

**Exploring some of Cicely Berry's voice and
language exercises for a directing concept of Athol
Fugard's *Sorrows and Rejoicings***

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Declaration

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore how using voice practitioner and writer, Cicely Berry's, exercises and language strategies on sound and text, could lead to finding a directing concept for the play *Sorrows and Rejoicings* by Athol Fugard. The expectation was to discover a layered and interesting interpretation of the text by using a more sound-based approach which relied less on visual aspects such as décor, scenery and lighting effects. The research consisted of both a production of the play with a student cast and this thesis, which articulates the full rehearsal process of working on the play with Cicely Berry's ideas as a clear framework. A qualitative approach was used for the first part of the thesis which involves an overview and discussion of Berry's career and work. Her various books on voice training and working with actors and directors are also referred to. Then a full Practice as Research approach was followed to find a coherent structure and concept for the production process and performance. Cicely Berry's exercises were selected and adapted throughout the process by myself as director to explore this South African text and to encourage the actors to bring to the life the personal sound of the characters, as well as create their physical environment through using sound imaginatively.

The production revealed that Berry's many exercises and strategies allow a more open approach to the text and that, within the realism of the language, a poetic and heightened quality was found that led to exploring the characters and their emotional and physical landscapes in a deeper way. Improvisation on these exercises led to concrete ideas for stronger characterisation, active and imaginative use of voice, song, and chant to enhance the themes and atmosphere, a more open and fluid use of space and the essential aural and visual concept that worked well for the production.

The centrality of Berry's approach puts the text first and as a director one then also has the freedom to explore and improvise on the exercises as they are needed. It was found that one needs to use many of the exercises and to repeat some of them at different stages of rehearsals, in different ways, to fully benefit from them. As they are open-ended and not prescriptive in their potential outcomes these strategies are very useful for a director and actors in exploring a text, in order to find a creative interpretation that is stimulated by the words and images. In this way an awareness of the sound potential in language becomes more important than relying largely on visual aspects.

Key Words: Cicely Berry, Voice, Exercises, Athol Fugard, Directing concept

Opsomming

Die doel van die studie is om ondersoek in te stel na hoe die stempraktisyn en skrywer, Cicely Berry, se oefeninge en taalstrategieë vir klank en teks kan lei tot 'n regiekonsep vir die drama *Sorrows and Rejoicings* deur Athol Fugard. Die verwagting was om 'n geskakeerde en interessante interpretasie van die teks te vind deur middel van 'n meer klank-gebaseerde benadering wat in 'n minder mate steun op visuele ondersteuning soos dekor, verhooginkleding en beligtingseffekte. Die navorsing bestaan uit 'n opvoering van die drama met 'n studenterverdeling en hierdie tesis waarin die volledige repetisieproses van die drama beskryf word met Cicely Berry se idees as raamwerk. 'n Kwalitatiewe benadering wat 'n oorsig van Berry se loopbaan en werk insluit, is in die eerste gedeelte van die tesis gevolg. Haar onderskeie boeke oor stemopleiding en werk met akteurs en regisseurs word onder andere na verwys. Daarna is 'n volledige Praktijk as Navorsingsbenadering gevolg ten opsigte van die produksieproses en opvoering. 'n Seleksie is gemaak uit Cicely Berry se oefeninge en dit is in die loop van die proses deur myself as regisseur aangepas om die Suid-Afrikaanse teks te verken en die akteurs aan te moedig om die persoonlike klank van die onderskeie karakters te verlewendig, asook om hulle fisieke omgewing te skep deur klank op 'n verbeeldingryke wyse aan te wend.

Die produksie het aan die lig gebring dat Berry se talle oefeninge en strategieë 'n vryer benadering tot die teks moontlik maak en dat daar in die realistiese kwaliteit van die taal 'n poëtiese en verhoogde spraakkwaliteit gevind kan word wat lei tot die ontginning van die karakters en 'n dieper verkenning van hulle emosionele en fisieke landskappe. 'n Improvisatoriese benadering tot die oefeninge het tot konkrete idees vir sterker karakterisering, aktiewe en verbeeldingryke gebruik van die stem, sang en dreunsang om die temas en atmosfeer te verryk, 'n vryer en vloeiender gebruik van die ruimte en die essensiële vokale en visuele konsep wat goed gewerk het vir die opvoering gelei.

Die kern van Berry se benadering stel die teks eerste en die regisseur het dan die vryheid om die oefeninge te verken en daarop te improviseer wanneer nodig. Die studie het bevind dat 'n groot verskeidenheid van die oefeninge gebruik moet word en dat sommige op verskillende stadia van die repetisieproses en op verskillende maniere herhaal moet word om die volle waarde daarvan te kan benut. Aangesien dit oopeinde-, onvoorskriftelike oefeninge ten opsigte van uitkomst is, is die oefeninge baie bruikbaar vir 'n regisseur en akteurs wanneer 'n teks verken word om 'n kreatiewe interpretasie te vind wat gestimuleer word deur woorde en beelde. Sodoende word 'n bewustheid van die taal se klankpotensiaal belangriker as om grootliks op visuele aspekte te steun.

Sleutelwoorde: Cicely Berry, Stem, Oefeninge, Athol Fugard, Regiekonsep

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Dedication

For my daughters, Clara and Nell

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Chapter 1 – Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction and motivation on Cicely Berry as inspiration to the study

Teaching Voice and Speech Studies in a Theatre Department constantly brings up challenges for me and students on how to combine technical training with finding ways to stimulate creative interpretation of a text. One works towards establishing a firm foundation in breath support, clear tone and resonance, well defined articulation and ease in projection, on the one hand. On the other, one tries to unlock the creative possibilities in speaking and performing a poem, prose or dramatic text. The aim is to stimulate imaginative thinking and responses towards the material and to communicate these texts as clearly as possible.

Cicely Berry has taught and worked in drama schools and the theatre in Britain and abroad for more than forty years. She started off at the Central School in London in the late 1950s, managed her own private studio and then joined the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 1970 (Ellis 2010:35; Berry 2001:34,35). She later became Voice Director of the RSC, a position she still holds today, despite her advanced years. Her work constantly shifted between two modes: teaching practical voice and speech classes to students and working with professional actors to help them uncover their creative responses to language and sound.

Her approach is practical, sensible and not too prescriptive. Actors have commented in dvd's made on her life and work, that she does not impose her way of working on them but allows for individual responses within her structure during rehearsals (*Where Words Prevail*: 2005). Over the years I have built up an attachment to her thinking and methods and tried out many of her exercises. Although she values technical accomplishment in speaking this is by no means the only criteria in her work with speakers and performers. As her work developed within the Royal Shakespeare Company and in outside workshops e.g. in prisons and workshops in other countries and cultures, she developed further exercises and strategies that are more physical and improvisatory. These exercises aim to put the actors at ease and to energise them into working with the text in a less analytical way; to find a confidence and enjoyment in discovering how the sound of the speech or scene leads to more interesting meanings and interpretation. She states, "through the physical exercises they were able objectively to find the sound and force of those words, and gain confidence in speaking them" (Berry 2001:42).

The bulk of her writing on these exercises, strategies and creative approaches to text, covers four books: *Voice and the Actor* (1973,1986), *The Actor and the Text* (1987,1991), *Text in Action—A definitive guide to exploring text in rehearsal for actors and directors* (2001) and

From Word to Play—A handbook for Directors (2008). One can clearly see a progression in the kinds of exercises she suggests for actors. She starts by drawing attention to feeling the breath in the full length and width of the chest and back, grounding the tone of the voice as fully as possible and then releasing resonance in the required space without unnecessary effort. Articulation, or muscularity as she calls it, is given careful attention (Berry 1973:22,25,27,32). Students are actively encouraged to feel sounds physically and to be aware of the movements of muscles and not to only listen to themselves critically (Berry 1973:45).

She then progresses onto specific work on texts and this is where she feels that true technique, or rather a sense of freedom, within the preparation, will be honed (Berry 1973:11). The demands of the particular text in terms of structure and meaning will lead to the actor trying out various exercises linked to breathing, support, tongue and lip action and release of sound through vowels and consonants (Berry 1973:44,45,61,62,69). This will in turn encourage a sensitivity towards feeling rhythm, pace and projection in the flow of the phrasing. Exploration on imaginative aspects of imagery and sound and character which are embodied in the text, stimulate the actor to become clearer and more confident in interpretation (Berry 1987:14–31). In her book *From Word to Play, A handbook for directors* (2008) she states that her aim is to explore the specific aspects of language in a “creative rehearsal process [which will] hopefully fuse both concept and character development with the structure and sound of the text itself” (Berry 2008:30). This I feel, forms the basis of her work throughout her many years of teaching—from what I have read and the DVDs I’ve seen on her process (*Where Words Prevail*: 2005; *Working Shakespeare*: 2006). It is her hope that texts can be explored on a deeper level through this work on the body and the voice and not only from an intellectual perspective.

Much of her time was spent with actors in rehearsal, in collaboration with directors, but she did have a very significant directing experience of her own while doing *King Lear* with some actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1988. She says,

I wanted to approach the play by speaking it first, and listening to the movement and texture of the language, before coming to conclusions about character, place and relationships. I wanted them [the actors] to hear where the language takes us. (Berry 2008:172)

Her account of this sense of freedom in exploring the text; which she actively encouraged while working with the cast and her technical team on the language of the play and how this led to further ideas for directing; the performance, soundscape, set, costumes and lighting, has contributed to my understanding of her approach from then on. This process has in turn, actively stimulated my thinking as a director about trying out an approach which is not

predominantly visually based for an interpretation of a South African play, *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2002) by Athol Fugard. The first half of this study therefore consisted of a practical exploration of Berry's ideas in rehearsal towards finding a clear, directing concept. This work culminated in a production of the play *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2002). The second half of the study consists of this thesis which articulates what was discovered and achieved during the practice. The two parts of the study are interdependent and the reflection on the practice of using Berry's exercises and strategies and their efficacy, resulting in the evidence of the production itself, is the key focus of my research.

A full discussion of her work and career proceeds in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 I focus specifically on her views about language and sound in the theatre. In Chapters 4 and 5 I discuss the use of her exercises and strategies during our rehearsal process and also other warm-ups and improvisations that were used to explore the play. In the final Chapter 6, I comment on my findings and conclusions and on the value of Berry's ideas and writings in practically stimulating ideas and interpretation for directing and performance.

1.2 A brief background to the play *Sorrows and Rejoicings*

1.2.1 Choices

Unlike Berry I did not have a professional cast to work with and there were some considerations to bear in mind before choosing a play for this kind of exploration with students. I wanted to challenge this approach by seeing if this focus on language, sound and character could lead me to a more open-ended, possibly less conventional view of the play. I chose Fugard because his texts are carefully structured and ideas and metaphors emerge through language and imagery which suggest action and development in the inter-relationships between characters, rather than external situations. His dialogue, although realistic in tone, also has a poetry to it which lifts it out of the mundane reality the characters often find themselves in. Berry has often said that her ideas are applicable to modern text too and not only to Shakespeare and other verse or heightened texts and I was curious how well some of her ideas would work in the end. There was some risk involved! I also wanted to choose a South African play that has something meaningful to say about our political and social situation at the time the play begins, ten years (by now, almost 25 years of course) into our so-called new South Africa and democracy. The play has a good balance of characters between three women (two coloured, one white) and one white man. I feel it is important to reflect these demographics in our department's productions. The students were very enthusiastic about tackling a Fugard play with more mature characters and issues which was heartening, as the play needs this kind of gravity which perhaps young performers might struggle to find. The three women in the cast are also very musical; all sing and play the

piano and I had a feeling I might tap into their skills in a more sound-orientated kind of production such as this one. The nature of the process was collaborative, working within a clear structure, guided by the language of the text and improvisations and strategies that were slightly adapted from Berry and my own processes that I've developed over the past years.

1.2.2 The play and Fugard in context

Much has been written over the years about Athol Fugard and his work, as befits a playwright regarded by many as one of the most significant in the English-speaking world. Albert Wertheim says in his introduction to *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard—From South Africa to the World* (2000:viii) that Fugard should be included among the seven most prominent playwrights alive today. He states, “The reality is that Fugard is a world-class playwright, who often uses the South Africa he knows so intimately as a setting for more universal examinations of human life, human interactions, and the powers of art” (Wertheim 200:xii). The scope and purpose of this thesis however, does not allow for a full discussion of Fugard’s life and work and is not the prime focus of my study, which is to explore Cicely Berry’s strategies as applied to *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2002) to find and comment on a directing concept. I have therefore limited myself to a short discussion of the play and its context within the time it was written and performed. I refer the reader to a few key sources for further reading on his plays and critical views on his work in the bibliography, particularly Professor Marianne McDonald’s seminal book *The Craft of Athol Fugard: Space, Time, and Silence* (2012). This is the most recent book I have found that includes discussion of all his plays until 2012 and also offers in-depth discussion on his writing and directing process, rehearsals and biographical information. I deliberately did not read and use this book until very recently as I did not want to be influenced by Fugard’s own commentary about the process of working on *Sorrows and Rejoicings*.

On reading this last section of the book which contains a full and informative discussion of the rehearsal process of the play which was performed at Princeton University’s McCarter Theatre in 2001, as well as the Cape Town production later in the same year at the Baxter Theatre, I was pleased to discover that our approach was quite different. And yet, of course there were similarities in what we found about the characters themselves (McDonald 2012:321–343). I was encouraged to discover that our view of the play and the characters was considered in the same depth as the process I imagine Fugard went through with his cast. In some ways I suspect our interpretation in 2015 was a little tougher and bleaker in reflecting the women characters, than in these early productions, although the humour that emerged through Dawid as a volatile and self-absorbed character was also evident. Our views on Rebecca as a wilful, rebellious yet intelligent young woman co-incided quite clearly

and this also re-inforced my opinion of the actress's strong performance. I also noted with some delight Fugard's comments on the "musical" feel of the text and that he feels the monologues should be approached almost like "arias" that build to a climax (McDonald 2012:330). This is exactly what we discovered in our rehearsal process and Berry's exercises assisted the cast and myself to play with this idea of musicality in the speaking and the soundscape as a guiding concept for the whole play, which explores the sound of the characters and their landscape.

In the last short section on Fugard's life "A Personal Portrait" (McDonald 2012:345–348) McDonald provides some illuminating comments on what drives Fugard to write until his now, early eighties. Many of these insights are brought to life in the text of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* e.g. his deep attachment to South Africa, especially the Eastern Cape and Great Karoo landscape—despite living abroad for so long, his love for Afrikaans although he writes in English, his concern at what has been lost in the country through the years of Apartheid and yet his hope for a better, positive future for ensuing generations of South Africans, particularly young people who have the ability and time to change things. As McDonald (2012:346) puts it so succinctly,

Fugard's plays have always linked the particular to the universal in ways that touch audiences and readers alike. His themes are those that have always haunted the human psyche: love, hate, life, death, loss, survival, and hope. His plays invite audiences to think, and even more to feel, and most of all to leave the theatre with new insights into how best to live life and meet death.

I feel that this play was a good choice for us to explore these themes and to reflect back to the time of the millennium when there was a great feeling of hope in South Africa for a better future. Seeing the play now, one wonders whether the sense of optimism is still so strong in these days of corruption, scandal and violence on our political stage. In the light of the recent #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall campaigns in 2015 and student protests still ongoing throughout the country in 2016, it is ironical that the idea of equality for all is still felt to be sorely lacking on many fronts, economically and educationally. At the end of the play the "voice" of Rebecca as young woman, who although hopeful, is uncertain about what to do with the house and property she has inherited from her dead, white father, is not muted but not clear either. Confusion and the question of where to go is still part of her individual identity. In his quiet and eloquent way Fugard to me captures these conflicting desires and offers a timely comment yet again on what could be lost all over again if the powers that be, and indeed all citizens in our society, do not pay attention to each other's humanity and potential. He himself feels that the core of his writing is about "storytelling, about living, breathing human beings" (McDonald 2012:345) and that he now feels free to write about

“familial, personal and philosophical and mythical” (McDonald 2012:345) matters. He still believes passionately that theatre can have an important and life-changing impact for the better on people.

In the Appendix to her book McDonald (2012:349–362) provides a very useful “Dateline” which provides a comparison in short keywords and sentences between important moments in South African history with Fugard’s own personal dates, events from his life and career milestones. It makes for impressive reading and the realisation just how prolific his writing has been over the many years since he began on his journey as a writer, actor and theatre maker. By 2001 he had received many accolades, one of which was the Vita Award for lifetime achievement as well as the Fleur du Cap Lifetime achievement award (McDonald 2012:359,360). By this stage the Truth and Reconciliation Commission had been working since 2005 to redress the atrocities/political wrongs committed during Apartheid and the South African rugby team won the world cup to the delight of President Nelson Mandela and others. Many revivals of Fugard’s plays were being staged throughout the world, *The Island* for instance, receiving rave reviews at the London National Theatre in 2000 (McDonald 2012:360). Apparently Fugard also decided to give up acting in 2001 and in 2002 he received yet more recognition for his contributions to theatre in receiving the “Lifetime Achievement Award in South African Theatre” from the Theatre Managements of South Africa. In 2003 his only grandchild was born and in 2004 he gave up directing—although he has since returned to co-directing some of his plays in recent years (McDonald 2012:360), such as *The Train Driver* (McDonald 2012:361).

Sorrows and Rejoicings (2002) fits into the last phase and fifteen years of Athol Fugard’s career. It was according to McDonald (2012:205), the first play he wrote “in its entirety outside South Africa”, having relocated to California at the time. The play is set in the Great Karoo around the Graaff-Reinet area, so often the milieu for Fugard’s plays, in 1999—on the cusp of the millennium. Marta Barends (late thirties) has taken care of the old Olivier family home for many years and has had a long and loyal attachment to the family via her mother, the previous housekeeper. Matters are complicated because she grew up with the only son, Dawid Olivier, and was like a child herself in the home with his grandparents. They had an intense affair as teenagers and she became pregnant with their daughter Rebecca (now 18 years). Dawid, an aspiring poet and writer (now in his forties) left the country as a young lecturer and political activist in the mid-1980s and married a young English speaking South African woman from Johannesburg, Allison (also late thirties) whom had also been a student in one of his classes. Marta and the baby Rebecca were left behind—in more ways than one. One senses that there may be an autobiographical link between character Dawid and the playwright although one must also be careful not to assume that all personal facets are necessarily reworked into his characters. McDonald (2012:307) says in Chapter III The

Writing Process, that Fugard draws on two main sources in his writing “his country and his inner self” but also warns the reader not to expect direct and overt links to Fugard’s life. He too describes his creative process as both private and public, “My whole motivation, my choice of the stories I tell, belongs in a very secret area of my life which I reveal to no one. And I’ve also got a public act, which is the play when it gets onto a stage” (McDonald 2012:307).

Fugard wanted to write about the pain of exile and the loss so many artists suffered who left South Africa in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. McDonald (2012:205) quotes Breyten Breytenbach, foremost poet in Afrikaans of these generations of critical writers, as saying “Exile is the slow art of forgetting the color of fire”. Many of these poets and writers like Lewis Nkosi, Can Themba, Sydney Clouts and Perseus Adams however, did not survive their exile well and lost their creative connections to writing and in some cases lost their lives to alcoholism and suicide (McDonald 2012:205). Fugard has admitted to identifying with aspects of Dawid and himself and also used parts of his brother-in-law’s life and personality in creating this character (McDonald 2012:206). However, the play as a whole becomes a far larger and more symbolic view of the South African situation—poised between the old South Africa and the new one.

The play begins with Dawid Olivier’s funeral, after having returned to South Africa after sixteen years of largely self-imposed exile. He has returned home towards the end of 1999, a recovering alcoholic, terminally ill with leukemia, to die and seek some sort of forgiveness and resolution for having left so many years before. The female characters meet again after the funeral and during the course of a day, slowly the secrets and half-truths of the past are revealed, to the cost of all. Themes of memory, loss, sorrow, guilt, the influence of the past, some rejoicing, albeit tinged with bitterness and casting a shadow on the present, are explored in honest confrontations—in scenes of dialogue and longer monologues. The two characters Marta (the housekeeper) and Allison (the former wife), and later Rebecca (the illegitimate daughter), finally confront each other honestly about their love for the same man and the story of this triangle of relationships is revealed. The character Dawid reappears from scene to scene in flash-backs to key moments in the women’s lives. Although deceased, his presence is still strong and alive to them as they talk, argue, laugh, cry and eventually find some resolution/closure to their shared past. Marta learns about the true reason that Dawid did not return to South Africa when it was possible for him to do so and his shame, cowardice and pride at not wanting to admit his failure as a writer. Allison discovers that Marta kept Dawid’s identity from Rebecca as she was growing up and also that she, Rebecca, burnt his poetry bequeathed to her. Despite all the losses felt by all the characters, Allison tries to arrange for some restitution by offering the Karoo house to Rebecca. Although Rebecca can now publicly claim Dawid as her father and inherits the Olivier family home

after Allison legally arranges for the documents, Rebecca's own sense of direction for the future is not fully clear. She accepts the gift and her mother Marta's positive view of the events and insights they have arrived at during the action and time of the play, but there is a sense of being troubled about the future, despite the hopeful tone and the feeling of reluctant forgiveness and reconciliation between them as mother and daughter. This sense of wondering about what lies ahead is the question that I feel Fugard posed in 2001 when he wrote the play and it was performed at the beginning of the new millennium in South Africa.

The past and the present are fluid and mingle and shift in time, as the characters remember and bear witness to their lost family life. The physical space is rooted in the comfortable Olivier living room which Martha has kept well-maintained and gleaming during the long years the house was unoccupied, the old people also having passed on. The idea of the room has much to tell and in its confines, the truth about these relationships and how this still reflects on our society today, emerges. The theme of fire and passion turning to ashes and dust is carried throughout the play and becomes a kind of lament for our country as well. This theme I found to be the key one which kick-started my initial thinking and responses to the play.

The personal and the political, as well as links to the mythical are all included in *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. There are classical references to the Roman poet Ovid and his cycle of poems called *Tristia* (sadness/sorrows) throughout the text, which starts with an excerpt translated by Marianne McDonald before the play begins (Fugard 2002:4) and this becomes an important motif for the philosophically minded character Dawid's connection to the reasons and passions for writing about one's homeland, language and landscape, and how personal relationships cannot be separated from these deep concerns.

The play has been called one of Fugard's memory plays, indicating a change of direction and tone from his earlier writing. In a recent scholarly work, *New Territories—Theatre, Drama and Performance in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2015) British writer Brian Crow (2015:147–165) suggests in his essay "The Dangerous side of Writing: the Post-Apartheid memory plays of Athol Fugard" that Fugard's earlier plays such as *The Island* and *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* had more danger and excitement in them, and that "audience and author shared a complicity in criticising the apartheid regime" (Crow 2015:148). In the earlier plays he feels that Fugard embodies "compellingly" the idea of going through an inner, intense personal experience which then becomes part of the larger crisis in society (Crow 2015:149). He continues further by saying that the dangers of the memory play as a genre and its potential reception by an audience are, that the play could be less dramatic and immediate in structure and in its impact and could become self-indulgent (Crow 2015:152,153). He feels the themes of exile

and return are potentially “powerful material for the post-apartheid dramatist” (Crow 2015:156) but that the memory genre was perhaps less effective in conveying these issues.

In this essay Crow (2015:157) mentions too the more positive views of another British critic, John Peter, who comments in a review for the Sunday Times (2002) on a production of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* performed in London in 2002. Apparently Peter “made the interesting observation that the writing is not dramatic, but Fugard’s questioning is” and offered this insight into its form: “The play relates to theatre as a complex oratorio relates to opera: the drama is in the intersections of thoughts and words, what is spoken and what is not” (Peter in Crow 2015:157). A few other critics again felt the play was “slow-moving if not excessively static, and that it was heavy-handed in its use of symbolism” (Crow 2015:157).

I find my own views on the dramatic value or success of the text are at variance from Crow and the last-mentioned critics. Perhaps there is a difference between in how I look as a South African living within this landscape and the gaze of some British theatre analysts. For me the play is quite bleak and honest and all the characters are flawed in some way. This I consider to rather be a strength. In my reading of the play I do not think there is supposed to be full reconciliation and “real friendships” (Crow 2015:157), even within the elegiac tone of the play and the hint of hope at the end. This reflects the reality of so many within South African society; much has not really been restored yet to those who suffered the effects of Apartheid personally and politically. Much more common understanding and acceptance needs still to be gained among people. This avoids a certain sentimentality and easy resolution to complex problems. I agree that structurally some of the scenes may have less dramatically charged interactions (probably as a result of long monologues used) and this could result in a slow-moving pace, but the passion and intensity of the characters are translated for me into very clear language and images that point to the lost chances of individuals and South Africa itself, within the bigger picture.

I support Temple Hauptfleisch’s insightful comments on Fugard’s ability with words in his book *Theatre & Society in South Africa—Reflections in a fractured mirror* (1997) and how they are “fundamental to his thinking and his writing” (Hauptfleisch 1997:141). He also acknowledges Fugard’s use of long monologues that often seem indicative of “the didacticism which underlies a great deal of Fugard’s writing—and indeed that of most serious writers in South Africa” (Hauptfleisch 1997:141). However, he also affirms the power of Fugard’s conscious use of language in that it is “sparse and tight...rhythmical, symbolic, image-laden and aware of the meaning of words and their power” (Hauptfleisch 1997:141). Hauptfleisch perceptively recognizes that Fugard crafts his words most carefully; “whatever form it takes, the word derives from the theme which derives from the original generating image....and signals key scenes in the play” (Hauptfleisch 2013:142). These images and

words are linked fully in the actor's live performance, giving life and substance to the characters' individual actions in a physical space that also suggests more than just surface reality (Hauptfleisch 2013:146).

Our aim was to discover through the richness of the language, the various voices and sounds and fundamental images in the play and how the characters' personal voices interweave to give us insight into a man's many failures and some better qualities, such as love and the hope of forgiveness, in order to reflect the larger South African society of which we are a part.

1.3 My inquiry during this study

What interests me is to what extent a concept or structure can be found for directing a student production, by focusing on the language and sound exploration of a South African play text, such as by Athol Fugard, rather than deciding on a visual, spatial interpretation before this work is done. Can these voice and language exercises suggested by Berry for actors and directors, lead to more specific listening to and 'hearing' of the ideas and themes of the text? Can these strategies assist me and the actors to find a more layered interpretation to the play? Will this approach lend itself to less reliance on or attention given to décor, props, costumes and technical sound effects to find a deeper purpose to the play and communicate this effectively to an audience?

The definition of an 'open-ended' interpretation or a way of working rather, and a 'layered' approach can mean different things to various people involved in directing and working on a production. For me it simply means not to have decided on a final interpretation of the meaning and ending of the play until at least three quarters into the rehearsal process. The final moment of the production was not quite decided until two weeks before opening. This approach also allows the actors to contribute to the creation of meaning from their own views on these characters (far older than themselves) and what these relationships have become in the transition from the old South Africa to the new, and what of course, still remains the same. It also affects the way we look at the space and how to use it more interestingly, guided by the language and imagery. These decisions are also only reached at a later stage. In this kind of rehearsal process questions are asked more than answers given. Exercises and strategies are used until meaning becomes clear and scenes then need to be 'set'.

The actors constantly have to question their characters' motives, actions and find ways to convey their physical and vocal presences in ways that might not be obvious in the text. At the same time they must remain grounded in the reality of Fugard's world. Through Cicely Berry's ideas as inspiration, some adaptations and additional improvisations of my own, I hope to explore what lies beneath this family drama. The 'layering' idea is applicable on

many levels. The exercises and adapted improvisations used at various stages in rehearsal, will hopefully, have encouraged the actors to rethink, rework and add to certain vocal and physical aspects of their characterisation, suggested more organic ways of moving and blocking of scenes, especially towards the end of the process and to contribute to finding an overall sense of style in the performance. Where are these characters living inside themselves and in the physical and emotional space of the play? Of course, not all these aspects may be realised but the attempt is there.

It was also important to me that our explorations did not in the end impose a kind of fanciful interpretation that might be detrimental to the feel and views of the play as written. I wished to enhance and highlight some themes, contribute to the insights that Fugard offers in a slightly different way but showing respect for the text and its cohesiveness.

1.4 Purpose of the study

My aim therefore was to test some of Berry's ideas and exercises on approaching a local play with more awareness on the sound potential released through the language by the actors. I wanted to see how this approach towards finding directing/performance concept with a student ensemble could influence or lead to discovering ideas for directing in terms of use of space, characterisation and acting, costume, movement, creating atmosphere through sound(s), a sense of style and atmosphere that could enhance the meaning/ideas of the play. In other words, we tried to explore the vocal, aural world of the text first through voice and body in the acting, to reflect the core thoughts and themes. This then led us to certain choices which of course were also reflected visually and concretely in the set, décor elements and lighting.

Cicely Berry's methods and suggestions are perhaps used more often on classical texts e.g. Shakespeare and poetry but she feels that her exercises can be used effectively on modern texts as well and this is what I wanted to test. Many of her strategies are applicable to various situations between actors and can be interpreted and adapted for improvisation, yet linking to some aspect of the scene or text at hand. She is not prescriptive about the outcomes to her exercises and this is what is so useful about her approach. I tried to use exercises relevant to certain stages of our rehearsals and to see how working with actors, who while focused on allowing the language and all that is embedded in it to release sound and imagery, coupled with physicality, would encourage me to make choices and decisions on interpretation for the play as a whole.

1.5 Research questions

Cicely Berry believes in the physical power of words and taking time to unlock the meaning of a text as fully as possible. I would like to explore how some of her voice, sound and acting exercises or strategies can help me to discover a clear idea or vision for performing this play. Can working more intensively, also physically, on the language and sound world of the play, e.g. the words and sounds spoken by the characters (their thoughts being heard, how they articulate), and their interactions and relationships, reflected in their tone, volume and rhythm, as well as the sound suggested by the physical environment/landscape these characters find themselves in, be brought to life more vividly by this experimenting? Would the 'sound atmosphere', that could be created by more awareness of the inner landscapes of each character, reflect or contrast with the outside world they live in and can this lead to a more layered but still coherent and believable interpretation of the play? These questions were asked throughout the working process and will only probably be fully clear after a few performances. Indeed, as a director one is always aware of the public impact of any kind of production you are working on and how your collective interpretation might be received or perceived. But it is difficult to judge the full efficacy of the ideas until the run is over and there has been time to reflect and also hear other critical opinions.

A live performance is also seen, not only heard and of course one cannot ignore visual elements, nor is this the intention. Berry had the full support of a technical team behind her, who also contributed actively to the creation of key visual elements and made certain choices which were absorbed into the productions she worked on, notably that of *King Lear* referred to earlier in section 1.1. This has not been the same of course for us, but it has been fascinating to see how far one can go on a realistic text with a student cast (having both strengths and limitations) in terms of these ideas on sound and to see whether we can find a clear, engaging performance in the space where the visual aspects do not dominate the vocal and verbal.

1.6 Methodology and structure of the study

1.6.1 The combination of research methodologies

I have used two kinds of approaches in this study namely, a qualitative one combined with that of Practice as Research. In the next two chapters of my study I will comment on Cicely Berry's life, career and writings, her views on sound and language and voice training, written both by herself and others to provide a framework for the second part of the thesis (Chapters 4 and 5). Her books are very personal, narrative and often anecdotal in style and through my research and reference to others' critical commentary and observations, I hope to place her within a lineage of voice and speech training in Britain. I also refer to her international

influence and standing, not only as a voice and speech teacher but also in later years as a facilitator of workshops for directors and teachers.

Berry's exercises provide a varied, creative methodology and in our process during rehearsals, the aim was to engage with her ideas in a kind of conversation; testing them and allowing for some of her frameworks to lead us towards ideas and options for a more sound-based interpretation.

For the remainder of the thesis and the practical project which encompasses the working process; testing her strategies, and on the direction of the play during this process as well as the critical reflection on completion of this, I have followed the ideas related to the field of Practice as Research (PaR). Robin Nelson (2013:3) also refers to this term as PaR in the introduction to his book, *The What, Where, When and Why of 'Practice as Research'*. I have read and found Robin Nelson's book, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (2013) to be very useful as a guide-line for this kind of approach or method and to articulate some ideas. I particularly focused on the first three chapters for assistance in this way of working, where, as Nelson (2013:8,9) says,

Practice is the key method of inquiry and where in respect of the arts, a practice (creative writing, dance, musical score/performance, theatre/performance, visual exhibition, film or other cultural practice) is submitted as substantial evidence of a research inquiry.

Nelson (2013:6) reminds one that although "some durable record is institutionally required of research findings, the documentation of practice may at worst displace the thing itself" and therefore suggests that the thesis should attempt to keep alive a sense of telling what and how the practice came to be. A recording or dvd of the production is not the full and only evidence of an embodied practice of bringing a text to life on stage. I have attempted to discuss the process of finding a directing concept for *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2002) which is complex, by using many of Cicely Berry's exercises and strategies as a basis for my approach and to comment and reflect on the value of this way of working. The production itself, as substantial evidence, I feel reflected my directing approach inspired by Berry's writings and exercises. I hope this thesis further comments on this exploration as accurately as possible within the scholarly practice of PaR (Nelson 2013:8).

I agree with Nelson's views that "PaR projects require more labour and a broader range of skills to engage in a multi-mode research inquiry than more traditional research processes and, when done well, demonstrate an equivalent rigour" (Nelson 2013:9). I cannot imagine that any other mode of inquiry would have been inclusive enough for this research project. I hope that the submission of the practice (as it was perceived in performance) and via the

additional recording (provided separately on a flashdisc) and the articulation of this practice in the thesis, is recognised as a “substantial part of the evidence of [my] research inquiry” (Nelson 2013:9). Haseman (in Nelson 2013:10) further notes the following about research that is led by practice:

[He] asserts the primacy of practice and insists that because creative practice is both on-going and persistent; practitioner-researchers do not merely ‘think’ their way through or out of a problem, but rather they ‘practice’ to a resolution.

I have therefore attempted to find a more layered interpretation for the play *Sorrows and Rejoicings* by a “practical knowing-in-doing” (Nelson 2013:9), underpinned by many ideas from Cicely Berry and to submit a production as “substantial evidence”, referred to earlier. Although I have through the years read, discussed and practised many of Berry’s voice exercises with aspiring student actors I had not used her ideas on sound and language as the basis of an approach to directing a full production. I have used these exercises on occasion, mostly in classwork of voice warm-up sessions, Shakespearean sonnets and scenes and other heightened poetry or monologue texts. It seemed a natural extension of my understanding and enjoyment of her methods, to want to try and use some of these ideas on unlocking a text, within the bigger framework of finding a concept for directing. I know that many of these exercises can work effectively on smaller scenes of plays (dialogue or group scenes) and in energising actors’ vocal responses but I was not at all sure of how this would work for finding an overall directing concept of a more realistic South African play. It was full of uncertainty, as I suppose it should be when one embarks on this kind of approach, where your initial ideas might go in a different direction to what was envisioned and where one must not impose a pre-determined view of the play, either vocally or visually—at least, not during the first few weeks of rehearsal.

One, however, has to proceed and begin somewhere; hence the initial grounding of Berry’s ideas on text and sound in the earlier chapters of this thesis. This gave me the basis to begin my inquiry.

1.6.2 The timing and use of Berry’s exercises and strategies in rehearsal

The cast and I had read the play on our own, (several times in my case, as director) but there was no initial first reading to begin our rehearsals. I encouraged them to read the play before we began officially and to focus rather on what they ‘heard’ as they read than what they ‘saw’ in their mind’s eye. I wished to avoid preconceived ideas about character and visual interpretation and too much discussion on what the play ‘should’ mean. I wanted to begin with a more active, open-ended approach by incorporating an exercise(s) of Berry with an

extended improvisation on ideas from the text. Once this was explored and some ideas gained, then we could do more traditional read-throughs and table discussion.

I had previously read through Berry's works and the numerous exercises she suggests for working on different aspects of actors engaging with a text, either individually or in a group. I soon realised that although I knew the content of many of these exercises, I could not quite pre-select a number of them and then apply, regardless of other aspects of rehearsals at hand that may need attention first e.g work on characterisation and atmosphere of each unit or scene. Practice as Research, referred to as PaR, requires a different approach as one is not supposed to force meaning or make it fit into a neat structure—to suit an exercise's potential outcomes, for instance. The practice leads to one finding the structure or framework needed for a scene, characters or other aspects, from an exercise or a group of them. The text has its own demands and the themes; sounds and images suggested at each stage of working leads one then to rather find a strategy or exercise that can be linked to that, and perhaps open it up even further in terms of imaginative interpretation. One also has to consider what your cast has to offer and their strengths and resistances. So here, I already had to change my initial plan of working by pre-planning a set selection of exercises. I had to allow for the open-ended possibility of finding the exercises as one needs them and to allow them to expand into improvisations on the text and characters etc. I had sifted through them and of course, there is some degree of realisation about what might be useful and which ones less so, but there were too many to try out in the time we had available. As a general principle, I had to accept that I could not make certain exercises fit or mould the ideas, images, sound possibilities in the text according to my views or wishes for that particular scene/character or moment. Finding a concept focusing more on the vocal ambience was complex and a little nerve-wracking too.

At some point one also realises as a director, that you do need to do some traditional improvisations from a more psychological perspective while working on a text as this one. The warm-ups still contained a lot of physicality and voice work linked to Berry's exercises and I also included more articulation work with tongue twisters and vowel and consonant sequences. However, there was a need for more background work, structured around situations e.g. discovering and creating the history and childhood of the characters, making drawings, revisiting the past in political situations which involved improvisations and some discussion and watching a dvd on Fugard's work (Athol Fugard at 60—Carte Blanche programme on SABC), work on age; the younger selves of the characters contrasted with their older selves, the visualisation and exploration of the London flat and the Karoo house. I also included music at times and animal and bird improvisations linked to their characters and feelings, which combined movement and sound. This work on the personal, social and political aspects of the life of the characters also led to some very revealing moments in the

hot-seat interviews we did, that clarified relationships between characters and gave a sense of reality to who they were and where they came from.

To sum up, I think that Berry's ideas were very useful and valuable as inspiration and practical grounding for the choices we made. Her approach can point one to look deeper and wider at the playwright's language and how to discover more options in interpretation. In combination with some more psychologically based work, it gives both director and actors a sense of confidence and freedom in finding an imaginative response to the text, and a truthfulness in sound and body in performance. In the end one has to allow the text to a large extent to suggest the methods of working and to be open to change and adaptation, which also include one's own ideas, as I've discovered in the more complex field of Practice as Research.

A comprehensive discussion of the exercises we explored and their contribution and impact on my ideas for finding a directing concept, is given in Chapter four. In Chapter five I comment on further warm-ups and other kinds of improvisations that were also valuable to explore the text and the world of the play.

1.6.3 Further documentation

I kept a detailed rehearsal file of notes from the beginning of the process which documented each evening's rehearsal structure, chosen exercises and further, structured improvisations around the themes for the evening and the week's rehearsals. I also made notes on the main impressions I found after each rehearsal. This later proved invaluable as a clear, written record of the process, albeit in my rather untidy handwriting and scribbled drawings! I did not film the process due to limitations in assistance available from technical staff. This, however, gave myself and the cast some privacy during explorations and the freedom to experiment without a camera's watchful eye. It was also not possible for me to guide these sessions actively and film at the same time, so it was an option I did not pursue.

It was a very concentrated period of rehearsal leading up to the production run, with very few breaks in between to actually write further on the thesis as such. PaR really does demand time and intensive practical work to test, discover and then consolidate one's ideas. I also deliberately did not conduct formal interviews with my cast on their views of Berry's exercises and strategies. It was already challenging for them to focus on many different aspects of the text, exercises and being creative with character and sound explorations. Discussion about characters, the text and themes and my way of approaching this through Berry, was informal and ongoing throughout the rehearsal process, but I felt the final insights on the efficacy and value of Berry's approach and ideas were my responsibility to comment on as a director. The actors' focus and responsibility lay in being open and receptive towards the text and my

suggestions, giving their full attention to developing their characters and performances. In this way we collaborated well and their contributions led to my finding concrete ideas for both sound and visual ideas. Time was used efficiently I feel and did not place an extra burden on their other work.

I include a basic drawing of my early, initial ideas that emerged for the set (Addendum 5) , some photographs of the performance space being set up in the early stages (Addendum 6) and a flashdisc with a recording of the full play of 90 minutes (see attached envelope). The recording was made on the eve of the final dress rehearsal and unfortunately, it is rather dark in the space. It is not a professional recording and was done by the stage manager and only has a static, wide view of the performance space. It does, however, provide a visual record of our approach and the concept within this particular space on the side of the HB Thom stage and workshop.

I also include a programme and poster of the production (addenda 7, 8) for the record and interest.

Chapter 2 – Cicely Berry’s early years and later influences—an overview and discussion of the important phases in her life, work and career

2.1 Introduction

Cicely Berry turns 90 years old in 2016 and has had an impressive career in the world of theatre and voice training. From an early age she immersed herself in the love of poetry and developed a deep appreciation for and connection to the works of Keats, Shelley and Auden and most of all, Shakespeare (Kaufman 2011:2). She admits to being “absolutely obsessed by poetry” (Carey in *Voice and Speech Review* 2011:235) and how speaking it aloud regularly can affect one’s sensitivity to ‘the richness of language and its possibilities’ (Carey 2011:235). In her book *Text in Action* (2001) she remembers how she could at the age of eight years already recite the whole of the poems, *Hiawatha* and *The Ancient Mariner* (Berry 2001:33) and how she enjoyed taking ‘elocution’ lessons simply for the pleasure of being able to express poetry aloud (Berry 2001:33). These early years of reading and speaking poetry and being inspired by some gifted teachers at school and later on, during her teacher training, led her on the path to becoming a voice and speech teacher of international note.

