', call-and-response gives time to reflect in action, make adjustment and respond to the call, or offer a call for response. Due to the nomadic potential the adjustment through call-and-response can be as quick or as slow and as temporary or enduring as appropriate, for anyone involved in the cultural exchange. In the teaching environment the tutor/practitioner should ensure they model openness, sensitivity and invested engagement with individual cultural creativity within the collaborating group.

I will discuss the call-and-response interactions analysed during a series of weekly three-hour acting approaches classes over a period of 21 weeks utilising a transculturate pedagogy. The students were taken through transculturate exercises and improvisations I had developed over six years of practical and theoretical research inspired by my MA study. The exercises are an exploration of fusing African actor training techniques and M. Chekhov technique interpreted through my cultural lens. I am explicit that it is my interpretation and that the students must interpret the work, learning through their own cultural lens. During the taught sequences that lead to various improvisational starting points there is adjustment to the training and each other as the classes progress. I add a caveat that 19 weeks of the training undertaken with the students was face to face after which the Covid lockdown interrupted studies and the remaining two weeks of the term were delivered via online teaching. Therefore, the findings spread across face-to-face contact teaching and online represents the adjustment phase in the *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory:

Imitation is the action of response copying the call. In African oral tradition repetition is used to dissolve the past and the future into one eternal present, in which the passing of time is no longer noticed as repetition. Imitation is a vital feature of call-and-response as it is a foundational part of African philosophical perspectives handing down a lineage of whole structural system through such things as stories, theories, rituals and cultural instruction to be copied and passed on verbatim. In the

arena of actor training, the tutor/practitioner has to be careful not to dictate imitation for too long, so they do not supress or dominate the interaction, but value the essence of imitation - response and repetition as a unique creation. Embarking on the transculturate work, the students imitated the physical, facial and breathwork sequences. I noted the moments of adjustment and student responses to the call:

> Journal notes: *it really is vital to ensure all students know they have a voice particularly in these early stages of the work, that the response is within their own cultural creativity even if imitating. The exercises facilitate imagination, it motivates, prompts, challenges. I observe the students working the physical forms in the room, I witness their physical and verbal adjustments as they practice.*

> Student*: I come from a very closed village and quite… you know, this makes absolute sense because I am learning from you and all the other cultures we have. I'm adjusting to that.*

> Student: *it's like we can adapt ourselves in the work and I don't have to censor myself which I've always done before*

There is a clear sense that moving from the phase of *negotiation* the students were adjusting to any differences that they were experiencing. My analysis found that their response to the shifts in the process of cultural exchange provided an embodied exploration of a transculturate approach. The first student words suggest that their previous experience of culture was based on a stereotype which stigmatised other cultures outside of the dominate culture. The second student expresses their identity has adjusted through a liberation of not censoring themselves in doing the work; an experience they had not felt before. Analysis of both findings redresses cultural passing Ogbu (2004) in the educational setting and Dubois (1999) double consciousness. The learning of the students was shifting to their own cultural lens rather than through an oppressed dominant norm as identified in the literature review.

Question and Answer utilised the same conversational words or gestures which can carry much different meaning. In short improvisation sequences the students are asked to listen and with (cultural) awareness to respond to the different shades and tones we all have in saying the same words or repeating gestures. Prompts made to the students: how can/do we adjust? How many different ways can

we play with the words or gestures to create/explore the nuances of meaning and be unafraid to adjusting? Can we play a question/phrase by ending with an ascending quality? We can play an answer by ending with a repeated or descending quality? Do cultural influences or particularities change the quality?

> Journal notes: *Because of the diversity of the group and the work instigated through the project World Stories there is a greater cultural curiosity. That's good. There are brief separated moments of their cultural intonation because of the cultural reference, therefore I reminded them that these acting approaches session is about sharing what they're learning, there are no in jokes, and we should approach the work from a position of not knowing. My role is to facilitate voicing emerging knowings and adjustments, Re/Voicing old, inscribed stories, to probe the call to response and probe the response to call. There are no fixed starting points. At the end of the session one student feels he hasn't responded to the task as he thinks he should have*
>
> *Student: I'm sorry, I'm adjusting in being able to use my own culture, so I was working with myself, I hadn't thought it would be like this at drama school*
>
> Partner Student*: Oh no, it was so interesting working with you, because I was adjusting to what you were going through…*

They shared a face and sigh of collective relief which the rest of the group respond with a supportive laugh. The indication of adjustment and not being fully aware of it in the moment, is equally valid if not more so in the reflection of it. My interpretation of this data confirms that when we recognise the adjustment in a transculturate exchange it makes us feel like perhaps we understand something about the difficulty of cultural complexity. We attach meaning to it which lays the building blocks towards transformation. In collaboration, we work together for personal and social transformation (Freire 2000; hooks 2003; Mertens 2009), *I am because we are,* to interweave cultural strategies between the intersection of actor training pedagogies, cultural identity and cultural racism to facilitate understandings, adjustment and change that will create sustainable transformation.

Statement and Commentary is a declared expression of an idea. An offer of a statement is followed by a direct response to the statement either with an agreement or a contrasting view. As the response is a commentary on the call, it is the call-and-response that is always prefaced with, *if needed we will always agree to disagree amicably*. The expectation is to build on each other's offering and work

together to move the exchange along to create something that is inventive and collective, encouraging students to listen and build on each other contributions as they go about solving the problem. It is iterative and collaborative as the commentary objective is to mobilise connection, concurrence, disagreement, reflection or inspiration to allow for the possibility of discovery.

> Journal notes: *I work in layers to ensure clarity, and repetition to understand understanding. I call question, to prompt response. I ask the students to incorporate physical gestures within the statement or commentary. At points there is creative tension in the scenes because the students attempt to push the boundaries. There is confidence in the students whose cultures aren't always recognised in educational setting and some students find that a bit unsettling and difficult to make adjustment. I watch two students struggle along, it is more imitation than commentary and statement and the scene does not progress. I find an appropriate moment to stop the work and ask why the student is afraid to make a commentary. He is reticent at first, so I give the group a preparation task, while I speak to the student separately.*

> Student: *there's people on the course who come from all types of backgrounds all cultures which has opened my eyes a lot because I've been raised in an area where everyone's white middle class working class in my school there was one black kid that's it, I feel so ashamed and embarrassed about a lot of stigmas that I'd had in my head for years*

> Me: *thank you for being so honest*

> Student: *I felt like I couldn't say anything because I felt like I would embarrass myself through my own ignorance, because I didn't want to offend anyone. I think I'm adjusting to that.*

This honest conversation led to revisiting class discussions about cultural situatedness opening a channel for individuals to renegotiate their positionings in order to recognise their adjustments. Adopting the call-and-response approach means that a lot of Western conceptual superiority is eradicated specifically in relation to actor training, as discussed in the introduction, literature review and the methodology section, where the predominant practitioners and methodologies are Western and those who manage and teach the curriculum are predominately White middle-class men (Ginther 2015; Peck 2016; McAllister Viel 2018). Therefore, accepting the rules of an African oral tradition is to surrender to the unfamiliar in actor training. The approach confronts inequality, it does not seek to demonise those

who have been privileged in the educational setting but demands equity between all cultures.

Affirmation is a sequence of a short phrase offered as the call to receive an affirming verbal or non-verbal response. The student or tutor/practitioner respond through their attentiveness and verification to support the student/tutor who calls. I use it during the practical implementation of the taught sequences during short scene work. The students are prompted by such phrases as *tell me yours and I'll tell you mine, oh sisters and brothers, tell me what you see* to elicit an active engagement with the caller by placing all the attention on them. Each student will get the opportunity to be the centre of affirmation to affirm that different cultural centres co-exist. In doing so it sets out to address the hegemonic narrative that the centre is tantamount with Whiteness. Therefore, affirmation becomes a site of adjustment where the students can "transform and challenge stereotypical forms of cultural representation" (Denzin 2003:118-123). As the work deepens the students begin to express their cultural attitudes using rhythm, variation in pace, and creative language adjusting to any new fleeting, transitory, emerging culture.

At the end of the third stage of the research project, which involved the semi-structured interviews undertaken with twelve of the thirty-three students, the final question was asked as the call: *Give three words to describe yourself?* After nearly a year of actor training which had been framed by a *Transculturate Call-and-Response Theory,* I wanted to ascertain if there were any differences that would demonstrate signs of adjustments in their responses to the same question that was asked in the first questionnaire.

Call: Give three words to describe yourself
Sept 2019 Response: *Psyched, nervous, hopeful*
May 2020 Response: *Present, resilient, grounded*

Call: Give three words to describe yourself
Sept 2019 Response: *Anxious, intrigued, nervous*
May 2020 Response: *Gassed, spiritual, a challenger*

Call: Give three words to describe yourself
Sept 2019 Response: *Excited, hopeful, nervous*
May 2020 Response: *Free, strong, connected*

Call: Give three words to describe yourself
Sept 2019 Response: *Relieved, determined, scared/nervous*
May 2020 Response: *Aware, inspired, open*

Kamonos-Gamelin (2005) writes a "teacher's role is not to replicate suffocating conditions that stunt self-awareness and self-knowledge, but to set up conditions that will inspire, that will literally give breath to students' visions of themselves as 'knowers'" (2005:187). The analysis of the data confirms that the teaching and learning the students had undertaken demonstrated significant adjustments in how they saw themselves, related to differing cultures and their engagement with their training. Additionally, in expanding on their reasons for the changes the students expressed:

> Student: *when you accept other cultures it kinda like allows you to have a better perspective of yourself, you change its kinda freeing,*

> Student: *people who aren't open to new cultures stay stable and neutral and stay in a straight line*

> Student: *I've made these adjustments, obviously before I came into this environment, I thought I was a certain way like I thought oh yeah if there's a certain situation, I'm sorting it out I'm cracking it I'm yeah now I'm calm because no-one can tell me I don't belong here.*

> Student: *I've adjusted to the way I've had to look at myself I've had to look deeply into my culture and me, who I am, if that makes sense.*

The students were demonstrating the process of adjustment as they were making 'sense' out of their transculturate experience. There are correlations with the issues that perpetuate cultural racism in actor training pedagogies raised in the literature review. Opening up a transcultural learning space that rejects cultural racism by embracing a transculturate pedagogy creates a platform that accepts the positivity of cultural difference, resulting in a cultural responsiveness that has the potential to transform the learning experience. The findings exemplify that identity is not static, it evolves and develops to inform and reform in a continuous dialogue with the cultural world (Mead 1934; Hall 1996a; Coley 1998; Levine-Rasky 2013). Through the students' cultural interactions, it became the lens through which they saw themselves, ultimately influencing their understanding of others and uncovered a depth and breadth of possibilities for creative exploration.

Surprise is an interchange between call-and-response that manifests in enthusiasm and improvisation. There are provocative calls meaning a response does not have to be to the first call which can allow for an unexpected and startling response to mix things up. It's all about listening, building on offerings, going somewhere together, and creating something brand new and unexpected. Students are required to commit to being within the space of the unknown, exploring unforeseen possibilities. Specifically, in actor training using the body/mind (Zarilli 2009; Chekhov 2014; Hendricks 2017) to make connections in the moment that impact on the unfolding improvisation. Cohen-Cruz (2010) confronts the nature of this call-and-response work by insisting that tutors motivate their students to bring "together as many opposing points of view as possible" (2010:110) and to adjust and readjust to those viewpoints. Thus, the surprise call-and-response supports the student to realise that they are able/do engage in critical dialogue and action, while emphasising that the adjustment in language processes exist in "partnership with action" (Fisher, Jocson & Kinloch 2005:92). It has the potential to be the most unpredictable of the five types but offers the student to explore the core of their cultural individual creativity and cultural imagination. The immediacy of the moment-to-moment exchanges is an effective tool to exercising adjustment through reciprocity, attentiveness, responsiveness, imagination and flexibility to open up endless possibilities of creativity.

During one of the Shakespeare teaching sessions the students were explained the premise of surprise, and put into pairs from which I noted the students in an organic surprise call-and-response improvisation

> Student A: *Why don't we speak like that anymore?*
> Student B: *We do. Different beats. Like Rap, different Raps, reggae speak*
> Student A: *Language is shortening and we're using less words*
> Student B*: Most people don't enjoy words, that's social media*
> Student A: *but actors have to*
> Student B*: my family are from Jamaica and we're always talking especially when we're all round the table. It's a word fest*
> Student A: *my family don't really talk is that a Western thing or maybe a middle-class thing?*
> Student B*: It's just different*
> Student A: *Different is good*
> Student B: *Yes! Anyway, I think Shakespeare was black*
> Silence. Student A: shrugs shoulder demonstrating not sure what to say?
> Student B: *Just like Beethoven, & the guy that wrote the Musketeers*

Student A: *Really, I love that film*
Student B*: It was a book first*
Student A: *But he wasn't actually black*
Student B*: yeah, when we're doing Shakespeare for me, I see him as black*
Student A: *yeah, but historically*
Student B*: we don't have many pictures of Shakes, but when we're working on it, I see and hear him as black, that works for me.*
Student A*: And it wouldn't work otherwise?*
Student B*: It makes sense for me*
Student A: *Fair enough. For me Shakespeare was actually a woman*
Student B: *Yes. A woman and black*
Student A: *Yes*

The improvisation was loaded in the *way* the words were said as much as what was said, along with the responsive voicings from the students watching. Furthermore, this encounter revealed an insight into a shared experience providing an avenue for self-discovery and expression through adjustment. Nwanko and Onwumechili (1991), Kim and Ruben (1992) also confirm that most people in most situations adjust to the awareness of cultural differences. There is minimal empirical research that tests theories of adjustment (Adair & Brett 2002; Ben-Nur & Lluis 2006, 2015). Although research in cross cultural negotiations suggests that adjustment does occur, and it is beneficial in the interpretation of each other's objectives or intentions made explicit by honouring cultural differences in order to locate and explore places of equilibrium and dissonance (Weiss 1994; Hall 2003). However, in my analysis of findings by interweaving call-and-response into a transculturate approach, adjustment is an emergent process that advances *negotiation* through direct and indirect reciprocity.

The data samples of call-and-response throughout this adjustment section transmit meaningful cultural information. They signify how the students adjusted to one another's cultures through a practical transculturate loss and recovery in time and space to springboard budding cultural offshoots. The phases of *negotiation* and adjustment should not be deemed as passive but transformative in the reassessing and recovering of cultural specificity by promoting exposure to new and valued interpretive cultural repertoires (Rama 2012; Scandone 2020). This leads to the next transculturate umbrella stage Ortiz (1999) called *neoculturation* under which the

phases of self-assertion and synthesis sits. It is the creation of new cultural phenomena as a result of the exchange and intermingling of separate cultures.

Interval

Re/Voicing
Connection to my research gave me powerful incitement
at times overloading my process.
Research can be messy, say Chilisa (2012), Khupe & Keane (2017)
always already, always known, the almost known and everything in-between*.*

My supervisor allowed me to off load stripping away
The layers of racial disturbances
to transform my connection into a present invaluable tool.
A tool that opened up a palpable trajectory, to fuel

The next part of my research, semi-structured interviews
But Blindsided by the pandemic.
Lockdown forced the next research stages online.
The changes were considered under the University ethics guideline.

Valuable time reviewing the initial data, whilst teaching,
observing classes, taking extensive notes
filtered thorough in my reflective journal, had already been spent.
I had completed the first part of the research, I was confident.

The Transculturate Call-and-Response theory was proceeding.
So I would delay conducting the interviews.
Immediate priorities were communicating with students and staff
to organise online provision which read like a monograph.

Timetables, curriculum content, assessments, freelance contracts
ensuring all students had equipment and access
No detriment and discussing the dreaded word furlough,
Yes. During this new way of living the workload did grow

However, in budding May I moved to the next phase Self-Assertion
under the umbrella stage of Neoculturation.

Self-Assertion

The final two phases of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory are *Self-assertion* and *Synthesis*. These phases fall under the umbrella Ortiz (2003) termed *neoculturation,* outlined as the creation of new cultural phenomena created by the intermingling of separate cultures. Rama (2012) confirms that incorporation of culture takes place in the final stage of the transculturation process. In educational research it is the stage where students are fully engaged in the unique cultural learning spaces that connect them to each other in ways that are culturally relevant, and intentional artistic interactions originating from an equitable learning process. Student and tutor/practitioner are continuously challenging themselves to find solutions in the give and take, loss and recovery of *neoculturation* which ties in with an actor training mantra that the actors' job is to 'solve the problem' and once one is solved, another problem arises (Meisner 1987; Hagen 2008; Panet 2009). Pursuing that edict keeps us aware, active in listening, in the moment and imaginatively creative at every stage. I invited twelve of the thirty-three students to participate in the semi-structured interviews for the next stage of research (Table 7). The students chosen were a cross section of the group to represent the wide range of diversity.

Table 7. Demographic of Interview students

Anonymised coding	FAMILY HERITAGE	CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION
S1	Jamaican	Jamaican
S7	British/Uruguayan	Spanish
S9	Caribbean/Irish	Trinidadian/Tobagonian
S10	British	British/American
S13	White British/Scottish/French	White British lower middle class
S14	Guyanese/Jamaican	Caribbean
S15	British/Scottish/Scandinavian	British
S21	Black South African	British
S25	Nigerian	Nigerian/Africa
S27	Colombian Trinidadian Lebanese French	Latino - Colombian
S29	Ghanaian/Australian born in France	British Australian
S31	English Ghanaian Italian Welsh	English Italian

As discussed, the interviews were undertaken via Zoom and the questions formulated (See Appendix C), were stimulated from the data that came out of the questionnaires, the journal notes from my teaching sessions, alongside notes from observing the students in other classes. These latter two research avenues allowed me to witness and evidence self-assertion in various forms from all students, however the interviews enabled me to rigorously focus to triangulate rich detailed data. During the interviews I recorded all movements, physical gestures and mannerisms. Doing this through the medium of the screen had the added benefit of amplifying physicality as it is a medium that acts as a magnifier. After undertaking the interviews, I transcribed the recordings taking meticulous care to write the words verbatim adding every movement to match exactly at the point and time they occurred. As I read the transcripts many times over in a two-month period I continually asked myself Walshaw's (2010) question "in what ways do my feelings and reactions to their story influence my understanding of the data?" (2010:589). After this, I did nothing but allow space and time for the data to live in my subconscious in order to cultivate a deepening transculturate creative and poetic relationship rooted in historic specificity and artistic originality. The collated data was revealing, extremely personal and valuable research, and therefore the spatio-temporal continuum created the literal possibilities of "rewriting the world from the experience of not being able to pass into the world" (Ahmed 2012:176). Subsequently the transcripts were analysed as Re/Voiced poetic narratives, honouring what the students had said in the interviews. Each revoicing emerged specific to the student and was sent to them as a Re/Voicing Call for their response.

Within the process of loss and recovery in the transculturate exchange, *self-assertion* is exhibited by inserting oneself in a physical or emotional space intentionally or unintentionally. In my educational research I came to understand *self-assertion* emphasised the need to ensure student cultural voice underpinned 'ownership' of student learning. Interestingly the power dynamics changed with Zoom online teaching; students could switch off their screen if they were disengaged. The added weight of autonomy to their learning, which they seemed to have not experienced before, gave them an assertiveness that was expressed in weekly tutorials. More importantly, it forced any tutor/practitioner still using the banking system of teaching in actor training to reassess in order to maintain

engagement. Communication both verbal and non-verbal played an even more crucial teaching and learning dynamic, requiring authentic confirmation and reconfirmation of clarity (in the moment) from the student. This momentous shift led to conversations with my teaching staff about how we could teach non-contact actor training filled with innovative practice and a renewed critical and reflective rigour.

In the midst of these continuing conversations George Floyd was murdered on the 25th May 2020 in the United States. The murder was the catalyst for solidarity protests in the UK spearheaded by Black Lives Matter and Stand Up to Racism. The televising of his horrendous murder had a devastating effect particularly on Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic students and tutors/practitioners. There was a palpable consciousness of despair and loss; I observed the students trying to negotiate some understanding of what was happening and the implications for their lives:

> *you know there's a lot of tragedy and, and, and pain and loss*

> *It's hard cos I consider myself black I identify as black young man and so I should because I'm not white erm I'm not going to fit into that white supremacy. I've always been in the black camp than the white camp*

> *erm… it makes me feel* (draws out words) *it makes me feel, I dunno it makes me feel sad I can't lie to you angry*

> *it's quite scary as a human being*

In addition, as considered in the introduction and literature review the protests gave voice to story after story of the abuse Black drama students had suffered under the hegemonic structures, policies and culturally racist actor training teaching in HEIs. Actor training had come under a microscopic lens and my research was proving relevant to addressing some of the key issues raised such as decolonisation of the curriculum, the diversification and restructuring of senior teaching and management positions and the cultural racism that dominated teaching practices.

Hence, the transculturate theory I was exploring in actor training involved embedding the African oral tradition of call-and-response, thereby enacting a dialogic cultural exchange using a decolonised approach. During the subsequent teaching

sessions and through analysis of the semi-structured interviews, I recognised the increased value of the student's cultural particularities, made explicit within the learning environment, manifested as an increased sense of identity and/or sense of belonging (Penuel & Wertsch 1995; Carlson 2017). The analysis of the data demonstrated that working from the positivity of difference reflected the potential of embodied learning utilising cultural identity in actor training (Loukes 2011) and as Bhabha (1994) describes opens up dialogic spaces. Using call-and-response these dialogic spaces create an authentic platform for negotiation, debate, conflict and adjustment, increasing mutual understanding through transculturate creativity. The student Re/Voicing Calls catalogued their emerging *self-assertion* through the engagement and adjustment of cultural exchange.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
For me it's just, I've learnt so much about other peoples, their cultures
`Moves hand to chest.` *Er... In the end its about observation and curiosity*
Really being interested enough to break assuming subcultures
I suppose that's the adjustment, learning from a place of genuine generosity

The reciprocity of the transculturate process moved beyond the dominant or hegemonic gaze (hooks 2008; Fleetwood 2012) to encapsulate a call-and-response gaze. As examined in the literature review it is the initiation of active perception rather than interpretation leading to a cultural loss and recovery where power dynamics are exchanged, renegotiated and adjusted culminating in a fundamental pedagogical process of seeing each other. Consequently, it became evident through the analysis the sense of belonging not only related to the classroom but filtered through to their bodies being in the building, altering a significant number of students belief that HEIs were educational spaces they traditionally did not belong in or were not welcomed.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
I'm not gonna a lie, I mean like, I've been in other institutions
or whatever where I've felt like, like I need to tone myself down
maybe I need to like come across a certain way, make certain decisions
so, I don't appear to be like ghetto or like anything. `Tilts head right with a frown`

It's just about being a black person and a black man in particular
Er but in, in this er, course at ArtsEd there's so many people

are in my class here like me, I feel comfortabler
don't feel the need to put on a constant mask. I feel equal.

This realisation highlighted that identity is shaped and adjusted in continuous dialogue with the macro cultural world or the micro cultural exchanges. In the progress of this study the equitable culture created, determined the value of cultural capital and, as such, belonging. The sense of belonging augmented the ownership of their training impacting their embodied learning (Pavis 1992; Hingorani 2009; Hays 2013; Monro 2018). Consequently, in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, my findings revealed the pedagogic *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory enabled me creative cultural opportunities to explore an approach to embodied contemporary actor training predominately from the perspective of practically actioning inclusivity.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
I Smiled because my culture was included
Ignorance had kept it so excluded.
Smiled because my culture was respected
And at last my learning was connected.
The work that was created beautifully
Allowed me to feel equal. Crucially

In the data there was continual repetition of the phrase of *feel equal* in response to understanding the student's culture was recognised and made explicit within the learning environment. This expression confirmed the significance of the 'value' placed on cultural capital being a signifier of assertion in their sense of belonging. Notwithstanding the alienness and loneliness of Zoom learning, the students remembered through the bodymind culturally explicit training and the embodied learning they had experienced. This journey travelled enabled a realisation of a disciplinary flexibility 'rooted and spidered out of the body' which gave them an explicit connectedness to their training.

Despite the uncertainty of Covid, for the first time I was confident as a Black researching professional. I no longer felt like an imposter. There was a freedom of being able to breath in your own space all day unshackled from the daily double consciousness and outsider reminders that tattooed the landscape of my skin. My philosophical perspectives had become an intricate euclidean spherical anchor

which did not just lay beneath me but encircled me, promoting assertion of my researching professional self through my cultural identity (Min & Kim 2000; Slootman 2019). The timely draw-back-to-leap had found the theoretical navigation of Whiteness to forge a path in HEI that inscribed my own sense of belonging. It was a strange unfamiliar feeling that propagated a landslide of thoughts. I had ideas about how my thesis would unfold in putting pen to paper, I dreamed snippets of student Re/Voicings, and for the first time I felt I could articulate out loud my theories, research findings and why the research was important for the development of actor training.