Cicely Frances Berry was born on 17 May 1926 and grew up near London. She trained as a teacher at the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1946 and began her studies under the mentorship of Gwynneth Thurnburn (Saklad 2011:49). In an interview with Nancy Saklad she acknowledges the strong impact Gwynneth Thurnburn’s teaching made on her own development and ideas about voice and speech training in the 1940s and 1950s. Thurnburn was head of the Central School from 1942 to 1967 (Lewsen 1993:1). Thurnburn, in turn, was the successor to Elsie Fogerty who started the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art in 1906 in London (Martin 1991:155). Fogerty, along with Sir Frank Benson pioneered the founding of the country’s “first speech clinic at Saint Thomas’s Hospital” (Martin 1991:155) and brought an awareness of the clinical, scientific aspects to voice training of the time.

2.2 The influence of Elsie Fogerty

Elsie Fogerty spent almost forty years at the Central School and left a lasting impact on her students, many of whom went on to become famous actors. Laurence Olivier was probably the most well-known of the early generation of actors who trained with her. Fogerty’s belief in the necessity for having both well trained voice and drama teachers and skilled performers, operating within a clearly constructed curriculum led to her innovative “Diploma of Dramatic Art” (Frye 2011:89) being accepted by the University of London in 1923. It was one of the

first degrees offered in Drama in England. Voice training was one of the key aspects of the three year training course and graduates from the Central School worked all over the world after completing their studies (Frye 2011:89). Her sound technical background, especially her understanding of natural, supported breathing and using the resonant properties and potential of the tone of the voice for greater projection, in a more released manner, was probably ahead of the current practice at the time (Frye 2011:90). She supported the teachings of medical doctor and voice specialist William A. Aikin (Frye 2011:90) and in vocal performance, she acknowledged that William Poel, Shakespearean director in the 1890s, had a strong influence on her desire for actors to have a more contemporary, spoken sound and fast paced, flowing delivery. She also advocated integrating voice and body awareness before the influence of someone like Michel Saint-Denis was felt in English drama schools and theatre.

Berry herself says in *The Actor and the Text*, that Fogerty had an actor's perspective on training:

She was perhaps the first person to look realistically at the needs of the actor, and to turn attention from this 'voice beautiful' with its accompanying rhetorical style and gesture, and focus instead on the meaning and texture of the spoken word. (Berry 1992:287)

This more holistic approach to the art of speaking and acting was conveyed through Fogerty's own teaching methods and was continued by Gwynneth Thurburn who later succeeded her as Principal of the Central School. Interestingly, the idea of using a bone-prop to clarify movements of muscles in the tongue, lips, jaw and to improve articulation was still used by Cicely Berry in the 1970s and 1980s (Frye 2011:90). The little prop, invented by Aiken and actively used by Fogerty (Frye 2011:92) is one of many older devices and exercises still referred to in speech training today. When one reads Rinda Frye's informative and entertaining article on Elsie Fogerty it is clear that she was the (rather underestimated) fore-runner of systematised, modern voice training in Britain:

Fogerty was the harbinger of change in attitudes toward acting and actor training, and like most pioneers, her ideas were often as rooted in the old as in the new...Through her ministrations Central School developed its well-deserved reputation as one of the best actor training programmes in the country. (Frye 2011:92,93)

2.3 The influence of Gwynneth Thurburn

Gwynneth Thurburn brought an even more modern approach to drama training in the 1940s and 1950s. This was during Berry's first formal training years as a teacher and she

considered it to have an “open and modern” outlook—“Gwynneth was a most progressive and radical figure” (Berry 1992:287). Thurburn continued the strong tradition at Central to combine teacher and acting training (Berry 1992:287). Students were exposed to a wide range of texts; prose and poetry and dramatic text were included but the emphasis on poetry was what she found most valuable. Berry learnt the ground rules with regard to how formal or heightened language works, yet under Thurburn’s tutelage, a more personal approach was allowed in the interpretation and speaking of texts:

But what was important for me then was the time taken on the groundwork, ...and gave one the confidence to listen—and also to appreciate what was formal and what broke rules...[and] what was therefore interesting in another way. (Berry 1992:287)

She acknowledges that the changes in society after the Second World War and the new writing that emerged, also contributed to the change in the way texts were approached and spoken, as was heard in the plays by Arthur Miller in America and John Osborne and Arnold Wesker in England (Berry 1992:287).

Thurburn’s views on the importance of making connections to language, understanding the structures of various texts and her thorough technical background, provided a stimulating learning experience for the young teacher in the making. Thurburn’s great gift was teaching students to listen to the text being spoken and to really receive the thought being given by the other person, and so being open to the spontaneity of the moment (Berry 2001:34). Thurburn apparently held clear liberal views on politics; as Berry states “Gwynneth was a very well-informed, well-read person...a good socialist—which suited me, because I have always identified as left-wing” (Saklad 2011:49) and “it was this which informed her sense of service and the democracy of her teaching” (Berry 2001:34). However, she also credits Thurburn with transferring to her a sense of being “open and generous” in her attitude towards work and life (Saklad 2011:50). Berry obviously experienced practically this sense of the voice being part of one’s whole personality and that consequently, training also worked on revealing and expressing a sense of who you are. This idea of “open[ing] up” the voice (Saklad 2011:50) in order to express the full content of one’s thoughts and speaking have remained one of the cornerstones of Berry’s teaching until today.

Gwynneth Thurburn or Thurbie, as she was affectionately called by colleagues and friends (Lewsen 1993:1), was a beloved teacher, possessing a “great sense of humour which kept everything in perspective” (Berry 2001:34). She was generous in her willingness to invite guest-teachers and practitioners to Central School to share their knowledge with staff and students. In these early days she introduced influential figures like Michel Saint-Denis, Gerda Rink, Chrissy Hearn, Litz Pisk and Stephen Joseph (who pioneered the whole studio theatre

movement in the UK), to the School (Lewsen 1993:2). Her sense of “hospitality” as Lewsen puts it and being open to various approaches of such people, “not so much because they represented a sympathetic ideology, but for themselves, their intuition, their heart” (Lewsen 1993:2) seems to find a point of continuity in Cicely Berry’s way of working in the last four decades. Adrian Noble, Artistic Director at the RSC in the 1990s until 2003 (Rokison 2009:8) says of Berry in the foreword to *Text in Action* (2001):

She has an extraordinary knack of cutting the crap and focusing the essential challenge of a scene, or a speech...Her honesty, her intuitive understanding of actors and their processes ...have made her one of the most influential figures in world theatre.

I looked again at my own well-thumbed copy of Gwynneth Thurburn’s *Voice and Speech* (1965, with about eight reprints) and it brought back memories of my own early voice training at university in the late 1970s and early 1980s. One can clearly see that her views on the need for truthfulness in speech and voice work and communication being the most important point, was fully absorbed by Berry. An eminently sensible and clear approach that was extended by Berry in *Voice and the Actor* (1973,1986) some years later. Thurburn used the terms ‘muscular activity’ and ‘muscular sensation’ (Thurburn 1965:66–68) in a particular way to focus attention on clarity of sounds rather than too much emphasis on a person’s accent. Berry developed this broadminded view herself quite fully in *Voice and the Actor* (Chapter 3 is called ‘Muscularity and Word’) and subsequent books (Berry 1986:43).

The early, positive influence of speech teacher Barbara Bunch, during Berry’s school years seems also to have laid this early foundation to her work. Former student of both Bunch and Berry and later a colleague at Central, Catherine Fitzmaurice, well known internationally for her own work as a voice teacher, also attests to the lively enthusiasm for “acting and verse speaking” encouraged by Bunch who directed plays and taught acting too (Saklad 2011:93). Thurburn’s influence can perhaps also be felt in the earlier writings of Patsy Rodenburg, who is one of the younger teachers who trained under both her and Cicely Berry at the Central School (Saklad 2011:100).The idea of students speaking verse out aloud regularly to each other in a more informal manner and actively listening for the possibilities of the sound of the text emerged from Berry’s early years at Central School and her interactions with like-minded colleagues (Carey 2003:235). A real love of language and how to make it as clear as possible to the listeners, no matter the genre or style, is an essential basis or starting point for all these voice teachers’ work with students.

2.4 The influence of Saint-Denis, Poel and Granville-Barker

Berry thus, has been part of a long continuum of British voice and speech teachers who have all been connected to institutions who train actors and who were also further and importantly, inspired in these early decades by the work of French actor, teacher and director Michel Saint-Denis. He was a nephew of Jacques Copeau, the great French actor and teacher who founded the 'Ecole du Vieux-Colombier' in 1921 (Martin 1991:156). Saint-Denis founded the London Theatre Studio in 1935, just before the Second World War and brought a fresh approach to the English actor training system. His approach focused on the integration of aspects of training, e.g., releasing the creative play between voice, body and the imagination (Gordon 2009:159). He brought a greater awareness of physicality in acting which must also have influenced the style of vocal delivery, given his active encouragement of using improvisation skills (both non-verbal and verbal) to explore characters and scenes (Gordon 2009:159).

According to Gordon (2009:142) the older English playing tradition, established after the production methods of actor-managers such as Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and Sir Henry Irving and later Harley Granville-Barker were entrenched, is still to be found in the "naturalistic acting from the outside [to in] that still today characterizes performances in realistic plays on the stage and on television" (Gordon 2009:142). In reaction to the Victorian style of elaborate scenery and costumes and a melodramatic performance style, William Poel advocated a more language-based approach (Gordon 2009:143). Instead of paying too much attention to psychological motivation English actors were encouraged to find dramatic truth through the meaning and sound of the language in plays and to explore rhythm, tone and tempo to create character. Poel brought back the emphasis onto the words of the text and relegated sumptuous scenery and visual effects to the background (Gordon 2009:144). This attention to the text (particularly in Shakespearean productions), was refined and modernised further by Granville-Barker whose "aesthetic was as refined and spare as that of Copeau" (Gordon 2009:145).

In the early, twentieth century West End and Shakespearean productions, Granville-Barker aimed to establish a simpler acting style which combined a more subtle speaking style with the musicality of Poel's approach to rhythm and tempo, placed within a more open, abstract playing space on stage (Gordon 2009:146). The text and the playwright's vision was still considered paramount but a more flexible vocal approach was encouraged which reflected the modern sound in British society at the time (Gordon 2009:147).

Saint-Denis in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s brought an anti-realist approach to the theatre with strong emphasis on the physical, expressive qualities of the actor to the British theatre training and practice. Gordon states that "Saint-Denis more than anyone was responsible for

establishing the principles that would in time shape the curriculum of the modern British drama school” (Gordon 2009:147). He became head of the Old Vic Theatre School between 1947 and 1952 and is recognised for his tangible influence on many teachers and actors during this time; indeed on most of the drama schools in and around London. The idea of “action and physical expression” (Gordon 2009:148) brought a new dynamic to British acting.

He proposed a stronger emphasis on ensemble acting and the ideal actor was someone who would be both flexible in skills and temperament and who would be able to perform in many different styles of plays (Gordon 2009:148,149). He believed that a good actor required more than just technical skills. These views led to a freer and more creative approach towards training and also left its mark on voice and speech training ideals and methods. He questioned the historical value of adhering slavishly to the text and also suggested that movement and voice training should be taught together and not separately (Gordon 2009:152). He strongly believed that the student’s imagination should be actively developed along with technical training. Improvisation was incorporated into many facets of the curriculum (Gordon 2009:152). The importance of the awareness of the body as a whole was central to Saint-Denis’s philosophy of actor training (Gordon 2009:153).

This can be linked further to the work he felt should be done on the voice. He proposed singing to stretch the range of the voice and doing physical movements combined with tone exercises (Gordon 2009:155,156). Standard Speech was not considered to be necessary for all performances, “vocal play....and stimulation of the actor’s vocal-aural imagination was as important” and non-verbal and vocal improvisation was considered useful and necessary (Gordon 2009:156).

All these early influences on actor training seem to point the way to Cicely Berry’s development as a teacher and coach. Already one can see a connection to Saint-Denis’s ideas of exploring the text in a more creative, spontaneous way and how the words might demand to be played in certain ways and how the playwright therefore “might direct the actor” through the use of language (Gordon 2009:158). Of course, there must have been reciprocal influence coming from the British actors and their solid traditions (particularly vocal) but he does seem to have contributed towards loosening up rigidly held notions of speaking the text.

Saint-Denis’s view of the intuitive (Gordon 2009:167) being a crucial part of actor training and the importance of stimulating the imagination, rather than too much factual and psychological investigation into character work foreshadows the views held by Cicely Berry towards text and analysis. The expressive qualities of words (linked to their intentions of course) and sounds, and their release through the body was to become the main objective in her work with actors and indeed, speakers in other walks of life too.

One point of difference between methods proposed by Saint-Denis in the late 1940s and 1950s and Berry's later approach, is the importance of developing vocal tone quality through singing. Martin quotes Saint-Denis in *Voice and Modern Theatre* (1991:159,160): "Our concern is to awaken in the actor a musical and a poetic sensitivity capable of being translated to the stage...by modulated tones conditioned by the text". Berry certainly supports the idea of developing the resonance in an actor's voice but sees this as part of the general vocal training and not an end in itself. For her, the focus on the word is what is most important and that all technique is aimed at the clear release of thought embodied in the word. Beauty of tone was considered secondary. So, in her view the discipline of singing training, was not quite as useful for the demands made on the actor (Berry 1986:15,16). She reiterates this sentiment in an interview with Kate Parker, "The old ways made one think that the voice was too much like an instrument we use, rather than a part of ourselves" (Parker 1985:32).

However, Saint-Denis's concept of multi-faceted and integrated training was pursued most actively in the sixties and also affected the way rehearsals during productions were conducted, particularly as Gordon points out in "subsidized British theatre" (Gordon 2009:167). Saint-Denis was part of the British tradition of allowing the expressive actor, skilled both vocally and physically, to create a style of playing which emerged from rigorous exploration of the text itself, revealing the structure of the text clearly (Gordon 2009:167). The ideal for him was to find a "unified style of playing" that explored the full possibilities for performance from multiple, training perspectives (Gordon 2009:167). This idea of multiple approaches, yet with a unified vision, is also to be seen in Berry's work as she progressed from teaching at the Central School to becoming first, Head of Voice at the Royal Shakespeare Company in the seventies, and then in later years, Voice Director.

2.5 Berry's work at the Central School and in private practice

After her training was completed, Berry taught drama in schools all over the UK for two years before she returned to The Central School (Ellis 2010:35). Here, Berry was part of the actor-training division for six years and focused on teaching voice, breathing, resonance and articulation. She included a wide range of texts in the syllabus, particularly "verse of different styles and times" (Berry 2001:34). She also worked part-time for a while after having had a child (Ellis 2010:35). In addition to her work at the Central School, Berry also taught privately at her own studio in Drury Lane, London, during the 1960s and worked with well-known actors like Sean Connery and Anne Bancroft on their verbal skills. She says her focus was still largely on technique and on the sound of language (Berry 2001:34). There is not much available information about her private life during these years but she seems to have consulted with professionals in the business world and given workshops to schools and

teachers (Berry 1990:20). She discusses her experience of working with a research chemist, for instance, who struggled with articulating his words clearly (Berry 1990:21) and also interestingly, her sessions with a young clerk from a horse auctioneering company, who had a very strong Cockney accent. Her second book *Your Voice and How to use it Successfully* (1975, 1990) seems to be aimed at a more general speaker and not only actors, although much of the exercise material found in *Voice and The Actor* is included. There are different, fewer poetry and prose texts although they are still excellent for use by both the lay speaker and the actor. She also includes a final section called 'Speakers on Speaking' where public speakers like a politician, a clergyman and a BBC presenter discuss their approach to crafting their speeches and how they prepare for public presentations (Berry 1990:139–160).

After the publication of *Voice and the Actor* (1973) one senses that she attempted to reach out to the general speaker who needed expert advice on how to develop their voices and speaking. This reflects her democratic attitude towards speech work being beneficial, indeed necessary for people in most professions. Her books have been reprinted many times attesting to the demand for clear, accessible and well written speech training books.

Her husband, Harry Moore, was an American actor and teacher from New York who trained at The Actor's Studio. He came to England in 1950 and influenced or helped shape her way of working on actors' voices and text, in a different way to her previous training:

I became very interested, therefore, in finding ways of embracing both the English attitude—which focuses on making sense of things—and the American attitude, which is more about finding the emotion inside. (Saklad 2011:52)

She found it fascinating to experiment with 'the method' techniques, derived from Stanislavski's teachings and writing but adapted to the American style of a more intimate, emotionally charged kind of performance feel (as encouraged by the methods of Strasberg, Adler, Clurman): "I began to seek ways of making language relate in a *different* way to motive and feeling without losing its music" (Berry 1992:288). She was responding to the political mood of the time in the late 1960s and 1970s when young people were questioning established methods of teaching, training and education and the values of culture generally. The 'norm' of standard speech in Britain and the class connotations attached to this sound was being challenged and as she says, "some people went to the theatre wanting to hear the play the way it used to be/sound—others began to want to hear something new" (Berry 1992:288).

The function of some established theatre buildings were also being questioned after 1956 and new venues were sought out for performance. Both the form and content of plays were

under scrutiny and a 'revolutionary spirit' was felt in the Arts (Smith-Howard 2006:127). There was a need to re-evaluate and restage classical theatre too and not only modern plays.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to find anything further written about Mr Harry Moore and assume that Ms Berry has deliberately kept her family life as private as possible.

2.6 The influence of Peter Brook

Another important influence on Berry's methods and career was the contact she had with Peter Brook, the world renowned theatre director. They are from the same generation (both now in their late 80s) and came from a similar kind of theatrical background and must have shared many mutual friendships and acquaintances at the Royal Shakespeare Company and in London. Berry herself mentions her admiration for Brook's innovative way of working on productions, especially Shakespeare: "Then of course Peter Brook joined with me on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Well he was my guru, as it were" (Saklad 2011: 54) and in an article in *Plays and Players*, (Parker 1985:33) she states "I worked very closely with him. He helped me greatly in that he's very language orientated and does a lot of work with actors and exercises". Jaqueline Martin in *Voice and Modern Theatre* (1991:172) also refers to their collaboration... "when his [Brook's] way of working with the actors gave her [Berry] a kind of confidence in using particular exercises, about handing on language and so on".

Brook was asked by the Royal Shakespeare Company to direct *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1970 which became world famous for its innovative but simple design and fresh style of acting, which was much more physically expressive and used acrobatic and clowning techniques. It was considered a ground-breaking production and Berry apparently, was part of the process in working with the actors on the voice aspects. This must have been one of her first voice coaching projects with the RSC and she remains, after forty years, on their staff as Voice Director.

In my readings on this period of her career, I find it odd and regrettable that there is almost no mention of Berry's work and contribution to Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I looked through David Selbourne's book *The Making of A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Methuen:1982) which documents the entire rehearsal process from beginning to end and although there is a lot of commentary on how Brook related to the actors, the text, the physical and circus type work and the improvisation process around the text—perplexingly, there is nothing on the actual vocal exercises! I found this most frustrating. So too, when I read J.C Trewin's biography of Brook, *Peter Brook: A Biography* which ends with the 1970–1971 period and *A Theatrical Casebook* on Brook, compiled by David Williams

(Methuen:1988) which covers all his work until the late 1980s—deafening silence on Ms Berry’s involvement in the early Brook productions at the RSC.

Brook moved to Paris in the early 1970s to establish his permanent group “The International Center of Theatre Research...an organisation that would focus on both research and production” (Croyden 2003:xii). It may be that his and Berry’s collaboration was not extensive or continued in the UK after that but it does seem that certain aspects of the voice work was not acknowledged or recorded at the time. Brook after all, wrote the foreword to *Voice and the Actor* in 1973 in which he recognises her approach and abilities as a voice teacher:

And since life in the voice springs from emotion, drab and uninspiring technical exercises can never be sufficient. Cicely Berry never departs from the fundamental recognition that speaking is part of a whole: an expression of inner life...After a voice session with her I have known actors speak not of the voice but of a growth in human relationships...[she] sees the voice teacher as involved in all of a theatre’s work. (Brook in Berry 1973:3)

Brook and Berry do share a similar vision for the theatre perhaps, in a social and political sense and both feel that performances (of Shakespeare or contemporary writing), should feel alive and relevant for ‘now’, for audiences today and that all creative means should be found to connect people to their humanity. In a recent You-tube video interview about Brook’s latest production in New York, *The Valley of Astonishment*, he again eloquently restates his view that the reason for doing any text, whether it be Shakespeare or a contemporary text, is that it must ‘speak to us now’ and that the director and cast must do their best to find the most effective means to do so (Brook 2014: on ‘Encore’). Also the idea that there is no one way but many possibilities in the language of performance and to keep an open mind, is a shared one (Berry 1992:289, 292). Perhaps it is this feeling or conviction rather, that binds them as both friends and theatre colleagues, more than any specific work done together on a production. As Berry says (1992:294) “We must continually ask—what is right for now”. As Brook said a long time ago in a televised CBS interview with Margaret Croyden in *Conversations about Theatre* (1973): “We must always ask, what is theatre for? Why are you doing it?” Martin also states in *Voice and Modern Theatre* (1991:75,76,77):

Brook is concerned with creating theatre which is important now—an ‘immediate theatre’...which is close to [people] them, which deals with their actions...He prefers the actor whose voice and creative abilities are open to nature and the instincts of the moment.

2.7 Berry and The Royal Shakespeare Company from 1970–1990 and thereafter

Her work with actors and directors at the Royal Shakespeare Company took Berry further along her career path and inspired her development as a voice, language coach and teacher. The next three decades established her reputation as one of the influential trainers and writers on Voice in the world. The 1970s and 1980s seemed to result in some of the best work the RSC had done and Berry was actively involved in working with important directors like Peter Hall, John Barton, Terry Hands, Trevor Nunn and Adrian Noble. This is supported by Gordon's comment (2009:173) that the RSC "between 1964 and the early 1980s...had a world reputation for unparalleled excellence". She also led several educational theatre projects in these times that received critical acclaim. In some of these projects she started to assume the role of director or facilitator, and not only voice coach. I have devoted some time to discussion of circumstances in the Royal Shakespeare Company that led to this growth in her career in this following section. These were truly formative years for Berry in developing her approach towards working with actors on exploring language and also taking charge of interpretative and other practical aspects in productions, in relation to doing/ facilitating the more traditional voice work on a regular basis with the actors.

It would seem that in the early 1960s British Theatre was ready for new European influences on its acting and directing methods and styles which had become rather staid. The performance style in both voice and physicality shown by actors such as Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Edith Evans and Peggy Ashcroft, was being challenged by a new generation of actors who responded to the more working-class attitudes and tone exemplified by the new writing that emerged after the Second World War. As Gordon says quite plainly "the vast majority of British actors [in the 1950s] had no experience of the approaches of Stanislavski, Strasberg, Meyerhold, or Brecht and no knowledge of Artaud" (Gordon 2009:169).

Peter Hall was Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1960s and advocated a newer approach to both acting and directing Shakespeare, which was more in touch with contemporary society. (Smith-Howard 2013:2 in *Early Modern Studies Journal*). He also encouraged the inclusion of modern plays for the repertoire along with the Shakespearean texts. He aimed to bring a new 'vitality' (Smith-Howard in *EMSJ*: 2013:2) to both the rehearsal process and the staging of these works. He was supported by Peter Brook and Michel Saint-Denis who both saw the opportunity for renewal in performance style through rethinking some conventional, directing approaches and acting methods. Especially Brook was very interested in bringing "cutting-edge, European theatre aesthetics espoused by Artaud and Kott" (Smith-Howard 2013:2) to the RSC. There was a need to revitalise classic theatre with a contemporary energy and spirit. This led to many

experiments of which the Cruel Theatre Season (initiated by Brook in 1963–1964, in collaboration with Jerzy Grotowski and Charles Marowitz) was one of the most provocative and successful in this year.

The series of performances were presented at the LAMDA Studio Theatre and particularly the production of *Marat/Sade* by Peter Weiss was highly regarded (Beauman 1982:272,273). Brook worked with some of the RSC actors who were traditionally trained and challenged them to find ways of destroying conventional forms of acting and speaking. Vocal delivery was broken down into sounds, different rhythms, chants, non-comprehensible, fragmented language and even shock-tactics were used to make the audience feel a strong emotional reaction. The aim was to find an immediate way of communicating an internal state to the audience (Martin 1991:78,79). After this season it seemed that the RSC was becoming “politically provocative ...The company was developing a radical identity which could be seen in every aspect of its existence” (Beauman 1982:273).

Peter Hall was a dynamic director, with a strong personality, who also had tremendous flair for the business side and was responsible for taking the Royal Shakespeare Company to new heights (Beauman 1982:239–244). In 1962 Hall embarked on *The Wars of the Roses*, a full exploration in productions of Shakespeare’s History plays (Beauman:249) and which many consider to be his finest achievement with the Company at the time. There was a strong, disciplined work ethic among the actors and the directors and in between long rehearsals, they were expected to do classes in movement, voice and singing. Sonnet classes were also done with John Barton and Saint-Denis worked on acting techniques and scene work in a studio context (Beauman 1982:267). Interestingly, only at this fairly late stage of the RSC’s existence was there a feeling of an

RSC style [that] began to emerge, a style [that was] partly visual, embodied in John Bury’s spare Brechtian style of design, but it was also a style of speaking verse which married with that design, and which [Kenneth] Tynan was to refer to as one of the “Hall-marks” of an RSC production. (Beauman 1982:267)

Hall himself, felt that one of his greatest contributions to establishing a kind of performance style within the RSC was his work done on verse-speaking. In his early years at Stratford there were two styles employed. One was verging on the operatic, “relying on beautiful musical cadenzas, often at the expense of sense” (Beauman 1982:268). He aimed for a style of speaking that was more “dry, cool and intellectual” (Beauman 1982:268) and focused on the meaning being clear. The other approach that Hall encountered and also disapproved of, was the more naturalistic approach that was becoming popular among the younger actors. He felt that they were losing an understanding of the shape and structure of the verse

(Beauman 1982:268). This led to him employing a “drier, intensely rational, highly disciplined” way of working in the sixties (Beauman 1982:268). Cicely Berry started out with Hall and John Barton in her early days and some of this approach to the shape and form of verse or heightened writing, can definitely be seen in her own views. However, in the 1970s there was again a feeling that attitudes and methods of working had to change and even Hall apparently felt that a freer approach to acting and verse-speaking was inevitable (Beauman 1982:69).

Hall also succeeded in establishing another venue for the RSC in London at the Aldwych Theatre where their work could be seen by a wider audience (Gordon 2009:169). The Aldwych was again replaced by the new Barbican Theatre in the 1970s. Hall left the RSC in 1968 with some sense of disillusionment, due to ill health, career burn-out and disagreements with management about the administrative and financial aspects of running the Company (Beauman 1982:285). He handed over the directorship to Trevor Nunn, a young Cambridge educated director whom he considered “an English classicist to the core, but sceptical and pragmatic; an emotional intellectual” (Beauman 1982:292). Hall later became the Artistic Director of the new National Theatre in London in 1973 (Beauman 1982:296) where he pursued a very successful career in staging new, more commercial works alongside the classics.

2.7.1 The Other Place—the RSC’s first small theatre

In the late 1960s a new, additional theatre space was erected alongside the RSC Theatre in Stratford and was known as The Other Place. This theatre, apparently more like a large tin shed, with few technical facilities, placed the audience and actors in close proximity to each other. It seated 140 people (Beauman 1982:321). This studio-like space allowed for a more intimate relationship and a less formal approach to the Shakespeare plays. New works were also performed along with the classics. A more collaborative, ensemble approach was encouraged between the actors. The mood was changing towards the political climate of the 1970s. Initially, this change was encouraged by Trevor Nunn and Terry Hands. Hands developed the early travelling or touring productions which “played in schools, factories, small church halls, and had a wide variety of programmes ranging from those aimed at children to actors’ workshop courses” (Beauman 1982:297). He aimed for smaller budget productions of Shakespeare and other projects that “placed emphasis on cheapness and minimal scenic effect” (Beauman 1982:297).

A young director, who had worked with Hands as an assistant on some of these earlier productions, Mary Ann “Buzz” Goodbody, was particularly influential in the years that she was part of the RSC. She was the first woman director at the RSC (Beauman 1982:302) and in 1973 put forward a manifesto of principles that embodied an alternative vision for the

company. It included ideas on making classical theatre more accessible for audiences, providing cheaper tickets, moving away from the rather restrictive, proscenium stage set-up and using minimalist sets and décor, including more local work and creating more quality educational projects in the community, as an extension of the RSC's activities (Smith-Howard 2013:2,3,4) She was a committed feminist and also started the feminist theatre company, the "Women's Street Theatre Group" in 1971 (Beauman 1982:320).

Goodbody set the tone and standard for productions in the Other Place in these few years (late 1960s to mid-1970s) and there was an ethos of experimentation; a more restrained playing style as opposed to a more 'musical', rhythmical approach (Saklad 2011:57) and also a more direct, conversational tone in the speaking of the text, leading to a more personal connection to the audience. Her production of *Hamlet* in 1975, with Ben Kingsley playing Hamlet, was apparently one of the highpoints of the RSC's work in a decade. Goodbody placed it in a simple, neutral modern setting and the acting style was intense, fast-paced and naturalistic in the small playing space. Vocally it was more toned-down and direct in its approach. It struck an immediate chord with the audiences and succeeded in highlighting and connecting the complex network of personal relationships in the play to the larger, political issues (Beauman 1982:329,330). Cicely Berry was by this time actively working at the Other Place and with the RSC in the renamed Royal Shakespeare Theatre (previously the Memorial Theatre) and supported Goodbody's objectives for the theatre and the company. As Smith–Howard (2013:9) states:

Artistic truth, emotional honesty, engaging audiences in acts of direct discovery, unencumbered by the proscenium or superfluous scenic detail...these are the lessons of the Other Place.

It was in this kind of artistic environment that Berry could flourish and assist in making her contribution towards making classical and modern texts accessible and understandable to both actors and audiences. Thirteen Shakespeare plays were produced at the Other Place between 1974—1989 and in this period, John Barton, Trevor Nunn, Adrian Noble from 1991 to 2003 (Rokison 2011:8) all had terms as Artistic Director of the RSC. After Goodbody's untimely death at a young age in 1975, the character and nature of the Other Place changed and seemed to lose some of its earlier energy and impetus. However, as Smith-Howard (2013:8) says:

Many directors such as Cicely Berry, Trevor Nunn, Ron Daniels, Keith Hack, Bill Alexander, John Barton and Deborah Warner were very committed to maintaining Goodbody's objectives...and many of these directors directly credit Goodbody and her directorial style as a central inspiration for their own methods and practice.

These early directors at the RSC in the 1970s built on the foundation established by Hall and Goodbody and also left their own particular, individual stamps on rehearsal methods and interpretation of the texts. Gordon suggests that John Barton had the most initial influence on the Company's style of acting and speaking Shakespeare in the 1960s. He became an associate director in 1964. Barton was a Cambridge scholar who respected the structure of the language and emphasised the need to make clear, unsentimental sense of the lines, rather than focusing on well-modulated tone and musicality in vocal delivery (Gordon 2009:170). Respect for the text, tempered by also recognising the need to find a contemporary connection to the words seem to have been the main aspect of his approach. He seems to hold to the idea that the text, particularly the verse in the plays, contains the guide to interpretation and that the actor and indeed, the director should allow him/herself to be guided by that and not impose too individualistic a view (Gordon 2009:170).

Berry comments on her experience with Barton (Saklad 2011:50) during this time: "John Barton sought out the structure of the language, finding the opposites in the language, finding the different forms of language, and getting actors to honor that". This attention to the details and structure underlying a dramatic or poetic text also forms a big part of her approach, particularly as discussed in *The Actor and the Text* (1992).

Trevor Nunn, as mentioned earlier, was next in line as Artistic Director after Peter Hall and he and Berry worked very comfortably together by all accounts. He employed her as full 'voice person' in the company to work with the young actors (Saklad 2011:50) and it seems that he was the first director to realise the valuable input of a permanent voice/language coach for the company. Nunn explored the issues of the plays on a more intimate scale and focused more on the relationships between the characters and not only the verse structure and technical aspects. Berry remembers the intensity of the working process on their first production, *The Winter's Tale* and how "Trevor was always going for the intimacy between characters and how they interacted and connected with each other" (Saklad 2011:50). Nunn departed from the usual RSC style of the time and while maintaining simplicity in the set design, went for a stylized, "flamboyantly theatrical", symbolic concept in his acclaimed production of *The Revenger's Tragedy* by Tourneur (Beauman 1982:291). She refers to the style of playing as being upbeat and "anti-naturalistic" (Beauman 1982:291) and having a finely choreographed feel; "music and sound played equally strong roles, heightening mood" (Beauman 1982:301). As Hall himself stated "I felt...my successor had to belong to the next generation" (Beauman 1982:292) and Nunn was the director who would take the RSC forward in the next decade.

Terry Hands again, specialised in the history plays and followed a different approach focusing on stronger projection of lines and a much faster tempo in vocal delivery (Saklad

2011:50). Berry seems to have taken all these different methods in her stride and learned to adapt to various directors' approaches to production with remarkable ease and calm. She realised that the voice 'person' as she was called in the early days had to be a kind of go-between with the actors and the director and that she could play a very important role in keeping actors confident in their ability, no matter the changing style and demands from the director: "that was when I started to evolve exercises that would help the actors keep their integrity—their own sense of what the truth was—and still honor what the director wanted" (Saklad 2011:50).

She tells humorous anecdotes about her early appointment as Head of Voice to Kate Parker in *Goodbye, Voice Beautiful* (Parker 1985:32). Apparently the actors, and probably some of the directors, were rather suspicious of her role initially and it took about seven years or so before she felt they trusted her intentions and her way of working with them. She had to pay her dues by responding to the times; using only what was really relevant from her traditional training and devising new exercises for the actors that had less to do with so-called correct accents and beautiful tone and more with releasing tension, connecting with breathing in a deeper way and more emphasis on clear meaning and energising the words. She also became more aware of actors' needs and the personal nature of working on someone's voice (Parker 1985: 32,33).

2.7.2 The educational programmes at the RSC and Berry

Soon after her appointment in 1970 at the RSC, Cicely Berry also became involved in the newly established education programmes of the Company. Directors like Terry Hands and Buzz Goodbody were eager to take adapted productions of Shakespeare into the broader community, particularly to schools and community centres. They also wished to break down the barriers some people may have experienced in attending a more formal, theatrical performance, by using the Other Place. The aim was to make the classics more accessible to younger people who were the potential new audiences of the future. This outreach also involved workshops and discussions after performances. The smaller, intimate setting of The Other Place theatre in Stratford also helped create a friendlier, welcoming atmosphere for attracting non-theatre goers, as well as young people.

Buzz Goodbody had great success with her production in this respect, of *King Lear* in 1974 (Smith-Howard 2006:35,36). It is likely that Berry could have seen this production which according to Smith-Howard emphasised the personal, familial relationships in the play and also "invited its audience to reconsider issues of power, authority, kingship, corruption and poverty in an historical and political context" (Smith-Howard 2006:38). It appealed directly to the emotions of the audience and had a "truth and honesty...[and an] interactive style of performance [which] incorporated the audience into the performance" (Smith-Howard

2006:41). The text was brought alive in the space in a very direct and physical way which was both “challenging and entertaining” (Smith-Howard 2006:42). This kind of contemporary approach to the text and making it relevant to issues audiences could relate to, was also one of the seeds that took hold in Berry’s work in the 1970s and early 1980s.

In her book *The Actor and the Text* (1987,1992) Berry comments on this phase of her career. She took her educational work very seriously and is very proud of the “forceful unit” (Berry 1992:288) that the RSC educational programme became. Over the years, she herself conducted many workshops at schools for both students and teachers (mostly on Shakespeare) and worked with community groups on exploring the language. In Stratford she also started an initiative for English and drama teachers which was supported by the Ministry of Education (Berry 2001:39). It was during this time that she actively started developing her ideas on finding physical and imaginative exercises to help students release their voices and free up their responses to the text. She often worked in areas considered as “rough” or in what she refers to as “low ability schools” (Parker 1985:32) where Shakespeare was not read or popular and was amazed at the response to the words once the learners were allowed to explore the text freely and in a creative way as a group. She remembers the large number of workshops done at some Newcastle schools as being particularly energetic and exciting (Parker 1985:32). Indeed, she says that these learners often showed a more imaginative interpretation of the text because they were encouraged not to be limited by ideas of what was correct and proper in their speaking aloud (Berry 1992:289). She acknowledges the influence this workshop-approach had within such institutions, on the work she then subsequently did with the RSC-trained actors, as being very fruitful.

Unfortunately, there is not much detail about these years, specifically in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the projects she undertook. She refers to some specific events in her books (*The Actor and the Text* and *The Text in Action*) namely, two important educational projects on *Othello* and *King Lear* (Berry 2001:40) but one wishes that more could have been recorded. The workshop on *Othello* apparently involved a group of teenage boys who were initially difficult to work with and seemingly uninterested in what Berry had to offer. She made them do a very physical exercise, pulling at each other with linked arms while speaking the text and encouraged them to release their feelings while moving. It resulted in some chaos in the classroom, but in this way they became involved in the physical sensation and intensity of the words and seemed to connect more to what was going on in the character of Othello’s mind (Berry 2001:41).

The workshop on *King Lear* was with “a group of what [she] was told were ‘low-ability readers’, also in London” (Berry 2001:41). Berry was impressed with the young people’s ability, once they were more comfortable with the language, to find the essence of the

important imagery in Act 1, scene ii, in Edmund's speech where he describes his feelings of inferiority in being a bastard. They connected to their own experience of feeling 'black', 'poor' and 'ugly' (Berry 2001:41) even though they did not fully comprehend all the meanings and subtlety of the language. This is a very interesting, early observation made by Berry—that you don't need to understand every word fully (at first, anyway) in Shakespeare and other heightened, dramatic texts in order to make a kind of performance sense of it. I feel that this insight freed her up to develop many exercises that are physically based, allowing the actor freedom and confidence in expressing words: "through the physical exercises they were able objectively to find the sound and force of those words, and gain confidence in speaking them" (Berry 2001:42).

King Lear is the play she considers to be the most important ever written and Berry has travelled with it, so to speak, throughout her life (Berry 2008:173). Already in these early days of teaching workshops to children, teachers and professional actors she was creating exercises that helped the individual and the group understand the dramatic meaning inherent in the words and the creative potential in expressing the images contained in the language. Berry encouraged individual responses to the work; a sense of danger and being incorrect and says "we have to continually find ways for the actor to get behind the literal meaning and connect with the words at their very root" (Berry 2001:42). This she has endeavoured to do throughout her work and the foundations of her approach were established and flourished, I feel, as a result of her fortunate position in being part of a highly professional, theatrical company but also having regular contact with untrained or semi-trained people from all walks of life, in the workshop situation.

2.7.3 Recognition as director: the success of *King Lear*

In 1988 Berry was given the opportunity by Tony Hill, then head of the RSC's Education Department, to work again on *King Lear*, this time as full director and facilitator. The production would be performed at The Other Place (the old 'tin hut' as it was affectionately called by the theatre people) in Stratford and she and the cast would also present a series of interactive workshops with the attendees, which focused on Shakespeare's language (Berry 2008:172). It must have been one of the last productions put on there because in the following year, 1989, The Other Place was torn down. It was rebuilt and the new building reopened in 1991 but Berry feels it did not recapture the casual intimacy and rough energy of the former space, "in spite of its facilities and its elegance, it does not have quite the ambience of that original 'other' place" (Berry 2008:172).

Berry's aim was a little different to the memory of an earlier, successful *King Lear*, directed by Buzz Goodbody in 1974. Goodbody wanted to make the play exciting and accessible to young audiences in particular. Now, fourteen years later, Berry's "objective was to challenge

and re-educate actors and audiences” (Smith-Howard 2006:43). Her aim was to fully explore the language of the text in a more experimental way and to allow the actors to collaborate with her to find the essential actions, images, sounds from the thoughts of the play. This would lead her and the cast to finding a production concept or idea which was not pre-determined (Smith-Howard 2006:43). This method of working was a workshop situation, which she welcomed as a distinct change from the usual “repertory system” (Smith-Howard 2006:43) and its processes; a way of working she was very familiar with. As she herself says:

I wanted to approach the play by speaking it first, and listening to the movement and texture of the language, before coming to conclusions about character, place and relationships. I wanted them to hear where the language takes us. (Berry 2008:172)

Berry had been working at the RSC for almost two decades and it is both puzzling and revealing that she was not given a chance to direct officially for the Company before. Not many women it seems were given such opportunities until the late 1980s. Goodbody had been one of the early exceptions and Katie Mitchell and Deborah Warner only followed as directors in 1988 (Smith-Howard 2013:4). Although the production started off as an educational project with actors from the RSC who volunteered to participate, it soon evolved into a fresh, exciting show that somehow connected with audiences in a new and immediate way. The play was very well received by audiences and critics alike and later transferred to London for a full run at the Almeida Theatre. It was also nominated for The Evening Standard Drama Award (Smith-Howard 2006:47).

Berry’s discoveries during the rehearsal process were to build on and influence her way of working on text with actors in the future and many of her exercises had their origins or were extended even further in this production of *King Lear*. It is important to note what the main aspects of her approach to the text and rehearsal were. I have gathered the following comments from Berry’s own short discussion on the *Lear* working process, ‘King Lear in Retrospect’ in her book *From Word to Play* (2008) and Alycia Smith-Howard’s Chapter 2, *King Lear and the Commitment to Education* in her book, *Studio Shakespeare: The Royal Shakespeare Company at the Other Place* (2006).

Besides working on such a complex play, Berry had time constraints to deal with, as some of her lead actors were also understudies for lead roles in *The Tempest* at the Main House and the rehearsal period was far shorter than expected. From what I read it seemed like only four weeks! The actor who played Lear was a South African, Richard Haddon Haines, and was highly regarded by Berry and fellow players, “a tremendous South African actor” (Berry 2008:173). Fortunately, the cast were volunteers from the RSC and thus committed to the educational aims of the project. In a dvd made in 2005 on Berry’s work, one of the original

actors was interviewed on the working process of the 1988 production of *King Lear* and clearly states that the actors were very keen to work with her, as they knew it was going to be a 'different' kind of production (*Where Words Prevail*: 2005).

On the technical side there was a lot of support from Chris Dyer who did the design and instinctively understood Berry's idea of a simple, yet effective design that would represent the essence of the play's ideas on a larger, symbolic level/scale. The concern was how to make the play and its big issues work within a small studio space. She was also assisted very ably by Katie Mitchell who was the assistant director. There was a real sense of ensemble and co-creation among the cast and crew despite practical difficulties that emerged (Berry 2008:173). Even Edward Bond, the playwright, also a colleague and close friend of Berry, contributed his view of the play and suggested: "It is a play where people are getting on and off trains with a lot of luggage" (Berry 2008:173). This Berry took on board as her central idea for the action of the play as a whole. The whole group also enjoyed the challenge of finding creative solutions and were guided in a very positive, innovative way by Berry to get there (Berry 2008:173,176).

She approached the text with an open mind and had no set, pre-determined ideas about character, design, style (although she knew the play well of course, having worked on it before in other contexts). She intended "to create the world [of the play] through the language" (Berry 2008:175). According to Smith-Howard's account a great deal of time in the first two weeks was spent on simply speaking the text and finding "the rhythm, movement and texture of the language and only then coming to conclusions about character, time, relationships" (Smith-Howard 2006:43). The actors were encouraged to listen to each other's use of language as fully as possible and what that might reveal about their characters to each other. Then work was done on finding the "physical nature of the images" which involved various improvisations and movement on speeches, such as miming images, running and repeating words that suggested violence in the storm scene, etc. (Smith-Howard 2006:43,44). An interesting point was that all the actors worked on certain key scenes, whether they were in that scene or not. This must have given a sense of collective ownership to the cast.

After two weeks of rehearsal some functional props were introduced and various tasks were devised for the actors by Berry e.g. using suitcases and boxes, which linked to the idea of the carrying of 'baggage' theme. This resulted in a lively, rather chaotic use of the space but conveyed the idea of travelling through the land or kingdom and what it meant to each character to be on this journey (Berry 2008:176). At some point the idea for the set took shape from these improvisations and it was decided that the floor space would be a map drawn on a concrete floor or platform, representing "a harsh and exposed land...cold, and

unforgiving” (Smith-Howard 2006:45). This map would later “break and fall apart, creating different layers and planes” (Berry 2008:177). As Berry says, “it also spoke vividly of the divided nation and the broken world of Lear’s mind” (Berry 2008:177). The blocking too was not finally set and changed as the performances developed (Smith-Howard 2006:45). The audience was physically very close to the actors and the action was staged “within and all around” them and they were “actively engaged in the speaking and the pain” (Smith-Howard 2006:47).

Some of the most exciting work however, was done on the storm scene set on the heath. All the actors participated in creating the sounds and the atmosphere of the storm even when not required to be in the scene. It became a full ensemble effort where scenes were played simultaneously in the space while Lear was on the heath exposed to the elements. The actors repeated words and lines, threw objects such as leaves and greenery at him, used suggestive noises varying from whispers to shouts to echo the “disturbances of Lear’s mind” (Smith-Howard 2008:46). Maureen Beattie, actor in the show, tells in the dvd (*Where Words Prevail*: 2005) of how the cast suggested and posed the question of where the storm was actually taking place—in Lear’s head or outside in the Elements? At times he was rendered speechless and the other actors spoke his words for him suggesting his complete breakdown emotionally. Cordelia also spoke one of her speeches in German which was meant to be an expression of her true, inner thoughts, emotions and ‘spiritual state’ (Smith-Howard 2006:46,47). Additional sound was also recorded by Tim Oliver, the sound designer, and sometimes the sound was distorted, slowed down or speeded up but was used mostly in a subtle way at certain moments to underscore important moments in the play. Random sounds made by the actors were used in unusual ways e.g. a sneeze “accompanied the blinding of Gloucester” (Berry 2008:177). Sound itself, and not only the words, was thus used creatively to create the world of the play.

In reading these accounts it seems there was a real sense of freedom and spontaneity in handling the text vocally and physically by the actors, which energised this production and lifted it to another level. As Smith-Howard (2006:46) states:

In her work Berry advocates a significant change in attitudes towards words and language. She emphasises that speech is not only a form of communication but also a vital part of our individual essence and expression and that... this freedom is essential for enabling actors to completely invest themselves in the language and to ultimately make the words active, accessible and alive.

As a director Berry was generous in acknowledging the support and expertise of all those involved with her on this production and was also justifiably proud, that a project that started

out without any pretensions of going further than Stratford, would catch the imaginations of audiences and become a London success. One wishes that there could have been more offers to direct after this but it seems the RSC did not actively engage her as a director again which is rather curious, given the success of the production. The documentary dvd *Where Words Prevail* (2005) looks at Berry's work in the last few decades and some of the original cast members and Michael Billington, the respected London reviewer, are interviewed about their experience of the *King Lear* Production.

Billington was most impressed with Berry and the cast's interpretation and handling of the play. He felt the production, in contrast to many others, brought out a note of hope and optimism, despite the bleakness overall. He also suggests that this feeling of optimism reflects something of Berry's own personality towards finding more nuances in such a great work and compliments her on having a "gift" for "energising actors" (*Where Words Prevail*: 2005). He also found it puzzling that she was not asked by the RSC to direct again, officially, and comments that perhaps she was not as focused as some people on career advancement and therefore, conveniently overlooked by those who were intent on doing so.

Reading about this production of *King Lear* and the link made between the vocal work and the creative exploration of the text, is what has inspired me to pursue a similar idea. I'm going to try and find a performance or directing concept which is not fully pre-determined; by using some of her ideas and exercises on language, sound and character as a springboard for exploring a contemporary South African text with a small cast. This process of discovery will be discussed more fully in later chapters.

2.8 Work in Prisons

Berry also worked in and offered workshops at several prisons in the 1980s, 1990s and into the early 2000s. This was an extension of her work done at schools and one senses, also very important in her discovery of what makes people connect to language and gain better understanding of not only the text, but themselves. She took Shakespeare to people in high-security prisons, one of which was HM Prison: Long Lartin, and was amazed at how open the inmates were to her ideas and found connections to their own situation in plays such as *King Lear* and *The Winter's Tale* (Berry 1992:290,291,292). She used many of the exercises she would normally use with actors such as moving on the words, exploring punctuation, expressing physical actions on strong words, finding different groupings of speakers and discussion of themes, etc. This released a great deal of energy and personal reactions which uncovered the violence inherent in the language and its images:

And so this work allowed me to see how text can be explored objectively, yet with a purpose to open up the individual to the possibility of defining

themselves through language...[and] confirms for me that, from a modern perspective, motive and feeling can tie directly to the word—and this, in any country with any speech pattern. (Berry 1992:292)

Paul Heritage, Head of Theatre at the University of London in 2004, consulted with Berry and invited her as Keynote Speaker to a Conference on ‘Theatre in Prisons’ during this time. In the dvd *Where Words Prevail*, he comments enthusiastically on Berry’s approach to this work at Dartmoor Prison, a top-security institution well known for housing the most serious offenders in the UK. She did similar work with the inmates there as she had previously done at other workshops; on breathing and movement exercises, exploring the text and making it accessible to read, allowing the prisoners to respond in their own way to the imagery and finding a personal confidence in doing so. Berry (1992:290) says, “This sense of finding their own voice and their own vibrations is essential—listening to the inner voice—the concentration of energy then becomes quite different”. Heritage felt that by focusing purely on the work at hand Berry created a space for these people to be fully present “in the moment”, which took them away from their terrible pasts (*Where Words Prevail*: 2005). In speaking the words of mostly Shakespeare, it seems, they found a connection to language and rhythm and found more effective ways to express themselves. These physical, vocal and dramatically inspired exercises, linked to the text, allowed for a kind of emotional release within clear boundaries:

We did this to open up the hidden agenda of the language and to reveal the ambivalence and complexity of the feelings underneath...they began to comprehend/imagine something of the structure of that society through the vocabulary used. (Berry 1992:291)

It is uncertain for how long Berry continued her association with prisons but as she became older, I’m sure the work and foundations she established must have been taken forward by other facilitators, who supported her aims and the hope that positive, self-expression through poetic language could lead to new insights and less violent behaviour.

2.9 Berry’s international work

Cicely Berry has always expressed quite clearly her support for allowing diversity in the sounds expressed by actors. As she says in *The Actor and the Text* (1992:22),

What seems to me important is that we in the theatre retain the power to excite people with language; it should not be owned by the educated and/or those who rule, so we must awaken people’s ears to the pleasure of verbal communication—to its music and to its cultural diversity.

She has presented workshops in China, India, Russia, Korea and Brazil and also in Europe (Iceland, Croatia and Poland) and comments positively in her observations of these different cultures (Berry 2001:59). What is noteworthy is that Berry seems to adapt her working methods with ease to the language of the group and that it doesn't have to be conducted in English. The common denominator though, is working on a Shakespearean text in languages such as Hindi, Mandarin, Portuguese and Russian. She knows the text so well that it doesn't matter if it's foreign and can hear instinctively where the nuances of thought and feeling lie in the speaker and whether it rings true or not in the sound and rhythm: "I hear where the actor is in the text, and what he/she is trying to do with it" (Berry 2001:21).

In her book *Text in Action* (2001), she describes a workshop on *King Lear* that she did in Beijing and how in tune the actors were at one point with the meaning of the dialogue and how this simply stood out for her, even though it was in Mandarin and pitched at a very different level compared to English intonation. Berry found the tonal aspects of the language difficult, at first, as in Mandarin the meaning changes as the tone shifts but, found that after taking time on the four key scenes (selected by the working group and herself), the actors found the "reality of the scene and the formality of the language—the exact rhythm and music" (Berry 2001:52,53).

She found a way to help this group to understand the words and the relationships between the characters that reflected the bigger issues in these scenes. Through specific work on the language itself they found their own emotional, connection to the older Mandarin translation, which to Berry's ear sounded "right, when someone hits the moment and is behind the word" (Berry 2001:52). I think this is an important insight of Berry; the recognition that actors or performers who speak with meaning, all do so through using the body, the tone and resonance of the voice, the pauses or spaces between words and the clarity of thought is made clear by specific attention to the sounds in words. This "depth and feeling" (Berry 2001:52) she could perceive very clearly from the Chinese actors in the workshop, without having to impose her own cultural view of the play and she poses the question or comment that "this surely is an area of collective understanding, something which transcends cultures" (Berry 2001:52). She states that this work truly made her "learn to listen" (Berry 2001:51).

Although I've not come across much criticism of Berry as a teacher, writer and of her views (in fact, quite the contrary), I have read an article by Richard Paul Knowles: *Shakespeare, Voice and Ideology—Interrogating the Natural Voice* (1996), where he questions her use of Shakespeare as a kind of 'universal' text that can be used in many different contexts and with culturally diverse actors. The author seems to come from a philosophical background, rather than a literary or theatrical one. He certainly acknowledges Berry and her books as having a "pivotal influence...in the history of Shakespearean performance in the twentieth

century” (Knowles 1996:92). His views are not the focus of my study at this point, but it is interesting how his theoretical idea of her methods and influence, seems at variance to how Berry experienced her own aims and work. As a practical voice teacher myself, it seems clear that one’s working methods can easily be misunderstood by those who do not engage with it physically in the working or rehearsal space. Berry has always stressed her political stance as left-wing and how Shakespeare can be interpreted world-wide from various perspectives:

For we surely have to keep asking—why is Shakespeare important to us today—and why is he relevant...he is nearly always dealing with very strong political issues—issues so often part of today’s world. (Carey 2003:232)

In India, Berry discovered in her workshops that actors felt freer to explore the sonnets and scenes in their own dialects, rather than only using the standardised Hindi text translations. She felt she needed to release them from only speaking in the accepted, standard Hindi sound. But all seemed to enjoy and benefit from working on the Shakespearean texts themselves and found themes of interest and connection. In Africa, Berry worked with groups of actors from all over Zimbabwe who spoke in different dialects. However, she found that the smaller theatre companies were able to work in English along with their own languages but that there was a strong desire to work more formally on scripted text. The groups (actors and directors) wanted “their work to be more educational, so that they could open up ideas, help deal with problems, and perhaps be more of a political source” (Berry 2001:54). In these workshops she used more poetry from various world renowned poets such as Neruda and Brecht, along with Shakespeare. She assisted the different cultural groups in combining a story-telling approach with a more formal exploration of a text and its language. This enabled the actors to later approach scripted plays with more knowledge and not only to rely on their own improvised material. Berry’s approach reflects an awareness of diversity and openness to interpretation, by allowing the actors to relate to the texts in their own way, yet finding specific qualities in the speaking of the words (Berry 2001:54,55). This imaginative approach combined with good, practical, vocal discipline is what many of these groups sought in their working process with her. She in turn felt “This visit taught me so much about cultural perspectives...and how we in the West are so influenced and caged in by time and space” (Berry 2001:55).

2.10 Berry and Brazil: her association with theatre groups, especially *Nos Do Morro* in Rio de Janeiro

Cicely Berry has had a long and fruitful collaboration with several theatre groups or companies in Brazil during the last twenty five years or so. She has also worked with prominent theatre director, writer, theorist and founder of Forum Theatre, Augusto Boal (Berry 2001:55). She mentions three companies which have been a special source of inspiration to her (Berry 2001:55). The first was a mainstream one that focused on classical texts and here she employed many of the methods that she used in Britain, working on Shakespeare and heightened language. It is interesting that many of these actors apparently also had very successful careers in television, working for El Globo soap operas. However, they found value in her workshops to maintain their vocal and verbal skills as theatre actors, alongside the more naturalistic technique needed for the camera (Berry 2001:55).

The second association was with Boal and his group or company. She has great admiration for the processes he embarked on, with his idea of theatre for ordinary citizens, often referred to as 'Theatre for the Oppressed' and 'Image Theatre', (Boal 1992:xix) and the aim of showing the possibility for social change:

The purpose is to heighten the awareness of the audience to specific social problems which surround their lives and give them a sense of their own right to challenge, argue and speak. (Berry 2001:55)

She invited Boal and his company to the UK in 1997 (Paterson 2014:6) to lead workshops with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Berry and the actors were particularly inspired by his innovative work on the text of *Hamlet* and how he encouraged them to make new connections to understanding the characters and language. Boal has a very physical approach and used different and stimulating methods of getting actors to unlock their responses to a text, such as "communicating the text through different parts of themselves i.e. the eyes, then faces, then bodies, before speaking the words" (Berry 2001:56). In this way the actors reflected the inner desires and motives of the characters. Boal also has great respect for Berry as a person and teacher and verbalises this in his warm, enthusiastic way in the dvd *Where Words Prevail* (2005). He says that she recognises the people from the Rio slums whom she works with, first as fellow human beings, and that she teaches from that perspective, not merely as a professional who has all the skills and answers. This personal and direct contact, with whatever group she teaches, combined with a sense of clarity and discipline in the vocal and textual content, is what he and others admire about her approach.

It is possible that Berry was influenced by some of his games and exercises and may have adapted or used some aspects of these improvisations in her own methods. In the theatre

world, especially among voice writers, trainers and directors who enjoy collaboration, ideas seem to be traded and developed all the time. Once they have been put onto paper in books they are used! I have not undertaken a detailed study of Boal and his potential influence is not a focus in my study, but it could be interesting to note their possible, mutual exchanges of workshop exercises on text. As Adrian Jackson, translator of Boal's book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992:xxii, xiii) rather humorously says:

Boal continues to invent new exercises and adapt old exercises with the vigour of a 20 year-old...magpie-like, he raids traditional games in whatever country he finds them, changes them if necessary to suit his particular goals, and then brings them back to his Paris and Rio centres like a hunter bringing back trophies...coupled with an immense and warm humanity, which I fear no translation could entirely convey.

Sadly, Augusto Boal died in 2009 after a long battle with leukemia (Paterson 2014:10).

The theatre group that Berry has had the longest association with in Rio de Janeiro is the Nos do Morro (Us from the Hillside) company and school, situated in one of the largest favelas or slum areas of this well-known city. The company of young performers was started in 1986 by journalist and actor, Guti Fraga, who believed in the power of art to transform people's lives and to give them a purpose beyond crime and drugs as a way to make a living. He wanted to bring the young people off the streets and to experience theatre work in all its facets (Berry 1992:57). Indeed, today the company has over 350 participants, owns its own premises and a small theatre and has been very successful in its combination of doing vibrant work of quality, promoting culture and uplifting the community (Busato Smith 2013:1). They have achieved international recognition for some of their touring theatre productions and audio-visual works. The recognised film *City of God* (2002) used forty-two actors from Nos do Morro.

Berry first visited Vidigal, name of the notorious area, in 1996 and she has been collaborating with the company on a regular basis since then. She acknowledges her joy and satisfaction in this continued interaction: "I am amazed by their hunger for work on language, and their measure of understanding" (Berry 1992:57). She works with them on Shakespearean text, in Portuguese, often local dialects too and follows a similar working method to her workshops conducted in other parts of the world. Language and class are not seen as cultural barriers and she encourages the groups to explore the words from their own point of view and background. Like Fraga, she feels that if the working/performing space is safe and the atmosphere positive, then the young actors can express themselves freely and be empowered by their creative work on the text. There is one scene towards the end of the dvd *Where Words Prevail* (2005) where the group is working on *Romeo and Juliet* and one of the

girls playing Juliet is being rejected by the other performers each time she turns to them and addresses her line or comment to them. One can see the genuine reaction of desperation and involvement from this young actress and the effect on her as she is alienated from the group as a whole. It brought across Juliet's sense of loneliness in a very tangible way. There was a lovely sense of understanding from the group in the discussion afterwards and Berry was among them, and not physically removed from the group. One could sense this exercise really helped the actors bring the characters off the page and into their realm of experience.

Her teaching in Vidigal aimed to support the sense of discipline and excellence in performance, established by Fraga over so many years (Berry 1992:57). This work is a continuation of the educational workshops Berry initiated in the 1980s at the RSC and the outreach programmes the Company has become known and respected for.

2.11 Theatre For A New Audience (TFANA): the New York Years

An exciting theatre organisation called Theatre For A New Audience, also referred to as TFANA (www.tfana.org), was founded in 1979 by Artistic Director, Jeffrey Horowitz in New York. Its mission was to develop and vitalise the performance and study of Shakespeare and Classical drama. In 2001 TFANA became the first American theatre company to bring a production of Shakespeare to the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon.

This company produces for Off-Broadway and tours nationally and internationally. It is now housed at the Polonsky Shakespeare Centre in Brooklyn, New York. It has been functioning successfully for three decades and in an overview on their website (www.tfana.org) it states:

Theatre for a New Audience is dedicated to the language and ideas of writers: to a dialogue between Shakespeare and a provocative range of classical and contemporary playwrights, such as Christopher Marlowe, Edward Bond and Adrienne Kennedy.

The Centre also has a strong educational aim and "sustains the largest program in New York City's public schools for introducing Shakespeare" (www.tfana.org). Teachers are given professional development and 2000 students participate each year: "These endeavours are grounded in the belief that the language and scope of classical drama belong to everyone" (www.tfana.org).

Cicely Berry has had a long and happy association with TFANA and currently still holds the position of Distinguished Resident Artist. She has worked regularly in the US for twenty years, in New York and at other University Drama Departments in the country, conducting workshops and coaching on plays and a few films. A notable film she worked on as voice specialist is *Titus Andronicus* (1999) (Wikipedia 2008:1), directed by American director Julie

Taymor (famous for her now iconic Broadway production of *The Lion King*). Since Berry's marriage to American actor Harry Moore, she seems to have maintained close ties with theatre colleagues in the States and clearly says that she feels "very at home with their approaches to acting and to text, both classical and modern" (Berry 2001:61). She saw her job in working with American actors, as assisting them to find the bridge between understanding the structure of texts; finding a clarity in speaking often, very complex thoughts and the balance between this and the "inner, emotional drive" that she admires in their focus on the more 'method' approach (Berry 2001:61). She feels she has been able to make a contribution to their training by helping them explore how "the language itself physically and muscularly expresses the feelings" (Ellis 2010:36) and to have an appreciation of the rhythm and the changes in the sound. As she states: "What you have to do is honor the language of Shakespeare as well as you can, but from your own background" (Ellis 2010:122).

This finding of an interconnection between the British and American approach has guided her work with TFANA actors over almost two decades. She has inspired many (now highly successful) American actors who have great appreciation for her practical, no-nonsense and open approach to the textual side. Berry also participated in a five-part educational dvd series on speaking heightened language in Shakespeare. It is called *The Working Shakespeare Library* and was initiated by Glenn Young who publishes Berry's books under the *Applause/Hal Leonard* imprint in the United States (Ellis 2010:121). Recognised actors like Samuel.L. Jackson, Helen Hunt, Blythe Danner and Claire Danes were among the group of performers. These dvds are a treasure trove of Berry's voice and textual exercises and a rare opportunity to see her in action. She is assisted in some of them by Andrew Wade, who worked with her at the RSC for many years and who these days is on the staff as Voice Director at TFANA. These workshops cover most of the essential aspects of acting/speaking Shakespeare such as, *Muscularity of Language* (no 1), *Under the Text* (no.2), *Prose and Verse Texts* (no.3), *The Whole Voice* (no.4) and *The Voice Preparation Workshop* (no.5) (*Working Shakespeare Library*: 2006). Some of these exercises and rehearsal methods will be referred to in chapters 4 and 5 of my study.

One of the most important collaborations to emerge for Berry in about 2002 or so, in association with TFANA and now The Polonsky Shakespeare Centre, has been her workshops conducted specifically for directors (Berry 2008:29). This phase of Berry's development is what I find exciting and especially relevant for my own exploration of her ideas; on finding ways for directors to discover fresh options in rehearsal via language in a text for performance.

As described in her last two books *Text in Action* (2001) and *From Word to Play* (2008), the workshops take place over a three-week period with usually eighteen actors and about five to six directors. The directors select their own scenes from either a Shakespearean or Jacobean text or both. The emphasis is on using a classical text but occasionally a heightened, modern text will also be chosen (Berry 2008:29). The process then involves doing traditional voice work for the first week with the whole group, guided by Berry and an assistant (Andrew Wade in the *Working Shakespeare* dvd series, 2004). She also takes them through the text and discusses various possibilities and strategies for each scene. This would amount to about twelve different scenes (two to three actors per scene) to work on. The groups then work on their own with a specific director. This structure allowed her more time to work individually with the actors and each director. Then Berry rotates from group to group offering suggestions and exercises that “might be useful” (Berry 2008:29). At the end of this initial working process all the groups gather and each presents their scenes. Feedback is given by Berry and the groups discuss their observations and the effect of the various exercises and strategies on their understanding of the text and their personal ability in playing or communicating character through language. Her aim is to explore the specific aspects of the language in a “creative rehearsal process, [which will] hopefully fuse both concept and character development with the structure and sound of the text itself” (Berry 2008:30).

Berry has found it very valuable to develop her ideas in this practical way over an extended period of about seven years (Berry 2008:29). She states her gratitude for the opportunity she’s had to take time on these exercises and how they could support “the differing needs of both actors and directors” (Berry 2001:63). She feels her method works “parallel to their ‘Method’ way of finding the want and motive in the character” (Berry 2001:63). Eight years after publication of *From Word to Play* (2008), in 2016 I am not sure whether she is still able to conduct these workshops in New York due to her advanced age, but given Berry’s zest and passion for continued working, I would not be surprised. This regular interaction between her and the participating American and British actors, I imagine must have led to further collaboration and cross-pollination across the Atlantic, to the mutual benefit of all and also the promotion of classical work as still being relevant to actor training today. TFANA continues their excellent work in this regard.

2.12 Recognition of Cicely Berry’s service in the theatre and voice training profession

Berry has received several awards and titles recognising her dedicated contribution over five decades to voice and actor training and the role of voice empowerment in society today.

She received an O.B.E. (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in 1985 and was nominated for a special award by the Arts Council of Britain in 1992 for her “response to the challenges posed by a technologically diverse and increasingly multi-cultural environment” (Wikipedia: 2013). In 1997 she was given an Honorary Doctorate by the National Academy of Film and Theatre Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria. Birmingham University also awarded her an Honorary Doctorate of Literature in 1999. In 2000 she received The Sam Wanamaker Prize for pioneering work in theatre (Wikipedia: 2013) and another Honorary Doctorate in Literature from the Open University. In 2009 Berry was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2009 Birthday Honours. She was also made an Honorary Fellow of the British Shakespeare Association in 2011.

In September 2013 she was honoured by her Alma Mater, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, by Patsy Rodenburg a former colleague at the RSC and now Head of Voice at Guildhall School, students and various other theatre luminaries such as Sir Trevor Nunn and education professionals, whom she had taught or worked with. All spoke of the strong impact she has made, not only at Central School but in the broader (‘often excluded’) communities and the professional theatre: “Cicely changed the face of voice work, making it the integral and essential part of theatre work it is today” (Central Alumni Newsletter: 2012:11). She gladly accepted the position of new Vice-President at the School and was presented with a commissioned portrait of herself which will join others in the passages, forming part of the long tradition of influential voice teachers. She humbly acknowledged again the formative role of her early teachers: “my portrait hanging beside Fogerty and Gwyneth Thurburn, could not be a greater honour” (Central School website: 2012, Central Alumni Newsletter: 2012:11).

Chapter 3 – Berry’s views on language and text and the centrality of sound in the theatre

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I attempted to provide an overview of Cicely Berry’s early and later career path and how her work as a voice and speech teacher, facilitator and later director, influenced her views on working on text in the theatre. Her passionate love of language, particularly poetic text or heightened, dramatic text was the true stimulus and led to her devising her own methods of exploring ways to assist actors and other speakers in finding the physical and imaginative connection to the words. This evolved into her using certain strategies with actors and directors in exploring texts to create exciting and more dynamic theatrical interpretations, both in characterisation and in finding the play’s essential ideas, as a whole. In this chapter I shall elaborate on her approach to using language, both classical and modern, and how an added awareness of sound in that language can lead to deeper and freer interpretation.

3.2 Sensitising performers to using language for exploring and creating character

In *The Actor and the Text* (1987, 1992 2nd edition) Berry is passionate and concerned about the care and responsibility actors have (or should have) about being articulate in conveying the thoughts of a specific play. This is her third book and she continues to put forward her belief or “mission”, as Trevor Nunn states in the foreword “to expand the awareness of language, its roots, its possibilities of meaning, its physical seat and vibration, its associations, its weight and texture and colour” (Berry 1992:7). She feels strongly that actors should not only work on the physical aspects of voice production such as breathing, resonance and articulation but that exercises should also be done on sensitising performers to how language is used for and by a character, or the speaker in a particular text like a poem (Berry 1992:15). Language is “part of the essence of that person” (Berry 1992:15) and the actor must try and find a way to communicate that through his own sense of self; “this asks for a continual blending of our own truth with the truth of the character” (Berry 1992:15). The actor needs to make a commitment to work through the text thoroughly on many levels and to allow the language to have a deep effect on her.

In order to allow this process of being open to the ideas, images and sounds that language can offer us the actor has to be aware of his own personal, emotional and physical states and to let go of limiting habits that could influence their creative, vocal responses. As Berry (1992:16) says, even experienced actors “tend to hold onto the sound which feels familiar,

and in which we have confidence". The actor needs security and wants to make his voice "behaveto be in control of it, and to some extent plan it" (Berry 1992:17). This could prevent further, creative exploration on a text.

Berry (1992:22) has clear thoughts on our often "over-educated response to words" and that we, in many professions (e.g. in education generally, literature studies, the legal and medical professions and many more), not just the theatrical or entertainment world, tend to be rather cerebral in our dealings with words. Even in the theatre, she says, more effort can be made to convey the pleasure/enjoyment of language to audiences. She finds it regrettable that our present culture seems to be more interested in visual stimuli rather than enjoying the aural stimuli of verbal communication (Berry 1992:285). She reminds us that views and perceptions about understanding language and making relevant interpretation, change every decade or so and that each generation will leave its own vocal stamp on aspects such as pronunciation and style. She believes in the music that "cultural diversity" brings to the individual's sound (Berry 1992:285). She recognises that there is also the fear of being wrong or sounding 'wrong' that leads to inhibited speaking and devoicing (Berry 1992:22). She feels we are both inhibited and often unaware of the physical effect that words can have on us and suggests that sometimes we lose the primitive connection to language by not feeling it in the body, "language, as well as being highly sophisticated, is also primitive in essence" (Berry 1992:19).

The essential purpose of words initially for humans was to communicate needs which often can be painful depending on the situation. Their intentions can change the way we feel or think and respond to others. Words are potentially "instruments of change within us" (Berry 1992:20) and she believes in the political power of words used and spoken in the theatre. Berry (1992:21) states that words are an "active force":

If we are truly to make words active, it asks for a commitment to the work beyond a personal commitment, which is to do with seeing theatre as a serious political force in the context of the society we live in...We must be ready for their shifts. (Berry 1992:21)

Therefore, Berry holds the view that the literary value of a text and the speaking of it to communicate the logical sense, is not to be rated above the instinctual response and the desire of the actor to connect to a more imaginative speaking of the ideas and feelings in the dialogue (Berry 1992:22).

Berry (1992) does however, recognise that although she fully supports the importance of the word and the idea of language being a central medium for the actor, words can sometimes be limiting to an actor if she cannot express them directly and clearly enough. Then language

can be seen as a constraint. This limitation for the actor can perhaps be felt more so when working on a classical text, but often contemporary text is also densely structured and difficult for an actor to ‘unlock’ vocally. These days the contemporary actor/performer, especially at a professional level, has to engage with many varied texts, some of demanding complexity. The expected level of vocal expertise is high from both the audience and the director. The actor must be able to convey the inner life of the character and the style of the performance through the words (either very few, or stylistically, seemingly unstructured in terms of punctuation and form); to enable the audience to make both intellectual and emotional connections to what the performer is saying. I experienced this awareness of a text demanding a great deal of aural attention from its audience, director and cast, while attending a performance of a new Afrikaans play *Samsa Masjien*, written by Willem Anker at the Baxter Theatre in January 2015. An indistinct, continuous soundscape of noises, mutterings and broken fragments of words formed a backdrop to the elderly characters’ dialogue. This contributed to conveying the turbulent, disturbed emotional world of these characters in a disintegrating family situation. As an audience member I was required to listen with more concentration than usual.

Mere clarity in speaking the text is not enough to create the world of a play and the relationships of the characters who reside in it. This holds true for all spoken performances, one would think. Berry (1992:9) states: “whatever the style of writing, the actor has to find the right energy for that particular text” and although the actor must be clear and controlled about the character’s intentions, “the speaking should be free to the moment” (Berry 1992:19).

Most of Berry’s ideas and creative efforts on making language vivid, expressive and meaningful via the actor’s communication have centred on using Shakespearean text. For her Shakespeare’s words are still the most “rich and extraordinary” (Berry 1992:9) and demand from the actor to dig deeply into his imaginative and analytical resources to find “more possibilities...than we are aware of” (Berry 1992:9). These insights were gained mostly from Berry’s first two decades of working within the Royal Shakespeare Company (hereafter again referred to as the RSC), assisting actors and directors to discover the potential meanings of their parts and lines and how to communicate this understanding within the larger vision of the play.

3.3 Making Shakespearean text accessible

In *The Actor and the Text* (1992) Berry focuses on making Shakespearean text accessible and understandable to performers. She has the ability to explain technical aspects in a very clear manner which does not resort to either jargon or complicated language and terminology. Throughout the book she covers aspects such as metre and rhythm, rhyme,

speech and scene structures: ladders, language substance, argument and emotion, movement and discovery of thought, nature of the image, heightened versus naturalistic language, music and cadence: sound and meaning, word games, patterns, figures of speech, antithesis and prose (Berry 1992:301–303). Detailed discussion of these aspects is given and exercises are suggested for specific texts and how the actor can extract the maximum from the words by focusing on these points relating to heightened language.

Robert Gordon and Jacqueline Martin have both isolated certain key technical aspects of Berry's approach to particularly Shakespearean speaking at this stage of her career and note similar points in their analysis. Gordon also comments again on the link between Berry's verbal approach to that of earlier practitioners like Copeau and Saint-Denis within the British tradition, "that the text directs the actor" (Gordon 2006:177). They both recognise her ability to sensitize and energize the actor to be open to the "stimulus that the text itself provides" (Gordon 2006:177). The thoughts and emotions are "embodied in the speech[es]" and if the actor understands this and is able to trust the structure, sound and physicality of the words, then the meaning will become clear by itself, so to speak (Gordon 2006:177).

3.4 Discovering the structure of a dramatic text

The following is a short summary of Gordon and Martin's observations on the technical aspects Berry (1992) feels are necessary to work on for discovering structure in mostly classical dramatic text. This can also be applied to more modern text though.

1. The actor needs to be aware first of the thought energy contained in a word, then a line and progressing through a phrase as a whole. This needs to be looked at systematically (Martin 1992:172,173).
2. An awareness is needed of how the metre works in a line and how the "sense stress works with the metre stress" (Gordon 2006:177). This reflects on the sense of movement through a line or thought (Martin 1999:173).
3. The use of antithesis assists the actor in finding contrasts between thoughts and images. Often, broken up thoughts will point to specific emotional states in characters (if working on dialogue or speeches). As Martin (1992:173) says, "the balance between argument and emotion" needs to be discovered.
4. The 'substance' of the word refers to paying close attention to the length and feel of vowels and the "quantity and type of consonants" (Gordon 2006:177). It actively describes the content and quality of the thought being spoken through the actual sounds.
5. The source and logic of imagery needs to be carefully explored within the world view of the character and the play, and the setting of this world within nature. The imagery is often structured as being part of a "ladder of imag[es]" (Gordon 2006:177) where

there are more levels of meaning and connection that build as the thoughts in the play progress.

6. Both Martin and Gordon refer to the awareness needed of word games and patterns being part of the formal language structure and how this will enhance the meaning and subtlety in speaking by the actor, particularly to add a sense of humour and ambiguity (Martin 1992:173; Gordon 2006:177).
7. All the above aspects will guide the actor to find the appropriate tempo in delivery which is guided by the structure of the thought and feeling, working together in the lines or speech (Gordon 2006:178).

Martin (1991:173) sums it up nicely by saying, “Tuning into the language in this way is designed to give the actor a certain awareness and freedom, but above all it should reinforce all he [she] wants to do with the character”.

Berry (1992) does not restrict her methods to only exploring Shakespearean and classical texts though, but also uses modern writing to “feed [the] response to Shakespeare, and vice versa...for it is the interchange between modern and classical writing that enriches both and makes each more alive” (Berry 1992:10). She feels that it is by finding points of contrast and difference between these texts that the actor’s sense of words and speaking is sharpened both technically and imaginatively. Modern text for instance, is given more weight and precision and classical text is allowed a more conversational and direct sound, rather than being too ‘flowery’ in approach. The perception of rhythm is also often different for the actor in working on these contrasting texts and very valuable to experience.

Berry (1992) strongly supports this method of the two kinds of text working alongside each other, as the one enhances understanding of the other. She says: “every piece of text we speak on a stage is heightened—it is performed—and we have to find its particular voice and place that particular language” (Berry 1992:10). She mentions the value of working on texts by Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Bertolt Brecht and Edward Bond; and poets Gunnar Ekelof, Hans Enzensberger, Pablo Neruda, W.H. Auden, G. Lorca and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, as examples of modern texts that require a specific focus and awareness on the sound and rhythm of the language, which often has a poetic feel within a very contemporary style (Berry 1992:254, 268–272; Berry 2001:262–265).

3.5 The importance of technical preparation for the actor

Berry does not underestimate the importance of a performer’s technical preparation and abilities being honed and vocally fine-tuned. She started off at the Central School teaching exactly all these technical exercises and working comprehensively through the various aspects of voice production. Her first book *Voice and the Actor* (1973) deals extensively with

the background to the actor's voice and how one thinks about your own voice and what could prevent effective vocal performance. It is her seminal book I and worth a short overview, as many of her later ideas had their origin here and reflect the essence of her views on sound and language.

In the foreword to *Voice and the Actor* Peter Brook already recognises Berry's fundamental idea, that to enable the actor to release his vocal blockages and to respond creatively with "life in the voice" he needs to be exposed to "good verse" and inspiring material that "strikes echoes in the speaker that awakens portions of his deep experience which are seldom evoked in everyday speech" (Berry 1973:3). This recognition of the importance of allowing work on language to inform technical exercises for the actor, is clear from the beginning in her approach and training.

Voice and the Actor is mostly concerned with the practical aspects of voice training for the theatre actor or performer and contains detailed discussion and technical exercises in each section regarding relaxation and breathing combined, muscularity and word, and using the whole voice, as well as a short chapter on listening (Berry 1973:18,43,123,130). These chapters address the need for the actor to understand the value of doing physical exercises on the release of tension in the body, working on breathing, releasing fully on vocalising and to experience the movements of various muscles (both small and large), in the active process of articulating sounds and words. These chapters are quite straightforward and more traditional in approach compared to her later works.

However, already the selected texts for exploration are challenging in themselves, whether the focus is on finding breath support, stronger tone or clarity in articulation. Characteristically, the first two texts are a Shakespearean song *Fear no more the heat o' the Sun* (Berry 1973:30) and the Chorus Speech from the *Prologue, Act IV* in *Henry V* (Berry 1973:33,34). The aim is to connect breath and sound on this particular phrasing and to feel a purpose in this connection through the words. She also suggests a simple exercise of swinging the arms on phrases and releasing the spine forward and to the sides on some of the lines. Taking time to stand upright then and on feeling the breath and freeing the sound physically through movement, leads to more "freedom and resonance, and a feeling of the whole mechanism coming together" (Berry 1973:31).

In Chapter 3, *Muscularity and Word*, Berry (1992:43–75) again suggests working on a modern text by Edith Sitwell and older poems by John Dryden and Robert Herrick. These texts encourage the actor to find an "extra awareness on material which demands agility and clarity" (Berry 1973:73–75). In these early chapters she wants to assist the actor in finding a sense of rhythm and timing in the beat of the verse and to feel a precision in the diction at the same time. She encourages the performer to move on the words (almost to dance on them,

in a way) and to allow this sense of looseness and energy to be transferred into the speaking. Through this the performer can then be open to more possibilities in the rhythm, length of sounds, tempo and inflections which can enhance the meaning of the poem or text. An awareness of the physicality of sound can free the actor to try different interpretations with more confidence. A revealing comment by Berry (1973:72) which perhaps encapsulates the essence of her idea is “In this poem[s] you learn a lot about words doing their own work”.

At this stage, Berry does not over-intellectualize the potential meanings in a literary discussion of the texts. She rather wants the actor to be aware of what the process and experience of the speaking is and how the sounds of these words can offer her an understanding, on a more visceral, physical level—one which goes beyond what words mean in a purely grammatical sense. This way of working on text has continued throughout her career and although adapted and refined, it remains one of the essential aspects of her approach.

Chapter 4, *The Whole Voice* (Berry 1973:76–100) and Chapter 5, *Speaking Poetry* (Berry 1973:101–122), contain the bulk of texts in *Voice and the actor* and these range from *Ode to the West Wind* by Percy Shelley, an extract from *Under Milkwood* by Dylan Thomas, a sizable extract from Edmund Spenser’s *Epithalamion*, *The Rape of Lucrece* by Shakespeare and *Over Sir John’s Hill* also by Dylan Thomas. These are substantial, difficult poems and in our contemporary times, I suspect a considerable technical challenge to speak clearly and coherently and with full understanding, even by first language English speakers.

Chapter 5 focuses specifically of the speaking of poetry and its value for the actor/speaker. As Berry (1973:77) states earlier “the voice will never be as good in exercise as it will be when you have done the exercises, forgotten them and are using the voice imaginatively”. She affirms the need for the actor to be exposed to “material that can be used over and over again because it is possible to get different things out of it each time” (Berry 1973:77). She does emphasize that the groundwork such as warming the voice fully and preparing the muscles to be receptive to thought and expression, is necessary first and from that point of preparedness, this transfer or “progression to passages” (Berry 1973:77) will then be most effective. Working on poetry and dramatic material without sufficient preparation may be self-defeating. Once the performer is at ease in the body and voice then she will be open to what the heightened text has to offer: “the emphasis gradually shifts from technical ability into the interpretation of the sense” (Berry 1973:77). The discovery of meaning she feels is something that comes more “from sound—meanings which cannot necessarily be explained and which go deeper than our conscious, logical mind” (Berry 1973:101).