I was shifting in the autoethnographical space where narratives of subjectivity meet the narratives of culture (Zembylas 2003). Of course, my research needed to be evidenced and rigorous in its validation as discussed in the data collecting section, but I no longer felt the necessity to validate me. I was consolidating a positioning where "one's unique voicing, complete with colloquialisms, reverberations from multiple relationships, and emotional expressiveness, is honored" (Gergen & Gergen 2002:14). Was that *self-assertion*? The excerpt below highlights how positive self-assertion facilitates a critical understanding of cultural value. Using a Bourdieuian lens in analysis, *self-assertion* is a dismantling of cultural hierarchy as the centre continually revolves to decentre, uncentre and recentre.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
Acting doesn't belong to one specific set of people
Sometimes, sometimes I think when people think of, especially like black males,
ummm, I don't- I'm not going to say people think of us like quite rude
or aggressive but there is a stereotype that, you know, society kind of sees us.
I think the way I was raised and the way a lot of my friends were raised,
cuz a lot of my friends are black,
we was raised to have respect and to be hard working and to have manners, you know,
so definitely, I think culture plays a lot into it yeah.
It's always kind of like my thing to not prove people wrong but just show them this is not how young black males behave.
Just show them this is not how young black males behave.
So, in terms of that I just always make sure that I'm on top of my game.
It hasn't always been easy because sometimes you do slip
and you do think what's the point and `and` (audible breath in) *but*
just remembering because I'm black

By engaging in creative and culturally relevant experiences the student was not only able to articulate their sense of belonging in undertaking actor training but the change of narrative he needed in relation to his identity, thereby advancing a holistic learning experience towards a path to embodiment. Interestingly, I found that the transculturate phase of *self-assertion* confronted the outsider-within dichotomy. Through a considered awareness of the body and mind with self, in practical interaction with the outer learning environment (Yasuo 1987; Meerzon 2015), it motivated and stimulated the *negotiation* and *adjustment* of the 'value' placed on cultural capital from those who habitually through neoliberal agendas fall outside of the dominant group. Shifting paradigms to facilitate the reciprocity of cultural exchange in an educational environment redresses cultural unfamiliarity, flattening the historically assumed hierarchical positionings and markers of an undesirable embodied capital (Rollock 2012b). In doing so, within the parameters of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory all students can work freely through the lens of their own cultural particularities. One students Re/Voicing from his semi-structured interview demonstrates the enjoyment of *self-assertion* through cultural exchanges

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
This is good, I like this feeling, I'm learning new things, I'm, I'm…
Even when cultures clash, not clash but exchange of culture
`Pause` *I know who I am that's because I have a big ego but I'm sure*
when it comes to those types of exchanges when I'm in the moment
I know there's a lot that goes through that enjoyment

Analysis of another student Re/Voicing emphasises the recognition of culture revealing an avenue of progression that had not been accessible through previous hegemonic teaching practices. The students point of view of how one's identity is often stereotyped or placed on us was being questioned through the acknowledgement of the significance of culture. Consequently, there is a shift leading to *self-assertion* whereby understanding the value of one's culture in actor training has the potential to open up a source of unlimited power.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
Umm made me question a lot of things about my identity
the way I am perceived or the way I want to be perceived
With my heritage I've questioned a lot, my friends and family.

And it is quite emotional. Deep. How it's all conceived?

Just accepted. How I'm meant to identify myself. Yeah
I've never really looked at it with any point of view
`Points finger to the screen to make the point clear`
Culture plays a part 100%. `Palms press, indicating connective tissue.`

There was evident Re/Voicing data that corroborated the implication of the negative connotations that can be attributed to culture enacted through the performance of identity which reinforced the hegemonic status quo. The analysis of the Re/Voicing calls brought to light the considerable impact making culture and cultural exchange explicit in the learning environment through pedagogic practice had on the students learning. Cultural affinities were *negotiated* and acknowledged through *adjustments* to enable dialogic interactions in which each student had ownership of a fluid and interchangeable centre. This fluid creative space or as Pratt (1992) coined the 'contact zone', is where *self-assertion* occurs to confirm or endorse the diminishing hegemonic structures that limit access to cultural capital, thus restricting embodied learning and oppressing embodied knowledge. Increased knowledge of each other's cultural references and of structural inequalities, specifically teaching practices, aligned with curriculum, generated and sustained the *self-assertion* not only of wanting to be seen, but *how* they wanted to be seen, which influenced their sense of belonging.

The implication for actor training educators is the contribution the transculturate approach has to the questioning of the status-quo in current actor training practices which opens up new creative possibilities and explores new ways of knowing and seeing (Van Manen 1998). For actor training pedagogy this offers a transformative teaching and learning experience enabling a continual re-evaluation and re-positioning of a unified understanding of an imaginative and creative exchange. This exchange is stimulated from the differing cultural viewpoints that a tutor chooses to meet and respond to in the room. The process of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory represents the mechanisms for the mutual exchange of cultural values which in turn informs practice. The *self-assertion* phase safeguards that it does not lead to an exact replication of any one culture but garners the potential to interact and create new cultures through the process. The findings suggested that successful integration of diverse cultural experiences in a

transcultural framework promoted equal social status, explicit mutual support, the sharing of different lived experiences with no hierarchical positionings, and the recognition and resolution of cultural contradictions. Subsequently, it is from the call-and-response pedagogic approach that elicits the perhaps contradictory however collaborative *self-assertions* towards the phase of *Synthesis*. My analysis of the final phase of *synthesis* occurred after each Re/Voicing Call was sent to the students for their response which was added to the Re/Voicing.

Synthesis

The students consistently expressed the transculturate journey had a significant impact and changed their outlook, resulting in a heightened sense of cultural awareness and how it contributed to their sense of self.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
Okay, Let's take the plate of food analogy
I've moved to London that's the chicken breasts on the plate unseasoned, covered in gravy
cos that's the Northern way, `laughs`*, and I've come down to London*
and I've had absolutely loads of stuff thrown at it `rubs palms together`*, a ramen*
noodles and jollof rice piled on and it's gonna be like I can't tackle this meal now
but it if I section it all out into just little bits and tackle each one, that's how I can finish the meal, no I take that back you'll never finish the meal
erm I've had tastes of each sections of it erm… but now I don't feel

`Pauses` *feel exactly comfortable* `silence` *I'm just aware*
not uneasy, just aware I'm still learning still understanding. `Swings in his chair`
It's been difficult but like not squeezing blood from a stone
`Laughs` *it's just been a journey, understanding people and culture changes. I've grown,*
erm by just listening to people if ... that's a huge thing before when I talked to people,
I used to hear them, but I wasn't really listening I was waiting for next possible opportunity for my turn to speak but now I'll listen to them properly
and the next opportunity to speak I choose not to, absolutely

I let it sit for a bit. I listen. If you're silent that person will say more
that's been a huge thing for me learning about people's cultures, never did
that before
`Silence` *I've liked who it's helping me to be I'm definitely stronger*
more freethinking it's made me into that type of person. I consider
more. `Clenched right fist moves to left palm.` *I've really have*
enjoyed it
I've enjoyed the change of mindset

This extract from a Re/Voicing clearly amplifies the student's journey to the phase of *synthesis* through their metaphorical use of food. An experience resulting in a cultural plate with unlimited opportunities, the student critically reflects that it has been based on listening and being willing to know otherness, including his own strangeness (Imbert 2014). The student acknowledges his fears and anxieties, but through engagement and *negotiation* with the process, the student decided to *section it all out into just little bits*. I can interpret that as stripping away the layers as a form of individual negotiations and adjustments starting from his own cultural specificity. The student expresses his *synthesis* is one of consideration*, I consider more,* a critical reflective occurrence illustrated by a physical gesture confirms the intensity felt in the transformation undergone during the process. The awareness and understanding through cultural exchange is something that he has never experienced before, however, it has stimulated a change and the student defines it as a *growth* to being *stronger, more freethinking* with a different *mindset.* In transformation towards *synthesis* the student recognises that the meal is never finished, it is unlimited plate of possibilities that he will permit himself to taste or experience in discovery. Through this Re/Voicing the student explains a pure cultural process (Pavis 1992; Welsch 1999) and whilst the student articulates uneasiness in the processes of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response*, the feeling is embraced and outweighed by the transformative focus of challenging what is considered the 'norm' and exploring embodied understandings.

Although the term *synthesis* means to combine a number of different pieces into a whole, in the *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory *synthesis* under the umbrella of *neoculturation* centres the process rather than the outcome. Hence, the time and space of a transculturate approach privileges the process of exchange itself, rather than any subsequent syncretism, without being regulated or restricted

by them. As considered in the literature review and methodology sections of this thesis and highlighted in my data analysis, it is the dialogic teaching and learning possibilities of call-and-response within a transculturate theory that gives cultural exchange space and time for the emergences of a new form of temporal culture. This approach clearly outlines an alternative pedagogic practice from 'bank teaching' (Freire 1996a) to a practically action inclusivity by exploring equitable embodied actor training pedagogy through cultural possibilities embedded in lived experience. Below another student details the visceral form of *synthesis* they experienced in the process. In interpreting the data into Re/Voicing I wanted to capture the excitement in the rhythm and the expressive language the student used:

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
I knew I needed to experience new cultures
people who aren't open to new cultures stay neutral and stay in a straight line.
No, I'm a person who likes diagonals, I like mountain ranges,
I like wild cars, I like 2 wheels, 4 wheels, anything,
water, land anything.
So, I've learnt new culture and I've added new culture to my own culture.
Now I'm carrying aspects of different cultures and can add to my own culture
which I can then spread to friends up North who haven't experienced these
types of culture

The student clearly evidences the implications for incorporating a culturally relevant approach in teaching goes outside the classroom. They see it as a vital tool that can be used beyond the learning environment to make a positive impact on friends. The engagement with cultures has resulted in a desire to share what has been learned with others for the benefit of his own culture (Slimbach 2014). The student's aspirations fall in line with the transformation paradigm aligned in this study. The cultural patterns that underline the interactions of call-and-response (Pattillo-McCoy 1998) have motivated a previously unearthed sense of activism and through transculturate learning there has been a shift of consciousness that is transformative in the way the student now sees themselves being in the world. Using his own words, the student is expressing an interpretation of the Ubuntu philosophical viewpoint of *I am because we are*. There is an emerging understanding that one's culture is multiple, and each person lived experience and existence evolves and revolves in contact with others.

By engaging the students through the creative sequential process of *enslavement, negotiation, adjustment* and *self-assertion* framed under a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* pedagogic theory, transformation has occurred leading to forms of *synthesis* in cultural communication and exchange. Scarpetta (1989) description of the transculturate phase of *synthesis* in teaching is apt, "we are of all the cultures. Each person is a mosaic" (1989:5), in as much as, *synthesis* is a partial deculturalisation of the past with a transculturate exchange towards the neoculturation of the present. Taking the mosaic analogy, would confirm identity is not one dimensional, but is recognised in connection with others. Additionally, as culture is performed through identity, we have multiple references that can be formed, informed, reformed and transformed concurring with Hall (1996a) and hooks (1994). In *synthesis* the students gained significant understanding of the relevance of a transcultural pedagogy to their actor training by reconnecting with cultural particularities with and through others. The process worked towards the dissolution of the dichotomy of 'self' and 'other'. This dissolution created in a transculturate learning environment where utilising cultural difference in teaching becomes the status quo, reverses the dominance of Whiteness in actor training by challenging the cultural racism that operates in pedagogic practices.

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
being in this environment has given me more understanding of who
I am right in the craft that I'm in
I realised like I need to educate myself to get a more truthful view
Like I was born in South Africa, and I haven't been in touch `rubbing his chin`
`Pause`, *in touch with that culture for a while*
I feel so detached if I'm being absolutely honest
when I came to the UK, I learnt to speak English in 6 months, became a complete anglophile
I completely threw African culture away and English society was my interest
it's crazy thinking about that doing that in order to adjust
you've got to like throw away a huge part of yourself in order
to fit in, `long pause` *what's been great with this adjustment* `his words are rushed`
My culture, it's in my blood is a huge part of who I am, of me, and being an actor

The student describes how he underwent a cultural passing as a mechanism to survive (Ogbu 2004; Fordham 2010), by assuming the cultural norms and values

of the dominant culture. Nonetheless, in my findings opening up a cultural space of mutual exchange and process of cultural understanding, the student was able to explore a marked *negotiation* of his cultural particularities to re-adjustment in the learning environment. A liminal space created between one destination and the next to find his own form of *synthesis.* Via education the student synthesises a "becoming comprehension" (Kirkland 2012:142). He demonstrates a realisation of the significance of the possibilities of cultural creativity in his training and by using the words *this adjustment* there is an implied awareness of the recurring nature of the process and other adjustments may occur.

Another student communicates the hyperawareness of her body in HEI, her visibility, both by the outsider positioning she occupies and the cultural stereotyping she tries to negotiate:

> **Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call**
> *I mean, that things are much more sensitive*
> *To what I do, and not comparative*
> *To others who hold fast their biases*
> *And False beliefs of what a Black Girl is.*
> *I Smile more to be more approachable*
> *To Signify that I am no trouble.*

There is a powerful sense of masking herself behind a smile tying in with DuBois' (1999) conception of double consciousness, an imposed fixed and persistent form of consciousness in order to succeed in a world of Whiteness. This student takes a different route to the previous student extract and decides to use double consciousness rather than cultural passing to survive the hegemonic learning environment. The dismantling of double consciousness in education can only take place if the Whiteness driven by racism and supremacy, has been eliminated from our cultural positionings (DuBois 1999). Her Re/Voicing continues:

> *And I remember starting at ArtsEd*
> *I remember a piece of text we read*
> *It was about an Iroko tree*
> *It's from Nigeria, obviously*
> *I'm Nigerian so I thought wow. Wow*
> `(You thought the work would just be thee and thou's)`
> *This is my culture and I beamed with pride*

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I Smiled and Smiled my eyes and mouth were wide.
I Smiled because my culture was included
Ignorance had kept it so excluded.
Smiled because my culture was respected
And at last, my learning was connected.

It is in the reciprocity of transculturate learning that the student reclaims her smile. Through cultural engagement and the sharing of her culture, she exemplifies the *synthesis* she has reached through the journey of her smile in a hegemonic learning environment. The lived experience of smiling to be *approachable,* the subservient smile to signify she is not *trouble* is part of her enslavement, particularly in education where students who fall outside of the dominant culture present an acceptable and partial or full erasure personification of themselves in order to function and 'succeed' (Fordham 2010; Ginther 2015; Dunn 2019). In the call-and-response of a transculturate process her smile is transformed to one that *beamed with pride* with full physical expression *eyes and mouth are wide*. Subsequently, her smile acts as an outward transformation representing the inner transformative journey. The inclusion of the student's cultural particularities in teaching practice and curriculum created a platform of equity in which she clearly feels her learning is connected because of the explicitness of culture in the learning environment. This authentic bodymind unification motivated by culture is the inspiration for embodiment in actor training. Hence, the connection to her learning can be interpreted as embodied learning stemming from a pedagogic practice that places equitable value on all cultures that they encounter within the learning environment. In doing so:

Extract from a Student Re/Voicing Call
everyone's toolkit is going to be different, `takes a glass of water and sips`
and that's what is unique that's why I really trust ArtsEd, `finger to lips`
because they're not sculpting students to be a prototype drama student
you're giving us a training that sculpts ourselves and that makes us confident

This student's *synthesis* transpires in the possibilities of difference and how *unique* it is in what they have previously experienced and their interpretation of what is considered the standard of actor training. I can interpret this awareness of uniqueness and difference as transculturate self-growth. The data in the questionnaires, classes observations and teaching notes from my reflective journal indicated, the *prototype drama student* referred to is based on a 'White, posh,

outgoing, expressive, imaginative and confident,' model that HEIs such as Conservatoires and drama schools sculpt students as the "commodified brand that sells institutions" (Peck 2016:18). The *sculpting* into the *prototype* in actor training has recently highlighted the destructive impact on student learning (Marshal 2013; Dunn 2019) where students are expected to submit themselves both physically and psychologically to what is deemed an authorised pedagogic approach to actor training. The process of sculpting takes place regardless of any cultural references which prompts cultural passing and double consciousness for those students who fall far outside the hegemonic prototype frame. I considered the data to see where or if the assumed prototype and the culturally aware student intersect. Through the lens of *synthesis* my analysis pointed to the requisite of confidence, aware(ness) and being connected, which naturally led me to ask: what does an actor training tutor/practitioner need to implement in their teaching practice to support students to generate or stimulate student confidence, awareness and connection to their learning*?* My findings indicated the answer lay in the recognition and explicitness of culture and cultural exchange in actor training pedagogic practices.

In my supervisory tutorial, I discussed the question with my supervisor who suggested that I examine and analyse the responses received from the students from the Re/Voicing call sent to them. This would further deepen the triangulation of my research and provide insight into invaluable data. Using verbal exchange coding for analysis allowed me to find cultural patterns to continue the storying of the data by confirming the commonalities of key moments the students identified in their Re/Voicing Call and arising from that, links to the themes of my study or realisation of any emerging themes. I found that this process gave validity to the reciprocity in the *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory whilst ensuring respectful representation of the student's participation in the research (Chilisa 2012; Tuhiwai-Smith 2018) giving authenticity to the interpretative Re/Voicing of their words. Of the twelve interview participants, I chose a cross section of six to focus the analysis through the lens of *synthesis.* Table 3 in the Methods section of this thesis demonstrates a sample of the coding. Subsequently, I was able to gain insight into the issues of identity, culture and racism all pertaining to inclusion, belonging and equity within a HEI actor training focus.

Racism: *I understand why white people have so much audacity... It's because they always see themselves and are made to be comfortable every single day of their lives. But black people in particular always feel like an imposter, particularly in 'predominantly white spaces' when they shouldn't be predominantly white in the first place, because we live in such a colourful world.*

Culture: *a part that really resonated with me was when I spoke about losing a huge part of myself to fit in (in relation to losing my heritage to adjust to UK culture)*

Identity: *... 'dichotomous' stood out to me the most. I think because it's such a relatable word for black women.*

Through undertaking this further layer of analysis, although the students shared transculturate experience were highly individual (Gu et al., 2010), similarities emerged. All students confirmed a shift in cultural awareness, and overall transformative development due to the learning experience of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory.

> *... ... From reading my revoicing call i feel as though self-awareness, recognition, and a great sense of connection… And this journey to discovering and embracing my identity (especially in relation to my heritage)*

There was also evidence of an increasing level of self-awareness and confidence.

> *...the part that significantly stood out to me was the part about not being just a body, I have a voice that needs to be used.*

> *…it seems like I'm so unsure about who I am/who I'm trying to be. It's almost like I'm trying to convince someone that I am who I am and why I am that way… Thank you- I think this has deepened my understanding of myself. (lol that's really cringe)*

> *there's Glimpses of confidence I know I have…*

The reflective questioning of the assumptions the students brought to the learning, including cultural and ethical judgments emerged resulting in a deep connection with the shared cultural interactions experienced and increased understanding of its significance in relation to their own learning and development.

…the importance of unlearning for growth and change… how that takes time, and repetition, and perseverance - remembering to leave that critical past self at the door…

don't really know what to think to be fair, it's taking me by surprise
I'm going to print this out because it's made me think… nicely think… I have a lot of pictures and quotes to turn to but not anything that has been my own words towards me. This is something new I need to investigate.
*I can only end this with Thank you. Simply thank YOU (*student emphasis)

My analysis of the responses through verbal exchange coding confirmed the gap my thesis was addressing. The inclusion of culture by implementing a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* approach confronts the cultural racism that currently exists in actor training pedagogies and has the potential to play a transformative part in the student experience. All students expressed that the shifts in the awareness in cultural interactions had affected the learning, connection or confidence in their learning on the course and there was a palpable sense of being able to better see through "the minds and hearts of others" (Slimbach 2005:207). I understood that palpable sense of being had influenced my autoethnographical positioning and philosophical viewpoint filtering through the distinctness of each Re/Voicing that had emerged for each student which in turn punctuated their response with the confidence of having been seen and seeing themselves.

…so comforting for me to see

…it was interesting for me to see myself

…it's odd to have someone dissect me so closely and yet so well...

…it was extremely heart-warming, and you captured my whole essence so beautifully

I recognised by gaining confirmation that the Re/Voicing Call represented what had been expressed by the students in the interviews I was ensuring the visibility of the researched, being accountable to the students, alongside honouring the individual voices in the *synthesis* phase of the transculturate process. By doing this, I was safeguarding validity, maintaining the decolonisation of my research whilst addressing the research questions.

Epilogue

This last stage completed the analysis of my findings and I reflected in my journal how significant the personal meanings of key moments in the cultural exchanges had enabled the students and myself to shift. A transformation that was rooted in the intersectoral openness of cultural awareness. In my search to practically action inclusivity within the domain of actor training, I found implementing a transculturate framework interconnected culture, identity and actor training pedagogy to enable transformation through a call-and-response cultural process. In storying the data, I chronicled the process from the starting point of *enslavement* of thirty-three students starting a three-year BA (Hons) Acting course. Their self-identification and assumptions about actor training in HEIs, alongside lived experience aligned with Bourdieu's (1996) habitus, highlighting the cultural inequality in the education system (Gillborn 2008; Rollock 2017; Bhopal 2018) and the culturally racialised system of knowledge (Bala 2017; Brewer 2018) that privileges Whiteness and the Eurocentric focus of the curriculum as superior and the universal norm. I was surprised how engrained the Whiteness of the *prototype* of the typical drama student was and the tangible sense of hope to change the outsiderness some students felt.

The implementation of a diversified curriculum and a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* pedagogic theory stimulated a partial disculturation - a loss to begin the process of recovery – in the phases of *negotiation* and *adjustment*. This approach was motivated by the explicitness of culture promoting the development of a transculturate lens where all cultural particularities are centred and decentred in connection with all other cultures that present themselves within the educational setting. I found the students were open to the negotiation of cultural exchange, exhibiting increased awareness of cultural influences and made significant adjustment in the re-conceptualisation of the value of difference, opening up a wealth of learning possibilities. These possibilities enabled a deep rupturing of the ways in which knowledge is conceived and authorised against a neoliberal landscape.

During the process, I sought to garner further understanding of the complexity that occurs in the movement of cultural interactions, through artistic practice, at a particular moment in time. I observed the students shifting back and forth between

*negotiation, adjustme*nt and *self-assertion* as transcultural exchanges fostered the action of information transferences through call-and-response. It was in the phase of *self-assertion* that the dismantling of cultural hierarchy occurred and any default positioning that had emerged in the *enslavement* phase was continually decentred. This occurrence supported reciprocal interactions where students demonstrated ownership of a fluid and interchangeable centre in relation to other students simultaneously going through the process. Using an equitable teaching practice, *self-assertion* in the creative space of the contact zone (Pratt 1992) ignited the value of cultural capital by diminishing the operation of oppressing cultural viewpoints that fall outside of the accepted norm. Specifically, it was in the transculturate phase of *self-assertion* where the students expressed a sense of deep connection to learning which epitomised their embodied learning. What had emerged was the springboard of neoculturation the reinvention of a new shared culture based on the meeting and the interacting of different individual cultures.

In *synthesis* I was reminded that the key focus of using a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory in education is driven by the process and not towards any outcomes. Therefore, as a process of "entanglement, intermixing and commonness" (Welsch 1999:205), it is a theory that stimulates conversation and collaboration between people, and welcomes the multiplicity of cultural viewpoints while maintaining individual identity. Shaping inclusive teaching in HEIs around cultural practices offers an examination and questioning of universalism in actor training pedagogy with the aim of achieving embodied learning and embodied knowledge. The authenticity of this embodiment moves beyond "academic *mono*culturalism, or *inter*culturalism, and towards *trans*culturalism" (Ryan 2011:636, italics in original). The exploration of this new approach in HEI actor training provision afforded me a decolonised gateway to *what* we teach by reforming the curriculum and *how* we teach actioning inclusivity through a pedagogy that facilitates cultural particularities.

Differing examples of what *synthesis* could mean for each student emerged during the research. The cultural mosaic of each student held the potentialities of difference, cultural awareness and confidence all leading to a connection to themselves and others, thus cultivating a deepened connection to their learning. From this realisation, I determined the transformative essence of *synthesis*

surpassed place and origin to manifest a collective neoculturate positioning. Concurring with Eze (2014) "place and origin are no longer exclusive markers of identity" (2014:238). Instead, each person is invested in the re-evaluation and 're-claiming' of one's cultural identity in correlation with other cultural references through *negotiation, adjustment, self-assertion* circulating in a transformative *synthesis.* Thus, what emerged using a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory, was a pedagogic approach in time and space, past and presence which presented possibilities that authentically engaged with equitable teaching practices in actor training.

In the following section I will discuss how over my year-long research journey garnered a deep understanding of a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory This understanding presented insight into how an actor training tutor/practitioner can access cultural capital and enable a dialogic cultural exchange using a decolonised approach to motivate and promote a platform of creative equity.

PART VI: CONCLUSION

Re/Voicing

I started this research journey, inhibited and controlled
No home to situate my work, the reasons were manifold
Colonised supremacy accented oppressive research traditions,
Under Giddens (2001) *fragmenting tendencies of modern institutions.*

Neoliberal policies framed my professional existence
Exacerbated hopelessness through my euclidean double consciousness.
The reality of being Black in academia exacts a daily price irrespective of my position
My transformative counternarrative disintegrated layers of domination.

It has been at times overwhelming, however the subjectivity
Associated with autoethnography, aligned with Ubuntu philosophy.
Specifically, (Burnard et al., 2018) *the outcomes of ongoing reflexive self-interrogation may be uncomfortable, personally, professionally, culturally And Methodologically.* Provided me with a poignancy.

A theoretical understanding of myself as a researching professional and educator.
Undoubtedly messy work (Gunaratnam 2003). *And you is not an imposter.*
Gran?
What ya dey wait for Julie. You is like the Doctor Bird.
Moves the air round her wings, backwards, forwards. Black-bill concerned
Hovering on the hum of uncertainty, ruby throated silence, on standby.
You done finish feeding on nectar you have fi let ya words fly

I wanted to undertake research into implementing a *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory in HEI actor training. The two years of in situ observation and a year-long specific research project with students produced the storying of the data revealing resonances, connections and insights into a theoretical framework that Re/Voices the connectedness of theory and practice utilising cultural particularities. Through the interweaving of the story embodying a complex Euclidean web of relationships and interdependence at the core of the self, while also preserving the uniqueness of each person's perspective, this study highlights the gap in actor training pedagogy and the transformative possibilities of seeing each other, through explicit cultural awareness.