In terms of speaking heightened language, she says it should not be a fearful barrier to be crossed; simply a balance needs to be found between sounding overly formal or too casually

conversational (Berry 1973:101). She wants to actively encourage the performer to take note of the form of the text, the metre in the lines, the “sophisticated and subtle way...imagery, associations of words, internal rhythms and all the devices a poet uses [so that] then the whole thing becomes wide open with possibilities” (Berry 1973:102). The language in a text is closely looked at from various angles but meaning is not pre-judged or concluded until a process of listening has been embarked on, “for it is through listening for what the text contains that you will hear its possibilities” (Berry 1973:102).

Berry stays with the older verse in this chapter, works like *Corinna’s Going a Maying* by Robert Herrick, paying attention to the metrical structure, rhythm, the length of the vowels and consonants, the pauses and stresses in each line and the interrelation of lines with each other. Some brief commentary is given to meaning but less time is spent on this overall. The focus is on the actual speaking of the words and what could (not should) be understood about the sense of the poem. She does though provide clues to interpretation; some general comments of what the text could be about but seems to point more to alerting us to what it could mean when the sound changes. As she puts it “an awareness of how sound can take you into another territory, not logically, for it does not need to explain anything” (Berry 1973:105) and “language itself reacts on us” (Berry 1973:105).

Berry wants our ears to be wide open and alert to the energy in words; recognising that they have a physical quality in themselves and how this informs the way they are written and also therefore having a deep effect on how we hear them. Berry (1973:110) uses a sonnet by Gerard Manley Hopkins called *No Worst, there is None* and *A Nocturnal upon St. Lucie’s Day* by John Donne as examples to discuss the intensity of language and how the strength of feeling is conveyed by the “physical presence of the images” (Berry 1973:111). These two poets’ use of language, for her, contains a wide variety of nuance and rhythm, in both argument and emotion and require a larger energy and focus from the speaker (Berry 1973:111). Interestingly, this chapter also includes modern poems by Thomas Hardy, W.B. Yeats and D.H. Lawrence, all combining the formal with the colloquial sound which she finds such valuable vocal training for the actor. Her aim as always, is to connect “stylized language (sophisticated language of any sort including slang and ‘in’ phrases) with its physical root” (Berry 1973:121). She states: “If you are talking trivialities it is not the triviality that is important—it is the need to speak it that matters” (Berry 1973:121). She is also adamant that one should not prescribe to actors exactly how a line or speech should be spoken or sound. This is a matter of personal perception and is necessary to maintain as this sense of individuality in the spoken expression is “what makes poetry alive” (Berry 1973:122).

In the final two chapters (6 and 7) of the book, namely Listening and Using the Voice, she also recommends the speaker investigates and practically explores Part 3 of the poem *East*

Coker from the *Four Quartets* by T.S. Eliot and an extract of *Man and Superman* by George Bernard Shaw. The emphasis is on discovery and taking time with feeling the rhythms, images and listening:

If you become emphatic or present a conclusion with either of them you will cut out their reverberations. If you receive the words and allow them to 'touch down' they will take on a meaning which is particular to you. (Berry 1973:125)

Already, Berry is moving to more modern writing and again, these texts are not only included because of their literary value but because they are linked clearly to what the actor/performer could learn from speaking them aloud, in different spaces of varying sizes. At the end of *Voice and the Actor* technical work is linked with the imaginative approach and the communication of the actor, which is always the primary objective. Berry refers back to the experience of working with Peter Brook on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a few years before writing her book, and makes an astute observation on the difficulties actors often face while working on dramatic or poetic language. She seems to have encountered this problem or issue in many similar scenarios in different countries and in different contexts:

The problem which the actors had in small groups, that of being absolutely specific with the voice and with the words, was invariably the same problem they had in acting. (Berry 1973:134)

This connection between voice work and the application of textual exploration to solve possible problems encountered in acting and performance, is very pertinent to Berry's later views, where training the voice becomes an extension of training the actor as a whole. These ideas are already present in *Voice and the Actor* and are further expanded in her later books to include the director in this process of discovery, in how an awareness of language and sound, used in different strategies/aspects in rehearsal can contribute directly to finding layers of meaning in a play. In the next chapter I shall discuss some of her exercises and strategies that could be useful in defining essential images, actions and interactions between actors that might lead the cast of the Fugard play, *Sorrows and Rejoicings* and myself, to deeper insights for performance.

3.6 The awareness of the physicality of sound in words to unlock imagery and intention

In live performance especially, Berry (1992:14–18) states that spoken words need to take on a larger energy within the theatrical space and must not be contained and stay on a comfortable, naturalistic level. This links clearly to her belief that dramatic language is a

reaching out from the performer/speaker on a deeper level by communicating the true purpose of the playwright's thoughts to the listeners. Words have a physical effect on both those who are speaking and those who are receiving them—or there should be a palpable feeling of exchange and impact. If this is not happening then the performance will be flat and unengaging (Berry 1992:19–22).

She suggests a more vigorous, spontaneous approach, less conscious and cerebral or academic, to approaching the speaking of text which allows for the unexpected and the surprising: “Words are so often much rougher and more anarchic than we allow them to be” (Berry 1992:23). The actor should be allowed to discover more ambiguity and richness of texture in the character's words and not become didactic and over-emphatic. This can be considered both for actors who tend to overstress words and put too much emphasis on consonants, as well as for actors who indulge too much in the emotions and fall into a generalised, poetic feel in the speaking, often ‘dulling’ the words with too much resonance (Berry 1992:23).

She is concerned with finding a “true release of thought” and a real “life-force” in the words, and in rehearsal would encourage the actor to be courageous and find an “extravagance in language, a music which is perhaps beyond our everyday usage” (Berry 1992:23,24). Making sound is a physical process, speaking words aloud is a physical process of moving muscles, yet also becomes an intuitive, expressive act.

Berry feels that the actor prepares vocally not only to achieve a certain level of expertise but also to connect to the text in a more interesting and fresher way: “exercises should make us ready for the intuitive response” (Berry 1992:24). Of course the most important aspects of training vocally must be done regularly, with a sense of discipline and commitment. She advocates exercises for relaxation and alignment in order to find a sense of physical ease. However, she feels that these kinds of exercises must not be an end in themselves but enable the actor to find a sense of being able to cope with excess tension and to channel it sensibly into other aspects of voice and bodywork.

Berry (1992:25) finds the exercises on breathing to be essential though and says this is where the actor finds his/her sense of strength and connection to the thoughts being spoken. The breath is necessary to make good, clear sound but more importantly, one can see it “as the physical life of the thought, so that we conceive the breath and the thought as one” (Berry 1992:25,26). Through this awareness of the breath moving or ‘powering’ the thought, the word becomes active. The thought process of the character is then revealed. As Berry states, when the breath and thought are fully integrated, without straining, then the “speaking becomes effortless” (Berry 1992:26). This is also what one would call grounding the voice or

tone with the meaning of the text and when this happens, then the voice can take on surprising qualities and possibilities that create a freedom in interpretation.

These ideas on voice express Berry's view on language and sound being intricately linked with each other and that training should work on both for the actor. The playwright's language expresses thoughts that need to be precisely encompassed by the right awareness of breath energy, and the release of these thoughts in/through sound, is a physical action occurring through the actor's body and is not only a cerebral one. Words and sound must be experienced viscerally, expressed in a more energetic, passionate way—yet not becoming forced or melodramatic (Berry 1992:27). Technical work is necessary for agility of the tongue, lips, jaw and for the placement of clear tone, well defined vowels and consonants and effective projection, as well as for communicating swiftness of thoughts—but this should not overshadow the need to also work on the “quality of language” (Berry 1992:29).

Berry (1992:31) feels that the actor should be given a sense of creative ownership to work with language and to be free from only staying within the “functional meaning of the words”. This way of working she hopes, will give the actors a sense of confidence and the space to trust the text itself and to allow the words to affect them more fully so that their vocal response will be theatrically truthful, spontaneous and in the moment. Exercises should be aimed towards this finding of new nuances, textures and colour in the sound; as Berry says “We need to make the listener remark: the audience must not only hear the words but realize them fully” (Berry 1992:31).

3.7 Differing qualities and structures of text: heightened or formal language and naturalistic text

Cicely Berry has spent most of her working life on finding ways to assist actors and later directors, make heightened text such as verse or very precisely constructed prose texts, communicate directly, energetically and with nuanced interpretation to an audience. Berry (1987:34) defines heightened language further by saying:

this writing is built on a rhythmic structure, where there is compression of imagery....and naturalistic writing to be prose, where the structure of the story is built on a logical progression of ideas, where the dialogue is rooted in everyday speech patterns.

She acknowledges the constant interplay between making formal language more accessible and on the other hand, investing more intensity into modern, colloquial writing. In both instances she believes that precise attention needs to be given to the structure of the form/material being spoken. In both kinds of writing the structure reveals the inner workings

of the language used. The actor needs to find the theatrical truth, whether it be “verbally [more] explicit” as in classical or heightened text or more intense and “understated” as in much modern text or in television and film (Berry 1987:33). Both require energy and discipline in the speaking to be accurate to the structure.

Interestingly, Berry (1987:34,35) mentions that often older texts can have a modern feel in the sound as in some Jacobean texts, “where the spareness and directness of a line can make us catch our breath in surprise at its contemporary ring” (Berry 1987:34) and the modern/contemporary texts also can have a more formal ring to them as a result of the stylistic shaping of the dialogue, as for example in the dialogue of Pinter and Beckett, or a Steven Berkoff text or a Noel Coward comedy. In a similar vein, I am interested in how a South African drama by playwright Athol Fugard can contain both elements of realistic speech and yet also poetic rhythms and images; and how this can lead us to the essential imagery for understanding the deeper meaning of the play.

However, Berry (1987:33) emphasises that the sound the actor uses in these texts need not be restricted to a so-called Standard English accent or Received Pronunciation. She does not consider this necessary or desirable for successful, effective, theatrical communication. Here her political sense of fairness and freedom in making sound is clear. She rather feels that the actor should find a sense of vigour in the language and confidence in expressing the ideas and feelings clearly, rather than adhering to a certain accent that is considered ‘better’ than most other English accents; “it is the vigour in the language that is crucial, and not an accepted set of vowel sounds...we have to be open to different speech patterns” (Berry 1987:33).

Her openness towards approaching texts vocally is clearly stated in both *Voice and the Actor* and *The Actor and his Text* and she makes an important point in recognising that the actor and director must constantly be assessing “ways of working on text: for the writing itself makes for methods of acting” (Berry 1987:35). The actors’ speaking and sound, indeed performance as a whole, will change according to the demands of the writing. She feels that all good writing that has depth to it, will affect and guide the speaker to discover the words on a physical and emotional level in the body. The necessity of experiencing these words will evoke physical associations and reactions in the performer/speaker and in this way, the sound of the language reflects the deeper experience of the meaning of the play/text (Berry 1987:35). These ‘truths’ that the actor may find in the verbal and vocal expression and acting are essential and not merely for making an attractive sound presentation: “They are not poetic elaboration, not there for an effect. They are necessary, and part of the vigour of the language” (Berry 1987:35). Accent may reflect social context and status in a dramatic text and this is also important for characterisation purposes, but it should not inhibit the actor and

result in slavish imitation of a certain sound pattern. The suggestion, within the relevant world of the play could be enough to make the actor convincing in her sound. Again, this links to her idea of words and sound having a larger presence within the theatrical space and not being reduced to only articulating accurate syllables and technical aspects.

What she would really like and feels is important, is for the actor to have a sense of freedom with a text and to acquire a sense of confidence in finding that text's particular energy and sound. This kind of work, a balance between exercising for technical accomplishment and encouraging the intuitive response, would result in interesting, fresh and organically connected speaking and performance by the actor (Berry 1992:24). As she states:

We must not through lack of trust in ourselves or in the text, over-control the language. We must first allow the words to act upon us—this asks for inner stillness—and then we must touch them out, let them free. (Berry 1992:30)

She supports cultural diversity in the sound of a text and suggests that in our age of visual stimuli, much of the pleasure in making sound through using a range of voices in dramatic performance, and letting this difference or range of sounds be vital to the communication, has been lost. She discusses the example of earlier ages, e.g, in Elizabethan times, where people generally and actors too, of course, had to entertain themselves and others by using their verbal skills which included singing, telling stories, speaking poetry, bringing characters to life in live performance (Berry 1987:48). Berry strongly believes in the role the theatre can play to renew this excitement in appreciating language for audiences. For her, it is important that people should feel connected to their instincts and the “emotional life of the language” (Berry 1992:48).

Today, in the electronic age, I suspect that the spoken word is heard less directly in the presence of people amongst each other, despite the instant contact of words through texting. The words are there in a certain format and style, but one wonders whether they reach another person on a level where the communication is supported by an emotional connection. In the theatre, this awareness of the role of language and sound can fulfil a satisfying need in an audience and should be nurtured. If speakers are encouraged to be articulate, then so might their listeners also become interested in being “guardians of the language” (Berry 1992:50).

Chapter 4 – Cicely Berry’s exercises—a discussion of their context and use and application to the rehearsal process of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* by Athol Fugard

4.1 Introduction

In following a Practice as Research approach (as discussed in Chapter 1) I found that it was not helpful to try and select all the potential exercises that could be applicable from Berry’s works before commencing rehearsals. There was a danger of pre-determining the outcome of some exercises; to make the textual ideas and images fit in with the exercise rather than allowing the exploration with the actors to find the possibilities in sound, language and space through a chosen exercise which was suitable at that point.

I had in previous weeks and months read through most of the exercises in her last three, written works namely, *The Actor and His Text* (1987), *Text in Action, A Definitive Guide to Exploring Text in Rehearsal for Actors and Directors* (2001) and *From Word to Play, A Handbook for Directors* (2008). Due to the number and variety of exercises and also repetition and combinations of certain suggestions she makes, I decided to allow for a looser approach and to take the risk of finding an exercise(s) with good potential, as I needed it at that stage of the rehearsal. We would then see what it could suggest to us as a guideline for working on themes, scenes and characters. There was a ‘sifting’ element in this early phase but no exercises were excluded. I noticed on re-reading her last book, *A Handbook for Directors*, that although it is very clearly structured around various aspects of working on text during rehearsal, many of these strategies had been included previously in *Text in Action*. Her final book is thus a concise and articulate summing up of earlier ideas. I therefore worked through and drew on the penultimate books and exercises and only linked up where necessary to the very last one. In this way I think we covered more of Berry’s ideas of working on text than if I’d only selected exercises and strategies from this final source.

In Chapter 3 I discussed some essential content of what is contained in *The Actor and His Text*, relating to her views on sound, language and the interplay between using formal language and modern text and do not wish to repeat unnecessarily. However, a short discussion of the kinds of exercises found in this book and the ones I did select in the end would provide a context for understanding their application in the rehearsal process. A more extensive discussion follows on exercises selected from *Text in Action* as this contains most of the important ones we explored and concludes with *From Word to Play*. Although I will focus on these in their order of publication in this chapter, I would like to remind the reader

that this is for establishing clarity in structure, especially post-rehearsal and now of course from a post-production perspective, and that it was not the case during rehearsals. The exercises were selected from all three books in no specific order and improvised on according to specific needs required by the text, at each phase of rehearsal and were not laid out neatly and separately from the beginning.

The aim was to find a directing concept for the play as a whole by exploring Berry's approach towards language and sound through a variety of exercises. This encompasses work done on character and relationships, the physical space or world and atmosphere of the play, potential soundscapes that may emerge and also finding the inner, emotional world of the characters and their personal sound or way of expressing themselves, including a sense of physicality in the body. This would then lead to further ideas on what could be included in the set design, lighting, costumes to support these vocal and verbal discoveries and images from the text. After the process and production run I would be able to assess the efficacy of using Berry's approach and exercises towards establishing a clear concept and interpretation of the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text with a student ensemble.

At first, to be honest, it seemed there was no obvious example of how I might, as a director, arrive at any particular sound concept or visual ideas for that matter, simply from doing any of these exercises. I knew that Berry's ideas would inspire us and stimulate thinking on many levels about the production but what to begin with was a difficult choice. It was rather a more subtle process of being open to the play and finding the potential in some exercises for exploration which then would lead to ideas for sounds, images and deeper interpretation. Finding key exercises that were useful and relevant to this process proved both simple and demanding as we proceeded on this journey. In the Afterword to *Text in Action* (Berry 2001:267) Berry affirms the necessity of doing creative exploration on language during rehearsal on a play. She feels that so much time is often spent working more on character and motives and that the process of how thoughts translate into live speech is sometimes neglected or considered less important. This encouraged me in guiding this particular cast to find or attempt more aspects of "the imaginative life of the play" (Berry 2001:267). She believes that "all words spoken on stage are just as much part of the creative life of that stage as its visual life, and they must touch us in an active way" (Berry 2001:267). She encourages directors, voice teachers who may be involved and of course, the actors to "listen and respond creatively" (Berry 2001:267).

Berry is clear in her initial guidelines and makes it all sound quite straightforward. She suggests one "pinpoint[s] the need of the scene and the need of the actors so that you find the exercise that fits" (Berry 2001:268). She is not rigid about the outcomes of exercises and

merely points the way to how they could be used. She encourages adaptation and that they may be discarded if they do not meet the purpose of that rehearsal,

as you get into them you can bend them round to fit the work in hand and let your imagination take you to what best will suit the specific need of the moment...they are there to open out the options. (Berry 2001:268)

This opening out of options is what I was hoping to find in collaboration with the cast on *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. In the discussion of the various exercises found in her books I shall at each stage discuss the ones we tried out and what we gained from them, whether they actively led to an overall concept of the play or aspects thereof, or not.

4.2 *The Actor and His Text* (1987, 1992 2nd ed.)

In Chapter 5 “Introduction to the Exercises” (Berry 1987:140–142) Berry clearly states that the actors need to take time with the exercises, whether it be for solo or group work on the text. She feels that the freest response comes from working in a group, “Acting must always be about relating to other people—provoking and responding” and “it is when we are working truly with other people that we are at our best and freest” (Berry 1987:142). All her exercises are structured for working in small groups or individual work within the support/presence of the group and she encourages one to mix up the exercises and not to do them in a set order, as long as the purpose of each is clear (Berry 1987:140). Their aim is basically to take away an over-concentration on the self by the actor and to transfer the attention onto something external. She hopes this freeing up makes the actor more aware of vocal choices.

This freedom of choice for a director leading a group is both liberating and slightly daunting, in having to make those first decisions which could lead one to further ideas and finding a concept. I was encouraged not to doubt our process by her comment “Often, the further you get, the more important the simpler exercises become” (Berry 1987:142). She also encourages the director and actors to use the exercises throughout the rehearsal process to allow for deeper responses, adding layers to the text. With her suggestions in this book Berry already seemed to point the way towards being a practitioner of “Practice as Research” herself, both creating and selecting what worked best as she needed it for the specific text being used in rehearsal.

All Berry’s work always begins with a thorough vocal warm-up which involves some movement and physicality. This is always emphasised in all her books and the dvd’s made about her workshops. I shall rather discuss how I combined her suggestions for warming and releasing voice and body with my own, for the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* rehearsals, in the next chapter on the rehearsal process. It is however, a crucial starting point for all exploratory work particularly on the language and sound aspects of a text.

4.2.1 Hearing Language: substance of text, using punctuation (Berry 1987:148–151)

This is a group exercise and Berry recommends the dynamics that group interaction provides, especially at the beginning of the rehearsal process. The actors sit in a circle and speak the passage around—in our case, the poem *Tristia* by Ovid (Fugard 2002:3)—from punctuation to punctuation mark. The aim is for each person to fully “receive what he has been given from the last person” (Berry 1987:149) and only then to pass on his/her own phrase or thought to the next person. Each person forms part of speaking and contributing to the whole text and awareness is created about the lengths of thoughts, the rhythms of short and longer words as well as the lengths of sounds in vowels and weight in consonants (Berry 1987:149). Moving through the text aloud and sharing it in this way focuses attention on the sound and not only meaning and takes pressure off the individual actor to interpret the full text. This provided a good stimulus for our improvisation on the poem to allow the words to make their own sense.

Berry also suggests singing the words around in a free way, not to a set tune. This can release a stronger vocal energy, add a touch of humour and lead to more varied use of tone and interpretation by the actor, who allows the voice to be more spontaneous and less conventional in the speaking (Berry 1987:149). She then adds three further aspects to the exercise, namely:

1. Whispering the text around is the next step and as Berry says, one now becomes aware of the energy needed to be clear and fill the space and not to make the voice “behave properly” (Berry 1987:150). This did help the cast to listen more carefully and to find contrasts and sensitivity in their speaking of the poem.
2. The actors then break the circle and move around the space while speaking, each taking phrases in sequence, still guided by the breaks in punctuation or following more flowing thoughts. This can go into running and even jumping while speaking and she suggests that actors move as far away from each other as possible to keep the flow going and to increase the level of vocal energy and release. This also makes the actors less aware of the idea of speaking poetry in a certain, studied manner, the “poetry voice” (Berry 1987:151) as she calls it. A more energetic, looser feel is encouraged.
3. The last aspect of this exercise is for the group to return to standing still and to speak the text through quietly with clear intentions, paying attention to the structure of the phrasing. This consolidates the meaning of the text as a whole again.

Application: The poem *Tristia* is an excerpt from Ovid’s *Sorrows* and is translated from the Latin by Marianne McDonald (Fugard 2002:3).

It is written in verse and the feel of an intense lament is conveyed by the heightened language. The male character in the play, Dawid Olivier, also suffers the same sense of loss by being in exile, removed from his country, family and language as was the case with Ovid, being banned for life from Ancient Rome for his outspoken views. The poem is included in the addendum (see 1) for easy reference.

The idea of a lament or a funeral guided this first textual exploration; that would give the actors a sense of the strong emotions connected to one's landscape and country and the longing for being a part of the space one grew up in and the familial attachments left behind. The above exercise allowed the actors to speak, whisper, chant, sing words and lines of the text within the idea of a lament that also had commentary from the imagined women in Ovid's life. They represented his wife, daughters and also became the mythical Fates at some point who would echo and confirm or repeat his words in English and Afrikaans, provoke him and also lament with him—all using the words of the text in different tempos and pitches.

As recommended by Berry, they moved near and around him, guided by the changes in punctuation and phrasing (which would affect the timing of their movement) and withdrew into various parts of the rehearsal room, also creating a boundary where he could not cross to be with them. With text in hand and not knowing the words or what to expect, a rougher quality was heard in the speaking. We repeated this exercise as a whole several times, myself adding suggestions here and there to change the mood and energy levels.

It was extended into an enactment of the event of the 'banning' and eventual death of the Ovid speaker and now improvised sound and words were introduced. There was no need to still focus on structure and punctuation at this point. This worked very well to take the ideas of exile and desolation further. A sense of ritual developed in the use of space, sound and objects that were provided. What started off as a text used for exercises and creativity in speaking then later became a strong possibility for inclusion in the production as a Prologue, setting the scene for the tone and visual aspects of the play as a whole. It was an important exercise and extended improvisation and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

4.2.2 Vowels and consonants (Berry 1987:151–155)

The following two exercises focus on the actors becoming even more sensitised to the actual sound qualities of vowels and consonants in words. The actors meet in a circle again (as referred to in 4.2.1) and speak the same passage which they know well at this stage (*Tristia*). They now should only verbalize the vowel sounds in words and feel the lengths and differences between long and short ones. Berry (1987:152) reminds one to maintain good breath support and to bear the meaning of the words in mind, but not to let this dominate the experience. The actors should actively feel the fullness of each vowel sound and how certain

patterns may emerge throughout a phrase and a feeling of the rhythm of a line may become clearer (Berry 1987:152). They then return to speaking the text normally and observe how this might feed into their sound exploration.

The group then speaks through a shorter section of the same passage but focuses on the consonant sounds. The aim is to “gauge how forceful the language is, its muscular strength...and whether devoiced or voiced” (Berry 1987:152). This she feels draws attention to the precision of the thought as spoken by a character/speaker and the mood, depending on the heaviness or lightness in the qualities of the consonants. The sound and substance of the language are pointed out through these exercises. This, Berry (1987:155) feels is always a positive process as it is “slightly absurd—...not logical, they release us from the need to make sense, and our imaginations can then be released through sound”.

Application: The above exercises were an important starting point for myself and the cast and this basic work led to valuable ideas for a performance concept which could be developed further. I started with the *Tristia* poem discussed in the previous exercise and also used a poem referred to in the play, *Running to Paradise (1916)* by W.B. Yeats (www.bartleby.com, 2015), and at a much later stage *Sonnet 23* by W. Shakespeare (Berry 2001:122). Beginning with passing the words and lines around according to the punctuation, singing, whispering and then moving and focusing on vowel and consonant energies, made us keenly aware of the possibilities in the language of *Tristia* (first text used) to suggest a milieu for the characters of the play and to link up with sound and visual ideas suggested by themes of the play.

Running to Paradise is a completely different kind of poem to *Tristia*; lyrical and philosophical with a sense of energy, movement and freedom in the lines (see Addendum 2). This poem was close to character Dawid Olivier’s poetic sensibility and also touched the heart and ears of his wife Allison, who heard him speaking it with passion during class lectures in her student days. This contrast in energy and flow was useful for the cast to explore. There was now a sense of youth and optimism despite the undertone that all life passes at some stage and that fortunes are interchangeable among all people, regardless of their social standing.

The actors were encouraged to find these younger selves of their characters in the language and to be extravagant with the feelings of freedom and possibility. Lines and verses were shared and repeated. The actors did not know the whole text initially but were familiar enough with it after several read-throughs. This resulted in more spontaneity in their speaking, lifting out important words, playing with extending vowels on longer words and finding crispness on the consonants that defined meaning more clearly. I adapted the exercise and a lot of movement happened between verses, jumping on and off chairs and tables and this gave a sense of being swept along by the winds of life. A hat was worn and

shared by the cast and a sheet was also passed around while running and creating the wind. This kind of exercise is not psychologically based and is more physical and vocally experimental. It releases energy and encourages a more active way of working together on text that is not naturalistic, yet can point to aspects of characterisation and interaction in the space. This sense of youthful energy and hope was remembered by the character Allison in the early years of her marriage to Dawid and gave her a sense of direction and clarity in her monologues where she remembers this, “I can still see him! ...standing there in the classroom, fired up with passionate conviction”, “at the end of that lecture Allison Fogerty was in love.” (Fugard 2002:7,8) and “London changed all of that. I was once again with the man I loved and had married...I finally had Dawid all to myself.” (Fugard 2002:26–28). The actors playing Dawid and Marta could also draw on the memory of this exercise/improvisation for the nostalgia of remembering their first love, which resulted in far more comfortable physicality between them and ease in dialogue exchange. Marta thinks back nostalgically to one of the intimate moments she shared with Dawid as a young girl “...so he started playing games with my name...Marta Barends...the way he said it!...it...like he was tasting and eating it...that night we made love for the first time”(Fugard 2002:38,39). In the last scene of the play Dawid recalls his sensuous experience of Marta’s name and his love for her: “Marta Barends! When I roll that around in my mouth I taste Karoo food, Karoo sweetness...Warm Bruin Brood en Doringboom Heuning!” (Fugard 2002:53).

Aspects of these exercises and awareness of the words were also used later on during the characters’ monologues in the play, where the actors needed more individual attention on their personal sound and personality as revealed by their use of tone, clarity in diction and variation in tempo. They were made aware of the importance of having active awareness in speaking vowels (their lengths) and consonants (for definition) and how deeper issues were revealed about their characters through Fugard’s choice of language and how this enlarged energy could enhance their vocal performance. The actress playing Allison found that by scene 5 of the play (Fugard 2002:26–31) some vocal fatigue often set in and she needed to use this kind of awareness consciously to maintain breath support, vocal energy and clarity in her articulation so that important information about her and Dawid’s early years in London would not be lost: “ We went over there with such high hopes. God, it was exciting! London! and freedom.....And he got a job without any trouble—teaching English at a posh school. It all seemed perfect .” (Fugard 2002:26,27). At the same time, the flow and pace of the speech had to continue as this is the middle point of the play where she and Marta open up towards each other and reveal personal issues about their relationship with Dawid. Allison reveals her earlier sense of insecurity about her married relationship and the past to Marta “Did you ever know how jealous I was of you, Marta?...I knew there was something between the two of you.” (Fugard 2002:27,28). Marta replies “Ag no Allison...I had nothing to give

him.....except trouble and a daughter who doesn't love him." And "there was I jealous also, hating you because you had taken him away from me" (Fugard 2002:28,30). Even at a late stage of rehearsal it was useful for the actress to stop when she lost her energy and definition in this speech; free up by moving lightly and swiftly into different places in the living room and round the table, and sing out on her words and then, only on the vowels for example and enlarge the resonance. The other actors would then from their places in the stage space, choose some consonant sounds and quickly go through these sounds that they could all repeat energetically like "t,t,t,t,t or "d,d,d,d,d " and then playfully mix up and speak end consonants from their own words. This quickly reset the slight dip in energy and clarity during this scene.

4.2.3 Language Fabric (Berry 1987:157–169)

This section complements the previous one on hearing the substance in the language of the text. Now the focus shifts to an awareness and recognition of the underlying choices made in connecting thoughts in a passage. Berry (1987:157) wants one to spend time on words to feel their full possibilities and "not to take any words for granted". Words create certain images and sounds that are connected to each other and the actor needs constant reminding to find these connections. She says there is not a specific exercise for this but rather the fostering of an "attitude to text" (Berry 1987:157) that needs to be done: "for everything contributes to the texture of the thought and is part of the whole fabric, through which we find the patterns and ladders in the writing" (Berry 1987:157).

Listening, observing, commenting: the actors make a group or circle as done earlier and here is a slight change I introduced; the actors now speak the passage together while one person steps outside the circle to listen and observe. The listener questions and comments on all words and lines that are not clear in intention or their sound. Each member of the group takes a turn to step out and continue this process (Berry 1987:158,159). The actors can speak one word each at a time, or a phrase and make sure that they convey this clearly and with full intention. It requires sharp concentration to speak and pass on the lines or thoughts rather, without losing the energy and clarity. Finally full thoughts can be spoken by each actor and a sense of connection is maintained in the group on the text as a whole. This exercise we followed both in the earlier rehearsals on the play and during the later stages of rehearsal when reading sonnet 23. It was useful too while focusing on parts of each character's longer speeches at certain points in the play. As each actor also listens critically to the group and individuals, the actors speaking are forced to rethink when unclear and to invest the words or lines with more energy and to consider their inner responses to the meanings more fully (Berry 1987:159). They have to reach out more consciously with their

words to fellow actors and be aware of how one word links to the next in the shape of a whole thought.

Application: We used this exercise in one of the first three rehearsal sessions and extended it into an improvisation which included the Dawid Olivier character. The dialogue in the script is mainly between characters Allison and Marta, with Rebecca listening from the far corner of the room. Marta is telling Allison the background to the Olivier family and honouring their name as an important family in this small Karoo town (Fugard 2002:9–12). It is an important section in the first scene of the play and establishes the uncomfortable, awkward feelings between the mistress who was left behind in South Africa and the wife who has now returned to the family home after many years.

The two actresses first read through this section taking it slowly word by word, then moving to longer phrases while the other two actors playing Dawid and Rebecca took turns to comment on their emotion, clarity and sincerity in conveying the thoughts. It helped to slow down rushing over the thoughts (initially the actress playing Marta struggled with this tempo aspect) and gave the actress playing Allison a chance to think about her sub-text on her lines and attitude towards Marta. However, I felt more needed to be established in the actors' awareness of being older in this context and how different it must have all seemed when young, in love and all three meeting up for the first time. The situation was expanded to include Dawid Olivier as young man bringing Allison home to meet his parents. The actress playing Rebecca became his older father and mother, even an old Aunt Lettie who came to visit, in turn, and the scene was imagined as a tea-party held for newcomer Allison to introduce her to family and friends. Marta served the tea and was part of the conversation at times, and also an observer. The line from the play that guided us was "Vriend or vyand—friends or enemies—the people you love or the people you hate, we don't forget them" (Fugard 2002:9).

The actors improvised all the dialogue around the tea-table that Marta refers to, as she remembers the past. This led to some embarrassing moments for Allison who could hardly speak a word of Afrikaans and Dawid having to correct her often. There was also some very funny dialogue from the actress playing Ouma, Oupa and tannie Lettie, having to be polite and yet question this new daughter-in-law in their lives. It highlighted the underlying tension between Dawid and Marta who had to keep up the pretence of being master and servant. The family stinkwood table became a conversational battleground as words flew around or rather, stuttered from person to person. It started quite realistically but developed into a larger, more humorous scene, even faintly ridiculous as the actors pushed the conversation between them to cover up what was really the secret relationship between Marta and Dawid. They also used the teacups and tea cloths to move them around the table, to hide the sugar

bowl and idea of biscuits on a plate and to swop chairs at intervals. This pointed up the attitudes and relationships, as well as releasing some honesty in the words. Each actor then had the chance to listen and comment in a whisper on parts of the dialogue, as it was spoken by the actors in turn. They returned to the lines of the text and a realistic approach but the emotions were heightened and more charged after the improvisation. The actor stepping out/commenting could also add an inner thought from their own character, how they felt about the conversation taking place e.g. their fears and wishes about what might happen at or after the tea-party. The idea of an observer listening to the talk and reacting physically and vocally was often used in the blocking of the play with Dawid; being present and in full view on stage in most of the scenes as a ghostly presence or a younger self from his past. The actresses were also present onstage throughout (except for character Rebecca who leaves briefly in one scene) and sometimes stood and/or sat and listened to a scene unfolding. In this sense a simple verbal/vocal exercise such as this one led to further ideas on using the stage space and eventually, a sense of style in the performance as a whole.

In our last two weeks of rehearsal we returned to this exercise using Shakespearean sonnet no. 23 “As an unperfect actor on the stage/ Who with his fear is put besides his part,” (Berry 2001:122, Addendum 3). The space on stage was now being filled out into a set and although not completed, was usable and the main pieces of furniture were there as well as the essential props. After the July vacation break it was very good for the actors to focus on thorough warm-ups and again pay attention to their vocal energy and clarity in this far larger space. I clearly remember how suddenly their voices needed a lot more resonance and muscularity in general on the words to project the text. They read the sonnet in the group as discussed earlier in the above section and now we approached it fully as Berry suggests. Using a heightened text at this stage and in the playing space helped them to connect on many levels to the precision needed on words. Later on, they also moved on individual lines and spoke the shared lines, now from the point of view of their characters. It was notable how much more depth was felt in their speaking, although of course by this time they knew the play and their characters very well and were in the last phase of runs of the play. The idea of layering this kind of exercise on the realistic text at first, then including it at a later stage of rehearsal and working on a different, heightened text is very worthwhile and sets new challenges for the actors to apply this kind of focus during performances. This awareness extends their technical abilities and becomes part of their technique as actors, making voice work an integral part of vocal characterisation.

4.2.4 Awareness of choices (Berry 1987:162)

Berry still focuses on the group in this exercise. We used this effectively as an extension of the earlier exercises on language in the first two rehearsals of *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. It

makes actors aware of how important words relate to certain key ideas in a passage. All sit together in the space and speak the words of the text “firmly but gently” (Berry 1987:163) while tapping with hands on the floor. In the *Tristia* poem examples of themes were exile, loss, longing for mother tongue, the heavy weight of the past, the alienation of the writer. Then two speakers pair up and sit back to back and speak through the text. The rest of the actors are sitting around them and verbally repeat all significant words that connect with these ideas. The actors must listen very carefully to the text and immediately respond without looking at their papers. This is a versatile exercise and works well, especially once the speakers know their texts. In this early phase the cast didn’t know their words yet so the full effect of listening and responding was not quite as quick as it could have been but they were alerted to the important words. This stimulated further thinking on the content and images from the play, even if they had not yet had a formal read-through at this stage. Words highlighted such as “sweet song”, “my verbal art” “erase my loss and pain”, “exile” and “cry”, “fate”, “land and beloved wife”, “winds”, “breath” and “tears” (Fugard 2002:3) elicited further sound responses such as different qualities of breath, chant and song from the cast that were actively used in our live soundscape in the Prologue. This also contributed to the idea of continuing the soundscape throughout the play. This was worked on and incorporated throughout the rehearsal process and became a core element in finding my directing concept.

The exercise can also be adapted with the whole group splitting into two groups and while speaking, one side pulls physically in one direction, repeating any forceful words and then swopping to do the same with the other half. This links with the “jostling” exercise discussed later in *Text in Action* (Berry 2001:120) and also frees the actor to vocally respond more spontaneously on words carrying more weight and force.

4.2.5 Miming the image (Berry 1987:168,169)

Berry’s attention is still on the words and finding physical ways of releasing the words to point up underlying structures, textures, connections and contrasts between them. “Miming the image” (Berry 1987:168,169) is a very useful exercise we used in early and late rehearsals. This is also discussed in *Text and Action* but I would like to refer to it here already. One actor speaks his/her passage and others in the group can then on the sides or behind, repeat certain words and physically mime what they understand to be the essence of the images in the speech, as they are heard. They can also simply do a physical gesture or movement without voicing words. The actor could also mime a gesture or action on his/her own words but we found this exercise works best in a group where one actor speaks and the others reflect on what they hear at that moment, through physical gesture or mime.

Application: We tried this on Dawid’s first scene, the homecoming back to South Africa (Fugard 2002:13–17). As Marta tells Allison how sick he looked and how they both felt once he’d found her at the township house, the past flows into the present in the stage space. All the female characters were spread out in the rehearsal space and expressed their reactions physically, and at times even echoed his words as he travelled round the space and retold through various South African images, his remembered landscape and past in Words and phrases such as:

“You’re going home, man. Hang on!”...

“blind, running blind like an animal”, “crashed”, “like a drowning man”...

“there it was again as if the last sixteen years had never happened. That empty road stretching away...”

“I pulled over, ...I just stood there and waited...Harmony Marta!”...

“Days in London, bad days....many of them...”

“I just let it be....there was still you.....and Rebecca. My journey wasn’t over...”...

“Time....it’s a hungry rat....gnawing away at me....I’m sick.”...

“I kept my promise! I’m back”. (Fugard 2002:13–17)

It helped to make these memories and images more concrete to the actor playing Dawid as he was aware of the other three actresses being in the space, watching and listening to him. I feel this guided him to pace his thinking better and anchor his movements from image to image. It also challenged his focus—not to assume their gestures and energy. At first the actresses were more pictorial and obvious perhaps in their reflection of these images but as they became more involved and truly listened, the physical gestures became more internalised and expressive, less literal. In the end we did not incorporate the physical images explored by the actresses in this scene into the blocking as they were positioned in more static places and were not supposed to attract main focus, but it did heighten the words and imagery in terms of understanding for Dawid and lifted out strong, intense moments. He became more fully aware of his own choices for gesture and pace and often ended up simplifying unnecessary gestures such as fussy hands and scratching his head. In this sense, exploring the exercise added to the acting quality of the performer during rehearsal and later in performance—also an aspect of directing that one attends to.

In this ‘homecoming scene’ (Fugard 2002:13–17) we rather concentrated on sound to convey mood and atmosphere and the idea of time passing. As the scene progressed the

actresses/characters softly echoed in whispers or muted chant some of Dawid's remembering of place-names such as "Wonderboom, Rietfontein, Heuningspruit—kept saying them, over and over like a mantra.....Voorspoed, Kromdraai, Verkeerdevlei, Wolwehoek" (Fugard 2002:14,15) and this contributed to the sound-scape of this particular scene in a very effective way. It added a heightened feel to both his dialogue and the atmosphere created during Dawid's journey, which for him, gained an almost metaphysical importance as he rediscovered his sense of belonging through experiencing the landscape.

However, in a later scene (5) with Allison we used the same miming exercise with Dawid—now he was the one actively expressing moments through physical gestures from scenes of their life in London as Allison speaks about them (Fugard 2002:26, 27). This enlivened the blocking, added some lightness to the first section of the monologue and was incorporated into the scene. It also helped create a sense of style in performance i.e. all actors were visible throughout the play and moved in and out of certain parts of the stage space without trying to hide or be invisible. Dawid expressed his joy and excitement at being away from Apartheid South Africa and having the freedom of choice as a writer. This allowed for more fluid staging as Dawid used the side space of the stage that suggested a London street and bookshop, their London flat and the bedroom he went home to die in at the Karoo house. Allison earlier also refers to Dawid as she remembers the gloomy weather in London and his actual words from that time "If anything happens to me, Allison, for my soul's sake don't bury me in England. Get my body back home" (Fugard 2002:21). The actor playing Dawid at that point then echoes her words aloud. These ideas about sound and movement were derived from the early improvisations and exercises discussed so far from *The Actor and his Text*.

4.2.6 Energy through the text: kicking an object (Berry 1987:178–181)

This exercise builds on an earlier one that entails walking in the space and changing direction on each punctuation mark in the text. The aim is now to actively note the change in energy from "line to line...thought to thought...sense structure to sense structure" (Berry 1987:178, 179). The actor kicks an object e.g. an empty tin can on the last word of each line. This creates a sense of movement in the whole space. Berry emphasises the need for the actor to kick "on the word, and not just after it...notice just how active those last words are" (Berry 1987:179). She suggests using a sonnet to experience this sense of lifting the last word of a line and how the strong movement releases energy and points the meaning of end words. One can extend this further by only kicking on "the last word of the whole thought structure" (Berry 1987:181).

Application: We tried this out on the realistic Fugard monologues for characters, Allison and Rebecca. The kicking and moving through the space worked very effectively on Rebecca's

speeches at the end of the play when she speaks for the first time and releases her emotions (Fugard 2002:40–42). This was felt actively in the lines:

I wanted to tell him how you have wasted your life waiting for him—sweeping and dusting and cleaning in here every day...That's what you've become...the ghost of a stinkwood servant looking after her dead masters and madams. (Fugard 2002:41)

This action released her frustration towards her mother, Marta and the whole situation they find themselves in since Dawid's return, clarified her thoughts by pointing words carrying weight at the ends of lines, and suggested some ideas for blocking in the room. Initially, the actress seemed a little cautious on the lines, not wanting to overdo the anger and volume but this exercise encouraged freer movement towards and away from her mother who was sitting on a chair. We also adapted the kicking action into her throwing some books off a small wooden/brass chest which made good sense within the mood of the second last scene (8), where she finally confronts her mother about insisting that she, Rebecca, keep silent about the identity of her father while growing up in the conservative Karoo town (Fugard 2002:45, 46). Here the actress discovered that her character's true anger and pain was directed at her mother in the following lines and the kicking and throwing of objects (now on important words rather than end ones) added a sense of rage and danger to this moment:

Don't you understand anything? You taught me never to say that word! ...no "father", no "daddy" no "pa" because we must protect him, Rebecca"...Yes, I wanted to say "Father" more than I've wanted to say anything in my whole life. But I didn't! Because you had taught me I mustn't. ...You've been so blind and selfish. All you've ever thought about was your own precious love.....I'm going to live my own life the way I want to. (Fugard 2002:45, 46)

In this way an exercise became adapted and incorporated into the characterisation and assisted the interpretation in one of Rebecca's scenes, both vocally and physically. She finally discovers and asserts her own voice and in a way speaks for a generation of young people, still affected by the aftermath of unjust laws that separated families. This exercise was very useful in assisting Rebecca to find the weight in these words and to fully release them and to find ways of moving on the lines where it was appropriate and effective.

The above way of working worked equally well for the actress playing Allison in scene 7 (Fugard 2002:34–42). It is a long unit to sustain and in this part of the play Allison finally confesses to character Marta the true reason for Dawid's long absence and lack of contact with her and Rebecca. It is a strong, honest moment in the play and Allison takes the lead in the first half of the scene. She needs to be confident and point the thoughts very clearly,

almost sharply as she remembers and explains Dawid's decline into alcoholism, leukemia and their eventual separation. She speaks with some bitterness and resignation in the lines "By then I had stopped trying to do anything for him. Like you, I also finally realised I was helpless...I stayed with him as long as I could but eventually it was too much for me." (Fugard 2002:36). Kicking a can on some end words and then important words assisted the actress in structuring her thoughts, allowing their build-up and some vocal release in a clear, energetic manner—appropriate for Allison who is an academic and organised kind of person. Her personality and sound expressed contrasted with Marta's softer and warmer memories in the second half of this scene. This mood is then completely broken by Rebecca's confession of having entered the room and seen her father on the night before he died, at the end of the scene. This exercise helped the actresses find the contrast and balance in the tone of these three parts, of the scene as a whole.

4.2.7 Finding energy and spontaneity in the lengths of lines (Berry 1987:183–184)

This is a group exercise that encourages awareness of each other in the speaking but which also "brings out each person's individual energy" (Berry 1987:183) and sound. The actors come together in a close group after reading the speech/text a few times for the sense. Each actor speaks a thought, short or long and in any order and so the whole passage is covered in time. They are free to choose which lines to speak. The aim is for the group to sense who will speak next, not to interrupt and to link up smoothly so that the thoughts will flow. Some will speak only one word, others phrases or even long lines. The sense may be broken up at first but as the group listens and responds to each other, new energies and variations will be given to certain lines and the text as a whole will have a dynamic of travelling forward (Berry 1987:183).

Application: We used this idea in the early rehearsals, on the Yeats poem *Running to Paradise* for group improvisation and it certainly did release a sense of energy, freedom in interpreting the lines and an enjoyable sense of creative chaos! It worked well with the lyrical feel in the language and the sentiments expressed in the poem of mankind being swept along by the forces and winds of life and change. On repeating and exploring this poem again and focusing on a different element, the actors found a closer connection to the images by exploring the lines in this way and took it further with added physicality by moving, jumping and dancing on the lines. They were all equal in status during this group improvisation and also used props provided at the beginning of the rehearsals such as a bunch of keys, a sheet, a bowl, a hat or candle, some books. On their chosen lines each actor moved in the space to a specific spot and found a gesture for the image found in those lines. Eventually all came together into a tableau, with props, and performed a main gesture

while speaking their lines. The group then spoke the whole poem together simply, as one, and focused fully on the meaning. This playfulness with the text and having permission to be bold and fanciful with the words and gestures, makes the actor less self-conscious and being too literal and emphatic while speaking the words. As Berry (1987:184) says, “you give your subconscious responses a chance”.

After a few sessions of working on the poem at various intervals the actors became more confident with the words and allowed themselves to experiment freely with phrasing, pitch, tempo and a good sense of working together was felt. A sense of ease and variation in tone was found. This was something they could hold onto and remember at later stages of rehearsal when time was limited and the pressure of final runs and consolidating the show was upon them. This was then a good text to also include now and again as part of the warm-up and to recover that sense of flow and energy. The last verse encapsulates this sense of wanting to be free in the world as the wind, without material cares, yet having an awareness that all things come to an end:

The wind is old and still at play
While I must hurry upon my way,
For I am running to Paradise;
Yet never have I lit on a friend
To take my fancy like the wind
That nobody can buy or bind:
And there the king is but as the beggar.
(www.bartleby.com 2015)

There are more exercises in Chapter 8 on “Acting, Text and Style” (Berry 1987:190–203) but many of these are also developed and discussed further in *Text and Action*. The ones I found to be most useful will be discussed therefore in the next section. Unfortunately, we were not able to try all these remaining exercises due to a lack of time but they could be very helpful in assisting the actor to connect with the intention of their character in certain situations and to free up physically.

Towards the end of her book Berry again comments on the applicability of her exercises to modern text and her wish for them to alert the actors and directors to the sound and style in the writing:

The point I would make clearly is that however naturalistic the dialogue, it still is presented speech, and as such you have to find its precise style. All good writing has a very specific rhythm, unique to itself, and we have to be alert to this. (Berry 1987:255)

This awareness is what we continued with in our explorations on the text of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* in the search for a clear directing and performance concept.

4.3 *Text in Action*, a definitive guide to exploring text in rehearsal for actors and directors (2001)

In this book Berry (2001:19) refers early on to her thoughts on modern writing and how she feels her exercises can be useful for finding the “physical movement of the language, and how the thoughts move, plus different ways of connecting with the imagery”. She suggests three questions to keep in mind while rehearsing on a text which I have found very important in our process during *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. These are:

1. How we listen to and hear language.
2. What we apprehend from its sound and imagery.
3. How much the speaking of the text changes our understanding of it. (Berry 2001:19)

The most important aspect for her after discussion of motive, intention and character and more obviously general themes and images that are found in the writing, is the idea of imagination being “at the centre of the actor’s exploration” (Berry 2001:20). This way of working often takes the actor away from “logical sense of a character’s journey through the play” (Berry 2001:20). She strongly feels the actor should be allowed the freedom to respond from their own attitude towards the writing which “will make the result unique and interesting” (Berry 2001:20) and lead to more sensitivity and layers in performance.

As a director it was my responsibility to guide the cast through certain exercises and improvisations in an imaginative, structured way to encourage this awareness of the possibilities in the language and sound of the play. As Berry (2001:23) says, a director usually has a vision of the play, a concept and style that “underpin[s] the end product”. This was not the case though when I started out. I was hoping that in listening to her questions such as “How do you hear the play, and how much is the speaking of the language central to your vision?” and the comment “Individual taste is also very much part of the issue” (Berry 2001:24, 25) we would find a concept and interpretation on several levels that would do justice to this Fugard text. Berry (2001:28) emphasises the need for trust in an ensemble to allow for this more open approach and confidently says “the exercises will release energies and surprises in the language ...we must be open to the music, the rhythm, the rhetoric in the text, and we must not shy away from its physicality”.

In the mid-1980s while Berry was working at the Royal Shakespeare Company much more modern text work was being done alongside the classical works and Shakespeare. With such variation of plays and diversity in styles she recognised the need to develop “exercises of

action and interaction in text” (Berry 2001:45). However, she also found that her exercises on classical texts worked effectively on modern text too “in that they pointed up the rhythms and the changes in thought” (Berry 2001:46). She used her exercises on finding both a sense of roughness and “physical restraint” (Berry 2001:46, 47) in order to find clarity of meaning within a specific space. For her and us in our process with a contemporary, realistic text it is a constant balancing act between finding the truthfulness of the characters and their setting and keeping a sense of poetry (or heightened interpretation) where necessary. Her exercises have of course developed over the years and are not confined to the contents of books alone and it seems that this process of discovery on what works and what does not is an approach that she takes into her old age and final book (to date). She states:

We are constantly redefining the language for now, and it is never the same. We are always finding new ways, new images to help illuminate the text, and these new ways arise out of the specific needs of the play and its particular vision. (Berry 2001:47)

Berry’s commitment and belief in the power of theatre to reflect shifting political attitudes and actions lies in her recognition of the importance of language being made active by the actor. I feel that she also at this point in her writings makes clear that this should be the concern of the director as well.

We have to make people want to listen, and that cadence, that music, has to be found—and this is the balancing act...some part of us must connect with the basic power of language, and thus how theatre can stimulate and make us think.” (Berry 2001:48)

The exercises in *Text in Action* lay a good foundation for both actor and director to approach language and text more creatively so that “other meanings and resonances can surface” (Berry 2001:77). Most of her exercises use the idea of resistance in some or other way which prompts the actor to feel the “true need of the words....and to reach through to someone else” (Berry 2001:77). She feels this takes away unnecessary self-consciousness in the actor and allows him/her to focus on the task at hand and to stay “active” (Berry 2001:77). She stresses that both group and solo work can be done in any order and as required by the director during rehearsal time and that the process can benefit from layering and repeating certain exercises at the beginning and end of the work. She is realistic in saying that there is no right exercise and that a choice and its usefulness must be guided by the needs of the scene and the characters (Berry 2001:78).

I would like to discuss some of the most important sections of exercises we tried, either as a starting point for further improvisations on character and space, or to connect to a part of the play that could reveal ideas for sound and imagery. Many of these exercises led to further

insights into the characters, their relationships and their environment, both physically and emotionally. Some of these discoveries could be included quite practically in the performance. These are exercises that have not been included yet in earlier sections in this chapter, but there is always some overlap between Berry's earlier exercises (as in *The Actor and the Text*) and the later ones, such as in this book. I shall link the exercises used with our, often extended, improvisations that led to concrete ideas for a directing concept.

4.3.1 Story-Telling (Berry 2001:96–112)

The aim is to explore a piece of text by telling it as a story and to involve the body fully while doing so. This exercise has multiple aspects and is very valuable in helping the actors to listen carefully to sounds in words, to work together in finding meaning, to free up any physical awkwardness while speaking and to release a stronger energy through the words. It also builds confidence in the group as all are contributing to finding a way of telling as individuals (in their own voices) but with the support of the collective.

Berry uses several heightened texts like the speech of the Player King from *Hamlet* and an extract from "The Rape of Lucrece" both by Shakespeare (Berry 2001:97, 98 and 107–109) and later, a section from "Lament for Ignacio Sanchez Mejias" by Lorca (Berry 2001:109–112) as contrasting examples to work on. I chose to rather focus on a section of the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text as we already had three other heightened texts that were explored from time to time. I wanted to see how Berry's ideas work on a contemporary text and our time had to be used wisely.

All actors form part of a circle and read through the text. Then phrases are divided up and allocated to each person. When lines/thoughts are familiar the actors move through the room speaking quietly, later more energetically. Each person then runs and jumps onto a chair or table and makes a gesture on their line(s) that links to the story being told. All move back into the circle afterwards and tell their section of the story simply and clearly and the full story is connected up again (Berry 2001:96, 97). Further adaptation of the storytelling involves sitting in the circle, muttering it through as a group for the sense. Everything does not have to be fully analysed at this stage as meanings will emerge. Berry advises taking time on this exercise and even doing it in sections and with intervals between sessions (Berry 2001:97). In this way the discoveries made can be considered more thoroughly and become part of the rehearsal process in a deeper way.

Application: We used the basis of this storytelling exercise to structure improvisations on important themes of the play linking up with the end of scene (1) with Marta recounting the story of the stinkwood tree in the Knysna Forest (Fugard 2001:12,13) and also on the poem *Tristia* by Ovid (Fugard 2002:3) which has been referred to. This took up the first three

rehearsals when we began, where on each evening time was spent on developing stories and scenarios around these poems and sections of the text that could be related to them. The exercise was adapted to suit our needs during rehearsals. This early initial exercise was to prove very illuminating and suggested the seeds for both potential vocal and visual ideas.

The Knysna Forest story/improvisation: At the end of this first scene of the play Marta reveals to Allison that Rebecca has not entered fully into the living room where they are sitting, for eight years. The stinkwood table she lovingly touches up with a dusting cloth is a bone of contention between mother and daughter and was the site of an earlier fight which ended with Rebecca calling Marta “n Ou Stinkhout Meid”—[“An Old Stinkwood Servant”] (Fugard 2002:12). Marta then proceeds to tell Allison how she does not mind the naming/insult anymore because the table has special significance for her. It is a family heirloom and was loved by Dawid Olivier as a tangible connection to the earlier, unspoilt forests found in nature. As a young girl she also grew to love the table after he told her stories about it and later as a young woman, it grew in significance as the place where they sat, did homework together, where he wrote his poetry and they shared intimate moments. This room, its contents and the Olivier home also became a secure space for Marta as a young child.

I felt it was important to establish this sense of origins and place with the actors in an early rehearsal as that would help them understand the bond between Dawid and Marta, and the different view on the home and Karoo milieu held by Allison.

Our first few rehearsals focused on landscape and place and this story tied in well and combined with a later exercise of Berry called “Inner vs outer Landscape” (Berry 2001:220, 221). The actors started off sitting in a circle and read sentences aloud from Marta’s text. At this point it was from her perspective, looking back with some nostalgia on an earlier, more innocent time. It is a short piece and they took time to speak it more slowly than the actress playing Marta did and to feel where the transitional moment is towards the past and a more poetic tone in the writing. This was repeated and then they spread out into various parts of the rehearsal room and could choose the length of their phrase or sentence. Already I asked them to visualise themselves as a small band of family members that lived a hundred years ago without modern comforts in the forest.

The rehearsal room was fairly spacious but full of usual items such as plastic chairs, a screen or two, a long table, a bedframe leaning against a wall, a dustbin. The suitcase of rehearsal props that I had introduced at the first session was also there to be used. Each actor took turns to be the narrator and spoke a line or two. In-between they could add to the text and fill out the storyline with sound and dialogue as long as the story continued and grew. The cast really were very creative in this improvisation and listened and played off

each other's suggestions. The lines from the text were there as a structure even though they became transformed and more dramatized as the improvisation progressed:

Once upon a time it was the King of the Knysna Forest, the tallest of all the tall trees. Monkeys and beautiful birds lived in it...Elephants slept underneath it at night. Then one day men came with their axes and chopped and chopped...until the king came crashing down. (Fugard 2002:13)

What was very striking were the actors' abilities to create imaginative sounds, both animal and bird-like and to create the atmosphere in a forest where man and animal life seemed still in harmony with each other. They also used the available chairs, tables and screens in an interesting, functional way to suggest the large tree at the centre of their living area and created a small dwelling close to it. This was done with ease and simplicity without losing the flow of story and dialogue. Relationships emerged in the family, as well as a kind of hierarchy appropriate to a simple, rural family. The chopping down of the tree was changed to the presence of bad hunters who threatened the family's existence, as well as the tree and this developed into a realistic imagining of a family in fear and hiding. Somehow parts of the tree were rescued and the father and family created a table from it.

There was a ritual element in how the table was then touched and used; the actors moving closer in a slow manner and moving around the table, touching and stroking it. Some lovely sensitive moments were created in the space and in the speaking. The symbolic value of the table became concrete in this scenario and not simply a pretty image. A clever twist was brought in at the end of this improvisation when the actress playing Allison 'woke up' after everyone had fallen asleep and was worried about someone breaking in. The scene switched to the present time again when she and Dawid were newly-weds living in Hillbrow, Johannesburg during the turbulent times of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The life in the forest seemed then like a satisfying memory one longs for but which is out of reach. This linked up to the characters' own sense of memory and loss and longing throughout the play and became an image they could recall and draw on to visualise as reminders in other parts of the play, when needed.

We ended up incorporating many aspects of the improvisation into the performance of this section of text. Most of the sounds everyone contributed during the scene were retained and the symbolic, almost magical feel of the table was further transformed through sound and a lighting change to enhance the dream-like mood. The tempo of moving and speaking around the table changed, became slower and also assisted the actress playing Marta to connect more strongly with her emotions on this piece of text and to find a certain softness and vulnerability in her character: "He was right. This table is alive—I can feel it when I touch it. It

has taught me how to wait, because it and me, we knew he would keep his promise and come back” (Fugard 2002:13).

Clear ideas for directing this part of the scene emerged from the actors paying close attention to the text and allowing for an imaginative response to sound and story-telling, movement and use of space. A similar use of these elements were included at various points during the rest of the rehearsal time and therefore contributed to the overall concept in performance.

4.3.2 Passing text around (Berry 2001:112–119)

This sharing first of words, then phrases and full lines or thoughts in a circle and listening, was absorbed into the previous story-telling exercise at first and encouraged the group to be finely attuned to each other’s tempo and rhythm (Berry 2001:112, 113). It is an exercise Berry comes back to from time to time in all her books. However, we applied it more lightly in the Knysna-Forest storytelling and did not expect each actor to only take the line word by word until the end. However, this more difficult strategy i.e. speaking only one word at a time and being stopped by other actors if not fully heard, worked especially well towards the last part of rehearsals, a week or so before opening night, to sharpen focus on the text and not to take words for granted. *Sonnet 23* (See Addendum p.3) linked up well to the Fugard characters’ thoughts and feelings of being less articulate or clear and confident about their desires:

As an unperfect actor on the stage
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength’s abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love’s rite,
And in mine own love’s strength seem to decay,
O’ercharg’d with burden of mine own love’s might. (Berry 2001:122)

Application: No actor was allowed to continue speaking if the group did not hear and understand each word or phrase fully (Berry 2001:122). Each of the actors had something to work on. The actor playing Dawid needed to finish his end consonants to balance out his tremendous resonance, the actress playing Allison struggled with lengthening vowels and going through multi-syllabic words more comfortably and at times, also needed to define end consonants and Marta needed to point end words more as the meaning sometimes faded a little towards the ends of lines and could be better sustained. On their own speeches it was often a case of insufficient breath support to sustain long groups of conversational phrases

and sentences. I was reminded of character Dawid's almost solo scene in the first half of scene (8) (Fugard 2002:42–45) where he enters the living room the night before he died. His speaking has to be both audible and create interest and a sense of fighting to the end, using words to do so. At the same time, he is physically weak and at the end of his life and breath, and must also convey this believably to the audience:

Was that you knocking? Wasn't sure if I was dreaming it...or where I was....but yes...yes of course....for a moment I thought I was still back in London. (Fugard 2002:42) and

It's obvious she's [Marta] lying to me which I suppose means there is anger and resentment. I don't blame her. I would be. And more. I'd disown him. A white man's bastard in the new South Africa? (Fugard 2002:43)

The actor needed to convey the thoughts and emotions clearly, not one dominating the other. This required awareness of going through words fully in terms of sounds, as well as being fully in the performance moment as character. Again, the idea of the exercise served us well, both in the early phase of rehearsal and towards the end of the process. In this way it contributed to a layering and deepening of interpretation in the play. Much of the precision on speaking and experiencing the sonnet text could be related back to sections of each character's monologues in the play and contributed to the actor's neatening up and clarifying and projection of dialogue.

4.3.3 Jostling (Berry 2001:120–122)

This is a vigorous physical exercise that works well throughout the rehearsal process. It needs to be done within a group but can also be effective with three or four people. The aim is to find or release the words in a fresh or more spontaneous way, perhaps breaking through the control established once text is learned or prepared for reading. Berry (2001:121)) suggests using a speech that can be spoken together by the actors from the play being explored. The actors come together in a tight group, touching shoulders and sides of the body. All must jostle each other while speaking it through. It is meant to evoke feelings of irritation and being slightly off balance. The words and sounds cannot be smoothly uttered at the same tempo and often well-practiced intonation of phrases takes on a different quality. Another variation on the exercise is for one person to stand in the middle while speaking and the group surrounds him/her at close quarters. The actor in the middle is then "propelled round the ring" (Berry 2001:120–122). I used this exercise both on text and in improvisation and it certainly did have a freeing effect on the energy and firmness of a speech by a character. This idea of resistance between actors allowing for a certain energy and disruption

in the speaking and finding responses, despite the physical distraction, was very effective. A simple exercise that can be repeated throughout the rehearsal period.

Application: In the early rehearsals I set up exercises and improvisations that would help the actors discover a sense of connection to the past and places where these characters might have lived. The play looks back into their memories of the landscape they grew up in under Apartheid, both rural and urban. In one of the first three rehearsal sessions, we worked on the ‘tea-party’ scene where character Marta remembers the time when character Allison was introduced to the Olivier family as the new bride-to-be (Fugard 2002:8–11). This is discussed in the earlier exercise 4.2.3 Language fabric—listening, commenting. This improvisation was extended later into placing Marta at the centre of the family stinkwood table and the other characters of either side of her. Marta was asked to discuss her feelings in her own words (not using the text), as the young maid/domestic worker in the house and also how she felt about this new woman in his life. The other actors jostled her from side to side as she spoke and it ended up being a vigorous and honest moment. They also threw in comments from time to time to keep the conversation going. Marta’s insecurity and hopes and bitterness as well as her pride, started emerging in her speaking as she was ‘buffed’ into letting it out. Her emotions seemed to be released without effort. Her English sound also changed slightly to being a little more from the [‘platteland’] or countryside which assisted the actress in her vocal characterisation. This was an aspect she was reminded of by myself throughout the rehearsal process; to find the balance in Marta’s English sound between being honest, from the Karoo, yet also having been exposed to more education through her relationship with Dawid and his love of literature.

The scenario continued to develop as she moved to different spots at the table, standing at times, leaning against it and the actors followed her and wouldn’t allow her to leave. She was asked to talk about the two families: the Barends and the Oliviers, now in a standing position with the other actors pulling in two directions while holding onto her arms. One clearly had the sense of her being in the middle of complicated family matters and not knowing what to do; struggling with where her loyalties lay. These tensions highlighted the triangular set-up between her and Dawid and Allison and made the underlying tone more tangible. This was remembered in later stages of rehearsal during blocking (establishing movement patterns) on the text when more energy and tension between the characters was needed, as well as staying with her authentic character voice.

The ‘jostling’ action also worked effectively on the character Dawid in scene (2) (Fugard 2002:13–17) when he returns home to South Africa and his Karoo hometown after an absence of sixteen years. He is ill from cancer, exhausted from the long airplane flight yet excited and happy to be back in South Africa, even a bit confused about where to go in his

recounting of the car trip from Johannesburg down to the Eastern Cape Karoo. The actresses followed him on his 'journey' and jostled and propelled him at certain points to deliberately disorientate him, and make him feel off-balance, perhaps energised as well as being tired! This helped him visualise the different aspects of the landscape he meets again after so many years and to feel both his fragility, strangeness and yet the welcome familiarity. Something of the disjointedness in this physical 'jostling' was transferred to Dawid's speaking. For the actor it was good to remember and incorporate into other speeches where a similar mix of emotions and physicality was needed e.g. the drinking scene during his depressive time in London (Fugard 2002:30–34) and towards the end of the play, just before his death (Fugard 2002:42–45).

4.3.4 Exploring sub-text and structure in the language of a play (Berry 2001:125–127); vocabulary of character (Berry 2001:135); muttering while reading aloud, pointing, echoing and repeating words (Berry 2001:139,140,147,148)

Berry (2001:125) says that "words are living thoughts" and the aim of the exercises in this section is to explore what lies underneath the characters' language. She suggests first taking words out of context and not being too absorbed in the structure of the lines and their grammatical correctness and literal meaning. She encourages the actors in a group to repeat words and lines of a speech several times and to note how some words and phrases take on more meanings, as they are spoken in different ways by individuals (Berry 2001:126). This repetition, questioning and challenging of the words draws closer attention to the "world of the play.... the vocabulary of character" (Berry 2001:126) and exchange of dialogue between characters. In this way actors are encouraged to hear the words in a fresh way and find deeper layers of meaning (Berry 2001:127).

Although *Sorrows and Rejoicings* is a play written in realistic, conversational dialogue it consists mostly of long monologues that also have a structure with at times, poetic imagery and rhythms reflecting each character's way of thinking and 'sounding'. Some of these exercises in this section of *Text and Action* helped the cast in finding their particular, emotional responses to their character's speeches and how they differed from each other. This worked especially well with the early scenes of the play during reading and rehearsal, in establishing the milieu of the characters physically and how they feel about this world in which they are now so closely brought together again e.g. the Karoo house, the flat in London. The atmosphere of the past impinging on the present (the memories of Ovid banned from Rome combined with Dawid's memories of Apartheid South Africa and London) and the reality of the South African political landscape post-1994 were also made more tangible to the cast.

Application 1: Berry specifically suggests that if working on one speech with the group as a whole, one person can stand or sit in the middle surrounded by the actors. The speech is explored within the context of the play and the responsibility of making creative sense is then shared. The actor speaks words or lines and the group mutters aloud on words that interest them or seem noteworthy at that point (Berry 2001:139). This takes the pressure of being correct or 'good' off the speaker, as the listening and responding is done by all. Words may be highlighted that at first, the individual actor did not consider important. This we applied several times to the Ovid poem readings with the actor playing Ovid/Dawid in the middle and the actresses around him or on the sides. We adapted the exercise for work on the poem and it had the same aim and effect. The echoing and muttering aloud by others certainly makes the actor far more alert to his own voicing of the lines and suggests further meanings. We also used the exercise on the *Running to Paradise* poem and each actor had a turn in the centre while speaking his/her verse. The repetition of an exercise from time to time deepens the responses to the language and how that is owned by a character.

Application 2: Awareness of language and intentions for character can be developed further with the individual actor being actively questioned by the group while speaking. This worked very well with all the characters in *Sorrows and Rejoicings* on parts of their monologues and sharpened concentration on the thoughts in lines. This kind of probing by others makes the situation slightly unpredictable and the actor has to think quickly, be clear and remember their words (Berry 2001:140). This section can be time-consuming in rehearsals and we found we could only manage to do this on smaller sections of the play and not in one long sitting. We used this exercise during one of the first read-throughs of the play, which only was done after several improvisations on the two heightened texts and some character work which was more psychologically based. By now, the characters knew more about each other and had solid background to both inner and outer landscapes and could be more questioning and critical as they began with the text itself. Interesting and thought-provoking questions were raised after almost every second line! The actors enjoyed this round-table discussion very much and felt it added to their understanding of each character's intentions during these first two scenes (Fugard 2002:5–13,13–17). After only two to three scenes could be covered in one rehearsal evening we decided to halt this exercise temporarily due to lack of time. But it certainly could be repeated at another stage later in rehearsal time and lended itself to adaptation on smaller parts of each character's monologue when the intentions and speaking were not clear.

Application 3: To add more variation to this scenario Berry also suggests that the group argue with the speaker as they proceed through the speech (Berry 2001:140). This can release a good energy among the group and free up any underlying reservations the actors may have on the honesty, clarity or thought processes of the speaker. It can also lead to

unexpected discoveries in the character's emotional landscape such as hidden anger or resentment. On the other hand, it can also lead to some positive chaos and loud vocal release which was the case in one of our mid-process improvisations during rehearsals, where character Dawid is addressing a student political meeting and has to defend himself verbally from heckling by the women. We found this to be a valuable aspect to use during character improvisation on his early youth and involvement as an activist, addressing a crowd during a student protest. He discovered his youthful, passionate, political voice which linked up with his younger scenes in the play where he explains his reasons for leaving the country to Marta:

That is what I am going to try to do, Marta. That is why I am leaving the country. My writing is the only weapon I've got. Without it I'm useless. And that is what that bloody banning order has made me...useless! I can't be read. I can't be published. I can't be quoted. (Fugard 2002:24)

This was an exercise that could be used effectively on text and in improvisation and assisted the actor with actively finding more layers in his characterisation.

An interesting change then concludes this sequence with a quieter scenario. This works well with dividing the actors in two's, each using the same piece of text. The aim is to really focus both actors' concentration on the language and subtext. One actor speaks the text aloud and another stands behind him or her and repeats these words quietly into their ear. Berry suggests that one must try and repeat as much of the text as possible (Berry 2001:140). Through this the actors both need to listen and speak and hopefully, absorb the language in a concentrated way into their thinking and speaking.

Application 4: After the middle phase of our rehearsals, when we were blocking and working on the last four scenes of the play, scenes 6 to 9, we incorporated a few of Berry's exercises one evening on scene (6). This takes place in characters Dawid and Allison's London flat when their relationship was turning sour and he was drinking heavily. He was not successful as a writer and had lost his job at a private school (Fugard 2002:31–34). It is during this monologue (told by Allison as she remembers the incident from their past), that he admits he made a mistake in leaving the country and as a result has lost his creative ability. We read through the scene, discussed it briefly and tried some rough blocking in the space. By now we were working constantly in a smaller rehearsal room which was good for intimate scenes but limiting for scenes that needed more travelling space and larger emotions.

It needed much more energy and emotional self-disgust from the actor playing Dawid. I also wanted them to be physically braver in their contact with each other and movement. The actress playing Allison was present in the space both as present-day commentator and

active listener in the past as the scene regresses into that time and plays out in front of her again. To assist both of them to feel these emotions of self-loathing, anger, frustration, pity, drunken humour, desire and desperation, I encouraged them to use the kicking of a can on certain words on the text to vent their feelings, to change direction on each punctuation mark as they moved and then spoke and for the other two actresses to actively block or obstruct Dawid from where he wanted to go in the “flat” space. They could use the furniture available or use their bodies to provide a kind of barrier. I also added the suggestion that later in the exercise the actresses become like ghosts, whispering in Dawid and Allison’s ears all the fears and doubts they might be having about themselves. This seemed to stimulate Dawid into releasing emotions more easily and to push the scene further in his physical relationship with Allison. The blocking/movement became more motivated in the imagined space and established the conflict between him and Allison. She kept trying to escape from him, giving in and then withdrawing. He kept following her—and the bottle of whiskey as she tried to keep it away from him! The ghostly voices in their ears, links to this last exercise of Berry and enhanced Dawid’s speaking as it either reinforced what he was saying or contradicted him. A good build-up in tension and a mature interaction developed between the actors which was taken into the performances and contributed to the successful development of characterisation in the production. It also added to the blocking of that scene which highlighted one of the main themes of the play, the effect of exile and loss on character Dawid’s confidence and ability to write,

God knows I’ve tried to get it flowing again but if my writing ever had a heart it has stopped beating. I’m drought-stricken...an officially declared drought-stricken area....We should never have left. I would have survived solitary confinement back home. I won’t survive freedom here. (Fugard 2002:33,34)

A more relaxed manner of approaching this exercise could be to allow both actors to sit back to back on the floor, leaning in towards each other. They then read the text together (speech or dialogue lines) and the other actors comment on and repeat the words they find surprising “or which are in some way loaded in terms of their own character’s reaction” (Berry 2001:148). This adds a softer and more positive feel to the commentary and although meant mostly for dialogue parts, it can work on longer extracts from speeches too. One can adapt the exercise in this way to good effect. Both actors and the group are reacting and speaking against each other and this is an active process. They do not face each other and feel the presence of each other’s backs and the sound vibrations travelling between them by means of this contact. At the same time they are listening and thinking their way through these thoughts. As Berry says, “All these exercises help to identify the language, which both

defines and feeds the thought, and which in turn feeds the emotion” (Berry 2001:140). We decided to stay with the more active approach for this volatile scene (6).

4.3.5 Structures and finding progression of words in “Ladders of thought” (Berry 2001:149–152,157–182)

In this middle section of *Text in Action* Berry discusses the importance of looking carefully at the structure of a speech and the consequent layering or build-up of dialogue and speeches throughout a text for providing further clues and possibilities of interpretation. This work is interesting and valuable to focus attention on the individual qualities of words and to find which ones work together, contrast with each other or carry more weight and meaning. However, she focuses more on Shakespearean text and its rhythmical structure which we could not use as effectively in the Fugard text. She discusses aspects such as iambic pentameter and rhythm, rhetorical devices, antithesis, the use of the caesura, awareness of the energy through lines, the rhythms of prose, the structure of the soliloquy, etc. (Berry 2001:157–180). It was very useful though for us to work on the heightened texts mentioned earlier e.g. *Tristia*, *Sonnet 23* and *Running to Paradise* (see *Addendum 1,2,3*) and to take that awareness back into the contemporary language and become more sensitised to the shape of words, phrases, thoughts, length of vowels, sound qualities and energy of consonants and rhythms and pauses within the modern words and sentences, and then to discover the shape of a speech as a whole when applying a similar process to the Fugard text.

The awareness of the structure of a speech can practically assist the actor in finding a character’s individual voice through recognising the above aspects of which for Berry (2001:151), a sense of rhythm is probably the most important. Finding a character’s energy, “pattern” and “sound...[that] can lift and inspire beyond the meaning” (Berry 2001:155) is what the actor tries to discover in the text and to communicate. Part of finding a concept as a director is assisting actors to find or discover their individual characters’ voices which form part of the physical and inner landscapes they find themselves in. Up until the last rehearsals this was a challenge to sustain. Finding clear and strong connections to the text and embodying them vocally as mature characters required a constant process of working on aspects such as discussed earlier. The energy qualities of sounds and their lengths and weight affect the quality of the spoken words and an awareness of the rhythmic flow and the pattern and build-up of these words and phrases reveal character in a clear manner.

This I feel the cast achieved in an overall sense in the production. On reflection, after the run was over I felt that the actors created and sustained the soundscape of the physical landscape and the atmosphere of the play very consistently and found the balance in levels of volume and sensitivity in these aspects of the sound. At times though, one of the

actresses, although making solid efforts in interpretation where she showed lovely warmth and sensitivity, found it more difficult to fully sustain her individual character's English sound patterns and flexibility, and to project her thoughts and emotions with more technical ease in that physical landscape. This interplay between the two aspects, both personal sound and the larger soundscape, was what I wanted to develop in the performances, allowing the sound in the text and the space to resonate more than relying on visual effects.

4.3.6 Speech structures—awareness of punctuation in lines (Berry 2001:161–164)

This exercise aims to explore how a speech works overall and how it can be broken down into different parts or thoughts, that when combined, can define a character's breathing rhythm and give "colour and depth" to the speech as a whole (Berry 2001:161). Here Berry pays close attention to punctuation and how this can clarify the structure of a character's thinking and breathing in phrases and cumulative dialogue or longer monologue phrases.

Application: It worked well as a group exercise to take a piece of text from the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* script and to share out various lines between actors. This we tried in the very early rehearsals on the Ovid poem *Tristia*. Each person in the circle spoke a full thought; as Berry (2001:163, 164) suggests from comma to semi-colon, to full stop and the idea was to complete each thought fully before the next person continued and extended the thought. This slowed down the actors' responses initially and led to greater clarity in thinking the words through, as well as in speaking.

The group then moved through the space while speaking parts of the text together; finishing a thought and then finding another spot in the room and then speaking the following (ensuing) thoughts. This particular aspect of the exercise also worked well on individual monologues and helped the characters find variation in tone and energy by moving briskly on the phrasing and finding a sense of movement in the thoughts themselves. Both the characters Marta and Allison from *Sorrows and Rejoicings* benefitted from this energetic kind of work on their longer monologues. Changing physical direction on each punctuation mark enlivened the text and even led to changes in blocking, both in the early phases of rehearsal and in the performance space towards the end of rehearsal period. It also freed up the actors' vocal responses by suggesting changes in tone and tempo as their bodies became looser and more relaxed in the space during these scenes. As Berry (2001:173) says,

A speech is itself an action, for it takes on board the issue or issues which are to be considered. It then questions them, argues them through in order to resolve them in some way, and then passes that...onto the next speaker.

The stinkwood table is a prominent piece of furniture in the Karoo house of the play and there is much time spent sitting, standing and moving around the table. The phrasing in certain parts of the text led to the characters exploring the attraction of this table and what it represents—even if they don't all talk about it directly; physically being drawn closer and yet repelled away from it. Moving among chairs from thought to thought, towards each other and away, often physically reflected the relationships between characters and either the connection or lack thereof between them. Marta talks about the mundane and the extraordinary significance of the table for her “Your first visit to the village. I served you all tea in here” (Fugard 2002:10) and “But that's the way it is for a servant.... scraps and leftovers from the table” (Fugard 2002:11). Marta continues:

So I was polishing away and we were having this good fight....and the next thing I know is she is calling me An Old Stinkwood Servant.... I hit her—first time ever—I hit her hard.... Look at it Rebecca, isn't it beautiful! Ja that's stinkwood for you. If you polish and look after it and love it, it gets more and more beautiful as it gets old ...This table is alive—I can feel it when I touch it. (Fugard 2002:12,13)

Later in the text Marta's memory intensifies “I worshipped him. He used to help me with my homework. Made me bring my schoolbooks and sit at this table and do my sums and write my composition” (Fugard 2002:38). Rebecca again, has a negative view of the table, and a different dynamic in the moving and speaking on the phrases:

I wanted to tell him that his beautiful stinkwood table wasn't shining from the Cobra wax polish, but from the tears you rubbed into it.....And I wanted to tell him that I was praying for the day when he would be gone so that the house could be sold and then some other white family's “Stinkwood Marta” could come and start polishing the table. (Fugard 2002:40,41)

Dawid also mentions the table in scene (6): “You try writing a poem in the Karoo without a fly swatter on the table. Impossible. Whack! Whack! Whack!” (Fugard 2002:32) and moves around the table, jumping on a chair as he swats imagined flies. Yet Marta ends on a conciliatory note in the last scene where she asserts her place in the house she practically grew up in and took care of, for most of her adult life. This softer focus on the table influences her gestures and timing in the phrasing of her speaking:

From the day I was born I had my place in this room. Stinkwood Marta belonged in here as much as that table and chairs and everything else...Ja, beautiful hey!...You'll learn to love it as well, and don't worry, it will be

different for you. It won't need your tears to make it shine. (Fugard 2002:51)

The table becomes a concrete site of acceptance and forgiveness and she tries to make Rebecca recognise her place at or ownership of it. Interestingly, all these physical as well as vocal directions are suggested by the language. Berry's suggestions merely point the way to recognising this through awareness of structure in the dramatic sentences and how the characters react to their inner and outer landscapes.

These same ideas can be used for discovering the rhythms in the writing for a character or scene. Berry is interested in the group speaking and sharing lines round the circle as suggested before, but now not interpreting the phrases in any animated manner. She now suggests speaking the words in a flat way, without any attempt at variation in intonation or tempo. The focus is simply on feeling and hearing the lengths of the phrases and how this awareness can point to "underlying mood/intention" (Berry 2001:183,184). The group can test this further by spreading out in the space, reading or speaking the text together without expression and changing direction on the punctuation marks. She feels it is necessary for actors to do this kind of technical work on hearing the rhythms in a text before adding their own personal interpretation and allowing the experimenting to then guide further insights into the speaking. This process on language "can inform our acting choices and so help us to enter that other character, and the world the writer has given us" (Berry 2001:184).

All the exercises discussed so far could be applied and in fact, were explored quite successfully, to the contemporary Fugard text which has its own shape and poetry in its structure. Most of these were explored, albeit slightly adapted for this text. I felt we needed to do this kind of exercise more often in the second half of our rehearsal process as one tends to spend more time on the early scenes and the latter ones can be left a little late. The character Rebecca does not speak until the last three scenes of the play (7–9) (Fugard 2002:34–54) and then a great deal of information about her past and her feelings towards Dawid and her mother emerge. The actress had to guard against sounding either a bit mechanical after the long wait for her vocal release or being too emotional. Having an awareness of feeling the length of phrases and sounds, and working through the build-up more technically in terms of breathing and finding the appropriate flow and pauses helped to structure her interpretation. I did not always include the whole group commenting on her text but rather focused on her alone, as she spoke the thoughts and to whom and where in the space she directed these words. It is the first time in scene (7) that she moves into the centre of the room that she has hated and refused to enter properly after eight years. Finding the structure in her speeches through the punctuation in the long and short sentences and particularly noting the repetition of certain lines, the vowel and consonant lengths and definition and the energy running through the accusatory tone, all assisted her in claiming

this space again. Her movement downstage towards her mother Marta and around the table where Allison was sitting was also clarified and given prominence. Rebecca starts taking much of the focus in the last scenes and the play drives onto its further surprises and conclusion. Her voice needs to become stronger and clearer as the past is revealed,

He saw his daughter. He saw me. In here. The night before died... I came here. Every day since he came back I've been wanting to come here and stand in front of him ...but not with forgiveness in my heart. I wanted to tell him what he had done to you, Mommy. I wanted to tell him how you have wasted your life waiting for him—sweeping and dusting and cleaning in here every day as if he was coming back tomorrow. (Fugard 2002:40)

Although much of contemporary writing is spare and minimalistic, Fugard does not fall into this group. Berry puts it succinctly in her view on modern writing after 1956,

there is just as much expansive writing in modern work i.e. the second half of the twentieth century....and there is the same skill in shapeing and rhetoric as there ever was, and it has to be worked on in the same way. (Berry 2001:195)

4.3.7 Obstacles and resistance to the words (Berry 2001:197–200,209–213)

There are not many scenes in the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text that have short exchanges of dialogue. So this was an exercise only tried once, but still effective in its intention to enliven speaking between characters and to break up stereotypical responses and set patterns e.g. stressing words in a set way.