In order to authentically engage with educational research, I had to navigate the Whiteness under which a Black researching professional is forced to operate within academia. I am aware that my methodology in this thesis is longer than what is expected under the Western framing of doctorate writing, however it was an imperative aspect of my journey to fully engage with decolonising my research process and the status quo of educational research. Maya Angelou's (1984) directive states there is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you. Hence, positioning myself autoethnographically, through the lens of critical race theory, I sought and found an authentic philosophical perspective and as such a decolonised understanding of a pedagogic gap in actor training. I came to know that our lived experiences form a lens that uniquely represents how each of us has come to know the world and our stories. My lived experience is shared in my Re/Voicings to reflect how I know the world. This viewpoint enabled me to explore how the significance of cultural equity by using dialogic cultural exchange disrupts the maintenance of cultural racism, the privileges of Whiteness and hegemonic practices to reverse the destructive impact of a student's embodied learning and embodied knowledge.

> What to know? What is known? What is knowing? Who knows what? How to know?
> Alienating schism between Always already, Already known, Almost ready, So To conclude I am Ready
> Shifted positioning opened up a Euclidean crystallisation enabling me to embody.
>
> Kolb (2014) says knowledge results from the combination of *grasping and transforming experience*
> This autoethnographic study offered analytic and evocative cognizance
> Yes. Therefore in conclusion
> With Awareness, Specificity and Implication, leaving no confusion.
>
> In doing this study I was able to recentre, decentre and uncentre a previously indoctrinated approach to practice, theory and knowledge.
> *The importance of connection recognised in our ancestral heritage.*
> *Resistance must therefore focus on connecting connection with our body, mind,*
> *Community, history and the environment* (Kinouani 2021). All aligned.
>
> I Re/Voiced decolonised research through a critically transformative lens
> Utilising the Ubuntu embedded in the landscape of my skin. Stems
> From Hall (1996a) *one foot in the past one foot in the present*
> My lived experience. An approach to augment
> A cultural voice that is valid and relevant within academia

Diverse stories start to emerge and over time traditional and accepted criteria
For assessment of quality start to expand in order to embrace multifarious
Cultures, ideas and traditions on a consistent basis.

I have invaluable cultural capital that can make meaningful contribution
To policies and pedagogies in the domain of actor training education.

Answering the Research Questions

Along the way I have ruptured or embraced, when needed,
The visible and invisible forces which shaped the subjectivities in this thesis.
Chang (2008) advocates in autoethnography understanding *the forces*
Helps to re-evaluate presumptions and feelings about others, he endorses

Whether they are *others of similarity, others of difference* or even *other of opposition*
However, it is Critical Race Theory underpinned by Ubuntu and the exertion
Of Ladson-Billings (2006), hooks (2014), Freire (2000), Hall (2003) Bourdieu (2006)
Their work relevant today as was long ago.

Affording me the capacity to *critically shape* responses *to problematic situations* (Biesta & Tedder 2006).
Through resistance in the form of my Re/Voicings which represent the decolonised manifestations
Of the double conscious dialogue that have become part of my transformation.

I can now *manoeuvre amongst repertoires* (Biesta & Tedder 2006)
Within the Euclid imaginary lines of isobars
To question the Whiteness of academia and problematise the notion of what academic writing is.
In other words, my Re/Voicing's act as call-or-response to contribute to a continually emergent process of new knowledges.

In doing so I addressed the research sub-question: *How can a Black researching practitioner disrupt the Whiteness of dominate discourses in academia to authentically undertake educational research?* The euclidean sphere that can facilitate the mosaic fluidity of multiple cultural references subjectively positions me in a space of unknowing. There, I am able to deconstruct the pedagogic practices

and structures that purposely centre the dominant culture and seek to situate oppressed cultures permanently at the periphery by being unfailingly and with re-newness catapulted away from the margins of research.

Through my analysis I was continually guided back to the gap found in my literature review questioning how HEI tutors/practitioners engage students with their suppressed or oppressed history (Pratt 1991; Howes 2008) in order to provide a liminal space that enables an equitable platform of learning (Friere 1996a; Ladson-Billing 1998; hooks 2003). Particularly, in actor training where there is a deficit of evidence that examines students' cultural particularities permitted into the learning space (Hingorani 2009; Heim 2013; Ginther 2015; McAllister Viel 2018 & Karim-Cooper 2020) or the impact as a positive and valuable tool for learning. It questions the prototype drama student highlighted in the findings and the Whiteness that surrounds the construction of that prototype and what it means to those drama students who fall outside the prototype construct. There is no doubt that culture shapes education and vice versa. My findings evidenced cultural identity being key to the student's sense of belonging and connection to learning. Therefore, to explore a new contemporary actor training pedagogy originating from the students' viewpoints on culture has the potential to develop an equitable platform of creativity that supports explicit cultural engagement as a means to act as a stimulus for embodied learning.

Whilst rhetoric surrounds actor training discourses in regard to the shared universality of pedagogies and in turn learning, often under the guise of avant-garde thinking, it serves only as an aesthetic approach underpinned by neoliberalism. At present, there is no acknowledgement that cultural racism is camouflaged under this hegemonic mechanism of power. Actor training tutors/practitioners who seek to explore the intersection between education, pedagogy and culture seek to interweave the cultural specificity of students to redress current inequalities. It is an explicit positioning to acknowledge the distinct cultural background and lived experience as valuable capital instead of a barrier to learning (Vavrus 2008; Ginther 2015; Glynn 2019b). This explicit positioning in my study considers the research question: *What cultural differences and assumptions influence the experiences of BA Acting first year students on a mainstream actor training course*? Seeing the

students in an authentic reciprocal gaze of possibilities and celebrating difference as a source of innovation through cultural exchange under the pedagogic framing of a transculturate approach, we open up a myriad of potentialities to segue the entrenched Eurocentric theories and Whiteness dictated by White male practice in actor training (Deavere-Smith 2008; Peck 2016; McAllister-Viel 2018). Recognising the need to culturally see the students,

> First, it drives the necessity to implement a culturally diversified curriculum.
> Second, it gives opportunities to re-evaluate teaching practices, a maximum
> Engagement with a process of identifying
> Our cultural biases as a starting point to facilitate a process of teaching and learning
>
> Where differing cultural references can interact creatively.
> Last, it highlights who currently has legitimacy to teach and authority
> Of who defines relevant knowledge. Increased cultural awareness comes
> Through honest, respectful and meaningful interactions
> Designed to give individuals agency, celebrating difference and to learn from.
>
> Hence, all three propositional strands interconnect with focus, implicating
> The necessity to practically action inclusivity in actor training.

The findings demonstrated the students' willingness to engage in issues around culture and suppressed aspects of their own history. The questionnaires revealed that there were two defined starting points for students beginning on the BA (Hons) Acting course. Whilst all students expressed being *nervous*, the reasoning behind that feeling differed: those students who culturally self-identified as Western/Eurocentric described nervous and excited to embark on their training, and there was a sense of being ready, and a dream or desire being reached. In contrast for students who culturally self-identified as Black, East Asian, South Asian and other under-represented Ethnic groups the nervousness came with a sense of achievement, however, there was a collective expression of trepidation described as hoping that this educational experience would be different from their lived experience. For students who had not previously experienced their culture or cultural references being included in the curriculum, teaching or in representation of the tutor/practitioner there was an assumption or resignation that the status quo would continue in their actor training studies (Bala 2017; Brewer 2018). This finding substantiated that cultural inequality privileges the White Eurocentric narrative as

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superior, universal and is an inevitable experience in the education system (Gillborn 2008; Bhopal 2018). Therefore, it must be an imperative consideration for the tutor/practitioner in actor training to be 'brave' enough to engage with culture in pedagogic practice (hooks 1994; Ladson-Billings 2005) across lines of difference and hierarchy, to identify and reposition ideas, histories, and attitudes that uphold the dominant narrative.

I was struck by the students' surprise and relief in being able to participate in training and the conversations that made explicit their culture as cultural capital that could enhance the uniqueness of their creativity. The time and space within the contact zone (Pratt 1992) a cultural terrain where learning interactions are "reciprocal entanglements, mutual stimuluses, and continuous processes of borrowing and border-crossing" (Said 1993:15) stimulated a transformative experience in how they saw themselves in HEI. During the research I observed the continual cultural learning in a new transcultural mindset, enabled an innovative and critical way of thinking (Mezirow & Taylor 2009). It was not only relevant to the student's learning but inspired the students to take new forms of culture(s) that had become part of themselves out into the world to promote change which aligns with the transformative paradigm under which my research sits. The data evidences the palpable urgency and excitement of the students to be able to do this. Through Transculturate Call-and-Response, cultural awareness was found to be an iterative, ongoing process where students were 'seen, heard and belonged' (Miller 2020). The process made explicit cultural differences, commonalities and context, redressed and challenged assumptions that paved the way to inclusion, belonging and equity through the convergence of cultural awareness, connection to learning and confidence in achievement.

> The most exciting finding from this study was the tangible practicality
> This approach created in a theoretical framework implementing inclusivity
> In actor training. Straddling the old and new, back in the day, presence
> Dislocating the outsider-within traditional positionings in academia. Hence,

> *What factors shape a dialogic transculturate approach to actor training*
> *Pedagogy to meaningfully engage students with individual cultural*
> *particularities during their training and impact on their embodied learning?*

I answered this research question by investigating and interpreting
The interactions between various cultures rather than concentrating
On any subsequent outcomes or any end products of the study.
Open dialogue (Freire 2000) cultivated through and with culture (Ladson-Billings 2006) as a tool of imagination and creativity.

I revealed unique practice in the awareness of a reciprocal
Commitment between the student and the tutor. An original
Revelation resulted in a new cultural understanding and meaning in which
The awareness of culture in a transculturate exchange *tunes our neurons*
(Howes 2008). Then to enrich

The cyclical call-and-response process rooted within a Transculturate theory
Allows the tutor to build upon students' inventory
Of cultural knowledge and through reciprocal cultural exchange in the classroom (Alexander 2005)
Develop new knowledge relevant to the students' experience. Even on Zoom.

Thus, the introduction of culture as a creative asset serves as a catalyst for the transformation of teaching practices in actor training because it acts as a platform upon which to nurture decolonising theories, to revitalise acting methodologies and the authentic embodiment of student learning.

As I considered in the literature review, embodiment runs through actor training as a benchmark to the success of learning and knowledge. It represents a central descriptor in the assessment and performance academic standards for graduating actor training students (QAA 2019). However, currently the traditions of embodied learning and knowledge in actor training typify how Whiteness and cultural racism in actor training pedagogy impacts on those students who do not fit into the hegemonic culture and systems that operate in teaching practices or HEIs.

When you embody a process, you start to realise what you don't understand, you begin to ask questions (Lerman 2013)
How is my intrinsic worth valued, raises philosophical tensions?
Despite created frames by which diversity is given 'permission'
To exist under conditional inclusion belied by scholarly suspicion.

Ngugi (1993) asserts *that cultural racism seeks to annihilate a people's belief…*
It makes them see their past as one wasteland of low relief
For me this study establishes and justifies the foundations
Of challenging the very terms of engagement and enunciations.

My findings from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews highlighted the relevance of culture and cultural particularities to the students' sense of belonging and connection to their learning. The body is considered the subject through which culture manifests (Csordas 1990) which aligns with a principle psychophysical (body/mind) approach in actor training (Zarilli 2009; Prior 2012). Therefore, the realisation of embodied learning and knowledge clearly involves our bodies and experiences in making meaning, and as such, offers cultural analysis of a tacit and unrestricted human process of taking up and inhabiting space in which our existence can transcend. Given the convincing evidence from this study, it is imperative that tutor/practitioners must first recognise their own individual affinities and prejudices (Freire 1996a; Chilisa 2012) and how they have been shaped in terms of lived experiences. This approach will open the gates to engage with scaffolding pedagogy to align with students' cultural frameworks of reference which will meaningfully challenge forms of oppression in their teaching practices. There must be honest and uncomfortable engagement with a pedagogy (hooks 1994) that examines not what the student does but *how* a student learns which will render pedagogic possibilities that focuses on rooted knowledge disseminating from the cultural body. A lived body (Merleau-Ponty 1962) alive with cultural capital (Bourdieu 2006) and through a *Transculturate Call-and-Response theory* remains grounded in the notion of the process, and the particular situatedness of lived experience where it has aspects of imperfect dialogue, resistance, and divergence. This ultimately leads to a transformative rupture of the *always-already* value placed on bodies within the actor training educational setting.

> The transformations that are Re/Voiced in my study occurred
> Regardless of the students starting point of *enslavement,* point preferred
> As the performative mechanism of call-and-response
> Within the transculturate approach fostered a democratising renaissance
>
> That rendered the responding students as collaborators instead of merely
> listeners banking information, a hooks (1994) and Friere (1996a) theory.
> In the process all students were valued participants on an authentic footing
> This approach promoted *radical openness* (Biesta 2010) by putting
>
> Forward new and different forms of call-and-response dialogue
> Which generated cultural creativity and ingenuity in the analogue
> Production and embodiment of knowledge. Consequently,
> The reciprocity of any ensuing dialogic exchanges in a transculturate harmony

Motivated by the students at the centre of the teaching
And the cultural context set up by the tutor's explicit positioning, is far
reaching.

Transculturate Call-and-Response is a pedagogic model of fluid
Decentring, dissolving past and future into eternal present, rooted
From a position that celebrates the positivity of difference
That dances in *reciprocal gaze* advises Fleetwood (2012). This experience

Allows for meaningful divergent experiences among learners,
Creates encounters with diverse viewpoints, becoming critical discerners,
To tussle with existing beliefs and assumptions,
Facilitating space to connect diverse capital negotiations

The diversification of the curriculum was another important factor in engaging all students in the transculturate process and the implementation supported actioning inclusivity through pedagogy. It offered the prospect of "changed consciousness and cognitive autonomy" (King 2001:276) by broadening the cultural knowledge base, whilst enabling me to further link education to culture (Ladson-Billings 2013). Of course, the revalidation of the BA (Hons) Acting could not have been undertaken without the cooperation of the teaching staff and my Re/Voicings outline some of the acts of cultural, epistemological and personal racism and pedagogic struggles associated with doing this. Academia remains a White space in which Black bodies are viewed as alien (Joseph-Salisbury 2019) and having a Black body spearheading revolutionary changes to a domain steeped in White male tradition (Peck 2016) manifested in layers of racist resistance in order to maintain White privilege and power.

Although HEIs claim to have adopted an international outlook, this has been more to do with acquiring diversity in the student population for monetary gains; curriculum and pedagogy are often neglected (Ladson-Billings 1998; Gilborn 2005; Bhopal 2018). The recent student protests *Dear Central*… and *Why is my curriculum White*? and the 2020 explosion of student outpouring of racial abuse within actor training highlighting the emergency of the issue has provoked some recent movement and attempts towards decolonisation. However, the resistance and criticism against diversification in actor training is consistently based on the automatic presumption of a shared universality under a neoliberal agenda that

subscribes to curriculum changes having an effect on the safeguarding of excellence and alternatives lacking rigour. This train of thought only serves to underline the engrained colonised Eurocentric spaces of HEIs and the privilege of protecting a cultural vacuum of Whiteness. In addition, the tactic of muting cultural transformation ties in with the lack of diversity of Black, East Asian, South Asian tutor/practitioner representation in HEIs (Andrews 2016; Miller 2016; Mirza 2017). The findings in this study demonstrated that having points of reference through who was teaching and what was being taught also impacted on the student's engagement with the curriculum through a transformative cultural prism, and as such deepened the connection to embodied learning and manifestations of embodied knowledge.

Contribution to Knowledge

The findings of this study demonstrate exciting potential and the capacity of a transcultural responsive pedagogy in terms of creating student critical awareness (Jabbar & Mirza 2019). Subsequently, this thesis provides new knowledge regarding the discourse about teaching practices in actor training, specifically in HEIs. As a Black researching professional undertaking an autoethnographical study underpinned by Critical Race Theory there are two strands to this research that offer a unique contribution to the field. I have created and introduced an innovative pedagogy called *Transculturate Call-and-Response* that redresses the minimal research undertaken incorporating culture in actor training. There does not appear to be another study that considers the cultural narratives of acting students to develop a teaching theory that inspires an equitable platform of creativity. The African oral tradition of call-and-response is a performative cultural exchange that has survived through the centuries in various forms of cultural expression which rooted in a transculturate phenomenon acknowledges, hears, feels, sees and values the specificity of each student's cultural capital that presents within the classroom. In doing so I articulate the possibilities and impact of call-and-response as a tool that builds upon students' cultural references and particularities.

Transculturate Call-and-Response is a robust theorisation.
Built upon thorough dialogue and plans of action
Scripted in poetic form in order to provide for the expression
Of individual perceptions
Of revolutionary and transformative options

Specifically, the power of call-and-response collaboration
Lies not only in the possibility of realising concrete results from supplications
But also in the cultured familiarity of these tools within range
The activity of interchange
A culture constituting a creative language that motivates social change

Realising any new culture(s) in time and space (Nussbaum 2017) to promote
Transculturate intelligence and resilience. I add an academic anecdote

I have uniquely contributed to broadening the discourse on *how* we teach actor training.

Evidence collated and analysed from the data demonstrates that Eurocentrism and Whiteness remains as the default position at the centre of curriculum (Leonardo 2009) and is sustained by cultural racism in an assumed shared universality or the colour-blind narrative that conveniently prevents the engagement and shifts of artistic teaching practice. Cultural racism underpins individual and institutional racism (Powell 2000; DiAngelo 2018), thus, I consider it a key impetus to maintaining racist policies and oppressive teaching practices. This study shows that cultural racism has been an intrinsic part of acting students educational experience as recipients of these policies and practices. It has detrimentally impacted on the embodiment of their learning and restricted the cultural boundaries of embodied knowledge, specifically, in the continued disregard of their cultural distinctiveness as valued capital. From my own perspective as a Black researching professional in the domain of actor training, cultural racism has been one form of racism to battle in academia. It has insidiously added to the marginalisation of the significance and relevance of my cultural capital in actor training by perpetuating the racist ideology that habitually operates in HEIs.

Additionally, this study serves as a model for critical reflection with the focus on how a Black researching professional can authentically navigate Whiteness in academia to undertake decolonised research. Lorde (1977) writes in the *Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*:

I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the speaking profits me, beyond any other effect (1977:40).

Hence, the emergence of my Re/Voicings express counter-stories documenting my professional idenity, educational experiences and research which proffers a unique contribution to new knowledge.

My Re/Voicing's act as a springboard to critical analysis
From my cultural lens and seek to challenge what is.
It is through the self-assertion of my Re/Voicings
I have undergone transformative rejoicings

Of the double conscious transculturate me
That supersedes negative associations or implications, with a criticality
To negotiate and make adjustment in time and space,
Interlinking my past and present which has enabled me to embrace

My decolonising self. In revolutionary synthesis.
I have decentred Whiteness,
To reinvent my Euclidean foundation upon an authentic
Embodied knowledge of my cultural specificity. Unapologetic.

A Black researching professional combining autoethnography
Underpinned by Critical Race Theory
Demonstrates the significance of my academic journey
To understandings of the cultural capital and uniqueness of my positionality.

This study has sought and found a transformative prism
By challenging the ideologies and manifestations of neoliberalism
As it emerged to control my presence and silence me.
I believe this thesis illuminates I am free.

The interconnectedness of personal, professional, situational,
Dimensions of my professional researching identity, in the educational
Cultural complexity of today, Re/Voiced in critical reflection
Unfettered from the ivory tower colonisation

Shifts in critical awareness, rigorous specificity and philosophical possibilities
Have reformulated my double consciousness whilst writing this hypothesis.

Limitations

The research was conducted with one cohort of students in a HEI who in theory were ready for change. Recruiting the first Black female Director of a suite of actor training courses at a leading Conservatoire was the initial step to eliciting that change. This study is limited in its scope to the viewpoints and experiences as it relates to a Black researching professional and limited to the observations and interpretations of shared encounters and interactions with students and colleagues in that particular educational setting. However autobiographical in nature the research also carries my lived experience which has been the outsider and othered in academia for many years. I am observant and critically cognisant of the racisms that operate within education and as such educational research. Therefore, I contend that the cultural racism I have experienced specifically in actor training teaching practices in the HEIs, can be an indication that cultural racism operates in other actor training courses. The central focus of any doctorate research is new knowledge therefore, we must look toward building knowledge in ways not traditionally honoured by the structures within which we work (Shelton 2020). We achieve this by painting the Ivory Tower in a critical celebration of difference and possibilities and by amplifying the lived experience of marginalised voices in academia. This study gives invaluable insight into an autoethnographical decolonising journey alongside how acting students embodied learning is deeply affected by cultural racism in actor training pedagogic practices.

Implications

As previously mentioned, there is a gap in the literature relating to culture and actor training teaching practices. This study redresses the deficit by examining how making culture explicit in teaching practices, correlates with students' sense of identity, sense of belonging, and cultural perceptions which stimulates a greater connection that leads to embodied learning and embodied knowledge. This educational development aligns with the Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher

Education (QAA 2019) as an indication of mastery and critical thinking of the subject. Mainstream HEIs actor-training programs are not culturally neutral. They are intrinsically Western, and advocate theatre and teaching practices from the Eurocentric perspective. Nor do they engage with the notion of individual culture through habitus, the physical embodiment of cultural capital, being an invaluable source of creativity for the acting students learning progression.

I sought to address how cultural racism in teaching practices adversely impacts on students who do not fit into the oppressive practices currently used, therefore through a transformative paradigm lens, I consider the implications of this study are extensive. It offers an autoethnographic study in actor training from the perspective of a Black researching professional who is situated as an insider because of the leadership position I occupy and an outsider because of the Whiteness of academia. Decolonising my philosophical perspectives mapped a theoretical navigation of Whiteness which enabled clarity and transparency in addressing educational research inextricably linked to the phenomenon of interest. I hope that other marginalised researching professionals can draw from this study as a means to raise the consciousness of praxis as the transformation of subjectivity (Marx 1976) through the process of lived experience. Engaging in active praxis (Guba & Lincoln 1988; Hsia 2006) is what makes us uniquely human and can lead us to 'revolutionary practice' (Marx 1976). Under a transformative paradigm researchers must take seriously the implications of their research, beyond publication or dissemination of findings, and determine how their research enacts their underlying philosophical viewpoints (Mertens 2010). This revolutionary transformation gives agency to make active change through the researched knowledge of our unique lived experience, rather than being forced to rely on using traditional theories which have served to keep us from making meaningful change and as a result, at the margins of research. Hence, through indigenous praxis within educational research we are able to examine our knowledge, intentions, and practices related to social justice to develop a framework for inquiring into creating pedagogical approaches.

In addition, this research confronts the anti-pedagogic biases in actor training that sustain oppressive and restricted models of learning which emphasises *what* the

actor does or needs to do, refocusing to *how* an acting student learns utilising equitable teaching practices. In doing so it places a greater focus on pedagogy as a cultural practice, advancing Freire's (1996a) advocation for the examination of a responsive and reflective approach to teaching with students as collaborators, actively engaged with the generating and circulating of knowledge. However, there has been heavy criticism as to the ethics and validity of research undertaken in the field of actor training. Seen as being vocational or a 'creative activity' (Csikszentmihalyi 1996), practice overrides theory and ensuring coherency in epistemological viewpoints and the instability of what knowledge is being generated has proved problematic in academia (Elkins 2009; Jones 2009). New knowledge in actor training or drama research is often considered applicable only to the researcher, rather than the domain as a whole. Nelson (2013) cautions it is essential the "ephemerality of performing arts" is countered with rigor and criticality underpinned with clear, coherent and defensible research methods (2013:4). In undertaking this research I have sought to ensure that the research methods and pedagogical processes were made explicit to challenge problematic ethical and validity questions within the training ground at research, policy and curriculum level.

A further implication lies in the creation of a transculturate framework embedded with the performative oral tradition of call-and-response where I found a distinct and unique approach to connecting education, pedagogy and culture. It is a pedagogic theory that recognises culture and race (specifically in relation to the contemporary HEI actor training classroom) is not a binary of White and Black (Ladson-Billings 2005). Therefore, there must be a refocusing on difference in the multifaceted cultures of peoples. Through the framework of *Transculturate Call-and-Response* what occurs is a shift towards the adoption of a reciprocal, cultural approach that challenges universalising categories but appreciates the cultural mosaic of individuals. To undervalue personal knowledge in arts practice is to misunderstand the essential nature of the arts (Prior 2013). Choosing to take that shift embraces "dispositional qualities" (Murray 2014:231) attributed to cultural specificity, rejecting the assumption of universality of Whiteness and Eurocentrism as the default. hooks (1994) contends that advancing approaches to teaching and learning can "create a new language, rupturing disciplinary boundaries, decentering authority and rewriting institutions and discursive borderlands" (1994:129). Following

this proposition, new possibilities can emerge to go beyond stagnant and fixed understandings of self and other to engage conceptualisations of culture that are concerned with lived experiences. Thus, rejecting antiquated actor training pedagogic discourses to explore an embodied engaged learning practice in three fundamental ways; *what* we teach by diversifying the curriculum, *who* has legitimacy to teach by guaranteeing diversification in staffing and *how* we teach by actioning inclusivity through a culturally relevant acting pedagogy.