4.3.8 Dialogue and resistance (Berry 2001:197–203)

The idea is for each character to “repeat the last word spoken to them before continuing with their own line” (Berry 2001:197). The actor can also verbalise the last half of a sentence or phrase spoken before continuing with his/her own dialogue. Another variation is for the actor to repeat a significant word from what he or she has just heard and to allow that word to trigger her/his reply. It is rather time consuming to work in this way through long speeches so I restricted this to our first read-through of the text focusing on the first two scenes (Fugard 2002:5–17) which followed only after some preliminary improvisations had been done in earlier rehearsals.

Application: The cast worked as a group and while one character was speaking the others would echo the last word or part of the thought or line; repeat words that carried more emotion or highlight a certain image etc. This affected the speaker at that moment to listen carefully and after repeating the word or phrase voiced for him/her, continue his/her speech

in a different manner, perhaps a faster tempo or a change in tone or stronger emphasis. This differed from an earlier exercise in section 4.3.4 in that it became a more specific choice of word(s) that were being questioned or commented on. The actors had to focus solely on the lines in the text. The cast enjoyed this involvement in each others' dialogue and it did release a sense of curiosity about the subtext of some of the lines. They had to be reminded though not to comment on the text using their own words. This created a sharper sense of listening to the text as it flowed, was interrupted, emphasised by the speaker and then moved on again. There was not enough time to continue in this vein through the whole text but the point was made, not to take words for granted and to listen and respond quickly. For the main speaker it gives a good indication of what comes across and what is less clear. A touch of this exercise was included in the performance at the end of scene (6) where Rebecca echoes the middle and last words and consonant sounds of some lines of an Ovid poem in a strong whisper from upstage, as Dawid speaks it aloud:

My talent, which at its best was only slight,
Has rusted now and lost its sheen
I fear I'm not the man I was,
And I was little even then.
Long suffering dulls the sharpest wit:
There's no edge left to tongue or pen.
(Fugard 2002:34)

It becomes an echo of his doubting inner voice and sense of failure as a man and writer. This is a concrete example of an aspect of Berry's exercise on dialogue and resistance becoming part of the character and style (as reflected in the use of sound) in the production.

4.3.9 Providing obstacles, physical resistance (Berry 2001:209–217)

The aim here is to place something physically in the way of the actors like a large object or structure or use the actual bodies of fellow actors to set up a kind of resistance between the performer and the text and fellow performers. This need to escape or re-routing in the space, forces the actor to map out a new strategy of survival and the words being spoken are released in an energetic way. There is less concentration on a 'right' or a 'wrong' interpretation of the words which has a releasing effect on the sound. It might also pinpoint the necessity for speaking and using those words in this charged situation; the actor using only the necessary energy to vocally communicate the text while experiencing physical resistance or obstruction (Berry 2001:209). The sense of struggle helps the actor feel and utter the words more concretely. The breathing muscles are engaged fully and the mind is 'in the moment'. Berry (2001:210) refers to the combative and playful nature of this exercise and that it is a positive action in finding a "degree of relish" in the words as a result.

There are five sub-points to this exercise and we used some of these in our important, first rehearsals on the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text. Berry (2001:210) emphasizes that these exercises can and should be improvised upon being “open to interpretation in relation to the scene...[and] can be played around with in any way that is useful”.

- i. Restraining the actor
- ii. Reaching across
- iii. Building barriers
- iv. Getting attention
- v. Manipulation (Berry 2001:210–217)

Application: These core exercises proved very adaptable and useful as key exercises for developing improvisations on themes and images in the text and establishing physical interaction between characters. They were used at the beginning and in the second half of the rehearsal period.

In one of the first improvisations on *Tristia*, the narrator who is speaking as Ovid himself, is trying to escape the physical limitations of being in exile. The emphasis on this part of the exercise is for the actors to imagine the physical landscape of where he could be in exile, the emotional impact on him being so far away from his family and Rome. The actors enact his banning from Rome and he is made to go to another space in the room. While he does this a lament is started by the three actresses. He uses parts of the text and speaks in English and Afrikaans and some connection is felt with the Dawid character of the play. While many verbal and vocal elements are also used his sense of isolation is created physically. He then tries to escape from his confined space towards them and here the restraining aspect is used against him. The actresses become like the three stern Fates (<http://www.greekmythology.com>) that prevent him from crossing the sea and land back home. They block his passage as he repeats parts of the *Tristia* text and later, improvised dialogue. As the mythological Fates they use chanting sounds, enlarged breathing, wind-like song and percussive sounds to accompany their restraining gestures.

At first he is very active and tries to reach out to them for sympathy, both physically and vocally, calling and pleading with them, but they are unrelenting. As he becomes desperate and angry they use props like sheets and chairs to trap him and confine him to the space he has been banned to. They also create barriers of arms, legs and encircle him and propel him off-balance with a feeling of unearthly powers...The improvisation includes all the above-mentioned aspects into a whole. He tries to break through and at times succeeds, but is then thwarted again. His words become urgent, stronger and then sadder as he gives in to his fate and becomes still, collapsing on the floor. They try and manipulate him with softly spoken promises of fortune and fame if he forgets about Rome and his wife and rather follow them

on their travels on the seas. Here the actresses invented dialogue that departed from the Ovid text and became more like sirens calling him sensuously and falsely, trying to divert him from his true feelings and trying to persuade him to forget about his writing and ideals. This contrasted with the earlier, heightened energy of the restraining actions and forceful barriers they made.

This exercise and improvisation was truly successful and the actors found it both liberating and exhausting. Many of the vocal discoveries made by the actors were used as a way to begin the play and established both the physical milieu of the past and the present for all the characters. The characters here flowed into those from the play. Especially for Dawid as character, it brought a real sense of distance and loss from the South African environment that initially made him feel creative and worthwhile as a writer. The images of sea, sand, rocks and winds, voices from the past and present; all helped to establish a feel for the atmosphere of what the opening scene could look and sound like. The idea of props being used both functionally and in a more symbolic way later in the play was also suggested here (e.g. use of candle, sheet, book). Clear aspects of the directing concept were imagined and began with the creative response to the text and dialogue of this early improvisation. I felt very excited at the cast's ability to respond and react so imaginatively to the stimuli provided by this key exercise. I felt confident that Berry's approach at this stage would offer many possibilities for finding a layered interpretation.

4.3.10 Landscapes of the mind: uncovering the layers (Berry 2001:219–233)

In this latter part of *Text in Action* (Ch. 10) Berry (2001:219) makes very useful suggestions for using more imaginative exercises to “discover how the text can actively take us into those different spaces in the character's mind, and how each thought has a slightly different texture and dynamic”. This section of exercises also resonated very clearly with our work on the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text. She sets out four parts to this group under the heading: Imagination/Memory (Berry 2001:220):

- i. Inner versus outer landscape
- ii. Spaces in the mind
- iii. Drawing
- iv. Imaging

I touched on these exercises and adapted them for our purposes to discover how inner actions and thoughts can lead to a more concrete sense of place and space and outer actions by the characters. The scenes in *Sorrows and Rejoicings* move constantly between the past and the present, outdoors and indoors, youth and age, memory, dream and wish-fulfilment to the harsher realities of the present South African society from the millenium

onwards. For a young cast it was helpful to use a variety of exercises to explore this range of ages and experiences in the older characters and to imagine the changes in the political landscape in differing, more personal ways, other than just researching the historical facts. This exploration of thoughts moving into actions on the text and into improvisation situations, made it clearer to them what life might have been like in the Apartheid years of the 1970s and 1980s until the first democratic election in the 1990s. Finding this context of space and place then also went inward and helped the actors find reasons to understand their characters' deeply held views towards each other and their circumstances. We took these exercises beyond the text's actual dialogue but these improvisations were always closely linked to themes and ideas in the play. As Berry (2001:220) says "For language is not just about making sense, it is about where it takes you".

Application: Inner and outer landscapes (Berry 2001:220–223)

In this section I think it more interesting to rather discuss other improvisation situations and aspects of text than those on the *Tristia* poem, which have already been explored at some length. I adapted this exercise to become a larger improvisation, using lines from the *Sorrows* text but also allowing the actors to include their own responses from their characters. This was necessary as not all the characters speak in each scene of the play as there are more monologues than dialogue exchanges. To include the whole cast during these first four rehearsals flexibility was therefore desirable.

Berry (2001:220,221) suggests marking out two areas in the rehearsal room, creating separate spaces. In one of the spaces the character speaks when in the present. He/she moves to the other area when "the thoughts take you to another part of the mind, perhaps to a past experience, a philosophical viewpoint, an intuition, etc." Moving on the shifts in thoughts creates an awareness of what the characters are thinking and feeling and how this contributes to their resulting actions. Berry says "By physicalizing these changes of thought, and hearing their different textures in this way, you...uncover things that you may not have noticed before" (Berry 2001:221).

We needed to establish a physical and emotional landscape for the characters to inhabit. The actors had to create memories and sensations of their past landscapes, dwellings and how this could re-inforce their understanding of the present they found themselves in. We began with the first of the four parts of the improvisation, visualising the Karoo home that characters Dawid and Marta grew up in. The actors marked out a large rectangle on the floor and used some chairs and a table to broadly demarcate some 'rooms' in the space. Each of the actors took a turn then to first speak a line or two of text from the early scenes of the play while in the opposite area, like Allison's "My word! Nothing has changed. This is exactly as I remember it" and Marta 's "Every time I dusted and and swept in here I put everything back

in its place...Nothing has changed” (Fugard 2002:5,6) and Dawid ‘s lines “I also can’t believe it. But it’s true. Dawid Olivier is finally back home” (Fugard 2002:14). Rebecca took one of her lines from later in the play when she finally chooses to speak “I’ve heard you—many times—when you thought you was alone in here. You tell me there are ghosts in here...” (Fugard 2002:41). These lines or thoughts were spoken to stimulate their thinking as individual characters about how they feel in the present moment in the play. Then they were asked to take turns in stepping into the rectangle representing the Karoo house and to walk their way through rooms that formed part of their childhood and teenage memories. They could then voice their thoughts about what they remember in this space. When something did not match up to their memory or they were unsure they first had to move away from the rectangle to the other space and then query their memory. I also fed them suggestions and questions from time to time to stimulate more responses, for instance to Rebecca: “Where and when in the house was your first playtime? What did you play with? Were you happy then? What do you remember?”

This was a quiet, thoughtful improvisation in many ways as the characters both created and found memories and had to clearly visualise potential images of the house, its rooms, its yard and atmosphere. Each one of them had a different inner view of what the house meant to them. We did not have time to work through large parts of the text and their imagined responses, so included a little of both. They had to verbalise some of what they ‘saw’ or remembered in the past in those rooms, even if it differed from character to character. They ended up staying some time in the rectangular space as they became absorbed in finding their characters’ memories. After a few lines spoken alone they could all be in the rectangle together, moving through the rooms and voicing their observations and feelings aloud. This did help to save time as we still had other spaces from the past to explore. Already, moving on the voicing of these memories made these images far more concrete and lively for the actors—than it might have been sitting around a table and simply discussing what they think the characters see. This way of working through text, improvisation and contributions from the actors at an early stage set up the conditions for an imaginative approach I feel, using voice and body to imagine space more quickly and precisely. This also influenced their understanding of blocking the scenes; not to be tied down to rigid ideas of time and place but to allow for more fluidity yet being clear on what the reality was for each character within a scene. This fed directly into my eventual visualising of the stage space.

In the second part of the improvisation we moved to the aspect of drawing, 4.3.12. This part is linked to the above discussion. Now I asked the actors to focus on the living room which is the locus of the action in most of the play. The rectangle was enlarged and the table and chairs were arranged in the middle. They walked around the table several times, swapping direction now and again, and thought about what they did at this table so many years ago;

reading, writing, eating, playing, polishing, telling stories, being reprimanded etc. They then sat down and I provided paper and crayons and asked them to draw together, and to discuss what they remembered specifically about the room and its contents. They were also encouraged to argue with each other if they did not agree on the placing of objects and to move about in the space and imagine putting things back in order, before returning to the table and continuing with their drawing. The actors tended to go into character very soon and this led to a lively interaction in English and Afrikaans about who did what and what there was and even included the memory of Ouma and Oupa and Marta's mother who was the housekeeper then. We did not return to speaking dialogue or sections from the text while drawing, as I felt the improvised thoughts were revealing in themselves. There was much talk about Dawid's grandparents and how they liked the house to be and how each character felt in relation to them as the older generation. The communal drawing ended up being more detailed than what I imagined as being essential for the stage space but gave us a clear sense of the presence of the past and perhaps, what had been lost by these characters by the present time the play takes place. Memory, it was discovered is a complex thing and can be perceived differently by individuals; it all depends on your point of view. This exercise led to more questions about life in South Africa in a small Karoo town in the 1970s and early 1980s.

The third section of the improvisation went much faster and the actors responded and seemed to find images and words without undue effort. I asked the four actors to stand in the corners of the rectangular space, looking outwards. They had to take their attention out of the room and imagine the landscape and view outside the house. Each actor could be in character and comment on what they saw from their point of view. I encouraged them at first with verbal suggestions and they had to respond using words or very short phrases and to do so quickly. A whole wordscape of Karoo images was spoken, from the ordinary e.g. dust, white walls, aloes to more evocative animal and 'township sounds'. This came in useful during later rehearsals when building elements of the soundscape for a particular scene. The sound brought some of the longer monologues more to life by supporting the images mentioned. Together the cast also developed a sense of place and belonging—or not belonging, to the Karoo house and the environment.

A further addition to the improvisation was the shift from the big Karoo home to character Marta's family home in the coloured township. The rectangular space was made smaller and fewer chairs were put around the table. The actors walked the space to find the feeling of much less space, confinement. The room changed from living room/lounge to the kitchen. Marta and Rebecca were in character, except that Rebecca was 9 years old and the other two became a visiting aunt and friend. Questions were raised around the table about the Olivier family and jokes were made about people in the town. It became a very lively and jolly

improvisation. Interestingly, Marta became the centre of everyone's attention and aspects of Rebecca's rebellious nature emerged when she did not want to go to bed early and argued with her mother about staying up and watching television. Marta had to pacify her in front of the visitors and also show her authority. This pointed to the early family dynamics between the two and also resulted in some 'jostling' and pulling between mother and daughter that sounded very authentic. The physicality released between them resulted in more vocal spontaneity and ease than noted before in the readings. Both actresses playing Marta and Rebecca are more English speaking and this exercise helped them discover the Afrikaans side, as well as a more down to earth side to their characters. This helped them stay in touch with their countryside roots and was a useful reminder when working on scenes from the play when both women are older. Again, another layer discovered through using Berry's exercise and adapting it.

The exercise continued the following evening as it took long to work through the above aspects. I am only going to discuss the basics as a similar outcome was achieved in awareness of outer space and inner thoughts and reactions. The space was divided into two again and now the setting was their Hillbrow flat in Johannesburg and the focus was on characters Dawid and Allison in their first year or two of marriage. Some lines were chosen from the scenes where each of them comments on the effects of the Apartheid laws and the police harassing them. Allison mentions her first look at Dawid "the very first time I saw him. The Wits' campus in 1976—on the steps of the great hall. A huge student rally in support of the Soweto uprising." (Fugard 2002:7). She also tells Marta "Those last years in Johannesburg weren't easy you know, and we knew they were going to get worse. That banning order was only the beginning." (Fugard 2002:23) and "I realised just how much fear we had lived with in South Africa...fear of the informer, fear of that knock on your door in the middle of the night" (Fugard 2002:26). Dawid explains to Marta the effect of the harassment on his writing:

Ja. I'd reached a point where I was actually asking myself that question. 'Why bother? You know they'll just wake you up again in the middle of the night, search the place, find the manuscript and take it away like all the other stuff they've looted from your life.' (Fugard 2002:24)

They then moved through the rooms of the small flat commenting on what they saw, creating their personal milieu from this phase of their life together. The other two actresses then became policemen or security officers that questioned them in the middle of the night etc. There was a real sense of their private space being invaded and the actors imagined this quite vividly in their speaking and reactions. This was an important exploration for the actors playing Dawid and Allison; to experience this imaginatively, and helped them understand the reality of people who spoke out against Apartheid in those years and the risks they took. This

understanding was incorporated emotionally and physically in terms of acting memory by the characters and in later sections of the play led to more mature interpretation by the actors.

4.3.11 Spaces in the mind (Berry 2001:223–226)

This exercise is an extension of the one where the actor uses punctuation marks in a text to think thoughts through before speaking and then moves between thoughts and changes direction as in section 4.3.4. Berry (2001:223) focuses on whole thoughts now, how they build up a speech as a whole and suggests the actor starts by crouching in one spot in the room. He/she speaks and on the punctuation mark then runs to another spot in the space before crouching and continuing to speak (Berry 2001:223,224). She feels that crouching enhances the sense of urgency in the speaking. It is important for the actor not to speak “during the space between thoughts, and that you get to the next thought/space as quickly as possible” (Berry 2001:24). This is meant to assist the actor in fully completing a whole thought first before moving on to the next one.

The exercise was used during our second rehearsal of reading through the text. The first read-through had only taken us through the first three scenes, given all the exercises we tried out such as other characters asking questions from the speaker and commenting on his/her lines and repeating the speaker’s last words, etc. The actor playing Dawid found this exercise very good to focus his thoughts clearly in scene 4 (Fugard 2002:23–26) where he tells character Marta of his plan to leave the country and go into exile to London “Yes, it is my decision. I am doing it because I know it is the right thing to do...Half of the comrades are already over there” (Fugard 2002:23). A great deal of information is conveyed in this short scene about Dawid’s hopes and idealism to escape his banning order and find renewed inspiration to write: “My writing is the only weapon I’ve got. Without it I’m useless” (Fugard 2002:24). He goes through highs and lows too, admitting his depression at the situation in the country. He also reacts to Marta’s silent accusation that he is leaving her and Rebecca (then a baby) behind to cope on their own: “I am not running away. I’m leaving because I want to fight, Marta...for you, for our Rebecca, for those children I spoke to in that miserable little classroom this morning” (Fugard 2002:24). We adapted it to first speaking only one thought at a time but later including several thoughts, then running and crouching in the space between. This helped the actor to structure the long monologue (Fugard: 2002:24–26) more carefully and to consider his position towards Marta at key points too. He discovered when he was wrapped up in his own idealism and misery, when he wanted to be close to her and be persuasive and when he needed to withdraw. The build-up in intensity and tempo in the speaking was more confidently gauged after this experimenting and the blocking, although simple, felt motivated. The actress playing Marta also found her responses became clearer as she followed him around in the space or withdrew from him in anger and quiet

pain. She does not speak during the scene and still has to keep her physical and emotional presence alive as she listens.

Later we incorporated some subtle undertone of sound from her and the other two actresses who were upstage in darker lighting. This pointing of sound echoed Dawid's call to his cause, using Ovid's lines: "All over the world my charge will be heard" (Fugard 2002:24) and reminded one of the fate of the poet who died in exile despite his lofty words. These ironies become especially pertinent later in the play. Dawid's speech had something of the feel of an aria—albeit more toned-down. This use of soft vocal sound in the background, at certain heightened moments in the play is something we used again in rehearsals and became part of the vocal approach and style in the performance. It was suggested by our exploration of this Berry exercise during a read-through and much of what we found here added to my direction of the scene.

4.3.12 Drawing (Berry 2001:227–231)

This is included in the above discussion in "Inner vs outer landscapes" under section 4.3.10.

4.3.13 Imaging (Berry 2001:231–233)

This exercise links up with an earlier one in 4.2.5 "Miming the image" and explores how the actor finds the images in a text and expresses it physically, as he/she speaks it. If in a group, the actors can physicalize the image through gestures and actions as each line is spoken by the individual actor. As Berry says, the important thing is "not about describing the image, rather it is about experiencing it in the body and finding its reality" (Berry 2001:231). This has been discussed earlier and I do not wish to repeat, although it is a very useful exercise that benefits from repetition by each character on parts of their monologues.

4.3.14 Haunting and Loneliness (Berry 2001:233–238)

These exercises also had a thematic connection with the content of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* and helped each of the actors experience their sense of or moments of isolation and loneliness within their family structures. The play seemed almost made for this kind of exercise and exploration.

The basic aim is for the actor who is speaking to try and make contact with the group. He/she wants to "make someone stop and listen so that each phrase can be spoken directly" (Berry 2001:234). The group is walking briskly in the space and all avoid contact with the speaker when he/she tries to reach out through this phrase of dialogue. Each person turns and moves away. No one wants to listen and this can have a very real effect on the person being rejected. Frustration, anger, sadness, incomprehension, real isolation—all these tangible

emotions are evoked during the rehearsal to experience this dejection at not being heard and understood.

Application: We applied this idea of the actors ‘turning away’ from the character speaking, and not wanting to listen in scenes (7) and (8) of the play. It had been used at the start of our rehearsal and improvisation sessions on the *Tristia* poem too, when it formed part of Berry’s earlier exercises such as moving on the lines, changing direction, jostling the speaker, commenting on his words etc. The actresses also isolated the Ovid/Dawid character or speaker and turned away from him when he pleaded with them to take pity on him and allow him to return to his home. This was more of a group effort with text and improvised dialogue combined. In scene (7) the focus was on the three women for a change, as characters Allison and Marta finally confess to each other what the true reason was for Dawid not returning to South Africa when he was able to do so. His downslide into alcoholism and sickness and his pride in being unable to admit defeat with his writing is finally revealed. Marta also reveals the true nature of her love affair with Dawid to Allison. Rebecca is the witness, listening to all these revelations about the past. All is related honestly, although it might not be what any of them wanted to hear.

At the beginning of the scene (Fugard 2002:34–36) it was helpful for Marta to sustain her sense of suspicion towards Allison (that she was partly to blame for the way things worked out for them), to keep turning away from Allison as she tries to explain what really happened in the London years of Dawid’s exile,

There were days when I hated him as much as I had ever loved him. But in the end, like you in this house, all I could do was watch and grieve and poison my own life with self-recriminations and Oh for God’s sake, Marta! Do we have to go on thinking about each other in that way? He’s dead. We buried him this morning. (Fugard 2002:35)

Allison was the active one, moving on all her lines to Marta in the room and Marta moved either slowly or quickly or merely turned away as she replied, using her lines from the text “But I got a letter from him saying that the Government had refused him permission...(Fugard 2002:35). About half way through Marta takes the lead in the text again: “All these years I never allowed myself to think about how it would all end. But if I had, I wouldn’t have imagined this.... (Fugard 2002:37–40) and now we swapped things around. As Marta spoke about her love for Dawid enduring so many years and tried to reach out to Allison and Rebecca both physically and vocally, they turned away from her and moved into corners, opposite ends of the table and avoided contact with her. This was very effective in highlighting potential attitudes and tensions still held by Allison and Rebecca, despite the honest tone of the conversation. The blocking was much less static during these long

sections and the tempo picked up giving the scene an energy it needed at this point in the last part of the play.

We concluded with a short section by character Rebecca who speaks at the end of this scene, confronting her mother by stepping into the room properly for the first time in eight years: “He saw me. In here. The night before he died...I wanted to tell him what he had done to you, mommy.” (Fugard 2002:40–42). This is one of the first of a few climactic moments towards the end of the play. She confesses her secret of having spoken to her father before he died. She now has the need to make contact and be heard and as she speaks her lines both Marta and Allison turn away and move into different areas of the room. They do not reply and she has to continue and find more energy and intensity to make them want to listen. The actress found this slightly unnerving—her character was the one who never spoke and who was always being begged to do so. Now, she had a taste of what it felt like to be ignored in this volatile situation, when what she says is so important. Her sense of isolation in the family and being cast aside by her father was clearly felt through this exercise. Textually, attitudes and relationships became clearer through this physical moving away from the speaker and following each other through the space, and blocking seemed more comfortable and motivated by the thoughts and emotions. Not all the blocking was used exactly as suggested by the exercise but the underlying reasons for wanting to move and reach out did stay with the actors. The contact between the characters became stronger (strangely enough, after all the turning away) and enhanced the clarity and tone of the scene as a whole. These discoveries could be incorporated into the mood and tempo of the scene during performance and to prepare for scene (8) in which the character Dawid is central again; the tone very different and quiet as he confesses his failure as a father and writer.

An addition to this exercise is about the character “defining something about a person or a situation that is haunting them, and about which they are trying to seek an answer” (Berry 2001:236, 237). The speaker crouches in a part of the space and begins speaking. A second actor then approaches and stands quietly behind him/her. The speaker senses when the person is near and then runs away, escapes to another part of the room. This last one we did not apply due to lack of time but the idea is useful and active, as Berry (2001:238) says there is “something which the character is running away from, and which he/she does not want to face—the ghost that will haunt them”.

4.3.15 Alignments and symbols (Berry 2001:239–255)

In the second last chapter of *Text in Action* (Berry 2001:239–255) Berry brings her final ideas for working on text in rehearsal to a conclusion. I did not find the first half of these exercises so useful for “finding relationships” and “conspiracy” and “one-upmanship” and playing games (Berry 2001:241–247), as we had already explored similar qualities in other detailed

improvisations in the middle of our rehearsal period. However, the section on “Concretising Thought” (Berry 2001:249–251) was important to consider. For Berry (2001:249) this part of the exercises is “central to the work—and the imagination”. She divides it into three parts

- i. Making an object symbolise the thought
- ii. Building an altar or a structure to represent the character’s feelings or desires
- iii. Finding the centre line (Berry 2001:249–255).

4.3.16 An object symbolises a thought or concept (Berry 2001:249–251)

The idea is to find an object which has a certain value or “substance” to it as Berry (2001:249) says and to let that object represent the main thought.

Application: In *Sorrows and Rejoicings* there were a few objects that assumed more symbolic value as the play progressed, e.g. character Marta’s large bunch of keys, the polishing cloth for the table, Dawid’s poetry book and notebook, the large sheet and candlestick—even the piano assumed essential value as character Rebecca’s safe-haven in the room. The large, stinkwood table itself already had a strong, symbolic significance from the start of the play, representing the place of family gatherings and meals, the past, Marta and Dawid’s first romantic, intimate encounter, and repository of Marta’s memories of growing up and her relationship with Dawid as a young woman—in fact many of the ‘sorrows’ and the happier times in all the characters’ lives were experienced at this table. The table is Marta’s connection to Dawid and her hopes for a better future for Rebecca and is given constant attention in the form of warm words, polishing and occasional tears. As such, the table assumed central importance in the stage space and much of the action in the play happened at and around it. The kudu horns mounted above the two family portraits at the ‘entrance passage’ to the room suggested on stage, also assumed more than a decorative aspect although this was too big obviously to be handled by the actors. It made sense to play with both some larger (the table) and smaller objects in turn and see how the characters invested them with different significances.

Berry (2001:249) suggests placing the object on the table or on the floor between characters and when one speaks he/she moves the object to their side, claiming it as their own. The next speaker then shifts it or takes it away when they speak and so a tension is created around the object and a dynamic in how it is handled. It could become an aggressive moment or a playful one and often the object ends up representing much more than its obvious meaning and can take on a more abstract value. Marta’s keys become symbolic of a home, a property, a family, a name, recognition and the doorway to a new future. They also harbour the ideas of the secrets of the past being locked away and the power of a tradition of loyalty between servant/worker and employer. The movement and passing on of the keys

between the characters reflected these ideas in a clear and concrete way. It also raised the question in the improvisation of whom do these keys truly belong to. This is of course one of the deeper questions posed by the playwright.

This exercise also made the actors and myself more aware of the concrete presence of carefully chosen objects, talked about or suggested in the language of the play and how these are both real and representative of larger ideas in the text. It also showed the actors how to handle few props in a natural manner, yet slightly enhancing their more symbolic quality when needed, through this awareness. This sensitivity was shown by gesture (slowing down or speeding up) and timing in the handling (feeling the weight, heavy or light; the desirability or rejection) of such objects at various key points in the scenes.

The attitude towards the objects from one or more speakers also affected their verbal responses in tone quality and emphasis. Some examples were: the keys (throughout the play), the whiskey bottle (scene (6) especially and on the side space of stage for London moments)—a relationship literally drowning away in alcohol, the tearing of character Dawid's poetry book pages by character Rebecca (improvised by actress standing upstage by the piano), the sheet used at the beginning of the play as part of a Roman drape over character Allison's costume and later becoming a dustcover for the lounge chair (before scene (1)). At the end of the play it covers the stinkwood table completely, an almost ritualised moment of burying the past for a time, performed by character Marta and Rebecca. Even the large family photos of the Olivier grandparents mounted against the backdoor of the stage space and the kudu horns above them became symbols of a bygone Karoo family and way of life, while at the same time maintaining a functional value i.e. a photographic record of family history. The use of these objects was discovered by the actors and myself through paying attention to the exercise's suggestions but were not spelt out as such in the text. I picked up on references to them and explored further with the cast. This all contributed to the style of the play, contrasting ordinary realistic moments with heightened poetic moments, in the atmosphere of the scenes, the sounds and the rhythms of interactions between characters.

4.3.17 Building an altar/structure to represent feelings and ideas (Berry 2001:252–254)

This exercise we used both at the beginning of the rehearsal time and towards the end. I adapted the exercise for the purposes of the improvisations and combined it with the storytelling mentioned in section 4.3.1. The aim is for the actors to use whatever is found in the rehearsal space e.g chairs, tables, loose items like props provided by the director, other structures such as a screen or a bed that may be stored in the space and so on, and to build something from these elements. As the actors speak the words of a scene or improvise on it, they are building either "an altar or a statue" (Berry 2001:252) which can reflect inner

emotions of the characters or ways of working out a problem that they need collectively to solve. It can also assist them to clarify certain ideas in the text at this point. It is a very open exercise and allows for many ways to express underlying attitudes and thoughts. It links to one of the first improvisations we did as a group on creating the atmosphere in an earlier time when the Knysna forest was pristine and family life simple, man and nature living in harmony with each other. This exercise links closely with the story-telling referred to in section 4.3.1 which combines building a shared, family dwelling with found objects in the room and creating a history and atmosphere for that part of the text.

In a later improvisation towards the end of the rehearsal process, after the July vacation break, I repeated the idea of building an altar or structure with the actors and chose not to include story-telling. They needed to revisit their feelings and memories of character Dawid and to deepen their responses again as an ensemble. The set was being finally established in the stage space and the actors had to adapt to this much larger interior, different acoustic and how their relationships with each other as characters were affected. After an extended physical and vocal warm-up, including some choral song on the hymn *Soos 'n Wildsbok* (1983:psalm 42,ii) and the song *Suikerbossie (F.A.K 1979:song 114)* and again some work on *Sonnet 23* (Berry 2001:122) as preparation which helped the actors to find their vocal presences again, the actresses were asked to build an altar to Dawid's memory and the positive aspects of his personality and life. They could use the home objects and furniture set on stage for the living room of the Karoo house, as well as other items that were not yet cleared away in the space surrounding them. The movement and placing of the objects had to be accompanied by spoken comments; either loose words or phrases from the text where relevant, or improvised. At some point they could also include negative memories and comments but had to continue to construct the altar together. This exercise turned out to be both serious and rather funny as the female characters remembered Dawid the man both young and old, the writer, the activist, the drunkard, the husband and father. It resulted in some truthful emotions which often contrasted to the way the objects were handled, e.g., softly, quickly, angrily, roughly, carelessly, thoughtfully. The actresses used mostly improvised comments, but which related to the play and character Dawid. Glasses, many books, an overturned chair or two, a jersey, a letter, were all randomly collected and put together and did seem oddly, like the essence of a person's life in the end and a little sad ...He observed and listened and was surprised at some of the thoughts and feelings uttered! A good way to still discover aspects about yourself as a character.

I enjoyed seeing and listening to the freedom the actors showed in finding other thoughts, both remembered and new and their sense of ease with each other in responding physically to the idea. I was relieved that their sense of character and confidence was still there despite a three week break. I also noted that by now they were able to take Berry's suggestions and

exercises on with confidence and to work with focus and a sense of playfulness. I think they also understood the need for a certain level of repetition in some exercises i.e. *sonnet 23* and that this provided a structure that could quickly revive some technical skills before final rounding off of the acting and pointing of the text again. We ended this improvisation with Dawid showing some resistance, leaning and pushing against the women characters' hands as he voiced aloud what he hoped to get or wanted from each of these women in his life. They ended up pushing and pulling him from side to side too, which resulted in stronger emotions from him and some frustration and anger as well as laughter and some silly moments.

The building of a structure or altar worked well both at the beginning of the rehearsal process and even more so at the end of the process and reminded us of the darker and lighter aspects of each character and how variable memory can be—the characters certainly don't all share the same memories. It also made us aware again of how each character comes into the play from a different angle and the importance of sustaining those differences in age, experience and personality. Even at a late stage in rehearsal actors need to question their responses and not become complacent in their interpretation.

4.3.18 Finding the centre line (Berry 2001:254–255)

This is one of the most important statements made by Berry about language in a play, namely that every text has a line that expresses the central idea of the play as a whole, “the bottom line” (Berry 2001:254). This idea was something I took on board very early on even just before the rehearsal process began. Finding this essence of a text reduced to one chief idea or line from the play, serves to focus and concentrate one's thinking on essential sounds, images, relationships, symbols, actions that lead to finding a directing concept for the whole. In the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text it was the lines about fire and passion burning out to ashes that stood out for me after a few personal readings. It is first spoken by character Allison in scene (7): “That is how long it took for that fire in him to die out and turn to ash” (Fugard 2002:35). Character Marta also refers to the attraction of her and Dawid's youthful passion and the potential consequences in scene (7): “There was a fire inside him and little Marta Barends warmed her life by sitting as close to it as she could. I suppose some people would say she got too close....and got burnt” (Fugard 2002:38). Rebecca further contributes to the burning images in scene (8) when she admits to destroying a box of letters and poems Dawid gave to Marta “...and I went out into the veld and burnt them. All of them. One by one. I watched them all turn into ash and smoke, out there in the veld” (Fugard 2002:49). Soon after this, Allison again comments on this and the destruction of South Africa “The fires of South Africa”! Amazing! That was going to be the title of a poem he tried to write in London” (Fugard 2002:49). She also urges Rebecca to reconsider her prejudice against

her father “What you turned to ash and smoke out there in the veld was evidence of a man’s love, for his country, for his people—for you! Don’t reject it.” (Fugard 2002:50).

This struck me as the symbolic essence of this play; the losing of a certain life-force by the characters in so many aspects, if I had to reduce it to the bare bones. What is all lost....and why? Can the political climate of a country and its people have such a profound impact on a personal life? From there one could start exploring and building the sounds and images of how and why it happened in this way to these people, these lives. Berry (2001:255) admits that there is no exercise that can be done for finding this easily, but each of the actors’ can be asked for their opinions on what this central idea could be. Our bottom line did not really vary and the cast did not challenge or change this initial perception of mine; indeed, the image of fire to ashes stayed with us throughout the process as a bleak reminder how closely entwined the personal and the political aspects of life are, especially in a country such as ours.

4.4 *From Word to Play—A handbook for directors (2008)*

In her final book Berry aims to provide strategies and exercises to release “both the actors and the directors’ subconscious responses to the sound of the text, and through that response to find a deeper and ‘other’ layer to its literal, surface meaning” (Berry 2008:1). She wants to stimulate actors and directors to find how connections to sound and rhythm can evoke nuances of meaning in a text, thereby affecting our emotional response and how we are taken on an imaginative journey into the world of the play (Berry 2008:1).

For her the sound and rhythm of a play can reveal deeper, instinctive aspects of the characters and their world. She states that most of her exercises are already discussed and developed in her previous books but that she is more focused on the rehearsal process in this work. She organises her way of working on a play into various sections but feels it cannot be called a “method” as that would be too restrictive (Berry 2008:5). She suggests ways of staying in touch with the language and finding the possibilities of response through what she calls her “‘diversion or displacement’ strategies” (Berry 2008:7). The actors must be given the freedom and time in rehearsal to explore the less obvious, less literal meanings of words and not to always make logical sense of the text; “by taking the conscious mind off the literal need to make sense, allow the words to be on the moment and to surprise” (Berry 2008:7). It was my hope to use this idea(s), not only to enable the actors to find more range and skill in their interpretations but to see if this increased sensitivity to the language of the Fugard play would bring up further, fresh ideas for a directing/performance concept as a whole. This was our aim during the rehearsal process—to not make decisions too hastily about character, set, costume and lighting but to allow the actors to play with various aspects of sound first, as suggested by the images and ideas in the text.

Berry continues to elaborate on how her work evolved and this I have discussed in earlier chapters of the thesis. She mentions again her realisation that actors need a structure to work in while exploring a speech or scene of dialogue, yet not be weighed down by the director or voice teacher's expectations of what it might be. In our process on the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* text I had to give myself as director that same freedom and "take [my] mind off getting the words right" (Berry 2008:27).

In Chapter 5 of *From Word to Play* Berry (2008:310) clearly sets out the various "rehearsal strategies....to open up the possibilities of story, character and text...they uncover the subtext beneath the surface—the world in the language...they put the spoken text at the centre of the creative process".

She encourages collective work on the text especially for the listening amongst each other while in the moment of doing an exercise (Berry 2008:31,32). This we employed throughout and with additional improvisations a trusting sense of ensemble developed. She also spends time on an initial language workshop for a company of actors as a precursor to the actual rehearsal process. This involves moving on the lines of an additional text she chooses, feeling the beat of the thoughts, feeling the lengths of sounds in words and how this releases emotion, speaking from different parts of the room, and includes several aspects of energetic exercises discussed in her previous two books, such as using resistance between actors (pulling each other from side to side, jostling while speaking, etc.) (Berry 2008:38–65). She also works on the form and structure of a speech looking at phrasing, punctuation and imagery (Berry 2008:72–101) much of which again reflects on earlier exercises. These aspects were given constant attention in our process as we worked. Our warm-ups especially were crucial in preparing the cast to explore the text on an energetic and deeper level.

Then follows commentary on the exploration of various, potential acting spaces and how these may affect the dynamics of the voice and there is a discussion of an essential voice work-out in Chapter 7 (Berry 2008:32,33). She recommends this way of working (especially in her later years) to professional companies as well as community, school and prison groups. She feels that finding a sense of confidence in the language through enjoying the rhythm and sound will empower many people to understand a text whom may previously have been inhibited by this kind of dramatic or poetic writing (Berry 2008:33).

4.4.1 Displacement strategies (Berry 2008:105–138)

The essence of Berry's ideas for unlocking a text during rehearsal is found in this section of her writing in Chapter 5. Although most of these suggestions or exercises are already discussed quite extensively in *Text in Practice*, she consolidates them clearly here. There is

more emphasis on what a director should take note of and as she states so plainly and wisely “how do we really hear what is there in the text without colouring it with our own assumptions and values and meanings?” (Berry 2008:105). These strategies are important in trying to get the actors to look deeper than the surface value of words and to find stronger, inner connections to the thoughts in a text.

Berry sets up exercises that distract the actor from harbouring excessive tension and self-consciousness and trying too hard to make logical sense of the words, and which encourage the actor to find more spontaneous ways of connecting to text. This would then release “the anarchy, in the language” (Berry 2008:105) and the awareness of words being a physical activity, housed in the body and needing to be launched with full energy into the space “realising that language springs from the body as well as the mind” (Berry 2008:105). These are valuable sentiments but as Berry says, difficult to implement until the actor has experienced this instinctual response for themselves through free experimentation. The exercises may also be altered to “suit the particular requirements of the scene” (Berry 2008:107) and this gives the director a sense of freedom too in working on the text in this way. I shall discuss some of these strategies which we also used in our process but many of them are already mentioned in the earlier discussion on *Text in Action*.

4.4.2 Performing a task (Berry 2008:108–109)

This entails giving the actors something to do physically while they work on a speech or scene. It must be something clear and simple, not requiring a lot of thought. Berry (2008:108,109) suggests rearranging chairs or clearing up a pile of books while speaking or even picking up some potatoes that have been thrown on the floor. We had some props linking to the ideas in the play which could be used such as a suitcase, some sheets, books, candles, keys, a bowl and plate. This exercise was combined into the story-telling improvisation at the beginning of our rehearsals, where the cast used the props and available furniture in the rehearsal room to create a structure in a forest setting, reminiscent of the Knysna forest mentioned in the text of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (Fugard 2002:12,13). We did not use this on the text at first, but the idea was similar in application during the improvisation. The actress playing Marta, at a later stage while speaking her monologue at the table, used the large candlestick, lighting it, carrying it, placing it differently on and around the table while speaking. This had an effect on the ease and tempo of her blocking and gestures and the symbolic value of the prop was highlighted. The candle became a source of light and safety and brought the family together in one space. It also created a sense of intimacy in the story of the stinkwood tree and the forest and added to the value of the words themselves. The candle was also used again in the Prologue we created to start the play, by

the character Rebecca. Here she was one of the women in the speaker Ovid/Dawid's life and also symbolically blows the candle out at the end of his speech before the play commences.