Accordingly, this way of teaching and learning identifies that existence is created in the space of the 'contact zone' (Pratt 1992) between people, space and object, whilst concurrently exploring the doubleness of actor training subject/object, inner/outer and reflexive/reflective (Peck 2016). These constructs operate beside each other within a transculturate engaged learning process. In doing so there can be a transformative shift for the student from passive receptacle and tutor/practitioner from hegemonised authority to cultural intelligence and resilience (Ladson-Billings 2005; Smith & Segbers 2018), where they are able to reflect the world back on themselves which offers the possibility of a more inclusive way of being whilst celebrating the positivity of difference.

From the start this thesis has outlined the intention to highlight an alternative way of thinking about how we teach actor training to find space and time for an equitable platform of creativity. The *Transculturate Call-and-Response* theory is most immediately applicable to actor training, however, I hope it can be seen as a pedagogic theory or model that might apply to other domains in HEIs where teaching practices and curriculum can be practically diversified through *call-and-response* in the five transculturate phases. Staffing can be significantly addressed with a focus on the invaluable cultural capital we gain in adopting an authentic institutional culture in the process of transculturate exchanges. Ultimately, transformation through a transculturate shift informs policy makers and funders that so much innovation takes place at the euclidean margins, yet it is this transformation with ways of seeing and telling, that reinvigorates culture and connects it to present realities (Mahamdallie 2010:106-7). Disrupting the constructed and perceived challenges to see each other, and an unequivocal willingness to move beyond embracing other ways of knowing is the start to embodying those realities.

Re/Voicing

My Gran smelt of potato pudding and cinnamon. Always
My favourite redolent mishmash in the whole wide world. Always.

My Gran had dreams, marinaded in cultural glory
I have come to know that the seasoning of her dreams resonate through me

My Gran planted beginnings, weaved them into the landscape of my skin
Waited so patiently, with such unwavering belief, until she could wait no longer

Her Fermented Fragrances Frame me now as I finish this part of our journey…

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Questionnaire 1

QUESTIONNAIRE: All responses to these questions will be confidential

FULL NAME

DATE

1.What is your family heritage(s)?

2.What culture do you feel best represents you or you identify with at this time?

3.What do you imagine will be the heritage and culture of your tutors and lecturers on this course?

4.What do you imagine will be the heritage and culture of the content of what you will be taught?

5.Give 3 words that describe how you feel starting this course at University?

6. Why do you think you feel this way?
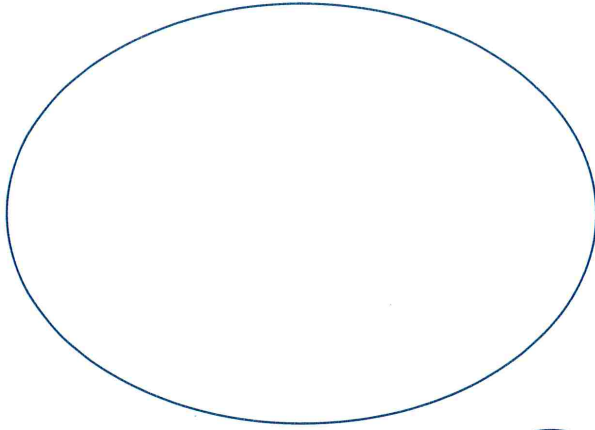
7. Give 3 words that you think describes a 'typical' drama student
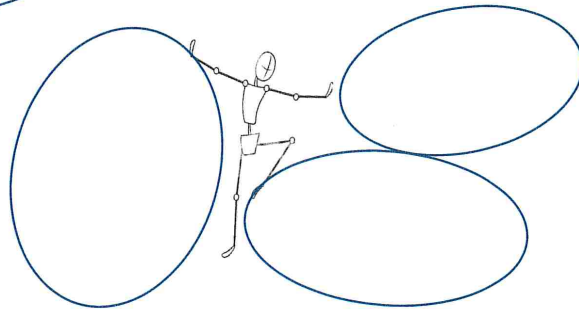
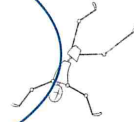## Appendix B Questionnaire 2

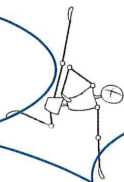QUESTIONNAIRE: All responses to these questions will be confidential

FULL NAME

DATE

1. Do you think the heritage and culture of your tutors and how you are being taught on the course has made a difference to your experience on this course?
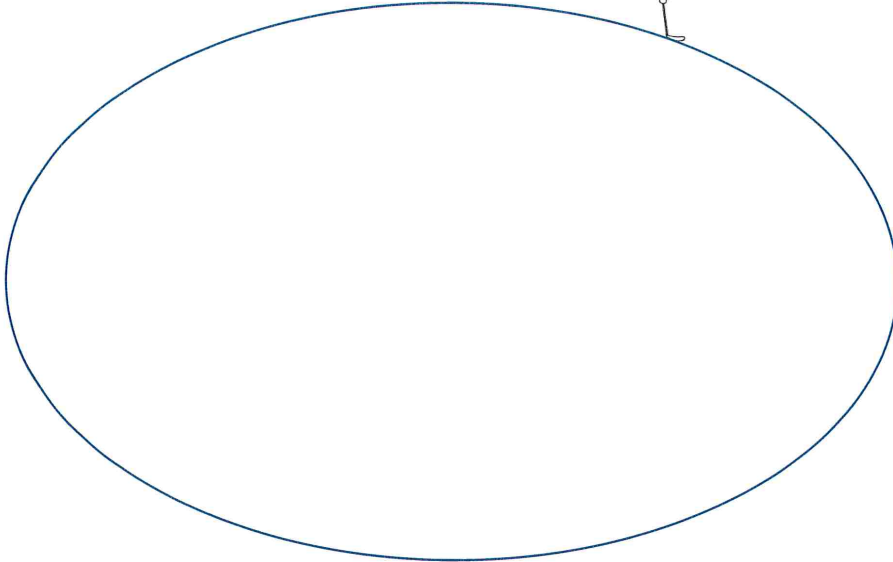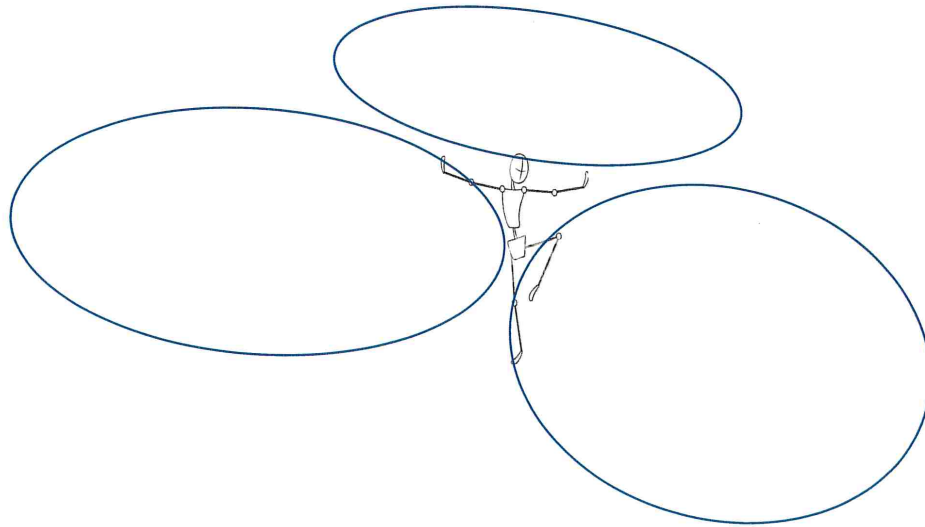
2. Why do you think that

3. Give 3 words that describe how you feel at the end of your first term?

4. Why do you think you feel this way?

5. Describe a 'typical' drama student in 3 words

Appendix C Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

1. Can you tell me about any adjustments you think you've made to fit into the actor training course?

2. Can you describe any ways that making these adjustments have affected the way you feel about your identity? Then ask about culture separately because they may include culture in their response to identity.

3. What difficulties have you found? How have you found a solution? Perhaps ask about resolution of these? (adjustment)

4. What have you liked about that experience? Why did you like it? Or how did it make you feel?

5. Aside from the technical aspect of the training- what would you like to see happen that you think would support your development

6. How much do you think accepting other people's culture plays a part in your training?

7. What have you done to try to recognise or accept other people's differences?

8. How has making adjustments to accept others made you feel? Look for clarity.

9. Can you tell me what you've learned about yourself and acting that you hadn't expected? Looking for any unexpected consequence pf being on the course

10. Give me 3 words you think you would describe yourself now, that you wouldn't have used before you started the course?

S1-Revoicing Call

'When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid' Audre Lorde

Me personally pause *I don't really like to say too much*
first just in case it gets, I get... it gets into a situation
if people want to come to me with problems and such
I'll give them advice I'll give them my opinion
Cause it says he without sin cast the first stone.
So, you see you can't cast stones hmmm, laugh
Picks up, puts down his mobile phone
Then nods his head to confirm the epitaph

because I know that I've done things that...
when I'm in the environment I can speak to anyone
in anyway and it's not seen as rude because they get the chitchat
I get out of my environment I have to... I've begun
to be careful about the way I speak and the way I say it. Pause.
I, I, I had to learn It's not always crazy. It's not like my habitat
it's not like I can keep being you know, du, du, du, du, and like, 'cause
kinda like I feel like I, I, I HAD to adapt

do you get it? Because like this whole drama schools
this whole Higher Educational thing is, is different isn't it?
you have to operate under different rules
Grimaced face with lined brows double-knit
Young black boy from North London, a Black area predominantly
it's like very lower income household
full of life poverty well I'm not gonna say poverty
it's just a lot of gang culture crime got a stronghold

Hands move rhythmically as he considers what I asking
I mean you get used to it, you get used to culture like that
if I grew up in say West London, he puts his hoodie up laughing
or somewhere, some place like that he adds the caveat
I wouldn't feel like this way no way, no way
he wrinkles his nose, touches his face, then he rubs his beard
you can walk around you have more, more, what's the word, leeway
you don't always have to Watch. Out. Pause. *You know, at first this environment was weird*

Audible breath. Pause. *You don't have to watch your back for something that's shady,*
 I walked around, literally walked around in tunnel vision
you only see one way of life one way to think about things. It's just crazy
but now I got a chance to see different aspects of life, to make a different decision

as in I can walk into Central London, just seeing the lights, I just look up and see
and I, I, I think that's motivational. Whereas when I'm at home nothing but darkness
can't walk around is just flats. Now I'm just seeing the world differently
seeing people like me, have come up. I really believe that I can make a success

I feel myself changing but den like Pause *because I'm changing*
Do you get it? Pause *I don't feel the same*
I can genuinely be nice to people and that's a bit draining
Sometime is feels like for some people it's a game
So, I'm still not I, I, I, I'm not 100 percent on where I stand per se
part of me knows like it not productive,
part me is like it, it, it sucks, just gotta move day to day
because I've made these adjustments. Pause. *That's constructive*

really coming to terms that it's not like that any more
to do that something certain things have to go, they have to go
like certain friends yeah like even dropping them out that's what's called for
and it ain't easy but it but it has to be done so yeah sad, so
Pause. *I going to have to, to...* Pause. *My friends get it, I to have to cut*
they get it. I'm gonna have to do certain things in order to succeed
Yeah like, me and my friends we have jokes and that, but
It's not... I'm not, it's not. His eyes divert with speed

I, just feels like somewhat toxic it's like, did you hear so-and-so got stabbed
or so-and-so got shot and yeah, my man's in prison
and everywhere the surrounding it's not what I want to be b, b, bagged
hands to mouth with clenched fist, stutter, stop. Body stiffen
100 percent I'm the culture I grew up with my friends 100 percent
raah Pause. *Some students even when you try to explain*
they're still like they won't get it fully and like the biases are present
oh, it's like he's like this and he's like this and then you gotta show them again

and again, and again, it does get a bit annoying, can't lie
certain things they would say it's like okay, please listen
if you said this back home, I would have to punch you in your face ain't gonna deny
but 'cos we're here and you Know we're here, my real feelings stay hidden
you feel like you can get away with it so deep down
I don't wanna let this run but I'm gonna have to, that's annoying
sits back, wags his head as he swings his chair around
It's hard, and the adjustments strange but I'm enjoying it, I'm enjoying

I feel like teacher wise I mean I feel like ArtsEd do have teachers who care
and are like me, that's great. Dramas school as a whole I think like
they can have, if not more, tutors and mentors, that GET. IT. That are Aware.
and you HAVE to do you get it? Points to one temple indicating basic psych
I feel like in my training. Pause. Audible breath in.
like the culture comes with the person, do you get me, like everyone

has their ground, where they come from makes them, THEM. So, accepting
Pause. *If you can't accept that then you're not accepting them, you're done*

forget it you can't establish a connection with someone. Connect
different people who are working hard. Together creatively
working hard so let's go. I'm like that I'm like let's work go with respect
we do it together, work together. Accepting everyone culturally
Yeah, it's just like fam. Audible breath. *Man, it is what it is*
Like. Long pause. *I'm a bit more Open now*
I feel like now I'm a lot more, I have a lot more Focus
Appreciative, no Aware, a lot more aware and inspired. Wow

a lot more inspired I thought it was there but now it's There.
and it's like I'll go out of my way to show a lot more respect,
picks up afro comb, twiddles, sticks it in his hair
ArtsEd is the place to be right now. Its lit. Calm. Finger pointed very direct
acting wise there is a lot man a lot you have to do a lot of research. Raah
I'm more physical actor before I used to think and read and say whatever
you get it? But it's so important to actually like understand, hit the bar
it makes sense then to get it into my body. Not about being clever

And you know what, I didn't expect it to go like that. Pause. *I like yoga*
I'm doing yoga, you know I can't tell the man dem I'm doing it
even, even, even like enjoying yoga, like I'm doing erm...the cobra
But now I'm like man dem you've got to do yoga. Yoga's lit...

Julie Spencer
17th August 2020

Student Response

At first my response while reading it was "I actually said all of this"
but after by the time I got to the end I can say I really enjoyed reading it.
It's motivating to see those words as it feels like someone else's story that I can relate to and take hints from.
Seeing the journey of the poem really made me go through the journey of my life.
That was interesting to go through, didn't really expect that to happen.
But because it did I feel a new sense of affirmation (if that's the right word¿?) with my journey.

The poem was genuinely great

S7- Revoicing Call

I've learnt how much I hate myself,
how much I hate myself yeah
I know truly I have this drive and determination every day, every day to,
to succeed, to be the best
I've never been at the point of struggling
I've never had the time to struggle
I put this persona for years thinking that is the correct thing to do.
I know how to hate myself, that's the craziest thing.

```
Pauses a moment to consider
Speaks again, the rhythm is quicker
Fold and unfolds arms twice
Does that a lot, a calming device?
```

Moving forward I follow this quote that's hung on my wall over there
Mohammed Ali **'Doubt is only removed by action'**
and I always said that to myself
Doubt is only removed by action
because you struggle for identity
and you struggle for this that and the other
you don't, I don't know the action, what action to take
and not knowing I will instantly have doubts
So, it's like my whole quote
my whole visualisation scheme gone

```
Eyes glisten as he shrugs shoulders
Purposely, picks up his water holder
Takes a drink with eyes diverted
Looks back suitably side skirted
```

That's when hate comes in because you struggle for identity
but it's also taught me to be resilient, what resilience is
I always thought I was the most resilient person in the room
no, no, no I'm not the most resilient. No.
I'm a pebble and that's okay, to be a pebble
I've just started to realise how resilience drives you past that point of hating myself
It's very exciting, having to adapt
Never experienced that tweak and peek at bits I have inside of me

```
Shakes head in visual demonstration
Of an implied notification
Sits back, looks up, scratches his nose
Pauses. Again, as he begins to disclose
```

erm... it's made me contemplate my identity
listening to my insides a bit more and how to listen to others clearly
because previously I've regretted...I'm a bit scared
of taking something different from what it actually is
so I'm quite careful with how I approach friendships, relationships and commitments
even when an impulse is involved that's something, I can't control

I've held a lot of things back previously
but with actor training it's allowed me to open things up
I hold myself very proudly and if I say I don't know my own identity
how am I meant to live day by day?

```
Revolving hands in circular motions
Seconds out on his mounting emotions
Looks to Ali stuck on his wall
Shifts his body with a left shoulder roll
```

erm... so it's made me adapt to a sense of erm
how to explain it, an open barrier I would say.
Seeing the behind side and the forward which I've never done before
It has been scary, it's been quite tough, but a development
because I have felt like I don't know my own identity
and that's quite scary as a human being and someone... I hold myself very proudly
I'm meant to wake up and be proud of myself and show I'm accountable
how can I intake other people when I don't know myself erm so

```
Gestures again, a facial grimace
Turns again to focus on the boxer's image
Nervous play with all of his fingers
Pound for pound the silence lingers
```

been a very big lesson I'm very glad I'm in the safe space I'm in
the actor training that I'm doing
I'm allowed to use as much space and as much time as I need
and I'm being supported by people who are like minded
so, it's quite easy and open to find my own identity
because we're all trying to find our identity
I always thought if people find themselves that's it, you're rooted,
you're happy you can keep walking now I'm learning to crawl I'm learning to do this
I already can feel the future will be beneficial, I'm experiencing this right now,
So, it's like join the bus we're all here

```
Hands to chest, taps, rubs away
Before he fixes his top in an edgy display
Of the seriousness in which he answers
Holding to account his very high standards
```

Culture, what do you mean by that? Culture
Personally, I think you can't hold the past.
won't ever move forward if you hold the past,
but I can see why people do. Yeah, the way people have been brought up
previous circumstances as well erm... previous memories
of course, when the obstacles too tall or too large you're not going to go past it
Erm but culture yes, I would say matters and upbringing and language
you've past the past, haven't you?
```
Open arms up, hands tight fists
Head tilts left an awkward twist
Nods his head in a point deduction
Eyes brows raised amplifying his question
```

I wouldn't have chosen or done the course if I wasn't open to new culture
up North there's a certain stereotype of a man
and a certain stereotype of a woman and a certain stereotype of certain things
you come down to London and you hear about different culture
I think it's more open and more unbiased which I never thought could be normal
It's incredible, it's happening to myself which I never thought it would.
That's a great thing.
you get to find out what different people are like and how to work with different people
if you want to be in a world full of collaboration and adaptation and creation and
imagination you have to be able to connect to cultures

```
A stepping stone vocal cadence
Unfolded arms folded guidance
Flat palms together, rhythmically motion
Chest scratches through his technical decision
```

I knew I needed to experience new cultures
people who aren't open to new cultures stay neutral and stay in a straight line.
No, I'm a person who likes diagonals, I like mountain ranges,
I like wild cars, I like 2 wheels, 4 wheels, anything,
water, land anything.
so, and I've learnt new culture and I've added new culture to my own culture.
Now I'm carrying aspects of different cultures and can add to my own culture which I can
then spread to friends up North who haven't experienced these types of culture

```
Stutters a little, struggles to maintain
Instead he says - can you ask the question again?
First time there's a laugh and a one-sided smile
He sits back in his chair and pauses a while
```

I'd say the word to describe my adapting like this was pure.
It's benefitted me sublimely, it's changed my thought process
because I wasn't up for adapting like I said
but then you have to connect and you just stop thinking
I had to be open and pure to be able to relax just relax
because at previous times I've been very forward erm structured to know where I stand.
because I was so intimidated, I was never going to do this, never going to do that,
I hold myself very proudly
I couldn't just sit back or start a plan. I just have to turn up and be myself.
resilience drives you past that point.

```
Stretches the words they linger longer
Tying up his thoughts taking time to ponder
Long silences follow laughs follows a long silence
Shifting his way to new found resilience
```

It turns a different route and a different way, now I don't know
the way it is. I don't know the path its going, but I'd rather not know the path
than know I'm gonna hate myself. I hold my hands up
and say take me anywhere any destination.
I do not want to end in that destination for long please. Now I think I'm
Loyal,

Productive
Caring
Affectionate
True

Julie Spencer
20th August 2020

Student Response

Oh, wow okay… not the font size or structure I was expecting…
Wait my name, let's change it. One L, wait should I change it to ██████*??*
No, it's Julie's document don't change it, keep it as ████
Oh
Did I really say that about me?
I'm going to start picking up more… to believe and not close my body off so much
I have a physical aspect of showing that I'm thinking that I didn't know I was aware of. Very interesting to read it.
Don't really know what to think to be fair, it's taking me by surprise especially reading this today (3/9/2020) when I said them things a while back.
I'm going to print this out because it's made me think… nicely think… I have a lot of pictures and quotes to turn to but not anything that has been my own words towards me.
This is something new I need to investigate.
I can only end this with Thank you. Simply thank YOU.

S9-Revoicing Call

I would say, I think if you're in a different area erm, wherever you go
you always alter yourself make sure you fit in.
In Brighton it's a predominately white area it's getting better now
and for me being outside London
I'm noticing for myself coming out with sayings
that I don't normally say, `his chuckles come out very sudden`
being from Brighton `chuckles` *so yeah, the London's getting to me.*
London by the sea, that's where I'm from. `Chuckle.` *London by the sea.*
I do find it hard when it comes to what's been shaped, you know structurally
in society what's been shaped for us and we haven't actually,
I feel like I can't have an input in that but I want to change things culturally?

I think its er, erm, definitely a mechanism I'm using to definitely
fit in with, you know, my race especially
because a lot of the friends I have are from the BAME community
and there's, there's certain things that goes with sayings
that people in the BAME community have with each other
the inside jokes we have with each other `chuckle` *which you don't really*
get from outside of that community so for me I feel like its affected me,
my behaviour in certain ways `chuckles` *because there's banter and belonging*
my mums white and she was very good at making sure
I get the right insight of culture
I need, erm I've always had my dad's friends actually around, for bonding

cos my dad's not in the country, but specifically
at ArtsEd I've come into an environment which to be honest with you, `eyes open wider`
I was actually really shocked to see
`chuckles` *if not a little bit darker* `chuckles` *or a little bit lighter*
how many people there were that looked like me
I was very happy I was very excited
with the people around me at Drama School specifically
so, it has had an impact on me culturally
because I think you're always learning do you know, `he smiles delighted`
it's making me kinda see things more broader which is good.
It's a hard one though because I, erm, and I should

I should... I consider myself black I identify as black young man
and so I should, because I'm not white erm I'm not going to fit into that white supremacy
or the rules forced on us by society
erm but there are certain times when they can, can,
be jokes going between certain black people or even chats and stuff
I'm very much included in the banter which is mainly just between black people.
but sometimes I think that I can't speak up, don't speak up enough
because even though I identify as a young black man maybe they might

not see it that way so there has been certain occasions where I do kinda bite,
like hold my tongue and don't speak where I do actually feel like I could give some insight
yeah that's always been there been with me always been there... yeah

It so hard being mixed heritage because people look at me, I'm half Trinidad
and half British and people look at me like I'm a 2nd class citizen in terms of my dad
is from the Caribbean and I am his son I am the direct descendant of him, Black British
I feel like cos I'm not their colour I just don't feel like I fit in and it is...
`Pause` *I've always been in the black camp rather than the white camp.*
it shouldn't be that way whatsoever `hands come together for a clap`
I should be able to fit in both camps. It's something I should be able to do
you know that feeling of ease I don't feel that straight away. That's true.
Never. It takes me a while to be at ease in with everyone, Julie, even you
because I'm too dark for the white people and too light for the black
people and it's like where do I kinda go? `He straightens his back`

I'd like to create work that represents me, it's different from
Black African, Black Caribbean its different, does that sound dumb?
The Barbershop Chronicles kinda touched on it, but not enough. You know
that first module we did World Stories you really have to accept
whatever anyone brought to the table `pause` *erm I would say*
`squints his eyes and chuckles` *it's had a very positive affect*
I think you really had to handle that topic in a supportive way
and whatever their culture, their world story was from themselves, handle it with care
we didn't know each other then, erm you know I didn't know anyone of those people
and to listen to the stories they wanted to share
it's a big lesson, `rubs his hands` *you've got to grow up and to be respectful*
if you can do that as a team of actors you can do anything, so that was perfect. `Chuckle.`

What I've learned about myself I hadn't expected to
You do your prep I thought constantly when you get on stage you,
you... in the performance you don't want to be thinking
I didn't realise HOW much I focus in on myself when I first started training
`his mobile rings pause audible breath in`
Sorry! when actually I need to put my attention on the person in front of me
and I think, I think that comes from maybe a bit of anxiety
I'm always overthinking everything even like meetings like this right now impacting...
I just. It's so important to just you can't. Acting is reacting
and I think you definitely need to spark off someone else, that's when you play
I can't just do it all on my own and I think that's what I do I put too much pressure
on myself. Yeah that's something I want to go away.
I definitely say inquisitive erm open I think, everything's accessible
I can't think of the word... it's like malleable?
like kinda I feel like I'm not bendy but yeah like more flexible
erm two more... it's a hard question... I'd say like I feel more wise
`Pause.` *There's so much more knowledge there I didn't even know acting required*
I thought you just got up and did it. `Rolls his eyes`

but you know there's so much to it erm chuckles *erm last word I'd say now* long pause *what's a word for in touch?* Bites his lip *okay...*
Long pause *Erm Connected, yes connected. I feel so much more connected especially with the psychophysical approach we did with you.*
I feel way more connected. His voice becomes less inflected

I wanna be successful when I finish here. His face has a slight blush
I just wanna be the best version of myself that I can be
Definitely. The people on the course and, and the staff
on the course all included, they're very much...
They're perfect for pushing you on the right path
which is something that I want to be on so badly
so yeah chuckles *I'd love to play black roles I'd love to play white roles*
I'm definitely open. I wanna act. I wanna be an actor, that's my goal.

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Julie Spencer
24th August 2020

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Student Response

When reflecting on the words that came from the interview we conducted a few months back, I found it really fascinating to see how naive I was. What this has really highlighted to me is that a lot can change in such a short amount of time. I didn't have the knowledge then that I'd go onto performing my Shakespearean monologue in my heritage accent, tackling my personal goals of being able to play black roles as someone from a mixed heritage. I believe the answer to my query was to not ask for permission and perhaps that I was overthinking it too much. I cared so much about what people darker than me would think that it stunted my own growth and development as an actor.

I cannot thank you enough for encouraging and giving me the confidence after this interview to do my monologue in a Caribbean accent. It might not seem like a big deal to you but it really changed my mindset when it comes to approaching new things. Naturally I'd shy away from them, but now I'm confident and eager to tackle anything.

S10-Revoicing Call

I always thought that I was comfortable in my own skin.
I've learnt about myself, a lot.
Breathy giggles spiral upwards, diminishing into the expectant air.
Silence. Thumbs stand to attention, metacarpal bendability rhythmically
moves in a way that underlines quintessential gentility.

I learnt that ...
I was extremely insecure
I did try to fit in a lot. Stops. Silence.
I always felt confused. Am I this, am I that?
I still struggle to just be, erm...
I'm just learning, trying to learn
I've outgrown people I used to hang out with
If I want to change then that's fine
, that this is a journey
A Journey. It. Is. Isn't it?

I want to tell you
'dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid,
to make us choose safety instead of risk,
sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us,
revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of
shared values, of meaningful community' - bell hooks

Cloudiness blurs her smiling eyes. She dances with her thumbs, circles
twice, right taps thrice, left taps once, press together pressed. Repeat.
Repetition. Meisner acting methodology? The rule of thumb repetition
exercise. Smiling eyes glaze over.

I've learnt that...
the way I am is okay
people will accept you for who you are
if they don't, they're not your type of people
it's okay not to fit into a box
I've thought I always should be in that box
I've always tried to put myself in that box
people around me have put me in that box
erm, I'm just learning
it's a, this is a process

It's a process of adjustment, truthfully
of NOT trying to fit in
I've been surrounded by not the best group of people
who weren't inspiring to me or encouraging...erm?
I tried so hard to fit in, stops
erm... fitting in, fit in
going with the norm, whatever the norm is
well we know what the norm is
okay I don't need to fit in,
to fit in. That's a recurring theme, isn't it?

I want to tell you
'do the best you until you know better. Then when you know better, do better' - Maya
Angelou 2011

Twitching digits demarcate the box each time the word is said. Flick,
flick, before they entwine. Resigned. Thumbs take up arms. The dance
reprises, a repeat. Circles twice, right taps thrice, left taps once, press
together pressed. Repetition recap.

A Recurring theme.
everyone goes through stages
of going I wish I was better at this
or I wish I was more of that. Erm ...I tell myself
don't try to fit yourself into a... er... mould
its habit, a habitual thing of judging yourself
I suppose it's being aware of that
I suppose. Pauses. *Looking back, I think*
I would have done some, some situations differently
yeah, exhales, *not staying with those habits.*

A solution. Interrupts. *I'm working on it*
Interrupted solution... I'm trying... erm, and then also,
like if you mentally torture yourself in a way
um... undoing habits is quite difficult.
yeah, getting rid of any habit is quite hard
so, remembering it's a progression
you do bring a lot a baggage... erm ...
...I have to realise. Pauses to inhale, exhale purposely
the hard part is reminding yourself to remember
sorry. I hope that answers your question?

I want to tell you
'don't hide in habit to resist aspirations' -Rikki Beadle Blair 2020

Giggles a cheeky smile that dwindles downwards. Followed by her eyes. Hands
move up. To rub in a thoughtful distraction, she exhales a shivering
breath. Is she resisting the habitual rhythm adopted? Sounds a sharp
intake. Thumbs to the ready. Circles twice, right taps thrice, left taps
once, press together pressed. A Repeat. A Reprise. A Reiteration.

I've realised our class especially is...,
I mean, you've got everyone from a different place
such different experiences. Different erm...Cultures
and when you're bringing that together in the room, to work,
that creates so many ideas. Erm...
people might pretend to be similar at school
when it's good or cool or considered the norm
people want to fit in to the norm.
people might follow that façade,
but everyone is so different... erm, and that's okay and erm yeah

Sorry did I answer the question?
you ask the question I start talking and then I forget
I mean, accepting someone, accepting what someone
erm has been through and lived through,
a completely different life to yours. Is massively, massively important
you have to be really empathetic to that
in understanding it's not all the same, erm…
it brings like a freshness to it.
you know erm…different cultural things
It's brilliant it gives us more knowledge and more understanding, isn't it?

I want to tell you
'culture does not make people. People make culture.' - **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

```
Right shoulder curves in, bites lip, head tilts. Frown. Face reddens.
Shoulders shrug, shifts, to slowly interweave fingers to place momentarily
under her chin. Thumbs interlock, unlock, downlock in deadlock. Takes on
the role of Thumbelina with expertise. Circles twice, right taps thrice,
left taps once, press together pressed.
```

The things that I'm looking forward to are all coming in the 2nd year
I'm sure famous actors still go on set and think whoa,
they probably still get nervous
but erm…it's quite daunting to me at this point
`nervous giggle`, *in a lesson I know I walk in. It's safe*
I know that there's not 50 people on set
and perhaps thousand pounds worth of equipment
I suppose I'm nervous for that pressure
Hopefully by the end of 2nd year,
I feel a bit more…erm secure within myself.

I've done a lot of thinking and reflecting
about what I have to offer
my differences can be seen as strengths not weaknesses
you don't need to like define yourself, because it can change
I like the person I'm becoming more
and I think that's good. I hope. `Quick giggle.`
I've enjoyed watching myself grow
I like how I'm evolving erm… yeah
and I like the person I'm becoming rather than the person I was.
still progressing. Still getting there.

`Long silence.` **The things that make me, me, are okay**
And what I've learnt about acting
erm… everyone's got ticks, habits
they come out in my acting
and obviously it's good to be aware of them
but little things about me that I might have in the past thought
oh, that's so unnaturalistic or why would I do that
but as an actor I'm using me to bring the character to the table

erm and actually if I then try to remove it, I'd be trying too hard to act.
Does that make any sense?

I want to tell you
'the truth of ourselves is the root of our acting' (Meisner 2012:45).

`Long silence.` *I would say I'm now more confident.* `Thumbs up.` *I'm now more secure,* `circles twice.` *I'm more open* `right taps thrice.` *There are so many words going through my head but yes. I'm now more understanding* `press together pressed` *empathetic. Yes, yes, I think so. I'm well, I'm getting closer to feeling like I'm enough regardless.* `Five words under the thumb. Dancing in development.`

In our final shared silence, I want to tell you
'we are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek'. – Barack Obama

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Julie Spencer
30th July 2020

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Student Response

A young voice of uncertainty meets a wise voice of encouragement.
Kind of like, a guardian angel dropping down nuggets of wisdom, to someone who
is conscious of the new path ahead, but unsure of how to walk it sometimes.
The minefield of discovering stuff.
The importance of unlearning, rather than learning for growth and change.
How that takes time, and repetition, and perseverance.

I also struggle articulating my thoughts sometimes, I know the sentiment behind what I
want to say, but don't always communicate it very well...
but (remembering to leave that critical past self at the door) what an interesting journey I
am at the start of.

uncertainty, anxiety, learning, trying, developing, letting go, growth.

S13-Revoicing Call

a moment in the project World Stories
we were given five minutes to free write about our identity and, and we
spent the last couple of weeks at looking at heritages
about how I believed I was plain white bread
I was good for toast maybe
but not much else
I actually found out in this process
I had French ancestry and a lot of family were actually
Scottish which I never knew before
now I was a piece of white bread with fresh French butter and sweet jam
and I was savouring the taste because I'd found there was more to me. What I am
I've actually begun to explore that identity

```
Scratches her nose. Then blinks
Pauses some time and thinks
Clasp hands together nervously
Eyes flick away purposely
```

not to underestimate myself or underestimate
my heritage because it's still a heritage I might not think it very interesting
but still, my identity. Yeah, there's opportunities
every single day to be observing
when you're at home, you're alone, you're stripped with all your insecurities.
what have you got left?
what really makes you, you yeah, the course has definitely given me time to reflect
on that and to learn about other people heritages and identities
which has just been so enriching, so enriching.
I grew up in a, in a multicultural city
so coming to University where there's even more diversity
even more stories and languages I've absolutely loved it

```
Rested hands under chin
Pauses a little uncertain
When she asks the question
Hands to chest in a heartfelt revelation
```

identity as a whole has been just so interesting
and cultural references appeals to my sort of openminded nature
I've always sort of tried to be someone who is of the world who is accepting
and open of lifestyles of different culture
that's just kind of fed that interest. because it's just so rich it's just so valuable,
definitely gonna add to my creative process at the moment and in future
right from the start from the induction workshops that were practical
right at the beginning of the year all the way through World Stories all the way
through We Are Arrested urm it was through the work, it was very vulnerable

you really had to dig deep to develop as actors erm every day
you know, you know we were safe, in a safe space
Everyone came together to embrace…

```
Hands to chest repeated
The sentence left slightly uncompleted
Lines appear in a furrowed frown
Takes a moment. Eyes look down
```

World Stories would not have been what it was,
you know we sang songs from Nigeria and France,
if people weren't so generous
erm songs that I would not have had a chance
to know or have accessed. It was fantastic we were all joined together
Er so it's a beneficial thing but you definitely do have your eyes open
got to unite us within the process, be there for each other
open your mind because you'll miss out if you don't. This is the training we've chosen
I've liked the opportunities to become passionate about the things they're passionate about
also your heart kinda of breaking for the things that breaks other people's hearts, things
you know there's a lot of tragedy and, and, pain and loss in other cultures no doubt.
That I being a young white woman and my ancestry having a history of white privileges.

```
Rubbing arms crossed arms contracted
Eyes look away nervously distracted.
Pauses to regain her thoughts again
Stretches her words out in a rhythmic sustain
```

I've never been made to feel uncomfortable but it's made me feel blessed
that I'm in a position where erm I can,
where I can learn about it now through an acting process
It makes me feel challenged to think critically about what I've began
to put out, above all it's made me feel, it's made me feel fortunate
that we've now got an opportunity to make this industry erm more accessible
and more, more sort of more knowledgeable and more passionate
more considered more conscientious that it ever has been before. Incredible
it's about asking questions, I like to hear directly
from people I don't like having assumptions
I wouldn't want anything to be assumed about me
I cringe if I think I'm about to share a presumption

```
Clasped hands. Clenched fists
Shifts position and her body twists
Closer to the screen she leans
Stresses words to convey what she means
```
sometimes it's a case of sitting back and listening and accepting
you don't know about what someone else has gone through
my identity erm my appearance is something
about that gets put under a magnify glass, when you
look at your Self

working with body on a daily basis and that's something that has been challenging for me
I'm very body conscious. I'm very aware of myself
I'm constantly thinking about it, constantly. My aesthetic necessarily
I realise that my body is strong and that my body is capable
so, it takes the focus off, that my body's also this
and my body's also that, my body's changeable
it takes the focus off those voices. Forget about the other bits

```
Eyes fixed left one squinting
Audible held breath finally emitting
Shoulders shrug. Pauses a while
Silence follows a knowing smile
```

Erm, I've learned that as an actor it is valuable to gel
with other actors and to go through a process together there's a real energy
to this whole acting business, it helps propel
a real energy and you've got to bring that energy you've got to bring that every
day. That open, ready, prepared energy to a professional environment.
it is not hiding behind a mask, but it is fully baring yourself
creative investment
erm it's not about covering up your marks as well
as your imperfections or shortfalls but it's about utilising them
just to totally use who I am and accept, you know it's a very long road to accepting
completely who you are bit by bit you get to do that you get to become…
bit by bit you get a bit closer to your full potential and you feel yourself connecting

```
Demonstrate fingers slowly entwined
With a shoulder shrug combined
Head tilted to the right slightly
As she inhales very lightly
```

I noticed over the months I really don't like to fail
in front of other people, I think I tend to have a bit of a fit
definitely been a challenge detail
to accept that we're all going to get something wrong at some point
having my eyes open throughout the day not just stumbling through blindly
but being more aware mmm yeah, I can feel the progression
I'm getting so much fitter and getting used to things, physically.
That's a really good question
I can't think of the word erm I am Prepared I think erm prepared just an air of preparedness
every day for my lessons and Forgiving, yeah more forgiving,
that's been an important thing, erm… more Intuitive, intuitive… my goodness
Erm Disciplined yeah erm Absorbing more absorbing
```
Voice trails off at the end of the sentence
Audible breath out. A very long silence
Her voice raises in a pleasing cadence
As she leaves a parting line with quiet confidence
```

It's a very intimate thing to share with people, to allow them into your life

Julie Spencer
27th August 2020

Student Response

My immediate Response After Reading:
I underestimate my ability to make my thoughts make sense to other people, I realise after reading this that when I stare off into the distance and I think intensely about answering someone's question (I love answering questions) another part of my body knows how to communicate the end product of that intense thinking. With regards to the content, I'm happy with the broad outlook if that's the right word that I've had on my experiences this past year. I like how the speech is broken in places, I speak sometimes in very long sentences, I just have a thing for decorating what I say not in pretentious ambition but to be soothed by the vibrations of my voice. It's nice to talk in a stream of words.

S14-Revoicing Call

Sometimes, sometimes I think when people think of, especially like black males,
ummm, I don't- I'm not going to say people think of us like quite rude
or aggressive but there is a stereotype that, you know, society kind of sees us.
I think the way I was raised and the way a lot of my friends were raised,
cuz a lot of my friends are black,
we was raised to have respect and to be hard working and to have manners, you know,
so definitely, I think culture plays a lot into it yeah.
It's always kind of like my thing to not prove people wrong but just show
them this is not how young black males behave.
Just show them this is not how young black males behave.
So in terms of that I just always make sure that I'm on top of my game.
It hasn't always been easy because sometimes you do slip
and you do think what's the point and (audible breath in) but
just remembering because I'm black
I have to work twice as hard as everyone else. (Pause) That's how I see it.
having to be aware, to be even more aware of it. Ummm... (Pause)

I found that people, I w, wouldn't say walk on eggshells,
but are kind of a little bit wary or, (Pause) I don't know if it's because of my colour but,
there are times when, ummm, for example, I'll be in class
and I'll be sitting with the black students,
not because there's...ummm I'm friends with everyone else but just, they're my friends innit,
that's who I relate to, ummm, that's who I connect with,
and I've noticed sometimes there can be a thing...
I mean I can speak to some people from a very honest point of view and just get to the point.
Whereas some people you have to be more careful with your words,
watch your tone of voice, (Pause)
even when It comes to like the space in between like when you're talking
t, to make sure (audible breath in) I'm not invading their space you know?
Before they look at my skin colour and think I am being threatening or anything of the sort.
That I'm that stereotype
Like I'm very aware. Made. Aware. That I'm a young black man and they are like..., you
know and people will v-view me differently.

There are other young black people, you know?
That are in the same boat as me, that understand.
So we come together, because we understand the struggle.
There's some things as black people you just get.
There's like, sometimes there's even an unspoken thing, if something happens, instinctively,
I don't know why but I might look up and instantly lock eyes with someone.
Not out of any malicious intent but it's just- it's just like,
it's like my body just reacts to it and also there's lots of things like culturally,
like there's a culture difference. (Pause) and it's not negative but sometimes
people just don't understand, but it's very good to know that there's people there,
that get me, that can relate to me.
So it's like we're finding, ummm we're going through this journey together.
And it makes it easier for me knowing that I'm not in this alone.
And also the staff as well like, I feel like the fact that there's black staff members,

helps me even more knowing that I have sort of, like, a role model
Someone that relates to me. That's so big. That's not like other drama schools.

Acting doesn't belong to one specific set of people
as actors we all need to learn about breathing and whatnot, rooting and grounding yourself
in our first projects we did World Stories and that, everyone's culture was ummm (Pause)
included so we can create a whole piece, ummm, like, for me I think that's so big, ummm
there's so many things that you can learn from so many different cultures, ummm (Pause)
and if you can, if you can kind of like, if you embrace that and you accept others peoples
culture and whatnot, that makes you a better actor.
if you're curious about something and you're asking about it,
having, ummm discussions, not in a disrespectful way
You want to understand them more, you want to relate to them more,
For me, knowledge is power
I feel like in the industry right now there's, there's definitely a change happening. There's a
lot more diversity, ummm but just to see a little bit more, I'd say, appreciation, more
exposure and appreciation to diverse material.
Ummm so I'm proactive myself. I'm Caribbean, even when it comes to like
African history, like African culture, I read diverse material and I ask about it.

(audible breath in) *To be honest sometimes it can be quite frustrating, is that the word?*
sometimes it can be quite frustrating because you are trying to…
sometimes, ummm… I don't wanna change myself (Pause)
I don't wanna change the essence of who I am.
I'm very rooted in myself and I'm not gonna change that for anybody. Ummm,
Frustrated. Ummm, (Pause)*I've become more accepting of adjustments.*
All my positive qualities such as being empathetic, ummm, quite open, honest, integral,
have been very vital in my, ummm, in my training as an actor. (Pause)
I've had to really like embrace them even more. Ummm… (Pause)*colla-collaborating*
I did like to think of myself as quite independent and I did like to work with myself
but I've learnt to work with people even more
like accepting other people's ideas, ummm… learning how to communicate as well
in a way that is much more professional,
(Pause)*also being kind to myself as well. Before I was very, ummm, critical of myself and I*
was my biggest enemy, ummm… but in this actor training
I'm trying to be kind and patient to myself as well.

For example, I hated the voice lessons at first, I absolutely despised it
I didn't know now how to speak. Sometimes even when I try to explain something
I stutter or I stumble. (audible breath in) *I feel like my speech is all over the place.*
The whole connecting to your diaphragm, I didn't understand it
I didn't want to understand it.
The teachers made me feel encouraged and motivated
to use my voice and use what I have
I'm not just a body, (audible breath in) *I'm not just a black body,*
I have a voice. I. Need. To. Use. It. I did not get it. (Long Pause) *do you know what it was?*
I didn't want to get vulnerable, but its- it was a lot of defence mechanism.
I was ummm, I had a lot of walls and a lot of guards up.

Ummm things that I, that stem from like family and like secondary school,
just growing up in general… (Pause) *I had a lot of defence up*
and when it comes to being vulnerable, I didn't want to seem vulnerable
in front of strangers and number one (Pause) *to, to myself as well.*
There's a lot of like, hurt that I was holding onto and for me to be vulnerable in acting,
I first need to be vulnerable to myself.

Words I'd describe myself now? Honest. (Long Pause)
Sorry, I've got to think about this one.
I am much more ummm ((Pause) *I'd say resilient.*
Grounded. Ummm (Pause) *I need a word for- for- I don't know the word for it,*
I would say I'm very more much more present
Instead of worrying about the future, I'm worrying about the past.
Pre-present, yeah.
And, last word (Pause) *last word, last word* (Long Pause) *ummm…*
Strong. Like strong-hearted.
Yeah (Pause) *strong-hearted or strong-minded. Let's say Strong.*
What, oh, (Pause) *it's made me feel, quite, ummm, like,*
you know when you can see yourself becoming a better person,
you can feel yourself evolving. I don't know the word for it,
but you can feel you're not the same person you was from last year.
It makes me feel more excited about my future if that makes sense.
I'm quite… yeah…excited, like I can see the change happening, is coming.

Julie Spencer
6th August 2020
Jamaican Independence Day

Student Response

It's a beautiful read.
When I read it I smiled but also cringed,
because I read it in my voice and it was interesting for me
to see myself using so many fillers (ummm).
What was interesting about that was that it made me think.
Did I use so many fillers because I was unsure of what I wanted to say,
or was it I knew exactly what I wanted to say and was being polite about it,
so being careful to use to right language.
Broken thoughts.
But thought being connected by the audible breaths in.
I felt as if I tip-toed around my answers.
"I'll be in class and I'll be sitting with the black students,
not because there's…ummm I'm friends with everyone else "
That part stood out to me,
it made me question why did I need to state I'm friends with everyone

and not just my black peers.
It made me realise that I am quite apologetic & tend to explain myself ...
'CONSCIOUS / AWARE'.
Empowered. Tearful. Grounded (especially the part about instinctively looking up at my peers and making eye contact).
Humour. Excited (from 3rd paragraph "so it's like we're finding umm..")
Touched.
The part that significantly stood out to me was the part about not being just a body,
I have a voice that needs to be used.
It was very touching as I'm quite affected by the passing of Chadwick Boseman who for me was a prime example of black lives matter.
It was almost like reading that part reignited a fire inside me to dig deeper in my acting.
Honest. Scared.

S15-Revoicing call

I don't have to accept it I learn about it and understand it as long as I understand it
I don't have to accept it cos to me that word accept means I could bring it into my life
I don't have to bring it into my life's my life. It's my life
I'll make you stay out of my life if I want you to
I can understand your culture. Pause. *And to a point where I'm not going to offend you*
but don't, don't push it on me to accept it, otherwise its gonna clash with my identity.
Erm… recognising someone's culture doesn't impact on my identity because if you've
recognised it, you've simply done just that. It's there. It's in your peripheral.
Accepting it to me, that word accepting, means you're taking something on
if you accept a gift your taking that gift off someone and your bringing it into your life
so, if I was to accept pause *someone else's culture that would,*
it's just the way my head works,
that would mean I would be taking on that culture into my life
I could accept it in terms I accept that's your culture that's completely fine Pause
but it would affect my identity if I was to go around accepting everyone's culture in the
world. Silence
I think, yes, accepting people's differences does play a part in my development
because it means you recognise them as a person.
And yes, yes 100% I think that culture does play a part in people's differences.
Silence
For example, so my culture has been a working class white Northern male,
that is my culture, that automatically brings differences into my life just that title alone
Silence. *Erm I can 100% accept someone else's differences because of their culture*
Long Silence. Frown
*Oh god yes… * Pause. *I am accepting cultures, aren't I? I see that, see that's my ignorance*
Our differences are in our culture, man! Realising Laugh
so … yes completely get it. Laughs. Audible breath in. *100% …* Silence. *yes…*
Thank you

I want to tell you
'dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community' (bell hooks 2003)

Silence *I've known I've wanted to come to drama school since I was about 12 or 13*
I've known it. Drama school or I'm going to be an actor and I've always been
the kid that's been you're going to be an actor you're going to be amazing
blah blah sort thing and it's put a huge amount of pressure on me, sort of thing
Hand to back of head, *so I did stupid things when I was a teenager*
because I felt this huge pressure on my shoulder
But I know acting comes comfortably to me that's my thing it's just me
Silence. *Getting to ArtsEd has confirmed that. Acting is telling a story*
and I've come to realise about myself at ArtsEd
I can tell stories quite well. I want to tell stories. He touches his head

I want to tell stories to people to help them understand the world better
because that's what I needed when I was a kid I needed to understand, but never
had the chance, so I wanna be a person who can bridge that gap
through storytelling and ArtsEd taught me that.