In one of the early rehearsals the idea of performing a task worked well for the actor playing Dawid, as he recalled the Karoo landscape of his childhood. This was improvised speaking but as he picked up scattered books one by one, and took them to a specific point in the room he remembered more places and things and people. The other actors then removed the books again and placed them in different spots. One had the clear visual and aural picture of a man who remembers and then loses his dear memories or misplaces them. This activity could also be applied later when working on scene 2 when character Dawid returns to South Africa and charts his journey back to his Karoo hometown (Fugard 2002:13–16), trying to find his sense of place and self again. Picking up and repacking the books, losing and finding them, all contributed to finding the images in the lines more clearly and not rushing.

This activity was also especially valuable, employed as a strategy by character Rebecca, who for the most part of the play does not speak and must occupy herself by performing small tasks and listening to the other characters and watching events unfold. She is deliberately placed quite far upstage in the space as she refuses to enter the room properly in a moral stance of defiance against her mother Marta and her father, Dawid. It was necessary for the actress playing her to create and evolve many small tasks that she could do within this space that were true to her character and would not detract from the main focus of many scenes. Some of these were suggested by implication in the text but most were not. She had to establish a strong presence that also conveyed some comment about her feelings within the tension of the scenes. This was difficult to do and had to be improvised along Rebecca's thought processes and reactions throughout the whole play. Some tasks seemed casual at first, then more telling e.g. how she played notes on the piano, used certain books and magazines and handled photos, etc. The actress was complimented by various members of the public on her excellent presence both while not speaking and during the spoken scenes, as well as her handling of space and props during the performances.

We also used the idea of performing a task(s) with character Dawid's activity of dressing and undressing on the side of the playing space when not in main focus, or entering the acting space during and between scenes. All the characters remain in the playing space and transitions needed to be flowing and often in full view of the audience with only subtle lighting changes. The actor early on used the time and transition needed to take off items of clothing, or to add more and this instantly helped change the idea of time to the past or the present, youth or age, sickness or health, Karoo or London environment. His character was the most changeable in this respect and contributed a sense of variation both in characterisation and

visually assisting the audience in following these transitions. A simple activity suggested by Berry which became a clear aspect of the visual and acting approach to the production.

4.4.3 Resistance (Berry 2008:109–111)

Here Berry again emphasises the value of setting up a kind of game which is very active in involving the group as a whole. One actor is restrained by something put in his/her way and the others prevent him/her from moving freely while speaking (Berry 2008:109). The actor must try and make his/her way across the room while speaking the text and find the real need and sense of urgency in the words. The resistance between the actors encourages a release in vocal energy, tempo and stronger articulation as they try and outwit each other and find ways to escape the barriers being created by bodies or chairs. This high energy exercise was very useful in the early and later days of rehearsal and has been discussed in detail in *Text and Action*. Berry feels that the idea of using a form of resistance, of actors having to reach out despite something getting in their way, albeit a verbal attack or a physical pushing against or moving through a barrier, is fundamental to her belief that all communication “however off-beat or minimal, is a way of reaching out to some other person and affirming one’s presence in some way....it makes us realise that words always cost something” (Berry 2008:111). The actor is constantly being challenged by another person or the group to think and respond to the text quite physically and not only vocally and it releases more spontaneous reactions.

4.4.4 Further exercises

The exercises in the rest of the book have been discussed already and although useful to take note of, I am not going to elaborate further on them. They are for instance “repeating words” where actors listen and repeat the last words of lines as spoken by one person to encourage listening and fresh reaction (Berry 2008:112–114). In “*Spaces of the Mind*” (Berry 2008:115–118) clarity of the thoughts in a speech is sought by moving to different spaces in the room; the actors allow the inner thoughts to suggest “places in their head” (Berry 2008:116) and they move to that spot and remain still while then speaking the lines. Each thought will have a specific place in the room and it assists the actor to be fully aware of the content of each thought before moving again. Berry (2008:116) feels this active way of working with the text can make the actor think faster on their feet which is something we do all the time in ordinary life “we are always moving to different parts of our brain, of our experience and our intuition, as we think through a moment of change” (Berry 2008:116). This exercise links up with those discussed in *The Actor and His Text* and *Text in Action* where the actor’s movement is guided by the punctuation.

She continues with *“Inner vs Outer Landscape—In and Out of the present”* where actors mark out two small spaces in the rehearsal room and move between the two while speaking. One space is for the present and the other is used for the character’s internal thoughts or past experiences (Berry 2008:118,119). For our play this was a good exercise to incorporate as there is much interplay between the past and the present.

“Drawing a picture” (Berry 2008:120,121) is also one discussed previously and can be used very effectively during improvisation on themes and scenes from the play. This formed part of our improvisation explorations on the characters and making concrete their memories of earlier living spaces. *“Concretising Thought”* (Berry 2008:22,123) deals with using an object to represent an important, central idea in a part of the text of the play. The actor(s) move the object to different parts of the space as they speak and find a new weight to each thought as they handle it. *“Marking thoughts”* and *“One-Upmanship”* (Berry 2008:126) involve one or two actors who listen to each other and grade each other in a way, by making a tick on a piece of paper after each one has spoken a thought. The aim is for each character to make his/her point clearly and to add more ticks perhaps! This we did not use due to lack of time in rehearsal but it can be a competitive exercise between actors who are debating an issue.

The next strategy *“Building Structures”* (Berry 2008:127) links very clearly with the earlier exercise *“Performing a task”* and this has been discussed. Remaining exercises in this chapter are *“Covert Relations”* where two characters do not want something to be discovered or overheard (Berry 2008:131). It requires the actors in the middle to keep physical distance between two chairs while walking and speaking and not to speak when the other actors on the sides, approach the chairs. The two main actors become very aware of the danger of being heard and have to be precise and quick in their speaking to each other. *“Making Contact”* (Berry 2008:132,133) has also been referred to and is a good strategy for characters needing to express “quite deep feelings” (Berry 2008:132). This exercise was used to good effect by the *Sorrows and Rejoicings* cast where one actor moves around in the space and tries to communicate with others and they turn away when spoken to.

“Manipulation” and *“Arguing and Questioning”* (Berry 2008:135–137) are interesting exercises too and we used aspects of them in our more improvisatory exercises in the middle of the rehearsal process which focused more on psychological exploration of the characters and their backgrounds. It usually involves two or more actors who try and persuade someone to do something “against their will and judgement” (Berry 2008:135). An example would be of a character being persuaded (or manipulated) to lie down or drink something while speaking their text despite some possible resistance from him/her, or on the other hand, showing acceptance. The arguing or heckling situation is definitely a useful exercise as it immediately

raises the energy levels in a rehearsal and leads to provocation among the actors. One of the actors has to clearly defend his or her ideas, arguments while being vocally challenged.

Berry (2008:137,138)) concludes this chapter by affirming her belief that these strategies can release a sense of freedom in response for the director and actor. She suggests that directors simply go with their “instinct[s] according to the scene and the actors” and to apply the exercises at various stages throughout the rehearsal process to find different options and to get the most out of them (Berry 2008:137). For actors she says these strategies can help them to physically realise the “underlying motive of the text in some way” and to find their “own personal connection to the language in a different, and perhaps more profound way” (Berry 2008:137). She is confident that whatever is discovered during these sessions will be remembered and retained in the thought and feeling processes during performance (Berry 2008:137). For her it is ultimately about “finding and clarifying the thoughts: even negative ones, always lead somewhere.” (Berry 2008:138).

For myself, it was a constant process of also clarifying thoughts through exploring the writing *in Sorrows and Rejoicings* and finding how some of the strategies used on the language could evoke certain key sounds and images that would lead us to a clear concept.

Chapter 5 – Further comments on the rehearsal process of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* and consolidating a directing concept

In the previous chapter I discussed the many and varied exercises that Cicely Berry suggests as a blue-print for finding new connections and resonances in response to a text. I wished to show how I used most of these exercises to assist myself and the cast in opening up more possibilities for interpretation and direction of the play. These strategies helped guide our exploration towards finding sounds and images suggested by the language in Athol Fugard's *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. Overall, I also hope that it has become clear how the exercises have had a cumulative effect in working on different scenes of the play, contributing to the acting and development of characterisation, use of sound and space, props, lighting and costumes and therefore a concept for the production as a whole.

In this chapter I wish to comment further on aspects that have not been discussed as fully yet; namely our warm-up process in general before rehearsals, the choice of performance space, fuller comment on a few improvisations and exercises that were instrumental in leading to aspects such as set design, costume and further soundscape development. Some mention also needs to be made briefly of other improvisations that were not directly part of Berry's strategies.

5.1 The rehearsal time-line

Rehearsals were planned for an approximate three month (9–10 weeks) duration with breaks in between. It ended up being 9 weeks—just. This was to accommodate both the students' workload in other parts of their course, as well as my teaching commitments. There were certain constraints initially in only having three rehearsals in the evenings per week (2,5 hours usually) which later were extended to include Saturday mornings. The rehearsal times became more frequent closer to the run, of course. The production was also scheduled as part of our Departmental line-up for the second semester and would have been the final production in the HB Thom Theatre in 2015 before extensive renovations were to begin. Performance dates were set for 27 July to 1 August. We were aware of working within a limited time frame to experiment with Berry's ideas, to find creative interpretation as director and to round off the performances for public presentation. However, the renovations were deferred unfortunately, but our performance dates could not be changed.

I therefore started on 16 March 2015 with the actors and had eight sessions before the holiday break in April. We resumed 13 April for a period of five weeks. I had hoped to work in some short rehearsals during the exam period starting after 15 May but this was barely possible given certain students' exam preparation schedules. In this brief time available there

were a couple of skeleton sessions involving individuals here and there. We caught up for a full week, full days of working from 9–13 June to consolidate. The students then had a July vacation break and returned on 16 July to resume rehearsals and runs of the play and to complete final technical aspects. The play had two final dress rehearsals on 25 and 27 July and officially opened on Tuesday 28 July for five performances. It was a tight schedule for a full length student production per se, more so for one that needed a bit more time for exploration. Nevertheless, it worked well and the students were up to the task despite illness at one point and vacation delays intruding into my proposed scheduling. We also survived serious load-shedding during most of the rehearsal time.

5.2 The use of the side-space of the HB Thom stage for performance

From the outset I wanted to use a smaller, more intimate space for the play where the audience is in close proximity to the actors. A drama such as this one I felt would work better half in the round where the audience feels connected to the characters and action and not separated by a large auditorium and proscenium style stage. A smaller space does not of course automatically guarantee this close connection, but I thought to try and create a studio-like space just outside the indoor workshop area in the Thom Theatre, including some space on the stage itself for the audience to be seated. It is a workmanlike space with a large wooden door, half concrete and half wooden floor and the stairs and upper level catwalk are clearly visible above. There is a feeling of height which I liked for the sense of space in the visual imagining of the Karoo and yet the floor space could be defined into suggesting the interior of a large, comfortable Karoo house's living room. There would also be enough space to suggest the atmosphere of the outdoors suggested by the text—Karoo ground and dust. This performance space seemed to offer possibilities for shifting between periods of time in the past and the present. It also set vocal challenges for filling this space more with clear and subtle sound to create or highlight, important themes of the play and believable characters that moved between memories of the past and the present in their energised speaking. A heightened, poetic realism is what we seemed to be looking for in all these considerations, in the acting, vocal and visual atmosphere.

Although I decided on this space before working with the actors on the play, its exact look and use was not pre-determined. I had actually thought I might use more of the elements within it, e.g. incorporating the iron staircase into the idea of the room but this later seemed much too big and unrealistic. We spent most of the rehearsal period in Rehearsal room 3 in the Drama Department which is a fairly small room with a piano, which was necessary for our exploration. Once in the theatre space however, we discovered that the proportions were much larger in a vertical sense than we had realised and had to be contained and reduced for the room to work. Nothing in the space was hidden though and the structures remained

uncovered. It was clearly not a box-set or fully realistic setting of a room; no walls or screens were used, but the essential furniture used later on has a traditional feel and hopefully strengthened or underpinned the symbolic value given to the wooden table, for instance. These elements, including some props, I felt had to be real and tangible for the characters to live in, use and be believable. This was clearly indicated in the text and made good sense on a functional and artistic level. In the improvisations we worked on initially the idea of the large, wooden workshop door took on a significant sign as being the portal from the past to the present and to the uncertain future.

Acoustically, this space did have challenges in that on a rainy and windy night the theatre's metal roof panels might create a lot of noise. However, the actors were aware of the audience's close proximity and their need to adjust and articulate clearly and mostly succeeded in not losing projection and communication. Fortunately, there were very few windy and rainy nights, rather some very cold ones! In the middle of the rehearsal process we decided finally not to use microphones to help create a soundscape, but to use the actors' natural voices in making sound and this added to the challenge of sustaining the clarity as well as the subtlety in the soundscape overall and the actors' communication with each other. The continual load-shedding times were a reality in that period (June, July, August 2015) and we also decided to be less dependent on technical aspects such as added sound recordings—although this came quite naturally from our working process. Lighting was an important aspect for creating atmosphere and changes in locale in the play and this we could not discard. The venue itself required the minimal installation of a few simple standing lights and a few others that could be mounted on the upper structures on the sides of the workshop space. Our scope was limited though in terms of the effects that could be created and the lighting served to support the practical ideas of indoor and outdoor shifts as well as changes in time and atmosphere. Intensity of light could be achieved and this we also used quite effectively. The lighting enhanced the flow of the play but did not dominate the performing space and the acting. I feel it fulfilled my directorial purpose in forming part of the shape of the play by illuminating the action and certain heightened moments. Only two audio-visual projections of a stinkwood tree; its trunk, branches and some leaves were cast onto the rough back wall at two moments in the play (in the first scene and towards the end), where I felt the majesty of the tree and its almost mystical significance could be emphasised. This I felt was an extension of the lighting to heighten the atmosphere. References in the text to this can be found on pages 12,13 and 51.

5.3 The warm-up sessions before each rehearsal: their structure and importance

In the first week's sessions the aim was to explore the physical landscape the characters find themselves in and then later to link it to their emotional landscapes. I had discussed what I felt the centre-line or thought of the play to be, the lines concerning fire to ashes (Fugard 2002: 35) and how this idea informed my thinking and listening to what the language might offer in terms of space and sound, for instance. I asked the cast very early on, even before reading the full text on paper to 'hear' and 'listen' first to what and how the words might suggest to them. This focus on sound and language was emphasised from the outset by doing warm-ups that contained many Berry or such-inspired kind of vocal exercises. The point was not to do a full voice class but a warm-up geared for energising and vocally sensitising actors for imaginative work on the text. I put questions to the actors such as "who and what has burnt out—either real or symbolically? What is the world of the past; both the ancient and the Apartheid years in South Africa? Where are these characters now?"

They were aware of my focus on using Berry's exercises or strategies and approach to exploring the sound of the text first and its importance for establishing their characters and their sense of landscape and place. But they were not aware of my sifting and selecting process for these exercises. This was my observation and choice as we progressed from warm-up to improvisation on and around the text. Of course, I acknowledged and noted down what their responses contributed to the aural and visual ideas as we went along. The warm-ups were structured and lead by myself for most of the rehearsal process until the last 10 days when I felt they needed to take responsibility for their own physical and vocal preparation. In this sense, the actors had constant verbal feedback on our process from the beginning. But it was informal and simply part of the working process. It was important to encourage a sense of freedom and spontaneity in their vocal warming but also a sense of discipline in starting work that would lead to improvisation on the themes of the play. This was very important to Berry too and all her workshops for actors and directors included voice work and warmups at the start of each rehearsal day. I refer to her last book *From Word to Play—A handbook for directors* (Berry 2008:16–170) as the most recent example where she lays out a preparation structure, which can be altered as needed to meet the needs of the cast and play "for they [the voice person] will lead the sessions in their own way" (Berry 2008:161).

5.3.1 An example of the first warm-up: starting actively on sound

We began with an energiser combining sound and gesture, passing an imagined energy ball from person to person while standing in a circle. The actors were asked to release sounds

energetically, e.g. like a fire rocket using varying lengths, volume and to pass and throw the sound to each other varying the pace too. They could use gestures to support the sounds. This created a nice sense of energy and enthusiasm. They had to keep their focus and although not strictly a Berry exercise it had a similar effect to her exercise of passing on vowel sounds which we did later in the warm-up. The circle became bigger as their confidence and spontaneity developed in this activity.

This was followed by a more restful sun salutation yoga exercise which involves breathing while doing certain positions and stretches from standing to lying down and returning to a standing position. It was repeated several times. This was calming and helped focus their breathing particularly. By this time the actors were quite warm physically and could proceed to lying on their backs with a book under their heads. They were encouraged to imagine their backs widening and lengthening and to breathe fully and comfortably. This is a well-known Alexander Technique resting position which is excellent preparation for breathing and working on sound. Berry (1973:23–26) uses this in her earliest book *Voice and the Actor*. From this point on the outbreath, connection to sound through humming, establishing resonance in the whole upper body and releasing on certain vowel sounds became closely linked to Berry's general voice exercises. The actors' felt the support from their diaphragms and abdominal muscles.

After a few spinal twists, turning their lower bodies, hips and legs, from side to side, heads facing in opposite directions to their legs, they did full star-shaped stretches with arms and legs, rolled over and came into sitting position on the floor.

They crossed legs and rocked forward and back while humming on a stronger tone and holding the hums for longer counts, 15–20. Then followed a full, open release on vowels like 'ay', 'i' and 'oo'. A variety of vowels were used. They could start from their centre tone and move up and down more or less on the same pitch and then according to what worked best for each person's range. These are similar to what Berry suggests in vocal preparation in her books and is a basic exercise, very useful as a starting point for feeling and hearing the sound in the space (Berry 1987:145,146). After vowel awareness we focused on feeling the energy and vibrations in consonant sounds like f,v and th and s, z and dj. The actors played with different firmness or crispness and softness in the sounds at both slower and faster paces. These sounds were also passed along the circle from person to person.

The actors then moved up into standing again and the humming resumed at a stronger level. Each actor aimed their hum to a specific point in the room and released the sound fully towards it. They could then run to another point while humming and release the sound (vowel) and feel the difference. At this first rehearsal the emphasis was on pure sound; feeling its resonance and vibration and enjoying the release in the large space of the

rehearsal room. It also helped to create a sense of physical ease among the group. Simple physical and vocal actions and releases also helped to reduce self-consciousness and prepare the way for the extended improvisations that were to follow and this is clearly Berry's aim with many of her strategies.

I then suggested to them to play aloud vocally with the first few letters of their characters' names and to feel the length of the vowels and the weight and energy of the consonants. The repetition of the sounds and the names of their characters built up a kind of energy and rhythm, short and long, quick and slow, which reached a highpoint in volume as well, as the characters slowly moved closer together and ended in a very tight-knit group in the centre. After a full body shake-out the cast was ready for the first improvisation. At this stage I did not use any tongue-twisters or articulation exercises and texts from Berry or another source as I wanted them to focus on the emotional quality of tone that they were to find from the suggestions I gave them. A more abstract approach at this point, allowing them to focus more on sound than detailed meaning.

We then began with the *Tristia* poem by Ovid and later explored *Running to Paradise* by Yeats. Their ears and voices were more open now to responding to suggestions given like, "what do you hear and feel in this poem about being in exile? How is this different to your homeland, who do you miss, what do the words tell you about the atmosphere of where you are now, physically in the world of the poem? What sounds do you hear around you or only silence? What do you hear in your head, how do you react vocally", etc. The full improvisation that emerged from this first session and which was so telling to my visualising and hearing of the play, will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.3.2 Further comment on subsequent warm-ups

This basic structure was followed and expanded on depending on the content of the Berry exercise/strategy or improvisation that would then be used and/or adapted in each rehearsal. I found it important to begin each session in this way and to find links with the thematic content from the play and the scene(s) or improvisations at hand for that rehearsal.

Later warm-up exercises usually began with an energiser of some sort, sun salutations established familiarity with combining breath and stretching and a sense of muscular control and at some point floor work was always done on breathing, resonance, fuller projection on humming, vowels and later song was often included. I also used small rubber balls now and again for them to throw to each other in various ways while making sound or singing out words and phrases. This was always fun to see who could concentrate on sound as well as catching the ball. Tapping and patting the head, facial area and chest lightly with the hands was also introduced while releasing sound, rolling from side to side with knees drawn closer

to the chest, feeling the sound vibrations and loosening the body. In a sitting position on the floor the actors felt grounded on their 'sitting bones' and rocked in circular movements, alternating direction on longer extensions of vowels and their combinations. Sound and upper body became more flexible. I brought in a consonant exercise familiar to them from their second year voice classes, which is a consonant sequence that effectively combines short vowels and consonants in different lengths and combinations. Although much shorter and compact, it is similar to what Berry (1973:63–69) works with in sections of *Voice and the Actor* in her chapter "Muscularity and Word". Each consonant can be worked through thoroughly in the sequence.

A further addition to warm-ups from the second rehearsal and which became part of many thereafter was the addition of an object being used by the actor while making sound. These were sourced from props used during rehearsals and had links to the characters and themes from the play, e.g. bunch of keys, cleaning cloths, books, pen, small drum, a candle, a hat etc. One variation had the actors think about the object they chose, place it in the space and then with a specific attitude towards that object, find a tone and quality on a vowel that felt appropriate. This gave an internal connection to the sound needed at that point. As they moved away from the object the sound became intensified and their attention on the object was enlarged. They could also then interact with their object by handling it, putting it away or placing in a different spot or giving it to another character, all the while expressing their intentions and feelings through sound. In this way the warm-up did assist the transition into more specific textual and improvisatory work and it flowed very well after these first three sessions.

As these sessions progressed we also started to include singing as part of the warm-up and to repeat parts of the heightened texts, the poems we had worked on before. After the *Tristia* improvisation and my decision to include it in the production as a Prologue, it was often used after physical and vocal warming as part of the process into further work on the play. During this improvisation we also found a hymn to include before the first scene of the play which formed a clear sound link from the past to the present, to this moment when the play begins in contemporary South Africa. "Soos 'n Wildsbok" (1983:psalm 42, ii) is an Afrikaans hymn that is likely to have been sung at a funeral in the countryside. I often included the singing of the hymn in different ways as part of the warm-up process, especially during the first eight sessions before we started working more closely on the text itself. The "Suikerbossie" song (1979:F.A.K) is also mentioned by character Dawid in the play and assumes more importance as the play progresses and we discover that it is actually character Rebecca, his daughter, who is the "suikerbekkie" he refers to (Fugard 2002:43). It is an old folk song in Afrikaans and part of South African culture. The song was used during my audition process already as part of the warm-up and the improvisations I set up for the students and was used

at various stages during formal rehearsals on the text. The subtle refrain of this song was included later at various points by the characters during performance and was discovered during these early times. The focus on various options of sound to be explored and given prominence, and potentially included as part of the concept for the production, was reinforced by the repetition of these elements in the warm-up process.

5.3.3 Combinations and changes in warm-ups during the first five rehearsals

By the fourth and fifth rehearsals I noted that we could work faster and that Berry's exercises could be combined quite effectively to create more flow in working on the play. We had not read through the text yet but were still focusing on a sense of place or landscape and the past; outer and inner landscapes. I therefore concentrated on using *Running to Paradise* as the warm-up after some sun salutations. This immersed the actors more quickly into the language. The actors passed on thought by thought in a circle and each person could respond in their own way to the line they spoke. They then ran on each line and found a gesture and could also jump on a table or chair while doing so.

All converged again in a circle and took turns to step into the circle and speak their line(s). They then quickly read and spoke from word to word which resulted in a sharper focus and energy among the group. This whole combination was done fairly flowingly and led to very creative vocal responses from the cast. I noted more freedom now in vocal tone, range and tempo and physically they entered fully into the spirit of the exercise and used movement in the whole space. This energy then transferred effectively to the pure sounds I asked them to improvise when they sat down again on the floor, back to back. They made wind, sea sounds using their breath more consciously and combined this with chanting and sighs which linked up to the idea of a lament and grieving again. We ended the warm-up with a few slow sun salutations which grounded their breathing and provided the link to the next phase of reading.

Sitting back to back, the four actors began with reading the play aloud and at certain points they could interrupt each other and comment or ask questions—but only when someone felt there was lack of clarity or uncertainty about meaning, pronunciation, etc. Some of the lines, particularly during long monologue sections were shared by other actors. This proved to be a very lengthy exercise and we could only reach half-way through the text. The actors did find it very valuable though to speak against this slight, verbal resistance and maintain their sense of character and story. The work on the poem facilitated this transition to the text quite smoothly. I could see though, that after these first five rehearsals, the cast was ready for a change in the kinds of warm-ups and exercises done so far. They needed some different input and challenges to explore the characters and their personalities on a deeper level. The first phase was established but now more probing psychological work needed to be done.

They also needed to have a bit of fun as the subject matter related to the play was serious and emotionally taxing.

5.3.4 The warm-ups during last three rehearsals before the April break—new additions

In these sessions I included exercises that are not Berry's but they seemed to compliment hers in being quite energetic and physically based. These are ideas that I've acquired and developed many years ago and use from time to time. Many are like children's games in a way, e.g. musical chairs. One or two were loosely inspired in their approach by David Zinder's approach to acting in his excellent book *Body Voice Imagination* (Zinder 2002:80,81). Amongst others, they included skipping to music, in this case upbeat African music, and spreading out in the space and keeping equidistance from each other immediately when the music stopped. This created a nice sense of spatial awareness and a bit of playfulness was introduced. They also walked at different tempos in the room and created shapes like a circle, a square, a triangle in the group using arms, legs and whole bodies. This was also done to music. At a further stage in the warm-up the actors returned to the floor, rested and imaginatively went into feeling themselves enter their characters' bodies, accompanied by a change in music. They were asked to silently formulate a question (uncensored) that they were desperate to know the answer to, to one of the other characters and then to breathe it out fully. Music resumed and they began to move one part of their bodies e.g. an arm, a hand, or the chin. This time they had to ask themselves as characters a question and allow the question to guide their movement becoming stronger and clearer. The question could be voiced softly as the gesture became even larger and took over. At this point they imagined either a bird or other animal that connected to their character and feelings at that moment. The bird/animal quality started to take over their movement and sound. This was a very concrete exercise to do and is loosely based on ideas from "The Psychological Gesture" developed by renowned acting teacher, Michael Chekhov (2002:63–73) and added another level to their physical and emotional views of their characters. This was taken further but too lengthy to describe here.

From this stage on, which began in a more abstract way, we progressed to situation and personal improvisations on the childhood memories of the characters. At the end of this long session I played music again and the actors returned to finding their animal/bird characters and had to link it to this 'younger self' they were exploring and interact with each other in a playful manner. The actors brought in sound and this added another sense of awareness to their characterisation. Warm-up and improvisation became integrated in a useful way during this rehearsal and the idea of the bird/animal sound was returned to in later rehearsals.

In the last two rehearsals of this week music and informal dancing was used as physical warm-up to rock music and the actors were encouraged to be silly and revisit their teenage years from their characters' point of view. They constructed their own dance starting with feet, hands, elbows, bottoms, shoulders, neck and head. This switched to dancing back to back and singing along with the music. The characters came more to the fore and influenced the mood of their singing. Then followed a musical chairs game with them as young students. Some realistic, probing improvisations followed and they ended with singing the *Suikerbossie* song, now from a more adult perspective in their 20's and 30's. The sound focus at the end reminded us again of the evocative power of sound and song or chant being consciously used as a symbolic refrain/motif at moments during the play, contributing to the idea of layering interpretation.

5.3.5 Additional exercises and ideas for warm-ups during the second part of the rehearsal phase—end April to June

We were now working more closely on the text itself, starting with blocking of scenes and paying close attention to the characters and their language. We spent most of the remaining rehearsal period in a smaller rehearsal room with a piano which was by now being absorbed into our active use of sound throughout the production. Warm-ups returned to the earlier structure I have discussed but more work was added on articulation to assist the actors on the clarity of their speaking. More time was given also to warming and stretching the head, neck, tongue and lip muscles to facilitate movement and agility. The actors worked together to massage each other's necks and shoulders and backs and roll-downs were also done regularly. These are commonly known exercises done by all students and actors at some point in their training. Berry also does include some of these kinds of exercises in her vocal preparation before rehearsals and workshops and I refer the reader to her books already discussed earlier in the thesis. The consonant sequence, combined with vowels was repeated on more consonant sounds at each rehearsal and many tongue twisters of varying difficulty were also included. The actors could approach these tongue twisters from their characters' own personal sound and they did not have to be spoken with a neutral or standard English accent. This was valuable for characters Marta and Rebecca who required a slightly more Afrikaans sound (not overdone though) and for the actress playing Allison, who had to be convincing as an English speaker. At first, this was not so easy to sustain as the actors discovered, and the articulation preparation was necessary for this practice to become absorbed into their characterisations. I had not decided if we would be using any microphones in the performance space and we explored both a larger, live vocal sound in the rehearsal room and tried a single mic on some sound effects. The mic soon proved limiting to movement and blocking by the characters in the space and was abandoned in time.

Warming and projection became even more important as the actors realised the extent of their vocal support needed for the production.

Warm-ups continued to link to the content of the scenes worked on during rehearsals in May and Berry's exercises were also linked to these or followed afterwards. Sometimes I used the idea of a "Trust sculpture" to remind the actors of their statuses within scenes and how this could change from scene to scene. The characters arrange themselves physically in certain positions in the space without speaking to reflect where they feel they fit into the family structure and the hierarchy of the scene(s). This can be done leisurely or more quickly according to instructions given. It was instructive to the cast and to myself to observe how the characters viewed their positions and at times, they then rethought their overall blocking within a scene or adapted their intentions towards each other, by this sense of physical closeness or distance that was revealed in the group sculpture.

The remainder of the rehearsal time until the second week in June (9–13) was greatly reduced due to the students' exam time-table and commitments. However, we resumed with full energy during this week and warm-ups started each session as usual. We could fortunately spend a few days in the performance space, the side area of the HB Thom stage facing the workshop doors. Our warm-ups here were structured along similar lines as before; physical and vocal warming, repetition of exercises and use of the heightened texts such as the *Tristia*, *Running to Paradise* and *Sonnet 23* poems again before focusing on the text. All took on a stronger energy within the much larger space and this structure and repetition of exercises, albeit slightly adapted again, gave the actors a sense of security and confidence as we worked through the play as a whole. All warm-ups were done on the stage, next to the performance space and at times the actors moved into the performance space and explored the acoustics through speaking and improvising on parts of the poems and the play. The warm-ups still remained an essential part of the creative process on the acting which the actors now started to consolidate into an effective ensemble.

5.4 A discussion of how specific, important rehearsals lead to the discovery of key directing elements and an overall concept

5.4.1 Focus on the rehearsal of *Tristia*, linked to Berry; exploring space and sound

In the earlier discussion of Berry's exercises and their application in Chapter 4 the Ovid poem *Tristia* (see *Addendum 1*) is mentioned at various points. The first rehearsals spent on improvising around this poem and its themes from Berry's perspectives/exercises, became vitally important in establishing the foundation for my directing concept. Elements found here were incorporated into the aural, visual and design aspects of the production. I would

therefore like to discuss this rehearsal and the connections myself and the cast made to the text and interpretation, in more detail than already referred to. I would like to emphasize that it was not the only exercise that contributed towards directing ideas, as Berry's strategies often work best in groups and when repeated in different ways at different stages of working on the text. It was however, one which led to several concrete ideas for beginning the play and its style.

The first question or challenge was how to explore the physical space of the rehearsal room in terms of movement and voice and what could be suggested through keeping the idea of "exile" in mind and how could this lead to discovering the landscape around the characters, in a setting prior to the play? What sound qualities could enhance this feeling of separation and loss?

In the published script of *Sorrows and Rejoicings*, as mentioned before, Fugard includes an excerpt from the Roman poet Ovid's volumes of poems called *Tristia* (meaning sorrows or lamentations), translated by American professor Marianne McDonald. Ovid was banned from Rome in 8 AD to Pontus, a small place on the outskirts of the Roman Empire and was never permitted to return. He died without ever seeing his wife and family again (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tristia>). When I first read the play I was struck of course by the intensity of feeling and the heightened sound of this poem and its relevance to the male character, called Dawid (echoes in the sound of the two poets' names). Both these speakers share a similar pain despite the divide of centuries in time. The following lines (Fugard 2002:4) already made me hear certain sounds in my mind's ear:

...dear mother tongue
...never again its sweet song be sung
...my loss and my pain
...when my lament will end
...Bring me back to my land and beloved wife

This poetic excerpt already contained the seeds of the whole play's themes—a poet in exile who needs to get home to finally be at rest with himself and the world. The ideas of longing and death are already present in the language.

This text is not formally part of the play, but the character Dawid quotes lines from Ovid at important moments in the text (Fugard 2002: 23, 24, 34, 43). During our exploration I saw and heard the potential of including it as a Prologue to the performance. This inclusion would set the tone aurally and visually for the rest of the interpretation we might follow throughout

the play. At the start of this session I did mention to the cast that for me the most revealing lines in the whole play were about passion and fire burning out to ashes and smoke (Fugard 2002:35,49,50) and that this we should keep in mind throughout our rehearsal process. Naturally one's imagination sees certain images, but at the same time this poem evoked the sound of a lament which contained all the heightened elements that Berry would use in her verbal improvisations to good effect. I have no idea whether the poem was included in the first production of *Sorrows and Rejoicings* in New York or not, but this was my feeling of a good choice to pursue after the evening's discoveries.

I am spending some time on an account of this first rehearsal because it is so important in how it established to myself and the cast how this playing with the poetic text by Ovid would lead us to more sound 'scapes' and images for interpretation. We began in traditional mode, sitting in a circle with the script and followed a familiar Berry pattern of reading it through together quietly at first, then sharing out lines and verses, moving from punctuation mark to mark listening to the text (Berry 1987:149–156); (Berry 2008:73–77, 84,85). These exercises are from her books *The Actor and His Text* and *From Word to Play*, and cover a series of interconnected work on a text with a group. This I did decide on before the rehearsal to provide some structure, but it was open to change and slightly adapted by myself. Often these exercises flow into each other and involve movement, e.g. walking or running on certain lines and adding gesture on important words. Please refer to Chapter 4 of the thesis for initial description of these exercises. See: 4.2.3—Language fabric, listening, observing, commenting; 4.2.4 awareness of choices, 4.3.6—Speech structures—awareness of punctuation in lines and 4.3.9—Providing obstacles, physical resistance.

They read the poem two or three times for the feeling of mourning and other possible qualities. The actors at this stage are not in character as such; they are themselves, become other characters related to the poem and then include their characters from the play itself. This text of course speaks directly to the play and its issues; both are male speakers and one is in permanent exile, the other returns but to face death in his homeland. This extract sets up a framework for the idea of the past repeating itself and flowing through time into the present. All the actors contributed to the speaking and highlighting of important words. We let the man begin and then the three women followed, commenting through the words, echoing and emphasising and lifting out certain sounds. This is something that Berry (2001:126,139,148) suggests as a way of creating awareness, questioning the content and amplifying the tone quality of a poem. At a certain point the actresses naturally went over into a kind of chant as an undertone and did not always speak with the actor, but almost against him.

I also discussed the basic background to Ovid's banning by the Emperor and the link to the Dawid character in the play with the actors, but did not want them to be too absorbed by historical background information. They went through the poem in various ways, testing the flow of the lines, the end words, sounds that seemed prominent, volume, pitch and even included some repetition of certain words and phrases. It led to a bit of a cacophony at one stage, but somehow that reflected the extreme internal anguish revealed by the speaker(s). The text was certainly coming alive through their speaking.

I had from the outset made a choice to involve some use of props, that link to the play in some way throughout the rehearsal process. Our student stage manager and myself gathered a few basic things such as sheets, a bowl, some old books, a bunch of keys, a few cleaning cloths and a small drum which I had brought along (on instinct) all which are referred to in the text, except for the drum. I wasn't sure how I would use them yet but wanted the option to have some objects that may later acquire more significance. This was now included in the next part of the improvisation.

Linking to the text in terms of the banning of Ovid we divided the space in two parts. The women were in turn the poet's wife, advisor and the Emperor Augustus and were placed on one side of the space. Ovid was removed from them. What followed was an improvisation enacting the idea of his banning from beloved Rome and the Court. At first the actors all met quite formally in the middle and held hands. They were to breathe in and release over several counts, each round building in intake and intensity and allowing the breath to move into audible sighs on sound. At the most heightened moment the circle was broken and the women began by using vowels to create a strong keening or lamentation. Sounds like an extended ai-ee (as in fly) and ei-ee (as in say) were used in different combinations while they moved to their part of the space again. At the same time the actor playing Ovid moved away into his separate space and in his own words, pleaded for an explanation about the banishment and to be pardoned. This set up a counter-point between words and sound which ended up being very effective. The Emperor's voice intruded every now and then and the advisor played a softer role in trying to negotiate with the Emperor and to comfort the wailing wife. The male actor referred to the poem by Ovid as a source, just spoken a little earlier, but found a free flow of lines all his own.

The women then moved out of their space and became like ghosts from his past, taunting him, reflecting his doubts and their fears and the mood changed to a quieter feel. Berry encourages movement in her exercises and in this spirit, the actors simply continued in the body what was set up vocally. No rights and wrongs in these kinds of improvisations. They used the sheets to cover themselves and the drum added an ominous feel among the sounds and words used. I would occasionally throw in a suggestion or two to guide or move

it along a bit, but on the whole the actors took control of the exercise and developed it until it seemed to find a conclusion.

At this point they took their copies of the poem and again they spoke it through as a group but with more awareness now of what might be at stake, for Ovid as a man and poet and for those left behind. Things changed again; the women were placed on either side and behind him. He now translated some of the lines into Afrikaans and this added an immediate connection to the Dawid character in the play. The women also repeated some words in Afrikaans, muttering and supporting and commenting, using the text to intensify what Ovid was speaking. There was an awareness of emotion and mood but no discussion of sense and subtext. This they had to discover while trying out different possibilities in the moment, allowing thought and voice in terms of tone, pitch and intensity to reflect the essence of the words. A good contrast emerged between the feeling of sympathy from the women and the despair and anger from Ovid. The women eventually left the words and continued with chanting and singing on certain tones which seemed suitable for a funeral lament.

I then gave a suggestion to change the energy and pace and this is a classic Berry exercise already referred to; the physical obstacle course that the actor has to find his way through while speaking (Berry 1987:164,165; Berry 2008:108–110). It sets up a kind of resistance to each other, both physically and vocally. As Berry (1987:165) says, “Any kind of physical obstacle will release the physical urge within the words”. The Ovid speaker had to decide to challenge this banning order and to find his way back to his city and family. The girls became like the three Fates from Greek tragedy (this was my idea) and had to prevent him physically and vocally from getting through the space. They had the poem in hand and didn’t know it of course, so it was a struggle on both fronts! He was speaking the words and they were chanting and singing parts of it and later they responded with only some words and sounds and at the same time they had to make physical barriers with their bodies and some of the props and furniture that had not been used yet e.g. the books, a few chairs. At some stage they used a sheet between the three of them to catch him and he became entangled and there was a sense of real helplessness and frustration that emerged from both the actor and character of Ovid. The actors often lost their places in the text and restructured some lines and vented their emotions in a very energetic way. This led to a much freer reading or speaking (even shouting at times) where there was a more direct response and less self-consciousness about how they might be sounding.

This ‘obstacle’ exercise we used a few times in subsequent rehearsals when the setting was in South Africa and a similar sense of frustration and release was needed. This idea of ‘layering’ that Berry (2008:137) suggests is useful throughout a rehearsal process to prevent actors from becoming complacent and to help them energise their responses and find a

physical connection to the speaking again. Once an exercise worked I found a positive reinforcement in my view of her ideas and then did decide to include it at some point later in rehearsals, even if I did not know at that stage when it might be. So the selection process evolved more organically. We then took a short rest and afterwards took the improvisation to a conclusion.

The funeral of Ovid seemed to be a logical setting to explore, as the play itself begins with Dawid Olivier's funeral in the Karoo. We now tried to imagine the idea of the farewell ritual to Ovid's remains that were transported back to Rome. The actresses exchanged characters again, swopping with whom was previously the wife and the daughter. One also became the Head of the Artists' Council in Rome who welcomes Ovid's ashes and addresses the women about the Romans' memory of their poet. The dialogue was improvised and the women resumed their lamenting on sounds with added variation now in tone and dissonance. They are very musical actresses, gifted in singing and came up with interesting shifts vocally—some rougher, sharper sounds emerged. Ovid followed their procession like a ghost and in his own words, commented on what he saw; what he had missed, his wife and daughter's ageing, their loyalty, the changed landscape, etc. They could use some of the props e.g. the bowl and the drum that were available and there was a sense of travelling throughout the space. There was a feeling of formality and weight in the sound and the improvised dialogue, yet a very personal and spontaneous connection to Ovid's voicing aloud of his thoughts. This seemed to feel more contemporary and already I could hear the sound of Dawid coming through as an alter ego. The cast had read the play before the first rehearsal but it was not discussed and they had no knowledge of what I would do with them or that the Ovid poem might have any further significance other than as a foreword. The exercises and related improvisations encouraged them to make this connection for themselves through voice and body. We added a final last moment and re-placed the scene with the characters from the play. Dawid was in the middle of the space, his wife Allison placed on one side and his former mistress Marta on the other, and behind him his estranged daughter, Rebecca. Visually this formed a large triangle. I asked them to try and bring together most of the aspects they had explored vocally in this rehearsal, but not to move while speaking the poem again. They had to try and remember though what they had felt like while moving earlier on parts of speaking the poem and to bring that sense of energy into the words, where appropriate.