It's made an impact on who I am in the sense that when I came home the first time
after being in London and at ArtsEd, smile, *cos I'm*
not from London so I came home and everyone was asking like my family asking
oh, what have you learned, what are you actually doing
and I said like please understand this but so far, I've learnt more about myself on this course
rather than learning about how to be an actor bangs on the desk with force
Pause. *I've discovered so much about myself that the actor training*
will almost come because of that. Hands cycle each other rotating
Erm... so it's not altered who I am but it has opened my eyes as to who I am definitely
and it's made me very, very in touch with my identity
because I am a Northerner Pause *and I've always been you know surrounded*
by other people who were Northern who were likeminded
cos I've grown up there all my life but when you're removed from that especially
a Northern boy going to the South of England, it's like two big changes completely.

and that's where my identity came very, very clear
as to I'm different I've led a different life from other people erm I was aware
I've never been the minority in my life ever and suddenly I've been pushed into a minority
and that's definitely changed me and my identity, my personality.
It's made me very headstrong and proud of who I am that's the word I'd use
to umbrella my experience proud and the course has introduced
me to that, opened my eyes that everyone should be who proud of who they are wherever they
come from not to be ashamed. A wagging finger.
I've had a 100% cultural change, really profound
there are people on the course who come from all types of backgrounds
all cultures erm which has opened my eyes a lot because I've been raised
where everyone's white middle class, working class. Eyes avert a little fazed?
here, it is so diverse and I don't know it broke down a lot of stigma
I'd had. Silence *I feel so ashamed and embarrassed.* He speaks in a measured metre

Being at ArtsEd has been a culture shock to me but in a very good way...
a huge culture shock to me 100%. Silence. *I can honestly say*
at the start I definitely felt a 100% uneasy
erm... because it wasn't just one little change it was many,
many changes all at the same time, I felt over phased. Hands to chin.
Overwhelming. I thought there was too much on my plate, but once you start dissecting
the changes. Okay, Lets take the plate of food analogy
I've moved to London that's the chicken breasts on the plate unseasoned, covered in gravy
cos that's the Northern way, laughs, *and I've come down to London*
and I've had absolutely loads of stuff thrown at it rubs palms together, *a ramen*
noodles and jollof rice piled on and it's gonna be like I can't tackle this meal now

but it if I section it all out into just little bits and tackle each one, that's how
I can finish the meal, no I take that back you'll never finish the meal
erm I've had tastes of each sections of it erm... but now I don't feel

Pauses *feel exactly comfortable* silence *I'm just aware*
not uneasy, just aware I'm still learning still understanding. Swings in his chair
It's been difficult but like not squeezing blood from a stone
Laughs *it's just been a journey, understanding people and culture changes. I've grown,*
erm by just listening to people if... that's a huge thing before when I talked to people,
I used to hear them but I wasn't really listening I was waiting for next possible
opportunity for my turn to speak but now I'll listen to them properly
and the next opportunity to speak I choose not to, absolutely
I let it sit for a bit. I listen. If you're silent that person will say more
that's been a huge thing for me learning about people's cultures, never did that before
Silence *I've liked who it's helping me to be I'm definitely stronger*
more freethinking it's made me into that type of person. I consider
more. Clenched right fist moves to left palm. *I've really have enjoyed it*
I've enjoyed the change of mindset

also, this idea of leaving personal issues at the door because I was very much a person
who previous to this who would enter a rehearsal space or a lesson
and everyone would be aware of my trouble's, wore my heart on my sleeve,
and it would affect the work that was going on, whereas ArtsEd had taught me to leave
hands up to the screen *your troubles at the door*
which allows you to create much more
erm pause *what else? Just because you don't understand something*
or you find it challenging doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. It's the training
It's adjusted me as an actor getting this ArtsEd training toolkit
it offers all these different things you can have, your spanners your screwdrivers and it...
everyone's toolkit is going to be different, takes a glass of water and sips
and that's what is unique that's why I really trust ArtsEd, finger to lips
because they're not sculpting students to be a prototype drama student
you're giving us a training that sculpts ourselves and that makes us confident

How can you recreate through your imagination something that you
want someone else to believe if your imagination is limited, you got to get into
broadening your imagination, your experience of what's around you and being open
to the culture around you, its something I've chosen
Nothings pushed but you can't shy away. There's a balance
You're encouraged it's there you can discover it. Silence
I would say I'm Proud I say proud now because previously I might have just said
that word, now I know what it means to be really proud, instead,
I know I'm definitely proud of myself 100%. Silence. *Understanding*
This is hard. Silence. *Free.* Spells it out and laughs, asking
How many is that? Ah... Strong. I can't think of the word when your emotionally invested
in touch with yourself ... connected? Yeah, I'm now Connected

yeah, I used to get confused of how I felt emotionally
never knew what I was doing really. That was me
but now I would say I more emotionally aware and more importantly
more aware of the fact that It's okay to feel those emotions you know. Absolutely

Julie Spencer
29th August 2020

Student Response

I've read through the document and the first thought that came to me was how broken my thought process comes across through speech in comparison to how it sounds when I'm thinking those thoughts - if you get what I mean. Even that is a perfect example as that sounds broken too haha. But I'm happy with everything in there and have no further comment to make.

S21-Revoicing Call

Not gonna lie when you made us say our names. Touches his face
Er just because I know what my name is
but to just shout my name, I've never had a space
so strongly and firmly I felt oh my god this is legit, this,
this is me and then you took it further
and made us stand in the front of the class to say our names
and just be in the space and introduce ourselves. Puts his hands together
Picks up an orange, plays with it as he explains
It was the first time I'd ever experienced that. It was amazing. I was amazed
you don't realise how important it is to just be able to say your name proudly
not to hide your identity. His arms move lengthways
It meant so much to me. Honestly

My first name means gift.
But now I'm also Bold I would say
Observant. Pause *and I only say observant only because I've noticed*
I'm beginning to evolve. Colourful. A shout as he flings hands up and away
laughs *er um Bold, Observant, Colourful,* pause *and this word*
but I wouldn't have understood the level or the magnitude
of it without being on this course... Passionate. Puts down orange. *That's the third.*
No, fourth. And, er Empathetic don't show it much but yeah, I feel it's something you'd
Have to develop in actor training
Yeah, I needed to develop that, empathy. His voice trails off… fading...

I'm not gonna a lie, I mean like, I've been in other institutions
or whatever where I've felt like, like I need to tone myself down
maybe I need to like come across a certain way, make certain decisions
so, I don't appear to be like ghetto or like anything. Tilts head right with a frown
Like even in my first retail job and I went up to somebody
and said 'Hello do you need any help and they looked terrified
and me just approaching them er... Takes off his hoodie
I'm hot. So, like that's something that's in my head alongside
It's just about being a black person and a black man in particular
Er but in, in this er, course at ArtsEd there's so many people
are in my class here like me, I feel comfortabler
don't feel the need to put on a constant mask. I feel equal.

er like even with our Director of Acting, you,
I've never had er a black person in that sort of position
I've never had a black woman in that position, that's so new
Not gonna lie when I came for my audition
I could tell ethnic backgrounds would be able to feel they can express themselves openly
whether they're saying something like positive
whether they're saying something that could be taken negatively

and that ethnic backgrounds could change the narrative
you know like I said don't feel the need to put on a constant mask
in order to get approval or, or to be liked
er in order to present your most truthful self yeah without a facemask

Shifts his body closer to the screen on the right

being in this environment has given me more understanding of who
I am right in the craft that I'm in
I realised like I need to educate myself to get a more truthful view
Like I was born in South Africa and I haven't been in touch rubbing his chin
Pause, *in touch with that culture for a while*
I feel so detached if I'm being absolutely honest
when I came to the UK, I learnt to speak English in 6 months, became a complete anglophile
I completely threw African culture away and English society was my interest
it's crazy thinking about that doing that in order to adjust
you've got to like throw away a huge part of yourself in order
to fit in, long pause *what's been great with this adjustment* his words are rushed
My culture, it's in my blood is a huge part of who I am, of me, and being an actor

It sounds so absurd like how do you lose a part of you that's so major
I mean so yeah, I'll say I felt a bit embarrassed that I let that happen
and it makes you feel a bit lost laugh *because when you're in London, a stranger*
in England like you don't really feel like this is your home, his fingers begin tapping
But then when you go back home you don't feel like that's your home either
do you know what I mean? so it's just like, where do you I belong?
I feel like... I worry am I being a bit too forward? He pauses for a breather
Am I intimidating anybody? Am I being a bit too strong?
Just er because people don't always say things explicitly
but you get feelings you get their undertones
er as to whether someone wants to be around you or not, actually
I'm still strong in how I stand, my chest is always up and I leave it alone

But you know what it's also made me feel even more inquisitive
Er it's supported me investigating my culture more
this experience has provided a strong sense of perspective
I think if that's makes sense. audible breath out, *before...*
for a long time for a few years, shrugs shoulders, *I didn't know*
er eyes squint as he pauses, *I didn't know what my purpose is if that makes sense*
and this has provided a strong purpose, yeah, so
when you accept yours and other cultures it kinda allows you to have a better awareness
cos er to accept other people's cultures is not to agree with everyone
or everything that they do and er when you can like see how other people live
from things that are similar or different you are able to come
to an understanding that no one culture has to dominate or be, you know combative

Realising I couldn't bring much to the table
because I lost so much, I feel like now I am able
to frame the lines, he wipes his brow and moves to the screen nearer
and see that... with others, through others, see my own culture clearer
I don't know without sounding corny I enjoy the process, this cultural learning
and the growth and I enjoy the notion of becoming.

Julie Spencer
23rd August 2020

Student Response

To my revoicing call, my initial response was "wow, that was an interesting read." I had no clue you were observing physical gestures and patterns of speech as I spoke so immediately, that caught my attention.

A part that really resonated with me was when I spoke about losing a huge part of myself to fit in (in relation to losing my heritage to adjust to UK culture). Oddly enough I stumbled on a piece i wrote on -5/09/19 right before I began my training at ArtsEd (i'm guessing). This short piece aimed to explore who ██████████ is. That piece, i'd say was the first time I Identified that theme of loss and it was interesting to see despite a year passing; the idea of losing myself in order to fit in to then grow to feel lost and somewhat alone (whew deep stuff here) because I'm still trying to find my home/ to figure out where I belong is still kind of unsettling. Mainly because the concept of it all feels as though it would sound absurd to anyone listening to it, which is probably why my rate of speech became more rushed as I intentionally transitioned to more positive thoughts.

My laugh after that point caught my attention because on paper it looks as though i use it as a mask/ security blanket/ coping mechanism which i personally haven't noticed before, so i'm just curious as to how often i do this especially when I speak on topics that are slightly deeper.

Whilst reading I felt as though there were a lot of er's in speech. Which showed me that although I feel as though i can definitely talk for the whole of England, speaking in this much depth about myself isn't typical. So, throughout the interview I could see that i was really processing these questions as i spoke to ensure that my responses accurately reflected my views. I don't know, it was just interesting seeing the desire to be understood superseding any impulsive speech as shown through the use of speech fillers despite me feeling as though I spoke freely throughout the interview, if that makes sense.

From reading my revoicing call i feel as though self- awareness, recognition, and a great sense of connection is the paradigm's to purpose. And this journey to discovering and embracing my identity (especially in relation to my heritage) has been a catalyst to finding that purpose. Which is so comforting for me to see because that sense of purpose was vacant not too long ago.

S25-An Iambic Pentameter Revoicing call

To Smile or Not to Smile (that is the question)

Smiley or Smileyer to be or not
Is something that I've thought about a lot?
Don't want to come across a Certain way.
But realised that wasn't all okay.
Being Reserved was always my mascot
Not purposely or part of some Big plot
Nobody wants to come across as rude
And I did not know I was so subdued
It's easy to be Labelled as angry
Particularly in white society
They'd say oh gosh Smile more what's wrong with you?
I wasn't sure what they alluded to
People remarked I seemed Mysterious
Something in me made Them so curious
People remarked a Smile made me better
Something in me, they wanted to Unfetter?
I've been the Only person that was Black
On a course where I decided to sit back.
As I'm the only Black one in the room
There was a sense of never-ending gloom
I mean, that things are much more sensitive
To what I do, and not comparative
To others who hold fast their biases
And False beliefs of what a Black Girl is.
I Smile more to be more approachable
To Signify that I am no trouble.
Oh, in the end its for my benefit
This Industry you should develop it
I'm gonna be around some privilege
(a lot of white people) with that image
So, to adapt is what I need to learn
To help my progress which will then in turn
Get me ready for the Business side of things.
I see it as a move that is win, win
In fact, I now can see my openness
*Disrupts the notion is...*dichotomous?
It hasn't shifted my identity
I know that I can Smile and it's all me.
And I remember starting at ArtsEd
I remember a piece of text we read
It was about an Iroko tree
It's from Nigeria, obviously
I'm Nigerian so I thought wow. Wow
(You thought the work would just be thee and thou's)
This is my culture and I beamed with pride
I Smiled and Smiled my eyes and mouth were wide.

I Smiled because my culture was included
Ignorance had kept it so excluded.
Smiled because my culture was respected
And at last my learning was connected.
The work that was created beautifully
Allowed me to feel equal. Crucially
Not everyone can understand that point
Cos everything has been from their viewpoint
Of course, at times their ignorance will show
It doesn't bother me at all, although
You're gonna get that everywhere you go
You're gonna have to understand that, so
Sorry for them is what I really feel
Lack of Maturity you can't conceal.
Bringing my culture to my work is good
It's so essential and the thing we should
Never shy away from, is that cliché?
Not sure I said what's needed to convey?
It's one thing to say I want to be on TV
There are actors that make it look easy
There's so much work to make it Effortless
And You have to do the work Regardless
So, using who I am makes Complete sense
That's one thing learnt I find is quite intense.
And thinking of five words that best describe
Me Now, `that's difficult to just prescribe?`
Okay, I've realised that I'm Fiery
I used a word the other day with 'd'
Discerning I found I'm Discerning... erm
Quiet, that's two. Watchful - is that a term?
Oh no not Quiet I was that before
So, Watchable and Curious, that's four.
And Charged, yes that's the word I'd recommend
Great that's the last one, got there in the end
You know already I'm no... `Tsetse Fly?`
The Smiling thing I need to clarify
For I can say with total honesty
Smiling or not Smiling's not a travesty.
In terms of first encounters when I meet
A conscious efforts made with no conceit
I've got to show, to be on my top game,
I'm open and engaged my best Grand Dame
But when you get to know me then you'll see
A different side that shows I'm not happy
Not because I'm angry and want a fuss
My feelings that are not Superfluous
Are gonna show, not buried in a mask.
But it won't stop me from being on task,
Nothing will stop me getting the work done
I understand that this is a Long Run.

It hasn't been that Difficult for me,
A few adjustments perhaps culturally
I don't think it has changed me not at all
Safe and secure in my own protocol
Smiley or Smileyer to be or not
Is something that I've thought about a lot?
Don't really have to say much About it,
Just is and has to be, `a Requisite?`

Julie Spencer
10th August 2020

Student Response

I think it's safe to say that I have read through this poem (very, very, very slowly) more than 8 times haha I loved it!

It was extremely heart-warming, and you captured my whole essence so beautifully, as well as the very thing that ignited our in-depth discussion, which was the issue of prejudice surrounding black girls, and the way we are so easily misunderstood and labelled as hostile, when we are just human like everyone else... but we often get more backlash for expressing our pains, even when done in subtlety.

I definitely think that it's an issue that needs to be discussed more openly for black girls.

I looked up some of your words and 'dichotomous' stood out to me the most. I think because it's such a relatable word for black women. I'm still not 100% sure what it means, even though I've looked it up... It's such a complex explanation, but I roughly get it and I just relate to it so much.

I also felt very proud when you touched on my Nigerian culture being used in drama school, and that just goes to show how important representation is. I understand why white people have so much audacity... It's because they always see themselves and are made to be comfortable every single day of their lives. But black people in particular always feel like an imposter, particularly in 'predominantly white spaces' when they shouldn't be predominantly white in the first place, because we live in such a colourful world.

I also looked up what a 'Tsetse fly' is and I watched a little documentary about them. They produce milk!!! Haha you learn something new every day.

All in all, I deeply appreciate this poem more than words can express.

'To smile or not to smile' (that is the question)

A phrase that speaks for itself if you ask me!

Thank you,

S27-Revoicing call

...tell me about any adjustments I think I've made?... whispers part of the question
Some personal changes that I've had with myself is definitely how my dedication
my dedication and my work ethic its increased way more I used to be a bit
of a, a how do you say I'd leave everything to the last minute,
a procrastinator, until that first term I realised it wasn't gonna cut here
right hand scratches upper left arm. Pauses. Swings in his chair
I realised I had to kinda shape up when I came into Arts
and into my actor training, I had to kinda and I did and that's
basically, changed my lifestyle and er... that along with my open-mindedness
I think, nods his head. *I think that's been a big success*
in terms of everything that I enquiry. I've been in a bubble my entire life especially
living in Dubai. Dubai's a big bubble and coming here is a big eyeopener in terms, basically
I can know in terms of what I already know. And there are a lot of things that I don't know
and I should know he bangs the desk *if I want to grow*

...that making these adjustments have affected? ...whispers part of the question
I thought I knew who I was, I thought I basically had it on lockdown, knew every reaction
Its, it's been, it's been interesting to see it affect me, but erm can you repeat
the question one more time? Shifts forward in his seat
I've had many different perspectives from ... laughs *my...,, obviously*
my entire life but I've never been able to sometimes accept them previously
and most of the times I would get really angry very easily at the things I'd disagree
with and this new kinda of experience or this new life that I'm living is allowing me
to just kinda understand that pause, *you can gain a lot of knowledge by listening*
you just have to listen and then figure out what or where they're coming
from, you don't always have to agree and that's something that's like the best thing to do
pause *I definitely feel it's affected the way I see myself and who*

I am, if anything I see myself as way more open to anything now. It hasn't changed
my culture but it's tied to it even more, 100% engaged
you know in Columbia, yeah, you're Columbian but nobody's blurting that out in the middle
of the street because everyone is. Like they'd just tell you to shut up he stops a little
both hands rub his neck, he shakes his head, eyes wide with expressivity
in Dubai everyone's different so they don't really talk about your ethnicity
that much and at the same time it's a bubble. They have different structures.
Now here in London and doing this kinda course, pause. *Seeing all these different cultures*
Everything, it's fascinating, but it also makes me even more proud of who I am
I realise I'm exclusive where I'm from and to how I was raised even more proud, damn,
of who I am Clenched fist *naturally and culturally*
Bangs on desk *I'm more connected to it than ever, completely.*

...what difficulties have I found? ...whispers part of the question
He pauses a long time to form his words with careful consideration
I come from a... my family is very, a very old-style type
especially from my dad's side, cos it's a very, it's not to stereotype
you know er, er pause *a Catholic raising but then also very conservative,*
things like that and you know when you're raised its your heritage
like that there's a certain way in which people, most people think, you know what I mean?

So, the bloodline, you know, my grandparents, my grandfather, he moves to lean
into the screen *my dad, his sister, his brothers there's always that thing where
they all think the same.* Pause. *So, going from that atmosphere
to living alone and being in an atmosphere where everyone is so,
so different and so out there, has been a hard challenge to accept that status quo
but then at the same time I realise it makes me a better person but it is hard
because it's contradicting things that I was taught when I was a kid...I have to disregard...*

...what have I liked about the experience?... whispers part of the question
*It's just, the fact that it puts me in a different position
er funny enough how hard it's been, I like that it's hard, it makes me,
I don't know if it makes me like a, like a, like a serial killer, maybe.
But when you know something inside out it's the kinda boring isn't it?
Then there's no spice to it, then what the hells the point, you might as well quit.
So, the fact that it's been so hard, it's been an enjoyable experience at the same time
This is good, I like this feeling, I'm learning new things, I'm, I'm...
Even when cultures clash, not clash but exchange of culture*
Pause *I know who I am that's because I have a big ego but I'm sure
when it comes to those types of exchanges when I'm in the moment
I know there's a lot that goes through that enjoyment*

*When I'm personally in the moment I get easily heated
I get very easily heated* pause *I get very easily heated.* Three times repeated
*but then I, I don't hold a grudge I never hold grudges after
when I think about it, when I think about all. I try to think like an actor
In a more reflective manner, everything* rushes words *I'm currently experiencing
I look at every single interaction that I have because of this actor training
and think, how can I use it? how can I use the heatedness? do you know what I mean
so even though the exchanges make me feel...
when I'm in an uncomfortable position and I'm feeling heated it feels better
it's like a, like a, what's it called an oxymoron I don't know whether...*
Pauses. *I'm just trying to use big words* laughs as he self-deprecates
I ask, what do you mean by heated? *Angry. Connected. Engaged. Passionate*

...how much...accepting other people's culture ... whispers part of the question
He scratches his head Pauses. Gives a quizzical expression
*when you're training it's not really a you sort of thing
most of the time, thanks to other people your developing
and if at some point you kinda start disagreeing with them or not accepting
who they are, obviously you're closed off, you're not going to learn anything
everyone can bring something to the table like no matter who the hell they are
you know what I mean and because of this whole accepting culture
thing if something makes you a more well-rounded person who's diverse.
Just ask a bunch of questions, just questions, my goodness
I don't think I've asked so many questions in my entire life, ever
because I've met such different, such different people altogether*

*I don't wanna ask too many questions because I don't wanna seem ignorant
but I'm literally just intrigued, intrigued and the fact that cos I've had a such a different
raising from them, erm... my childhood and the way I was raised*

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is so different, I don't want to offend but I want to know. I'm amazed
how they differ from me I hang on to them, sometimes I pull it too far,
but now I've learned to control it `bangs table`. It makes you a more rounded diverse actor.
…what I hadn't expected to learn? …`Whisper repeat he ready's his following quips`
how much information and…how… `puts together his fingertips`
how deep a single movement can be, how any action I can look at it
and analyse so many different things from it, things I never expected
Also how `pause` generous yet so `pause` selfish acting is
Is, it's so, it's, it's hard to explain… `Pause… Eyes down`. You've got to be generous.

If you're not then you're acting is mechanical, `Pause…` if you're not generous
and then you're not listening, that's what I've learnt, the importance
of really listening and imagining. Oh, `smacks lips` aarh words I describe
myself now but not before… `Long pause` Open `he gives his brow a wipe`
Emotional. `Long pause` in the sense of what I want in my life, mmm, Hungry
`Long pause`. Aargh I would say Light in the sense that I'm more free
don't feel like I'm having too much baggage like emotional baggage so I feel light
and I can describe myself as light. And finally, the last one, this is despite
everything it would be … Confident `swings in chair`
yeah confident 100% because there's a difference there's… yeah

I was going to say cocky, but there's a difference between being cocky
and being confident. `Awkwardly twists his body.`
cos I've always been cocky but I've never been confident until now `laughs. Silence.`
`He diverts his eyes sideways in an act of shyness?`

<div align="right">

Julie Spencer
26th August 2020

</div>

Student Response

What's my response to this? (Repeats question to himself)
I have no idea what about this makes me feel like I'm looking at myself in the mirror.
All my quirks, mannerisms and repetitions in my speech are there!

It's exposing and eye opening the way it's set up,
I had no idea I even did and said all the things that you wrote down.
I even had to confirm with my girlfriend to check if I actually twist my body awkwardly from
time to time!

A real good look into myself, thank you so much for this!

S29-Revoicing Call

Wouldn't use the word. Difficult
I'd say fun
yes, fun rather than difficult.
discovering my culture my background.
it's kinda raised questions that I need answers.
they're things that I need to find out
from my family and things
Which. Is. I. Guess... Difficult...

```
words become slow pronounced purposefully
as the pitch of her voice increases nervously
audible swallows
a little laugh follows
adjusting to a smile
pauses for a while
```

yes, I, I think in the past,
prior to coming to Drama School
never really talked about my own identity in terms of culturally,
been really interesting
it's made me feel like,
like the school cares a lot
about ourselves and bringing ourselves to the table,
yeah so, I think it's been nice to learn about myself
in order to learn about deepening my training
I'm. Taking. My. Self. Along with it...

```
heartfelt words tumble out to a fade
furrowed brows form a quizzical arcade
the dimple appears
as she shifts to change gears
head pivots carefully
left to right sparingly
```

made me realise, that I kinda,
I compared myself to some people
who are a little bit,
more in touch with their culture
which I know is like a bad...
like the wrong thing to do but it...
I still wouldn't use the word difficult
Er...don't. Think. This. Has affected my identity.

```
voice shakes before she stops abruptly
hand to chest illustrates aptly
probing her solution
causes some confusion
```

```
As hands wave side to side
```

if you don't accept other people and their cultures
then you're just closing yourself off
to other things cos I think that
you grow because your opening yourself up to learn
it's so important, so important
it's ridiculous and closed minded to not

Student Response

S31-REVOICING CALL

Ask me the question again I do know the question,
I just need to... She just needs to reboot.
Long silence. Her face a quizzical suggestion.
Its. Hard. She just needs time to compute.
Spiritual, intellectual, emotional. Laugh, *I didn't see that before*
Emotional in a positive sense, not like an emotional wreck

I've loved learning new things about myself and to relate
To other people, um…through others people's heritages
I thought training would be about having a script which you just translate
But I've been able to… it's opened me up a lot. Building cultural bridges.
Genuinely. Mmm. I'm happy, I'm happy to have learnt this
Um. Er… I'm not one to get emotional. Looks away. Deliberately
Not like I think if I cried, I'd be falling… into an abyss?
But you know what I mean. Laugh. Hands Clap. Connected viscerally

Appendix E Verbal Exchange Coding

S21 **Student Response** To my revoicing call, my initial response was "wow, that was an interesting read." I had no clue you were observing physical gestures and patterns of speech as I spoke so immediately, that caught my attention. A part that really resonated with me was when I spoke about losing a huge part of myself to fit in (in relation to losing my heritage to adjust to UK culture). Oddly enough I stumbled on a piece i wrote on -5/09/19 right before I began my training at ArtsEd (i'm guessing). This short piece aimed to explore who ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ is. That piece, i'd say was the first time I Identified that theme of loss and it was interesting to see despite a year passing; the idea of losing myself in order to fit in to then grow to feel lost and somewhat alone (whew deep stuff here) because I'm still trying to find my home/ to figure out where I belong is still kind of unsettling. Mainly because the concept of it all feels as though it would sound absurd to anyone listening to it, which is **probably** why my rate of speech became more rushed as I intentionally transitioned to more positive thoughts. My laugh after that point caught my attention because on paper it looks as though i use it as a mask/ security blanket/ coping mechanism which i personally haven't noticed before, so i'm just curious as to how often i do this especially when I speak on topics that are slightly deeper. Whilst reading I felt as though there were a lot of er's in speech. Which showed me that although I feel as though i can definitely talk for the whole of England, speaking in this much depth about myself isn't typical. So, throughout the interview I could see that i was really processing these questions as i spoke to ensure that my responses accurately reflected my views. I don't know, it was just interesting seeing the desire to be understood superseding any impulsive speech as shown through the use of speech fillers despite me feeling as though I spoke freely throughout the interview, if that makes sense. From reading my revoicing call i feel as though self- awareness, recognition, and a great sense of connection is the paradigm's to purpose. And this journey to discovering and embracing my identity (especially in relation to my heritage) has been a catalyst to finding that purpose. Which is so comforting for me to see because that sense of purpose was vacant not too long ago.	Subtext of physical expression. Body in HE spaces Rhythms – cultural rhythms, slang, ways of communicating Identity – loss off Fitting in (to the dominate culture) Inclusion/belonging Rhythms – cultural rhythms Emotional rhythms Identity - masking real self (Dubois double consciousness) Inclusion - Desire to connect- Equity/be understood/be included Rhythms – cultural rhythms Inclusion - Desire to connect/understood/be included Identity - representation
S25 **Student Response** *I think it's safe to say that I have read through this poem (very, very, very slowly) more than 8 times haha I loved it!*	 Identity

It was extremely heart-warming, and you captured my whole essence so beautifully, as well as the very thing that ignited our in-depth discussion, which was the issue of prejudice surrounding black girls, and the way we are so easily misunderstood and labelled as hostile, when we are just human like everyone else... but we often get more backlash for expressing our pains, even when done in subtlety.	Stereotypes, racism Inclusion – belonging Importance/Desire to be understood/ Equity
I definitely think that it's an issue that needs to be discussed more openly for black girls.	Stereotypes, racism
I looked up some of your words and 'dichotomous' stood out to me the most. I think because it's such a relatable word for black women. I'm still not 100% sure what it means, even though I've looked it up... It's such a complex explanation, but I roughly get it and I just relate to it so much.	Identity - masking real self (Dubois double consciousness) Identity – representation
I also felt very proud when you touched on my Nigerian culture being used in drama school, and that just goes to show how important representation is. I understand why white people have so much audacity... It's because they always see themselves and are made to be comfortable every single day of their lives. But black people in particular always feel like an imposter, particularly in 'predominantly white spaces' when they shouldn't be predominantly white in the first place, because we live in such a colourful world.	Inclusion/dominate culture Hegemony/belonging Identity - masking real self (Dubois double consciousness Inclusion/dominate culture Hegemony/Equity
I also looked up what a 'Tsetse fly' is and I watched a little documentary about them. They produce milk!!! Haha you learn something new every day.	
All in all, I deeply appreciate this poem more than words can express.	
'To smile or not to smile' (that is the question)	
A phrase that speaks for itself if you ask me!	
Thank you,	
S14 **Student Response** It's a beautiful read. When I read it I smiled but also cringed, because I read it in my voice and it was interesting for me to see myself using so many fillers (ummm). What was interesting about that was that it made me think. Did I use so many fillers because I was unsure of what I wanted to say.	Rhythms – cultural rhythms, ways of communicating Identity - masking real self

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or was it I knew exactly what I wanted to say and was being polite about it,	(Dubois double consciousness
so being careful to use to right language.	Rhythms – cultural rhythms, ways of communicating lesser than.
Broken thoughts.	Inclusion/dominate culture
But thought being connected by the audible breaths in.	Hegemony
I felt as if I tip-toed around my answers.	Identity - masking real self
"I'll be in class and I'll be sitting with the black students,	(Dubois double consciousness
not because there's …ummm I'm friends with everyone else "	Inclusion/belonging
That part stood out to me,	
it made me question why did I need to state I'm friends with everyone and not just my black peers.	
It made me realise that I am quite apologetic & tend to explain myself …	
'CONSCIOUS / AWARE'.	
Empowered. Tearful. Grounded (especially the part about instinctively looking up at my peers and making eye contact).	Inclusion/dominate culture
Humour. Excited (from 3rd paragraph "so it's like we're finding umm..")	
Touched.	
The part that significantly stood out to me was the part about not being just a body,	Black Bodies in HE spaces
I have a voice that needs to be used.	Inclusion/Equity
It was very touching as I'm quite affected by the passing of Chadwick Boseman who for me was a prime example of black lives matter.	Race/Racism
It was almost like reading that part reignited a fire inside me to dig deeper in my acting.	
Honest. Scared.	

S10

Student Response

A young voice of uncertainty meets a wise voice of encouragement. Kind of like, a guardian angel dropping down nuggets of wisdom, to someone who	Identity
's conscious of the new path ahead, but unsure of how to walk it sometimes.	Psychophysical gestures (actor training)
The minefield of discovering stuff.	
The importance of unlearning, rather than learning for growth and change.	Identity
How that takes time, and repetition, and perseverance.	
also struggle articulating my thoughts sometimes, I know the entiment behind what I want to say, but don't always communicate it very well…	Rhythms/Language – ways of communicating
ut (remembering to leave that critical past self at the door) what an nteresting journey I am at the start of.	Identity

uncertainty, anxiety, learning, trying, developing, letting go, growth.	

S7 **Student Response** *Oh, wow okay... not the font size or structure I was expecting...* *Wait my name, let's change it. One L, wait should I change it to* ▮▮▮▮?? *No, it's Julie's document don't change it, keep it as* ▮▮▮ *Oh* *Did I really say that about me?* *I'm going to start picking up more... to believe and not close my body off so much* *I have a physical aspect of showing that I'm thinking that I didn't know I was aware of. Very interesting to read it.* *Don't really know what to think to be fair, it's taking me by surprise especially reading this today (3/9/2020) when I said them things a while back.* *I'm going to print this out because it's made me think... nicely think...* *I have a lot of pictures and quotes to turn to but not anything that has been my own words towards me.* *This is something new I need to investigate.* *I can only end this with Thank you. Simply thank YOU*	Inclusion/dominant culture – white authority. Nico doesn't ever use his full name why now? physical expression, Body in HE spaces White body unawareness in space, Identity
S31 **Student Response** My heart was racing, *it's odd to have someone dissect me so closely and yet so well......* *It seems like I'm so unsure about who I am/who I'm trying to be. It's almost like I'm trying to convince someone that I am who I am and why I am that way.* *There's Glimpses of confidence which I know I have, but always it seems like I'm walking on eggshells.* *I think a lot before I speak- and my body language seems to say more then I do.* *It's clear through my movements and speech where my comforts lie.* *Thank you- I think this had deepened my understanding of myself. (lol that's really cringe)*	Emotional Physical response, Identity Inclusion Identity - half in half out Physical expression, Psychophysical gestures (actor training) Body in HE spaces Identity

Themes – identity, culture, racism, bodies in HE (actor training domain), Inclusion/Equity/Belonging

Appendix F The full-length reflective account of the pilot study

My Positionality
Gladwell theorises that ten thousand hours' practice makes you an expert.
Well glad, Reader. Effective Gladness enables me to identify my position as
A verified Higher Education Statistics Agency 'Insider Outsider'
An euclidean sphere ethnographed in ten thousand hours of actor training
Orient Said sated in ten thousand hours of Ivory Whiteness Academia
Galvanised by Garvey to demyth ten thousand hours' colonisation of my obsidian metaphysics.
Ringing the bell of hooks and Hall, to peal the carillon layers of research belonging,
Ding donging Camus, Foucault and Bourdieu as a framed French connection of reference.
Bearing the toll for who the bell enslaved, Igbo, Swahili, Yoruba and Others to forge a Personal diasporic exploration of persistent past, journeyed towards a **vacillating** future.
In the vesper of significance, I chime on the shoulders of Fanon, DuBois, and Dr. King.
Signal the buzzer buzzed by Baldwin, Butler, Gilroy, Ogbu, Ladson-Billings.
Tocsin overpinned by the alarmed newness of Ahmed, Akala, Andrews, Bhopal and Rollock.

Black. Female. Working class.
This sequence is purposeful.
This sequence signifies my experience lived, hierarchical.
Black. Female. Working class.
I am the Director of the School of Acting in a Higher Education Conservatoire
The First.
I am.
Myself.

One of very few in the upper echelons of Higher Education Actor Training provision.
I surf the waves of Institutional Racism. Every day.
Encounter the rolling billow of assiduous microaggression. Every. Day.
Microaggressions, Perez Huber and Solórzano asserts, 'systematically mediated by institutional racism... guided by ideologies of white supremacy'
The assault of my presence in HE is micro nuanced, multi layered and manipulated under the ground swell of policies.

Manifested in the curl of the verbal and the ripple of the non-verbal.
The penance for my Outsider status leaves me stranded in a tsunami of hypervisibility.
Employed alongside the whitecap riffled headland formations fragility,
Alternating soft and hard resistance to the inclusive acceptance of my time and space
in Academia.
Every. Day

However, undertaking this professional doctorate has lain me in the cradle of
Alkebu-lan - mother of mankind
Ubuntu and Bantu, Omoluabi and Ma'at shared theoretical concepts aligned
I have an evolving awareness of an African philosophical redress.
Drawing on reciprocity, individual dignity and the affirmation of our own humanity
when we acknowledge, the humanity of others, with equity.
This epistemological understanding is facilitating a critical development shaped from
my authentic past
Giving life and future to an emerging decolonised analysis.
Ten thousand hours' practice initiated and regenerated
I situate myself amidst my domain to look through a cultural curvature lens
To unceasingly shift the light of focus
To refract and challenge privileged and dominant discourse in Higher Education
To attention the changing of the guard
To gatekeep my feminine blackness, my ebony epistemology, my pluralistic praxis.
Steeped in a Nubian lived experience bursting with fluidity, particularity and veracity.
To emancipate the resonant voice of an embryonic Transculturate Call which in turn
tumbleweeds into a Transculturate teaching Response.

My research inquiry.
The question presented.
What can the first stage of transculturation termed *enslavement* be deduced or
described as
In relation to Level 4 students entering an undergraduate acting course?
Mixed Methods a multiplicity application
Provides fitting usage through a questionnaire, sampled, and a word-based data
interpretation.
Cohen, Manion, Morrison's publication positions
Open-ended questions invite free explanations
Circumventing the limitations of pre-set categories of reaction.
After thorough reflection and a pilot that prompts further contemplation
Decisions set down on seven short questions that lead my consideration.

To deepen my evaluations there is a subsequent follow up intention
Of the same short seven questions.
Repetition eight-weeks later will ensue, monitoring students' vicissitude,
Understanding opinions experiencing daily residence within the Ivory Tower.
Seeking responsive shifts to interpret the answer.
Bryman's triangulated illustration inaugurate
'meat on the bones of dry quantitative findings utilising qualitative data to illustrate'.

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Hence, an explorative investigation of an euclidean spherical space,
Locating the postulate starting point through Transculturation
A conceptual framework transmuted to facilitate an Inquiring Induction at Level 4.
Ortiz' Transculturation merging historic specificity and artistic originality
Yielding an ethnoconvergent creation of a new cultural phenomena.
Transculturation: Five phases under two transitions,
Starting point *Enslavement.*
Negotiation follows needing time and space before *Adjustment* sets in.
Under the initial transitional Partial Disculturation
These transitional shifts cultivate new contexts and cultural meanings.
Meaning upon meaning upon meaning
Continue to evolve, through phases of *Self-Assertion* and *Synthesis.*
Under the final transitional Neoculturation. Unceasing. Interweaving
The essence of individual cultures, theatrically dealing
to formulate a new connected whole.

Ten thousand hours, ten thousand minutes, ten thousand seconds
Experts in the time and space of an acting lesson.
Do binary differences impact on the actor training learning experiences?
Dramaturgical guidance accessed, in stages processed
A recurring transient milieu within, full of flow, bound, improvisational pitch,
Ensemble, separable collaboration a platform of equity to enrich
Creative cultural belonging.

Important to note, Not merely as an anecdote
Participation for all students is of course voluntary.
Respondents are made aware that they will have anonymity.
To ensure the responses are made to a higher degree
Uninhibited when reacting to my questioned enquiry.

St Mary's ethics review my submission like diligent caretakers
Interrogate the issue of my partakers,
Advise me to make clear-cut my aim is blackness.
I'm surprised that they've pinpointed with such righteous exactness
Participants are black, I am black, thus there's my research intention.
Assumptions laden with ten thousand hours of subjugation.
Have they read the complete application?
 As Ngozi Adiche advises 'The single story creates stereotypes …untrue,
…incomplete. They make one story become the only story.'
What answers can we find unless we observe the three-dimensional pot pourri
Of the teaching space that represents a modern University?

I justify the solicitation with a secure rationale
Although on reflection their reaction deeply affected my morale
How explicit could I be in my approaches?
Was it my ambiguity or an Ivory Tower mind set?
The irony did not escape me that I was requesting ethical approval

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From the institution that continually sidelined my own Academic inclusion
However, the hegemonic stamp of authorisation was crucial.

My reasoning was categorically founded on the basis
The concept of Transculturation is not about races
But processes of existence that explore phenomena in a creative space.
New cultural partnerships.
Not just skin, the thing your body's zipped in.

My reasoning continues to remove the perceived contrail.
Undertaking this research study narrows my application to detail
Enslavement bearing similarities to Bourdieu's notional Habitus
Enslavement focused under the partial disculturation gravitas.
Moving forward, perhaps from the foundation of Bhabha's *Location of Culture,*
The hybridity highlighting forms of colonial identity.
Yet, Acheraiou challenges Bhabha's paradigm of imposing anxiety.
Factors realised is not just of geographical origins
But the many **intersecting** centres of consciousness left in the margins.

A sigh of relief when informed that I don't need to go in front of a panel
However, the ethics procedure raises for myself a moral dilemma
Throughout undertaking the journey of my professional doctorate,
I am going to be continually confronted with the colour agenda
I need to ensure, on that front, I maintain objectivity
Whilst coated in African ethnographic subjectivity
Which will unconditionally support rigour in my academic clarity.

Research Rationale
Neoliberalism in education buries the complexities and subtleties of inequalities.
Diversity and equality policies riddle the Institutions, sanctioned and tick boxed
Watered down decolonised conversations have left the problems botoxed
Loke states the assumption is to fix the Others, not the Culture of the Institution
A cacophony of disparate voices, which has left us flummoxed.
Bhopal contests success in HE is dependent on 'adopting ways of being and doing'
Writing, speaking, the Ivory Tower academic language, all skills accruing.
Remains the epitome of existence and doyen of achievement.

Ogbu's educational research names the experience a cultural passing
Within the learning environment there is a sense of an unspoken trespassing.
Ladson-Billings rightly protests at the racism dysconcious
Propelled by privilege proclaimed on the back of a wronged synopsis
Burke insists inclusion is about fitting in to the hegemonic culture
Rather than interrogating biases, that will tear down a structure
That remains complicit in exclusion and students agonising rupture.
Andrews challenges the curriculum steadfastly colonised in Academia.
Clung to with privilege like some much-loved bacteria.

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University Partnership Programme Foundation (UPP), Social Market Foundation
(SMF) Runneymede Trust study reports ten thousand hours plus.
Experts
Identifying issues of ivory partiality towards white students
In 2019, the policies dictated have proffered no improvements.
Concerning curriculum colonisation, there's a disconnect,
Academic staff accelerates segregation.
Targeted dysconcious supremacy, reveals financial, mental health and impact
isolation.
Figures of retention, unpicked, one in 10 succumb to the abscessed implicit biased.
Black students drop out of Higher Education
Black and white starkly juxtaposed against 6.9 per cent for the whole student
population.

Supplementing statistics validates the arguments augmentation.

First class or 2:1 honours 76.3% of white students will achieve
Opposed to 60.3% black and ethnic minority students, English comparison figures
further aggrieve
All this despite, Black and Ethnic Minorities attending University reveal a year on
year increase.
The attainment figures demonstrate a significant decrease.
The figures agreed, the problems are evident
However, hierarchy approaches differ driven by economic benefit
Withdrawing privilege leaves some at a perceived misplaced deficit.
This dichotomy is where we are, with diversity policies of token
Systems revolved around systems around strategies internally broken

Consequently, taking the opportunity to map different cultural references
To gain some understanding of the cultural starting point of acting students' cultural
differences
To highlight any preconceived ideas students may have regarding Higher Education
Actor Training cultural preferences.
My research project is to explore how Transculturation could inform the actioning of
inclusivity.
To evolve a teaching practice that motivates an equitable creativity
In HE actor training provision in reaction to student cultural diversity.
A literature review revealed research lacking in the area of inclusive actor training.
Therefore, an aspect of the outcome of my investigation will be aiming
To pinpoint key indicators that support questioning current actor training teaching
practices,
That negate or ignore student cultural particularities,
Which in turn impact on their learning and Higher Education experiences.

My research will aim to redress who the gatekeeper is
Contribute to diversity policies, outreach strategies
Impact research journals and any theatrical periodicals

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Influence actor training as practitioners or professionals
Leading to the development of a Pedagogy of Transculturality.

Reflections
Implementation of the research project was fraught initially,
I realised I had theories and thoughts but little idea of how.
Practical intentions to investigate any validity.
This research assignment came at a time
I was still reconciling a paradigm
Which stemmed from an epistemological and ontological perspective
Emancipating an understanding under which I could operate authentically
as a researcher.
Therefore, it became clear to me that this study's purpose
Was not solely in relation to everything on the surface.
The actual project was the beginning of the application
Towards a personal epistemic decolonisation

Each step of planning I determined to reflect under a non-western lens
To safeguard the integrity of what was approached.
Providing a unified understanding of a research problem as Creswell contends
That would inform a fully rounded scope of how *enslavement* could be broached.

My decision was clearly more relevant
Adopting mixed methods, I wanted each stage to be evident
Quantitative methods to collate cultural and heritage demographics
When students appear for Induction week.
Descriptive data from qualitative methods deciphered
From the initial questionnaire and follow up, 75 students inspired.
Subsequent, contemplation on my chosen methodology
Considered I was exploring students' cultural phenomena
Challenging the dominant discourse to inform my viewpoint
Alongside enlisting a quantitative rigour to resist exploit
Decided my process sat well under the umbrella of Critical Ethnography.

My research to date fed into my questionnaire design
Time taken formulating the questions for data
Finalised on seven count-downed from twelve then nine.
The pilot took off and the questions took flight
Except excitement traded surprise like an impact crater
Come backs with queries seemingly black and white.
The question of heritage some recipients bypassed
It required clarity in the way it was asked.
Answered quite effortlessly by students of colour
This preliminary testing valuably, led to discover
The questions submitted needed a change
So, questions one & two had words rearranged

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Interestingly when the research proper began
There was something White students seemed not to understand.
I was asked what I meant by *describe their culture.*
Curiously, it seemed a concept they couldn't put into words
Did I mean football, sexuality, music or religion?
The number of White students queried, at least two-thirds.
Confusion around writing down a lucid definition

Thus, on reflection on how the project went
The initial questionnaire was the right way to go
The data assembled was rich with info
Prompted detail of enslavement as a cultural flow.

What I would change is the eight week follow up, structured
To give time to garner the nuances that the questions conjured
I would need to undertake some semi structured interviews
Which would enable to probe more deeply into the answers received
Firstly, unpick the words in their responses that were used
Alongside particularising how culture for them was perceived

Strength
Gladwell theorises that ten thousand hours' practice makes you an expert.
Does this mean I am now in a position to subvert?
The Ivory power structures that too readily assert
My academic positionings as lesser than.
My research log informs otherwise
My reflexive writings have supported me to theorise
This process has allowed me as an Academic practitioner to scrutinise
Reflect on my role, behaviour and relationship to research within my domain

It has been a long time coming,
Intersecting Euclidean centres of consciousness through critical ethnography
To motivate the undertaking of revealing hegemony and inequity
For Policy Makers, Educators, and Senior Management to make transformation
Requires consideration and renegotiation.
As Friere advises to create a more inclusive learning environment
Requires reflection of our values, examining how our values are reflected in praxis,
And through a shared experience exploring and learning
To facilitate a continuous process of emancipatory growing.
Lather continues a critical ethnographic researcher
Not only illustrates the potentiality for changing the status quo
But participates in shifting the prevailing single narrative to a pluralistic plateau

Undertaking this research facilitated a practical investigation
Into a potential Actor Training conceptual framework - Transculturation
Actioning inclusivity channelled through the policies of diversity

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Training student transformation channelled through acting elucidation
Facilitating the dysconscious role of awareness to privileged equity
Developing an euclidean call and response which informs a culturally responsive
teaching and learning application.

One last addendum to this projects strength
Hours upon hours a thousand tenths
I am no longer Rollock states, waiting for a seat at the table
Instead rejecting the metaphysical legacy inherited from Kant
Distorted and inscribed into history as a colonial fable
An Academic who is Black
I am developing a decolonised slant
That allows me to take my research back.
Discourses before having locked out our gatekeepers
For me now evolves in this philosophical metre.

Limitations
Considerations had to be reflected upon because as Head of Drama
Power dynamics needed to be ethically addressed
The consent letter outlined participation was voluntary
Withdrawal at any time was a facet expressed.
The questionnaire took place during induction preliminary
Day one for students
Several reasons raised validity concerns
There was not a lot of time due to the programme scheduling,
Which flagged the possibility of receiving slight returns.
Beside the potential for inconsequential answering.
Furthermore, I was mindful students might feel obliged
To share what they felt was wanted rather than their own views unprescribed.
The follow up questionnaire supported my undertaking
Participants had on the Acting course established eight weeks
Further opportunity was given to withdraw, which none did
Added time apportioned to consider answering techniques

Through African epistemology I have come to recognise that I should know the world
in and through my authentic self.
Chilisa informs Western knowledge disconnects relationships between researchers
and the researched
Elucidating more the notion that genuine ethnographic research is about finding
Connections should not be besmirched.
Yet, it is important to ruminate how my own assumptions
Influenced the issues and my questions construction.
My cultural plurality and positionings
Alongside my values as an educator in actor training.
To ensure my approach was robust and rigorous
I utilised my research log as an audit trail of the research development
Each stage of the process, I undertook to document.
Which enabled me to critically review the choices I decided to implement.

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I understand that my research may not reflect all student population
However, it delivers a preliminary, insightful prospective
On how the first stage of the framework conception
Enslavement in Transculturation
Can be interpretative.

Use of findings
Stephen Lawrence report 20 years on by the Runneymede Trust
Insists that urgent action is needed.
Enough has been discussed.
Implementation of race equality policies, diluted has been impeded.
Cohen's key findings in February 2019 drew this major analysis
 'Institutions must examine their policies and the outcome of their policies and practices'

Equity reports in 2019, Acting courses are massively failing
To tackle the culture of exclusion, prevailing
Within Higher Education and Conservatoire establishments
Though teaching and learning, curriculum regiments
Consumer driven by the green-eyed monster
Have a devastating impact for students of colour

The findings from this small-scale project will not be published
I have moved on from St Mary's to start afresh.
However, the research project provided me
With a deeper understanding of my inquiry.
It exposed some questions I need to consider
That will beneficially feed into maintaining rigour.
What, if any, are the limitations of inclusive praxis and principles?
What constrains or facilitates inclusive development?
How can we enable lecturers and practitioners and institutions educational?
To ensure an inclusive teaching and learning environment.

My future research will begin to work to influence
And bring about some meaningful consequence.
Policymakers, senior management I intend to reach
My essential focus will be those that teach.
From the bottom up and top down, meeting at the middle
My research aim will trump the beat of a paradiddle
For Freire maintains reflection without action is vacuous 'verbalism',
Action without reflection is worse, unscrupulous 'activism'.
Which leads me on to why this reflexive commentary
Has emerged to take root in some form of poetry

Tensions in Interpretation – why I write the way I do
My writings erupt from the margins of academic scholar
Since which my research is developed, directed, investigated and interpreted
Through an euclidean orbicular.

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Dear Reader, this ten thousand hours
Lived in the Ivory Towers
Facilitates a hard-earned privilege
Within a Transculturate bricolage.

Tuhiwai-Smith theorises 'decolonisation must offer a language of possibilities, a way out of colonialism'
An all-encompassing cultural schism
What resistance can I offer to the final border of hegemony
That lingers within the ethers of conforming to this task.
Establish an approach to writing that honours my cultural specificity?
Report my project findings in a reflective stance?
A Call for revolutionary consciousness in space and time
My Response manifests immersed in the beat and rhyme
Of a decolonised paradigm.
Laid down in performative dialogue
On paper recited like a historical demagogue
Afrocentric tradition Transforming
To a heritage frame that rejects conforming.
Reimagined to articulate a renaissance
Of this my embryonic Call and Response.

Appendix G University Code of Research Ethics

St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

August 2017

Research Ethics Guidelines for Staff and Students

Contents

Key Terms

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Research: It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not

embody original research. It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports (Research Excellence Framework – Definition).

Researchers: Any people who conduct research, including but not limited to: as an employee; as an independent contractor or consultant; as a research student; as a visiting or emeritus member of staff; or as a member of staff on a joint clinical or honorary contract - UK Research Integrity Office Code of practice for research (2009).

Research Ethics: Research Ethics refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond (ESRC guidelines).

Introduction

The University expects that all activity undertaken by its staff and students will be carried out to a high ethical standard. These guidelines are a living document which set out the University's approach, aims and methods in relation to research conducted at undergraduate/postgraduate and staff level. Alongside the University Ethics Guidelines those conducting research are expected to comply with all relevant policies and guidelines, with particular attention to the University Good Research Practice guidelines. All researchers are also expected to follow their discipline specific codes and standards (and keep an awareness of these).

Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for applying these guidelines lies with individual researchers, whether students or staff. The University Ethics Sub-Committee oversees the guidelines and has an advisory role.

Members of staff with responsibility for undergraduate, postgraduate or doctoral research projects (as well as staff research), are responsible for ensuring that those conducting research are fully aware of these guidelines, and have taken, or will take, appropriate action to ensure that ethical principles are upheld. Researchers should be aware that failing to comply with the University Ethics Guidelines could result in University disciplinary action.

Please ensure that you are aware of, and up to date with all University liability and insurance information before starting your research. For further information please discuss any matters regarding this with your School Ethics Representative.

Compliance with Legislation

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with current legislation, notably the Data Protection Act 1998, Equality Act 2010 and a requirement to hold a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate prior to seeking ethical approval, if required. 4

Ethical Principles
There are four key ethical principles that the University expects all involved in research should adhere to whenever applicable:

- • Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity and quality.
- • The autonomy of individuals should be respected.
- • Harm to individuals must be avoided.
- • People should be treated fairly and with respect.

1. To Ensure Research Integrity and Quality
    1. 1.1 Research is carried out with integrity when researchers genuinely strive to achieve the objectives of sound research by ensuring valid methodology, objective research processes and well-grounded findings. Research that lacks integrity is ethically unacceptable.
    2. 1.2 The objectivity and impartiality of research can be threatened if it is in any way dependent on a sponsor, institution or participants who have particular interests or values. Researchers should therefore ensure that the objectives of all parties are clearly articulated at the outset, and that the research is set up in such a way that it is independent of any special interests.
    3. 1.3 To avoid conflict of interests, researchers should maintain a professional relationship with their participants at all times.
2. Respect the Autonomy of all Participants
    1. 2.1 Autonomy

        It is the responsibility of researchers to respect the autonomy of everyone involved in the research: this includes fellow researchers, participants and those who may not be actively involved but about whom data is used. To respect autonomy, researchers should obtain informed consent and avoid practices and methodologies that involve deceit, coercion, dishonesty, invasion of privacy, breaking confidentiality and using data for purposes not clearly explained to participants.

    2. 2.2 Informed Consent

        Informed consent entails giving as much information as possible about the research so that the prospective participants can make an informed decision on their possible involvement. Typically this information should be provided in written form and signed off by the research subjects.

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1. 2.2.1 Research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those in the study.
2. 2.2.2 It is the responsibility of the researcher to explain as fully as possible, and in terms meaningful to the participants the aims and the nature of the research. Therefore confirming who is undertaking the research, who is funding it, its likely duration, the possible consequences of the research, how the results are to be disseminated and all the likely disclosures of personal data.
3. 2.2.3 The power imbalance between researcher and researched should be addressed. Care should be taken to ensure that the latter are not pressurised into participation. Research participants should be made aware of their right to refuse participation whenever, for whatever reason, without giving an explanation. It should also be recognised that research may involve a lengthy data-gathering period and that it may be necessary to regard consent as being subject to renegotiations over time.
4. 2.2.4 If there is a likelihood of data being shared with or divulged to other researchers, the potential uses of the data should be discussed with the participants. Their written agreement to such use should be obtained through the consent form or a collection notice.
5. 2.2.5 The Data Protection Act 1998 provides for various exemptions with respect to the processing of data obtained in research studies. Further processing of personal data may be undertaken if it is compatible with the original purposes for which it was obtained, and personal data may be kept indefinitely. If researchers wish to use data in subsequent research projects that are not directly related to the initial study, ethical approval should be sought.

6. 2.2.6 In cases where research participants are children under 18 years of age or are considered part of another vulnerable group (such as older, disabled or sick people or people with learning difficulties, or whose understanding is impaired in some way) every effort should be made to gain their informed consent. However, if they are unable to give fully informed consent, it may be necessary to use a proxy in order to gain consent. In this case great care must be taken not to intrude upon the privacy of the vulnerable participants. The researcher should consult relevant professionals, parents/guardians and relatives, as appropriate, and undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service check before working with these groups (if required). Researchers should attempt to obtain the informed consent of children and their parents (and, in relation to school children, those in loco parentis).

7. 2.2.7 In regard to multi/inter-disciplinary or international research; if the original research data is going to be used in a different way than was originally agreed to (by the participant) then the researcher will need to gain further consent.

2.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

1. 2.3.1 The anonymity and privacy of research participants should be respected and personal information relating to participants should be kept confidential and secure. Researchers must comply with the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998, and should consider whether it is proper or appropriate to record certain kinds of sensitive information.

2. 2.3.2 The researcher should anonymise data in such a way that it would not be possible to identify the individuals from that data, or any other data held.

3. 2.3.3 The researcher should explain how research participants will be afforded anonymity and confidentiality. Participants should have the option of rejecting the use of data-gathering devices such as dictaphones or video cameras.

4. 2.3.4 While the researcher should take every practicable measure to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of research participants, s/he should also take care not to give unrealistic assurances or guarantees of confidentiality. Research participants with easily identifiable characteristics or positions within an organisation should be reminded that it may be difficult to disguise their identity. Therefore researchers also should take into account the need to annoymise environmental factors and personal characteristics which could identify participants.

3. Avoid Harm

1. 3.1 A primary responsibility of researchers is to conduct research in such a way that it minimises harm or risk to subjects. This consideration should be an over-riding factor at all stages in a research project. Harmful effects may also occur some time after cessation of the research process and publication of results and this. The possible consequences of each stage should be assessed and every step taken to ensure the safety of, and prevent the adverse effects on researchers, participants, individuals about whom data is used, More widely, researchers should keep in mind the effect on others in the community (in which the research occurs) and those who could be affected by the results of the research.

2. 3.2 Harm includes physical, psychological damage and stress to individuals or groups. This could include the invasion of privacy, deception, damage to self- esteem or to the social fabric of their community. Researchers should be particularly aware of those who could be considered more than a minimal risk, such as those within vulnerable groups.

Harm may also include damage to the reputation of the University, the research discipline and future research. These can be caused by a project that is ill- conceived, deceptive, carelessly executed or irresponsibly used. Therefore researchers should make sure that

their research adheres to the University's values and principles when conducting research.

3. 3.3 If the objectives of a piece of research cannot be achieved without minimal risk of harm, researchers should consider abandoning the project. They should only apply for approval to continue if they can provide an overwhelming justification for doing so. Should approval be granted, they must ensure that every effort is made to reduce the risk and must make clear to all who may be involved in the project or affected by it that the risk exists.

4. Treat Everyone Fairly and With Respect

1. 4.1 Meet the Needs of Everyone
Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that the needs of everyone who may

be affected by the research are met as far as possible.

Needs include sufficient information, guidance, equipment, support and other resources to:

- o • Participate fully in the research process
- o • Deal with any effects of the execution and cessation of the research and the dissemination of its findings.
- o Communities as well as individuals may have needs arising from the execution and consequences of research.

2. 4.2 Give Equal Consideration to the Interests of Everyone

Care should be taken to ensure that the values and attitudes of researchers do not result in the interests of some people being given unequal consideration. It is easy, for example, to regard the interests of people peripheral to the research activity as of no concern to the researcher. However if people may be affected by the research, however minimally, then steps should be taken to protect their interests.

To treat people with respect researchers have a responsibility to treat all those involved in a research project with consideration, and to work co-operatively with them. Researchers must remember that participants have volunteered and steps should therefore be taken to accommodate their needs and requests where possible.

5. The Ethical Approval Process

6. Proposals for new research involving human and animal participants will be subject to the University's ethical review process. All research must be approved before work commences.

Researchers (including undergraduate/postgraduate and staff) should be aware of the University guidelines noted in section 6 prior to submitting any application.

Researchers should follow the three-tier ethical review process (which can be found on the SimmSpace and Staffnet ethics pages).

Once a research proposal has been approved via the University ethical review process and the research commences, the day-to-day responsibility for reviewing and monitoring the ethical aspects of the project rests with its researcher. For undergraduate, postgraduate and MPhil/PhD research the Supervisor/Director of Studies should oversee ethical aspects of the project and act in an advisory capacity.

University Policies, Codes of Practice and Guidelines. Copies of relevant University policies, codes of practice and guidelines can be found on SimmSpace and Staffnet ethics pages:

- Ethical application system (Three Tiers)
- St Mary's Ethics Process Flowchart
- Ethical Guidelines for Conducting Research with Children and Young People
- FAQs and commonly made mistakes and on the external website:

- St Mary's Code of Practice for Research
- Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct in Research
- Research Data Policy - TBA

Helpful Organisations and Bodies

Professional Bodies

- British Psychological Society
- The Law Society
- The Bar Council
- The Biochemical Society
- The General Medical Council

Relevant Legislation

- Freedom of Information Act 2000: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents
- Health and Social Care Act 2008: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/14/contents
- Human Rights Act 1998: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents
- Human Tissue Act 2004: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/contents
- Data Protection Act 1998: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents
- The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004:

  www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1031/contents/made

- Mental Capacity Act 2005 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006:

  www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents

- Equality Act 2010: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Research Councils

- Arts and Humanities Research Council
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
- Economic and Social Research Council
- Medical Research Council
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Science and Technology Facilities Council
- Research Councils UK (RCUK)

Other

- - NHS National Research Ethics Framework: http://www.nres.nhs.uk/
- - Social Research Association: http://the-sra.org.uk/research-ethics/ethics-guidelines/
- - UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO): http://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/
- - Universal Ethical Code for Scientists
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-ethical-code-for-scientists
- - UK Data Archive: www.data-archive.ac.uk
- - Secure Data Service (SDS): https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/
- - Disclosure and Barring Service:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Appendix H University Ethical Approval, Information letter and Consent form

St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

St Mary's University

Ethics Sub-Committee
Application for Ethical Approval (Research)

This form must be completed by any undergraduate or postgraduate student, or member of staff at St Mary's University, who is undertaking research involving contact with, or observation of, human participants.

Undergraduate and postgraduate students should have the form signed by their supervisor, and forwarded to the School Ethics Sub-Committee representative. Staff applications should be forwarded directly to the School Ethics Sub-Committee representative. All supporting documents should be merged into one document (in order of the checklist) and named in the following format: '**Full Name – School – Supervisor**'

Please note that for all undergraduate research projects the supervisor is considered to be the Principal Investigator for the study.

If the proposal has been submitted for approval to an external, properly constituted ethics committee (e.g. NHS Ethics), then please submit a copy of the application and approval letter to the Secretary of the Ethics Sub-Committee. Please note that you will also be required to complete the St Mary's Application for Ethical Approval.

Before completing this form:
- Please refer to the **University's Ethical Guidelines**. As the researcher/ supervisor, you are responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgment in this review.
- Please refer to the Ethical Application System (Three Tiers) information sheet.
- Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Commonly Made Mistakes sheet.
- If you are conducting research with children or young people, please ensure that you read the **Guidelines for Conducting Research with Children or Young People**, and answer the below questions with reference to the guidelines.

Please note:

In line with University Academic Regulations the signed completed Ethics Form must be included as an appendix to the final research project.

If you have any queries when completing this document, please consult your supervisor (for students) or School Ethics Sub-Committee representative (for staff).

St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

St Mary's Ethics Application Checklist
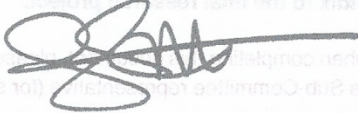
The checklist below will help you to ensure that all the supporting documents are submitted with your ethics application form. The supporting documents are necessary for the Ethics Sub-Committee to be able to review and approve your application. Please note, if the appropriate documents are not submitted with the application form then the application will be returned directly to the applicant and may need to be re-submitted at a later date.

Document	Enclosed?*	Version No
1. Application Form	Mandatory	
2. Participant Invitation Letter	Yes ☐ No X Not applicable	
3. Participant Information Sheet(s)	**Mandatory**	
4. Participant Consent Form(s)	**Mandatory**	
5. Parental Consent Form	☐ Yes ☐ No x Not applicable	
6. Participant Recruitment Material - e.g. copies of posters, newspaper adverts, emails	☐ Yes ☐ No X Not applicable	
7. Letter from host organisation (granting permission to conduct study on the premises)	☐ Yes ☐ No Not applicable	
8. Research instrument, e.g. validated questionnaire, survey, interview schedule	**X Yes** ☐ No ☐ Not applicable	
9. DBS if required (to be provided separately)	☐ Yes ☐ No X Not applicable	
10. Other Research Ethics Committee application (e.g. NHS REC form)	☐ Yes ☐ No X Not applicable	
11. Certificates of training (required if storing human tissue)	☐ Yes ☐ No X Not applicable	

*Double click the check boxes to check them

I can confirm that all relevant documents are included in order of the list and in one document (any DBS check to be sent separately) named in the following format:
'Full Name - School – Supervisor'

Signature of Proposer(s):	[signature]	Date:	25/8/2019

| Signature of Supervisor (for student research projects): | *[signature]* Edwards Leis | Date: | 27 Aug 2019 |

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Ethics Application Form

1. Name of proposer(s)	Julie Spencer
2. St Mary's email address	176290@live.stmarys.ac.uk
3. Name of supervisor	Dr. Christine Edward Leis
4. Title of project	Navigating Blackness in Academia to Authenticate Re/voicing a Transculturate Call and Response Approach to Actor Training in Higher Education.

5. School or Service	X A&H ☐ ETL ☐ MSS ☐ SHAS
6. Programme	☐ UG ☒ PG (taught) X PG (research) Name: Professional Doctorate EDD
7. Type of activity	☐ Staff ☐ UG student X PG student

8. Confidentiality	
Will all information remain confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 1998?	X Yes ☐ No
9. Consent	
Will written informed consent be obtained from all participants/participants' representatives?	X Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable
10. Pre-approved Protocol	
Has the protocol been approved by the Ethics Sub-Committee under a generic application?	☐ Yes ☐ No X Not applicable Date of approval:
11. Approval from another Ethics Committee	

a) Will the research require approval by an ethics committee external to St Mary's University?	☐ Yes X No
b) Are you working with persons under 18 years of age or vulnerable adults?	☐ Yes X No

12. Identifiable risks	
a) Is there significant potential for physical or psychological discomfort, harm, stress or burden to participants?	☐ Yes X No
b) Are participants over 65 years of age?	☐ Yes X No
c) Do participants have limited ability to give voluntary consent? This could include cognitively impaired persons, prisoners, persons with a chronic physical or mental condition, or those who live in or are connected to an institutional environment.	☐ Yes X No
d) Are any invasive techniques involved? And/or the collection of body fluids or tissue?	☐ Yes X No
e) Is an extensive degree of exercise or physical exertion involved?	☐ Yes X No
f) Is there manipulation of cognitive or affective human responses which could cause stress or anxiety?	☐ Yes X No
g) Are drugs or other substances (including liquid and food additives) to be administered?	☐ Yes X No
h) Will deception of participants be used in a way which might cause distress, or might reasonably affect their willingness to participate in the research? For example, misleading participants on the purpose of the research, by giving them false information.	☐ Yes X No
i) Will highly personal, intimate or other private and confidential information be sought? For example sexual preferences. **Note:** Students will be asked to identify their heritage and culture. Academic team have been informed of Qu 3 relating to students thinking about staff heritage/culture.	☒ Yes ☐ No
j) Will payment be made to participants? This can include costs for expenses or time.	☐ Yes X No If yes, provide details:
k) Could the relationship between the researcher/ supervisor and the participant be such that a participant might feel pressurised to take part? **Note:** Students will be assured that they do not have to participate if they do not wish to. Names will be anonymised and will not be identified in any subsequent findings or reports. However, any decision not to participate will be	☒ Yes ☐ No

respected and have no impact on the teacher/student relationship going forward.	
l) Are you working under the remit of the Human Tissue Act 2004?	☐ Yes X No

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13. Proposed start and completion date

Please indicate:
- When the study is due to commence.
- Timetable for data collection.
- The expected date of completion.

Please ensure that your start date is at least four weeks after the submission deadline for the Ethics Sub-Committee meeting.

Start of Project: 11th September 2019
Questionnaire 1: 12th September. Questionnaire 2: 2nd December 2019
Interviews March-May 2020
Expected Completion: July 2020

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14. Sponsors/collaborators

Please give names and details of sponsors or collaborators on the project. This does not include your supervisor(s) or St Mary's University.
- Sponsor: An individual or organisation who provides financial resources or some other support for a project.
- Collaborator: An individual or organisation who works on the project as a recognised contributor by providing advice, data or another form of support.

None

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15. Other Research Ethics Committee Approval

Please indicate:
- Whether additional approval is required or has already been obtained (e.g. an NHS Research Ethics Committee).
- Whether approval has previously been given for any element of this research by the University Ethics Sub-Committee.

Please also note which code of practice / professional body you have consulted for your project.

N/A

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16. Purpose of the study

In lay language, please provide a brief introduction to the background and rationale for your study. *[100 word limit]*

I am motivated by decolonising actor training and finding practical pedagogic practices to implement inclusivity in Higher Education actor training provision.

I am motivated by recent Drama School and Conservatoire movement such as Dear Central and Why is my curriculum so white.

Considering the cultural implications of this study, undertaking further research may ascertain the significance culture plays in teaching and learning for all students, regardless of colour within Higher Education. Additionally, it could potentially inform strategies that enable HEI to respond to issues relating to structural, organisational, attitudinal and cultural decolonisation.

17. Study design/methodology

In lay language, please provide details of:
a) The design of the study (qualitative/quantitative questionnaires etc.)
b) The proposed methods of data collection (what you will do, how you will do this and the nature of tests).
c) The requirement of the participant i.e. the extent of their commitment and the length of time they will be required to attend testing.
d) Details of where the research/testing will take place, including country.
e) Please state whether the materials/procedures you are using are original, or the intellectual property of a third party. If the materials/procedures are original, please describe any pre-testing you have done or will do to ensure that they are effective.

Participants will be asked to participate in completing an initial questionnaire during induction week Sept 2019. This will involve answering seven questions. Mixed methods will be undertaken to analysis the data. Responses to question 1-3 will garner responses that provide statistic data, (quantitative). Additionally, responses to questions 4-7 will provide data which a critical auto/ethnographic methodology will be applied to interpret, (qualitative). The data will be collated on the same day. A follow up questionnaire using questions that will be formulated from their initial responses will be given 10 weeks later, mixed methods will be used again to analyse and correlate the data collated.

The questionnaire questions have been originally constructed and were pre-tested in Sept 2018 as part of my Doctorate research design module. I received Ethics approval on that occasion.

In March-May 2020, ten participants will be chosen from the collated questionnaire data and invited to undertake a semi structured interview.

D
18. Participants

Please mention:
a) The number of participants you are recruiting and why. For example, because of their specific age or sex.
b) How they will be recruited and chosen.
c) The inclusion/exclusion criteria.
d) For internet studies please clarify how you will verify the age of the participants.
e) If the research is taking place in a school or organisation then please include their written agreement for the research to be undertaken.
f) Please state any connection you may have with any organisation you are recruiting from, for example, employment.

All 30 Level 4 BA Acting students will be asked to participate in the questionnaire, there will be no inclusion/exclusion criteria aside from all students will be undertaking a UG drama course.
They will be recruited because they are UG students enrolling onto a University Drama course. Ideally 20 students will agree to participate in the research project.

The ten participants invited for the semi structured interviews will be a cross section of the level 4 cohort. This will be based on gender/colour/class.

19. Consent

If you have any exclusion criteria, please ensure that your Consent Form and Participant Information Sheet clearly makes participants aware that their data may or may not be used.
a) Are there any incentives/pressures which may make it difficult for participants to refuse to take part? If so, explain and clarify why this needs to be done.
b) Will any of the participants be from any of the following groups?
   ➢ Children under 18
   ➢ Participants with learning disabilities
   ➢ Participants suffering from dementia
   ➢ Other vulnerable groups.
   If any of the above apply, state whether the researcher/investigator holds a current DBS certificate (undertaken within the last 3 years). A copy of the DBS must be supplied **separately from** the application.
c) Provide details on how consent will be obtained. This includes consent from all necessary persons i.e. participants and parents.

All students will be informed about the nature of the project and that participation is voluntarily and all data will be dealt with confidentially and anonymised.
Consent will be obtained via the consent form being signed.

20. Risks and benefits of research/activity

- Explain what information will be identifiable.
- Whether the persons or places (e.g. organisations) are aware of this.
- Consent forms should state what information will be identifiable and any likely outputs which will use the information e.g. dissertations, theses and any future publications/presentations.

Participants confidentially will be maintained by assigning each person numerically or alphabetically which will be used in all reporting. Using this system, will also make it possible to identify any participant who wishes to withdraw from the research. Participants will also be placed into aggregated groupings dependent on responses which will also support maintaining anonymity.

Any electronic data will be stored on St Mary's server. And hard copies of questionnaires will comply with Data protection and locked away accordingly.

It is anticipated publication will occur, therefore data will be kept for a period of 10 years.

I am aware the University owns Intellectual Property arising from research undertaken. I confirm that St Mary's University data protection procedure will be followed to adhere to GDPR and will inform management of Data.

I will collate all questionnaires and have them stored within the ArtsEd departments locked files. Once data is imputed onto SPSS electronic data will be stored on St Mary's servers.

Participants will be able to see what data is kept in relation to themselves, but will not have access to other participants' data.

Myself and my supervisor Christine Edward Leis will have access to the data.

No data results will include information that can identify people or places.

No information will be made identifiable.

All participants will be made fully aware of the research project, what it will entail and that participation is voluntary this will be communicated through the consent form and a talk explaining the project
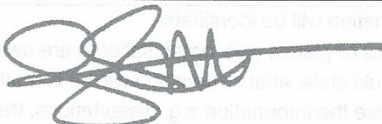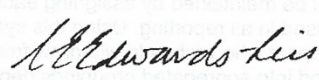
22. Feedback to participants

Please give details of how feedback will be given to participants:
- As a minimum, it would normally be expected for feedback to be offered to participants in an acceptable format, e.g. a summary of findings appropriately written.
- Please state whether you intend to provide feedback to any other individual(s) or organisation(s) and what form this would take.

As part of my call and response research design participants will be given a formative summary in the form of a revoicing - verse narrative. They will have the opportunity to respond which will allow them to delete, amend or add to the revoicing.

The proposer recognises their responsibility in carrying out the project in accordance with the University's Ethical Guidelines and will ensure that any person(s) assisting in the research/ teaching are also bound by these. The Ethics Sub-Committee must be notified of, and approve, any deviation from the information provided on this form.

Signature of Proposer(s):	[signature]	Date:	26/8/2019
Signature of Supervisor (for student research projects):	*L E Edwards*	Date:	27 Aug 2019

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Approval Sheet

Name of proposer(s)	Julie Spencer
Name of supervisor	Dr. Christine Edwards-Leis
Programme of study	Education Doctorate
Title of project	*Navigating Blackness to*

Supervisors, please complete section 1. If approved at level 1, please forward a copy of this Approval Sheet to the School Ethics Representative for their records.

SECTION 1: To be completed by supervisor.		
☐ Approved at Level 1. ☒ Refer to School Ethics Representative for consideration at Level 2 or Level 3.		
Signature of Supervisor (for student research projects):	*CEdwards Leis*	Date: 27 Aug 2019

SECTION 2: To be completed by School Ethics Representative.		
☒ Approved at Level 2. ☐ Level 3 consideration is required by Ethics Sub-Committee.		
Signature of School Ethics Representative:	M Mihovilovic	Date: 2nd Oct 2019

2nd October 2019

Dear Julie

I am writing to confirm that your application for ethical approval of your research enquiry has been approved at Level 2.

Researcher's name:

Julie Spencer

Regnum:

176290

Title of project:

Supervisor

Dr Christine Edwards-Leis
Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Dr Mary Mihovilović

Institute of Education Ethics Representative

Navigating Blackness in Academia to Authenticate Re/voicing a

Transculturate Call and Response Approach to Actor Training in Higher

Education.

M Mihovilović

ArtsEd

President
Lord Lloyd Webber

Principal
Chris Hocking

reception@artsed.co.uk
020 8987 6666

14 Bath Road
London W4 1LY
artsed.co.uk

Julie Spencer
12 Clovelly Road
London
W4 5DS

1st October 2019

Dear Julie

I write to confirm that as per your contract of employment, the school has agreed to sponsor your PhD with St Mary's University, Twickenham and Liverpool Hope University, subject to a maximum of 50% of the fee.

The current interim payment of £2185 will be covered in full.

Please request that the invoice is submitted directly to me for payment.

I wish you the best of luck with your continued studies.

Kind regards

Cheryl Jarman
HR Manager

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Hello First Year BA Acting students

I am Julie Spencer Director of the School of Acting, (jspencer@artsed.co.uk
020 8987 6649 Office - 316). I am also undertaking a Professional Doctorate in Education. Currently, I'm doing a research project called 'Navigating Whiteness in Academia to Authenticate Re/voicing a Transculturate Call and Response Approach to Actor Training in Higher Education.

This research project is the initial stage of project I'll be doing about finding practical ways and approaches to modernizing actor training, decolonising, and diversifying what is being taught and how it's being taught.

Because you are at the very start of your BA Acting course, I think it would be extremely valuable to gain some information on your thoughts before you embark on this journey and what you think or imagine it will be like. To start the process, I'd like to invite you to participate in a simple questionnaire of 7 short questions. It is completely voluntary. Additionally, if you do agree, you can withdraw at any time and the information you provided will be destroyed.

If you do participate all the information you provide on the questionnaire will be used to understand if there is a collective starting point you all share at the beginning this course, or if there are any differences, what they might be. I think the information you give as student actors will be useful in informing how actor training educators and practitioners can develop practical actor training approaches to accessing individual creativity for all students.

If you agree to participate after 12 weeks on the course, I will ask you to fill in another 5-7 questions based on your responses to this first questionnaire to see if there are any changes to your thoughts or ideas after having spent a term of intensive study at ArtsEd.

The questionnaire will take no more than 10 minutes. I will be the only person collating the information, and although your name is requested on the questionnaire, this is to assign you a letter from the alphabet which will make you completely anonymous. Your names will never be used, and all your responses will be strictly confidential. My supervisor Dr. Christine Edward Leis will be able to view responses but will not know the names of participants.

A consent form is attached to sign.

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF YOUR CONSENT FORM

Thank you so much
Julie Spencer

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Name of Participant: _____

Title of the project: Navigating Blackness in Academia to Authenticate Re/voicing a Transculturate Call and Response Approach to Actor Training in Higher Education.

Main investigator and contact details: Julie Spencer – jspencer@artsed.co.uk (020 8987 6649)

Members of the research team:
Julie Spencer

1.   I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions   have been answered to my satisfaction.
2.   I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and   without prejudice.
3.   I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.
4.   I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5.   I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant
(print)...

Signed.....................................
Date...................................

If you wish to withdraw from the research, please complete the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: Navigating Blackness in Academia to Authenticate Re/voicing a
Transculturate Call and Response Approach to Actor Training in Higher Education.

_____

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Name:_____

Signed: _____   Date: _____