They now spoke English and Afrikaans, included some chanting and echoing of words while he, Ovid spoke. There were different levels of tone, intensity and some sounds were whispered. His voice was the strongest but it had much more power combined with the background choral effect from the women. There was more depth in their understanding of what this speaker had gone through and somehow this was achieved through going deeper

into the language and not necessarily through talking about the possible meanings and emotions. It did take us a full rehearsal of two hours to get to this point, but I also found ideas for a soundscape and images that emerged which I would incorporate into this idea of the prologue to begin the performance.

5.4.2 The links to finding a key concept (aural and visual) from this first improvisation

I found the idea of the past weighing heavily on the present to be an important theme of this play which deals with memory and loss, both political and personal. I placed Ovid as speaker on some (potential) rocks downstage in the space and visualised the landscape of sand, possibly sea and foreign skies. The sound of wind and the sea also presented itself via the improvisations. This seemed to link with the feel of the Karoo landscape being open and vast, sandy and dusty. In stage terms this space could accommodate both ideas of the physical worlds where these characters (Ovid and Dawid) live in or wish to return to. For both characters the sense of attachment to their country, the landscape and their language was part of who they were. Already an image was suggesting itself for a potential use of the space and design in the Thom Theatre side-space. A semi-circle of sand, suggesting an arid, outdoor landscape of dryness and light was incorporated into the set design to indicate both the exterior area surrounding the Olivier home and the greater space in the past where Ovid was banned to, binding the past and the present. In a way, the feel and eventual look of the sand/earth is also linked to the symbolism of ashes. These characters have all experienced passion and losses that become like spent ashes, both in a physical and emotional sense.

The feel of the past and connections to family was also found in the text when character Dawid's grandparents are discussed by character Marta and later referred to by all the characters. Their presence, symbolic of an older Afrikaans generation; both more formal and solid, conservative yet loving towards their grandson, hovers in the background of the play. The Karoo house is their legacy to the troubled people left behind and who have to decide what to do with it. The images of the old people eventually took shape for me in the form of two black and white family portraits that hang on the wall/door at the entrance or passageway (the workshop door) to the living room. Mounted above these slightly faded photographic portraits was a set of kudu horns which also had several associations in the play. Character Dawid's parents were killed in a car crash caused by a kudu bull crossing the road, when he was a toddler. The horns are a reminder of death and loss and at the same time, also the kind of item or hunting trophy you might find in the living room of a Karoo farm house. The sound of breath being expelled in sighs or bursts was linked to the idea of a kudu moving, being hunted or in pain and was subtly employed at moments in the performance by the actors, e.g. when Dawid returns home to South Africa a dying man, the actresses support

with exhalation of breath on certain lines. So an image and sound were linked and was found by allowing the text to be explored and keeping an open mind. This contributed directly to selected elements in the set design.

The chanting, singing and choral speaking explored during the improvisations, as forms of lamentation, again led to the idea of actually linking the prologue to the women characters who will later on be present in the room of the house, where most of the action takes place. They appear as a kind of chorus in the space bearing certain objects that belong in the room. They are the voices from the past that in the first scene of the play become the voices of the women who confront each other after Dawid's funeral. They are in character but also become more than those characters by contributing at various points, in using sound to create the atmosphere of the permeability of time in a theatrical sense and physically becoming part of the present. These elements, suggested by Berry (2008:142–147) and also found during the rehearsal, were incorporated into my attempt at finding a way to interpret some of the metaphors in the text. Further experimenting led to an actual hymn being sung in Afrikaans called *Soos 'n Wildsbok* (1983psalm 42,ii) and this gave us the link to the funeral that has taken place in the Karoo sun, further transposing the past quite quickly and fluidly to the present. Further ambient sounds were then discovered to add to the general atmosphere of the physical landscapes where these characters found themselves in at various stages in the play. This was refined and reworked as time passed but the initial stimuli for a directing and performance concept came from the first working sessions.

Other examples of exercises or strategies that encouraged sound, spatial, visual (set, costume) and blocking ideas have been discussed in Chapter 4 and some will be briefly mentioned as reminders.

Story-telling (4.3.1): The soundscape created during the story of the Knysna Forest in scene 1, set the tone for many other ambient sounds to be improvised and included throughout the play, to support the text and the atmosphere created. Bird, animal, and insect sounds as well as rhythmic changes in the spoken lines were explored. This was also used in other scenes with the addition of city sounds, night sounds and musical touches e.g. the small drum and piano. The symbolic value of the stinkwood table was highlighted and this furniture also formed the centrepiece in the suggestion of a room on stage. The only other elements added in the large space were a small cupboard, sideboard and piano quite far upstage and a lounge chair downstage. A bed and side table were added to one side of the stage space, which suggested a small bedroom. By listening to and imagining the physical and emotional spaces where the actors found themselves in, the audience could fill in extra details from the language and sounds. The set remained open enough I feel for imaginative transitions in time and place, e.g. from South Africa to London; from flat to house, the interior

and the outdoors, light to dark. The actors used word and sound to create 'journeys' for the audience through the use of this space while telling the story.

Dialogue and resistance (4.3.8) and Spaces in the mind (4.3.11): The repetition of words and sounds, either end words or important ones, or echoing parts of phrases in whispers for emphasis by actors also provided contrast and enhanced aspects of the text and emotions at certain points in the play. This slightly enlarged the vocal elements; some song without lyrics, providing undertone and chant, was also included and contributed to the use of sound as an active strategy for interpretation.

Costume ideas: Ideas for costume and how to combine a subtle Roman feel in the line and drape of the clothes, linked with a contemporary look also slowly emerged from these early improvisations on the past. I wanted the influence of the past to be evident in a visual aspect too (even if not directly acknowledged by the characters). After a sheet had been used in various ways e.g. draped across Allison's dress in the Prologue, it seemed clear to me that a similar feel of linen and earthy colours could work well for these characters. Hence a stone/beige colour was used for Allison's smart tunic and pants, Marta was more traditional in funeral black but had a touch of purple colour in the collar of her modest, flared dress, Rebecca wore a short purple, linen shift dress with a belt that suited her youth and rebellious attitude, in contrast with her mother. The women wore accessories to suit their personalities and the funeral occasion e.g. Allison wore modern gold jewellery and Rebecca bold drop earrings. Dawid wore a beige linen suit, shirt and tie and scarf, that had a formal look in the beginning of the play and which matched the idea of a person of stature and means. This was then reduced as the play progressed and he started removing items of clothing to suggest the changes in time and place. This idea of clothing 'unravelling' or becoming 'undone' reflected on Dawid's emotional states during the play. The costumes also added to the characters' physicality and ages. These ideas were all derived from working creatively/imaginatively on the text and its language.

Language fabric, Listening, observing, commenting (4.2.3) and Miming the image (4.2.5); Inner and outer landscapes (4.3.10) and Haunting and loneliness (4.3.14):

These strategies or exercises all assisted the actors in some way to listen more carefully to their own or the other actors' lines and to react more spontaneously to the thoughts spoken in the space through moving and commenting. Blocking was often freed up and the space used more interestingly. Characters, who were in full view of the audience all the time could be listeners who reacted both physically and vocally without being 'hidden'. This influenced the style of the performance visually too. Seeing another actor express what you are saying, by miming an inner reaction to the words can help the performer become aware of his/her choices in gesture, pace and intention and to be more precise. This adjustment was then

absorbed into the acting quality overall and also allowed for more fluid staging as actors moved in and out between different spaces and different times of their lives. The downstage side space was often used more effectively or became livelier as character Dawid responded physically to character Allison's lines and the images evoked.

Further ease in movement and motivation of blocking in scenes was also encouraged by Berry's exercise where a tin can or an object is kicked on important words, end words, or parts of phrases (4.2.6) and combining this with changes in direction and making barriers in the playing space. This really allowed the actors to experiment with their lines and consider other possibilities in the spatial relationships between their characters. It also led to far more vocal release and ease in the characters' sound. Again, a combination of exercises was often the most effective and the idea of displacing tension, over-concentration on the meaning of lines and opening up responses in actors, was a useful Berry strategy.

In Inner and outer landscapes (4.3.10), the visualising of the Karoo house in a rectangular space and the idea of 'walking' through the rooms also helped the actors create memories of an imagined space in the text and to be aware of the fluidity of these memories for each character. This sense of place also clarified the blocking within the performing space e.g. when indoors, when outdoors, when the past becomes enacted in the present space and when the Karoo house becomes the London flat and so on. The actors needed to know exactly where they were in order for the audience to follow the timeline and story of the play. The haunting and loneliness exercise (4.3.14) fulfilled a similar purpose in using the action of turning away from a character who was trying to communicate, to enhance blocking ideas and to clarify attitudes towards each other.

Objects symbolising a thought and the link to props (4.3.16) and performing a task (4.4.2):

Certain objects referred to in the text assumed more symbolic significance as rehearsals progressed and improvisations were done. Some obvious ones e.g. keys, candle, books and polishing cloth were selected early on by myself for use in the improvisations. Others like sheets, a drum, a photo, the whiskey bottle were not given extra significance in the text but this emerged from associations with the characters and text during improvisations on the space in the Karoo house and London flat. The awareness of the value of these few props led to supporting the style of the production where more attention was given to sound qualities and heightening of certain visual moments, than having a full realistic set and décor elements. The idea of performing a task was also actively absorbed into the character Rebecca's stage business and movement to and from the piano in the living room. This became integral to her motivation for certain actions and responses. Berry's exercise on objects and performing of tasks while speaking (or silent), focused my attention as director

very specifically on the use of these objects by the actors, thus adding to the directing concept.

Contrasting modern and heightened text (Berry 2001: 45–47):

A further important and general strategy in alerting the actors to consider their responses to the text, was to use at times a different, heightened text of poetry to contrast with the more conversational sound of the dialogue Fugard writes. This is something that Berry (1992:10) advocates and used often in her work: “for it is the interchange between modern and classical writing that enriches both and makes each more alive”. This way of alternating technical and imaginative work between texts, gives modern text more weight and precision and classical text is allowed a more conversational and direct sound. Berry (2001:46,47) strongly supports the method of the two kinds of text working alongside each other as the one enhances understanding of the other. As previously mentioned, we used the poem *Tristia* by Ovid, a W.B. Yeats poem called “*Running to Paradise*”, which is mentioned in the play and in later stages of rehearsals, *sonnet 23* by W. Shakespeare. This interchange between more formal and modern writing encourages the actors to look freshly at the choice of words, how sound and meaning can reinforce each other and strangely enough, it resulted in energising and making more direct, the rhythm and conversational sound of the realistic dialogue. Often the actors became too naturalistic with the play’s dialogue and sometimes clarity and a sense of vocal presence were lost or slightly under projected. I had to remind them that they were not acting for the camera. This returning to a heightened text of more formal and lyrical language, helped to focus that pointing of word and presence again. This became particularly important in the late stages of rehearsal when actors can become mechanical and communication rather flat after repetition of monologues or scenes. This slight lifting of the realistic sound to a subtle, but heightened feel at certain key moments in the play’s performance, was a conscious directing choice on my part and carried through the play. Again, a continuation of Berry’s general view of what voice and sound can actively convey without becoming melodramatic. This was reflected in the acting and style of the performance as a whole.

In the middle of the rehearsal period, after often having worked through the poems and the Prologue as part of the warm-ups and including the piano as an integral part of the living room, I thought it would extend the style of the production by incorporating the piano as part of the actors’ pre-performance space as well. The actresses playing Allison, Rebecca and Marta play well and all are singers too, so it seemed a natural extension to set up the space and mood with them at the piano upstage while the audience entered the seating space which was arranged in a semi-circle facing the acting area on the stage of the HB Thom. The actor playing Dawid was already placed downstage, sitting on a rock and walked

occasionally on the strip of sand in front of the audience in reflective mood with his notebook. The actresses were not yet in character as such but played songs and improvisations that had a nostalgic, melancholic tone. A well-known South African song “January, February, March” was improvised on and developed with a touch of a jazz element. It contains links with the Coloured peoples’ past and the ‘naming’ of months, also often peoples’ surnames and the idea of the passage of time in the music, linked with character Dawid’s poem in the last scene of the play. Here, he also plays with Coloured names and surnames and the musicality found in repeating them, as he speaks (Fugard 2002:52,53). This was of course, developed in the later stages of rehearsal and only finalised in the last two weeks before performing. At the end of the play, this idea was repeated and the actors gathered around the piano and played and sang quite informally on a more upbeat tone while the audience left or came to speak to them. The idea was to establish the actors as performers in the space who then become the characters. I feel it did help to establish the tone of the play from the beginning and the consistent use of sound, both vocal and non-verbal and at times, containing musical elements, throughout.

The greatest creativity was experienced in the first half of the rehearsal period, discovering themes, symbols, getting to grips with the characters and their inner and outer landscapes and discovering the soundscape potential in each scene. In the second half of the rehearsals, when putting scenes together and finding a certain rootedness in the dialogue and the setting, then too there was room for including Berry’s exercises, although now in a more compact way. Many exercises were repeated throughout the rehearsal process and this was a very valuable part of the process, where layers of interpretation were added by combining exercises/strategies.

5.5 Other improvisations—their need for inclusion in the rehearsal process

This phase of rehearsal took place just before the April break in 2015 and included three long sessions in one week. The cast and I had explored the physical spaces or world of the play and the idea of the past environments that affected the characters, fairly extensively by this stage, through improvisation on the text and related themes. These explorations were linked very concretely to Berry’s exercises and strategies (as discussed in Chapter 4). Now I felt more attention needed to be given to the characters themselves or their personal worlds. We had included some detailed work on heightened text and the actors now needed to explore their backgrounds and motivations, relating to the play, more fully by working through improvisations that could help them build their characters’ personalities and histories. As young students they also needed time to understand more about the complexities involved in these relationships between mature adults like Dawid, Marta and Allison. This kind of

psychological focus required a slightly different kind of improvisation which was not really part of Berry's exercises. I deliberately did not focus on this kind of exploration at the beginning of our process so that more open-ended ideas could emerge for interpretation, before we decided on what these characters were truly like and why they behaved the way they do in the play.

5.5.1 The first session—early childhood

In the warm-up I played music and encouraged the actors to skip through the room and find a sense of looseness and ease in the body. When the music stopped they had to quickly spread out in the space and keep an equal distance from each other. They could also create shapes with their hands, legs and torsos. This they repeated a few times. Thus, purely physical movement and observation and alertness to each other's proximity resulted in sharper concentration for the next aspect, when lying down on the floor. Now they imagined a question they asked themselves (silently) and as the question became more intense they moved a body part, which became a full gesture. I asked them to imagine a bird or animal that linked to their character's feelings and to allow the gesture or action to be taken over by this animal. They could also express themselves vocally through sound. They only focused on themselves at this point. They then moved through the space, enlarging the feelings and action. This did seem to stimulate them into thinking slightly differently about their characters. Some interaction between each other also took place and this revealed some interesting attitudes about who felt closer and who more distanced from each other. This reflected on their characters' attitudes towards each other in the play, albeit in a more subtle way.

The cast then were ready for improvisations on childhood and teenage scenarios I set up for them to investigate some potential, early memories. Of course, they had ideas about their characters on many levels by now, having gone through their scripts in their own time and forming personal connections, but these opinions were not discussed around a table or decided on yet. An example of a scenario we first worked on is of character Dawid at the breakfast table talking to his grandparents (played by two of the actresses). One of the actresses played character Marta's mother who was the former housekeeper for the Olivier family. Dawid is small, about 7 years old and is telling them about being teased by his classmates at school and about having "old parents" and why. The actor had to actively imagine being his very young, character self and articulate his views about living with his grandparents and questioning the loss of his parents. All the actors were involved in developing this scenario which contributed to a whole range of aspects about Dawid's character and early upbringing. He discovered a real sense of vulnerability and insecurity; of being torn between loyalty to his grandparents and yet, feeling anger at his sense of loss. This improvisation ended in tears for the actor playing Dawid and the actress playing

character Marta's mother, stepped in to comfort him. Interesting family dynamics emerged in this emotional situation and established the presence of the housekeeper as an important figure in the household. This understanding was important for the actress playing Marta and helped to build her sense of where she came from and fitted into the household.

Another example was when character Rebecca, who also at the age of 7 years sees her mother crying at the kitchen table one evening. She questions her mother as children are wont to do, very directly, and character Marta replies that she's not had a letter in a very long time from Dawid. She tries to brush it off though as being unimportant. Rebecca then becomes emotional and confrontational and asks why she cannot go to the white school and tells her mother that she wants to stay in the big house so that she can always have a piano to play on. This turned out to be a strong improvisation and very honest emotions were released which pointed to the early beginnings of the stormy relationship between these two. The piano also became a very important element in Rebecca's life in the actress's imagining of her as a gifted girl with much potential, yet trapped in an isolated environment. She used the piano throughout the play, playing notes and phrases as comment on the dialogue and action in certain scenes and also as links between some scenes. The piano became an extension of Rebecca's thoughts and emotions as well as part of the soundscape. Rebecca's presence at the piano created a focus point the other characters kept being drawn to and she and her 'sound(s)' helped to create a presence of the younger generation's view of struggling parent figures still caught in the older South African past. For me the improvisation and dialogue sounded uncannily like a small, true Fugard play on its own and I wished I could have recorded it at that moment.

Character Allison had a scenario where she is playing as a young child in the garden of the comfortable family home in Bryanston, Johannesburg. She notices the daughter of the neighbours' black domestic worker watching her from the other side of the fencing. Her own parents are having a braai on the patio and don't notice their interaction at first. A very sensitive improvisation followed as she invited the little girl over to play and showed her her room etc. The parents then notice she's not outside and look for her and a whole domestic scene of questions and veiled comments plays out, as they interfere politely and try and get the little girl to go home. A typical kind of situation one might have encountered in white suburbs during the late 1960s in South Africa. Perhaps this was the early exposure Allison had to apartheid attitudes and which later led to her desire for activism as a student. Interesting discussions followed this scenario about the actors' own processes of growing up in South African society and schools and how this differed from their parents.

5.5.2 Teenage years

I placed them apart from each other in different spots in the room with an object or two that they chose from our selection of props and a few items they contributed from their own handbags. They interacted with these objects as individuals, concentrating on how they would feel and move and what they might talk about in relation to these objects. This was a short exercise but quite useful in noting the changes in body language now that they were about 15 years. They played with pen and notebooks, earphones, lipstick and combs, a photograph, even the piano and scarves were used. They were asked to think about how wild they were (or not) in these High school days and what they enjoyed doing most. A few more personal improvisations were done linked to friends and groups at school and whom they might interact with. Who were the loners and who the extrovert, popular teenagers? At the end of this session I played similar music to the beginning of the rehearsal and they went into animal /bird bodies and states of mind again. They were encouraged to interact with each other as young birds/animals and find a playfulness they might not have had before. This flowed very easily and it ended on a light feeling despite some serious moments they had experienced earlier.

5.5.3 Adult years

The following evening we continued our discoveries on personality and background in the same, smaller rehearsal room and now I felt the cast was ready to go deeper into exploring these characters in a more mature part of their imagined lives. We began with them as their characters, dancing like teenagers to rock music from the 1970s and 1980s. The dance progressed from only using feet, to hands, elbows, bottoms, shoulders and hips, etc. They observed each other, moved closer together and started finding a group rhythm. A good warm-up to combine character and breath moving freely. This developed into dancing back to back, singing along with the music and changing the mood of the character as they now aged into a different physicality. They had to imagine themselves being in their late twenties. They also formed a Trust sculpture after this energetic activity to find out how their status and relationships had changed from a younger age to this time. A quieter atmosphere was created as the actors became more reflective and cautious of each other. I felt this linked with their response towards and understanding of the text.

The space was then cleared and a black wooden box put in the middle of the room surrounded by four chairs, at a distance. A more formal situation was created for a more detailed “hot-seat” kind of questioning of each of the characters. This was not pre-arranged. Each actor had a turn to be in the hot-seat and all kinds of questions ranging from personal to the ridiculous were allowed. The others had to keep it direct and sharp and keep the responses moving. The actor being questioned had to think quickly and be as honest as their

personality allowed. They had prior to this rehearsal been asked to compile a drawing of themselves in the roles and a list of character points on a large piece of paper. Through this process therefore they had thought about more aspects of their characters. The questions asked were at times, unexpected and not something each actor might have thought about. By now though, the actors were fully involved and invested in the activity and gave each other a good 'grilling'. Much useful and important information emerged; some very funny and awkward moments too as the questions became more intimate and touched on sexuality, hidden secrets and racial attitudes. New discoveries could be added to their drawings and writings. This activity took time but was important to build a fuller sense of their characters' history and worked very well. The actors were guided by their reading of the text and earlier discoveries but were also allowed some freedom to invent and add to this.

After a short break more improvisation scenarios were done after singing the Suikerbossie song a few times with varying moods and perspectives from the characters. Being such good singers the actresses playing Marta and Allison, as well as Rebecca really gave the song depth and different nuances. Their contributions on playing with snatches of song, sound and notes throughout the play reflected their ability to use Berry's ideas on sound creatively. We returned to Dawid's lecturing days where he addressed a student protest meeting and Allison was in the audience. The other actresses heckled him constantly and he was arrested by security police. Allison rescued him by phoning her parents and begging them to pay his bail. We explored their first 'coffee date' alone and what the potential attraction and dynamics could have been between them, as the character Dawid in the play often projects a rather selfish, self-centred person at times and the actors needed to find a certain chemistry between them. A similar feel was also needed between characters Marta and Dawid to suggest a believable physical attraction and deep emotional attachment. The actors had to go deeper in these improvisations and also find a sense of trust amongst each other. They explored a situation where Dawid is home from university one holiday and has a political argument with his grandparents at the dinner table. Marta suggests a walk in the veld near the house and they both exchange views about the future, their relationship and hopes. This encouraged more physical intimacy and vulnerability between these actors.

The character Rebecca is the most enigmatic character in the play and not much is said about her early years. She also only breaks her silence in the last two scenes of the play. In our scenario she explored a situation where she is 16 years and asks Marta if she may go to a club with friends one night. Her mother is more conservative and refuses and this raised many relevant issues about Rebecca's protected upbringing and the lack of a father's presence in their home. This was a lively energetic exchange of wills and views and gave the actresses plenty to think about the positive and negative aspects of being a single parent in a small town, and the frustration an intelligent, young woman like Rebecca faces. In a way, this

improvisation captured the aftermath of the play—what future lies ahead for the younger, perhaps specifically black and coloured generation, with so many complex issues to carry and resolve in the so-called new South Africa?

On the final evening's rehearsal of this week we finally got back to reading the text and began with some loose blocking and additional sound exploration. We began with the prologue and slowly worked our way through the first three scenes adding much more depth than before in the reading. Again, it took more time than anticipated and we did not get further. However, a much stronger sense of character, background and place was established and we could now return to more technical aspects of the show with confidence. The actors truly invested in these improvisations and I felt they were ready to tackle the detail of each scene in the next phase of rehearsals after the April break. Berry's exercises would be returned to where necessary and appropriate on the language and text and thus we would continue to build the performance on this foundation. The directing view and style would also consolidate further in the next few weeks after this collective work had been done but there was still scope for development—which was the intention—to explore the text and allow for more open-ended interpretation.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

6.1 Revisiting the purpose of the study

My aim with this research project was to test some of Berry's ideas and exercises on approaching a local play with more awareness of the sound potential released through the language by the actors. I wanted to see how this approach towards finding a directing and performance concept with a student ensemble could influence or lead to discovering ideas for directing in terms of use of space, characterisation and acting, costume, movement, creating atmosphere through sound, a sense of style and atmosphere that could enhance the meaning and ideas of the play. In other words, we tried to explore the vocal, aural world of the text first through voice and body in the acting, to reflect the core thoughts and themes. This then led us to certain choices which of course were also reflected visually and concretely in the set, décor elements and lighting. This I hoped would result in a more layered interpretation of the play as a whole.

6.2 Research questions and results

The following research questions were posed in Chapter 1:

1. How can using some of Berry's exercises and strategies on text and sound help me and the actors to discover a clear vision for directing and performing *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2002)?
2. Can this approach and these strategies assist me and the actors to find a more layered interpretation of the play?
3. Can this way of working more intensively on the language and sound world of the play, e.g., the words and sounds spoken by the characters (their thoughts being heard, how they articulate) and their interactions and relationships, reflected in their tone, volume and rhythm, as well as the sound suggested by the physical environment or landscape these characters find themselves in, be brought to life more vividly by this experimenting?
4. Would the 'sound atmosphere', which could be created by more awareness of the inner landscapes of each character and their personal sound, reflect or contrast with the outside world they live in, e.g., soundscape of landscape, and could this lead to a coherent and believable interpretation of the play?
5. Can this approach towards finding a directing concept lead to less reliance on visual aspects, which often may dominate one's interpretation?

I found, in answering questions 1 and 2, that Berry's approach and strategies did help me as a director to find a clear vision for a play like *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. Her practical

suggestions for using certain combined vocal and physical exercises, on text in rehearsal, assisted me and the cast to explore the themes and images of the play in a creative way, which led to the discovery of ideas for how the characters could emerge through language; how they used the space, created a soundscape and which essential visual aspects were necessary to establish the world of the play. Berry's exercises were, for the most part, very effective in stimulating a different approach towards the text as a whole. Her open-ended approach towards the exercises gave me the freedom to adapt them where necessary and to include further improvisation. The use of certain exercises that were selected and repeated at times throughout the rehearsal process, e.g. the work on heightened text, contributed to finding more layers of interpretation for scenes and the characters. However, some additional improvisations and exercises on the background and psychological motivations of the characters needed to be included, as this did not form part of her strategies.

With regard to questions 3 and 4, I feel that her strategies and numerous exercises and the warm-ups we did, opened up many possibilities for exploring the sound atmosphere of the play in terms of the landscape the characters found themselves in, as well as their personal vocal sound. The actors responded to the language of the text and the sounds and images suggested, in a much freer way through her exercises and I feel created the landscape around them particularly effectively. At times, they found it more difficult to find and sustain the personal sound of their characters in terms of their voices reflecting age, experience, tone and tempo, clarity in articulation and projection. Berry's exercises and this way of working challenged the actors to constantly keep a double awareness of being in character but also being more of an ensemble performer, functionally part of a scene, contributing to the soundscape when not actively in focus during a scene. This shift they also managed successfully in my opinion.

Their inner awareness as characters needed extra work and therefore I included more traditional kinds of improvisations to help create background histories and more psychological understanding e.g. of these older people and the political background to the play. Berry's exercises, did assist the actors though in exploring relationships with each other in the spaces of the past and the present and this physical approach did release their vocal responses as well. The soundscape of the inner voices (e.g. supportive humming, sighs and breaths, expressive sounds reflecting emotion, the characters' own tone quality and articulation of thoughts) commented at times on the outer landscape, such as the physical space of the house and the outdoors, where animal and insect sounds, wind, song elements (both vocal and using piano and drum) were used and the heightened atmosphere of the past flowing into the present was conveyed through the characters' speaking on certain lines. As director, I tried to guide the actors to find a balance in their performances, between the sound atmosphere being created and the believability of their characters' speaking or voicing

their thoughts aloud. In the feedback we received from audience members, fellow students and colleagues it seems that this worked well and that the play was performed convincingly, supported by our sound approach (see Addenda 9–11). I feel this emphasis on approaching a Fugard play can work without detracting from the themes and content, in fact it can heighten them.

Referring to the last research question, I found that it is certainly possible to shift one's view of the play by employing the language and sound strategies that Berry offers, as an alternative way of exploring text which does not follow a predominantly visual approach first. One has to explore and find the central images through this process and select what would serve the play's ideas best in terms of the set, décor elements, costume, use of props. This is discovered by close attention to the structure and writing which Berry encourages one to explore through her exercises. One has to be open to the text as a whole and also allow for experimentation throughout the rehearsal process and not to finalise visual ideas too early. Of course this work with and around the exercises and improvisations stimulate ideas and images from the text and with one's own imagination, visual ideas emerge. In our process, the first few improvisations did lead to creative ideas for the soundscape and the subsequent idea of the past constantly informing the present, via the identification of the character Dawid with the historical poet Ovid. This awareness led to the feeling and sound of lament, hints of Roman dress in the costumes and the simplicity in the style of an open set with only the essential aspects of a Karoo room being represented. The fluidity of time and space were continued further in the suggestion of sand, rock and the outdoors in the strip surrounding the table and chairs. The soundscape however, provided the most atmosphere and detail of this world, as performed by the actors.

I did not feel that our approach eliminated the need for clear visual ideas, rather that they grew out of a more organic process on exploring the text first. The visual aspect of performance is aesthetically entwined with interpretation and cannot be discounted but this approach can allow for less dominance of the realistic set for instance and unnecessary décor or the use of recorded sound. I feel Berry's ideas as stimuli, can encourage one as a director to discover other elements in a production via the focus on language and sound.

6.3 Further discussion and final conclusions

Looking back over the process with a student ensemble and considering the success of the show during its short run of five performances, it seems to me that Cicely Berry's ideas and strategies are well worth pursuing by a director. If you value the contribution of the text itself and the imaginative possibilities suggested by the words and put your own interpretation on hold for a while, then the actors can make an extensive exploration and surprise one with sounds and images that lead to a coherent concept.

I discovered that we needed to work with Berry's ideas both vocal and physical, from vocal warm-ups to scene work, on acting and other elements leading to set and design in a comprehensive way. One could not only do one or two exercises and hope that would lead to clear sound and visual interpretation of substance. Berry's ideas worked best when applied throughout the rehearsal process, repeated at certain points and adapted when necessary. The exercises and strategies' strengths lie in their cumulative effect during the different phases of rehearsal as one gains more insight into the language of the characters, their actions and the rhythm and flow of the play. Berry's aim and advice to the director is, as has been discussed throughout the thesis, to allow the text and the language to initiate and advance ideas for interpretation and to encourage the sound of the characters to actively help create the world of the play. I found that this way of working certainly guided me to find a clear structure for the production, although it took time to explore, and the cast was stimulated by the exercises and suggestions to find more creative ways of establishing their characters. This process also challenged them on a technical level, as they had to sharpen up on vocal and singing skills and also had to move with ease from creating soundscapes in the ensemble and larger space, to more intimate and emotional moments and scenes between characters. Berry's exercises and their application gave them the freedom to cultivate a 'double-awareness' in their acting.

I realised again, after working through my rehearsal file and notes, that we explored many (indeed most) of Berry's exercises and strategies during our process, and that this gave the cast more options to explore their characters from different points of view. Some exercises or improvisations were developed more fully and particularly those in the early rehearsals led to clear visual ideas for the stage space, active use of soundscape and blocking. This resulted in both visually and aurally highlighting the important themes of the play, some of which could have become lost in the long monologues that needed to be sustained with energy and focus throughout the performances. Some exercises again, were more valuable for alerting the actors to their relationships with each other in the space and for more technical aspects like clarity of intention and energised speaking. There was the need though for a few, additional improvisations that were more psychologically probing. These scenarios and improvisations were devised by myself but linked clearly with the characters and situations from the play or the characters' imagined pasts. They were still quite verbal and physical in their structure but went deeper into creating background stories for each character and their social and political views. These, combined with Berry's approach and strategies I felt, served the play and our process very well. Berry is open-minded in her approach and allows for many possible outcomes to her suggestions of how an exercise could work. I realised that with patience and repetition of certain exercises and keeping a positive atmosphere in the rehearsal room, that we would build on individual and ensemble performances and the

themes of the play would be reflected in the choices made throughout the working process, on several levels, i.e., the use of space, selected set and decor elements that would emerge from the characters' need for them, sound that would be 'live' throughout, creating a sense of the physical world or landscape surrounding these characters, as well as décor elements like the table, piano, portraits and kudu horns. Lighting would be employed to help support the actors and shape the flow and rhythm of the play as a whole. At an early stage, I could already see that our applications and improvisations around Berry's ideas would actively guide me in an interesting and clear vocal, as well as visual direction. I just needed to trust in the work and to keep an open mind myself. At times, of course, it was rather nerve-wracking as I did not have it all worked out beforehand in terms of set, blocking, style and so on.

It was an instructive and very enjoyable process, thanks to the cast and crew who on the whole, pulled together as a small ensemble and were enthusiastic and receptive in their attitude towards me and this way of working. Although they did not formally have to answer questionnaires or do interviews while busy on the production, there was openness to comment and discuss the play and the possibilities for acting and staging as we went along. I feel this was an important aspect, to have allowed them and myself freedom of response and not to over analyse and justify the approach and strategies by Berry. I took the responsibility to set up clear structures for rehearsals in terms of warm-ups and activities and to allow things to develop within that; to direct my inquiry in a fairly organised way. They then could focus on responding honestly and creatively as performers. The cast received both positive and critical feedback from me as we worked and also gave each other feedback and suggestions. It was an organic process though and not formal. This led to the acting expressing a mature quality, good focus and intensity. My use of the exercises led to valuable insights on the directing process (as reflected on in chapters 4 and 5) and to solidifying the concept overall. I feel these choices were discovered actively on the floor, in collaboration with the actors and refined by myself. Having had the outside, co-ordinating eye, I felt in a better position to judge the efficacy of Berry's approach for a director than the actors. I include some brief commentaries at the end of the thesis from the actress who played Rebecca, commenting on her process (Addendum 9), and two students (Addenda 10,11) and an email or two from members of the public (Addendum 12) who attended the show, as indications of the play's reception by an audience.

Surprisingly, once focused on working on the text and more development of the soundscape and blocking in the second half of rehearsals had taken place, Berry's strategies encouraged us to give more attention to technical aspects such as vocal clarity, contrast in tone and tempo and vocal release. The actors could not rely only on feeling to convey the ideas of the play. Visual ideas stemmed from language and vocal exploration and the soundscape took prominence in the style of presentation. Simplicity in design and use of furniture and props,

yet creating a certain atmosphere and beauty in this particular workmanlike, almost industrial space on the side-stage of the HB Thom Theatre, where fly bars and rough walls, stored scenery, steps and doors were all in full view of the audience, was a choice derived from this approach. I include a few photographs of what the space looked like before rehearsals commenced and how it developed into the performance space (Addendum 6). The closeness of the audience allowed for a sense of intimacy while the space still retained a sense of openness for the symbolic idea of travelling through the landscape, the past and into the present. A very word-based play was 'lifted up' and enhanced in Athol Fugard's own words to the cast after attending the opening night. I think the actors brought a sense of movement into the words and images, enlivening the longer monologues that could have become too static and weighty at times. I think that for the most part they succeeded in embodying the language and voices of the characters, effective projection of sound and conveyed the text truthfully, without being bogged down by scenery, too many visual effects and so on.

A sense of searching for more layers of interpretation was continued until the last week or two of rehearsals before opening night, in that the ending of the play did not work quite as effectively in the writing as I felt it could. It seemed rather blunt to me that characters Marta and Rebecca simply exit the room. There seemed to be more possibilities and some I had already discarded along the way as we decided not to use any recorded sound and effects. At one point I had considered a sound recording of a kudu buck breathing heavily and then a crash of car brakes, as a return to the beginning of the play where Marta tells Allison about Dawid's early childhood and background. I now suggested an alternative, influenced by earlier improvisations they had done. The return of Rebecca to sit on the rock downstage with a notebook and feel the same sand in her hand that Dawid had touched, while speaking a very short poem by Afrikaans poet, Ronelda Kamfer (Addendum 4), came about from repeating the idea of the beginning/Prologue with speaker Ovid/Dawid who laments his fate and future. This attitude and feeling is echoed again in her wish to find stability within change as she writes down her questions, longing and hopes. Her fears as a young South African for the future are there, subtle but present:

Ons moet gaan
die heelyd ons
moet gaan
teenwinde hou ons trug
maar gaan
is wat

ons moet
gaan weer

en weer

mettertyd gaan

ons moet

(Kamfer 2011: Grond/*Santekraam*)

I have found Practice as Research as methodology or guideline for a study such as this one, to be effective in exploring practical strategies proposed by a seasoned practitioner like Cicely Berry. I cannot really imagine any other way of approaching and trying out both her work and its application to a play like *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2002) and reflecting on the experiences, than via the practice, the knowing-in-doing. One finds the exercises as you need them; develop them and then reflect on how they were employed throughout the rehearsal process crystallising into a vision and structure for the final performance or production. Perhaps there was more freedom in working with a student ensemble prepared to take risks and find different ideas, than with a professional company where success is often linked to financial reward or simply survival and even less time is often given to rehearsal. Working with Berry's approach and her many exercises, testing them to find sounds and images that can work towards building a directing concept, needs trust and time and there are no easy paths to follow, but once they emerge they build on each other and stimulate further ideas. These strategies can take one deeper into the text and the world, atmosphere of the play and the people who live in it. For a voice teacher these exercises or strategies offer practical suggestions on how investigating language and voice/sound based explorations in a freer way, leads to uncovering more layers of interpretation.

If this way of working is of real interest to one as director, more so than a pre-determined visual approach for the space and views about the play, then Berry is the one to guide you. The primacy of language and sound is her concern and passion. Berry's understanding of actors and how the process works on a production for both actors and directors, gives her a unique and broader view as a practitioner. She really has done it all practically in her long career and deserves the recognition she has been given, for making the process of understanding the language of a play clear and accessible to those who work with drama students and professionals, as well as lay people. Her belief in the power and joy of words, when this has become a little unfashionable in our times with the enormous and pervasive influence of the visual technology in both entertainment and education, is inspiring. In the end, the live act of speaking and communicating the thoughts and feelings of characters and how this can open up ideas for imagining the play, is still vital and important. As a director, I feel this is a central aspect of directing for me in any production I choose to work on and being open to the nuances of the text remains one of the cornerstones in my overall approach.

6.4 Value of the study

I think the main value of this project could (and has been) to show myself as a director and students that there are always many possibilities in interpreting a text and consequently, many ways of working to find an honest and truthful, yet more layered concept for performance—even if one is not fully successful. I hoped for a creative collaboration between myself, the cast and the text and to further my insight as a director in more directions. This I feel was achieved to a large extent.

This study could highlight the importance of sound and language, as stimuli for both actors and directors, to creating performance in a very visually-dominated field these days, where theatricality is often seen as requiring spectacle and using technical effects to emphasize meaning in communicating a play. In contemporary life we are bombarded by media images via television and film and even more intensely, social media. Our ears and ability to listen have in my view, become desensitised.

Hopefully, in a small way, this study may contribute to an appreciation and recognition for Cicely Berry's ideas and philosophy in working on and around text and her humane and practical manner of encouraging and facilitating actors to look deeper into what they're speaking and working on, and what the real effects of this could be on the play and each other.

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Addendum 1 - Excerpt from Ovid's *Sorrows* (*Tristia*)

I feared I'd forget my Latin language
Forget how to use my dear mother tongue.
I thought it would clot and dry in my veins
And never again its sweet song be sung.

Now I talk to myself and speak the words
Savoring each syllable so long unused.
I speak and practice my verbal art,
Those skills they say in Rome I abused.

So I eke out my life and pass my time
Trying to erase my loss and my pain.
I spend hours in speaking my mother tongue,
In which I find both my loss and my gain.

You ask me when my lament will end:
When my exile ends and my cry is heard.
Although complaints pour from a fountain full,
It's my fate that speaks, not mine those words.
Bring me back to my land and beloved wife:
You'll hear me laugh, when you return me to life.

I wish that you mourned my death not my life,
And you would be widowed only through death.
Then my spirit could soar on the winds of my land,
Your tears on my breast as I breathed my last breath.
Your fingers then would have closed my eyes
After one last look on my native skies.

—EXCERPT FROM OVID'S *Sorrows* (TRISTIA)
TRANSLATED BY MARIANNE MCDONALD

Addendum 2 - *Running to Paradise* (W.B. Yeats)

W.B. Yeats (1865–1939). *Responsibilities and Other Poems*. 1916.

15. *Running to Paradise*

AS I came over Windy Gap
 They threw a halfpenny into my cap,
 For I am running to Paradise;
 And all that I need do is to wish
 And somebody puts his hand in the dish 5
 To throw me a bit of salted fish:
 And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

My brother Mourteen is worn out
 With skelping his big brawling lout, 10
 And I am running to Paradise;
 A poor life do what he can,
 And though he keep a dog and a gun,
 A serving maid and a serving man:
 And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

Poor men have grown to be rich men, 15
 And rich men grown to be poor again,
 And I am running to Paradise;
 And many a darling wit's grown dull
 That tossed a bare heel when at school,
 Now it has filled an old sock full: 20
 And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

The wind is old and still at play
 While I must hurry upon my way,
 For I am running to Paradise;
 Yet never have I lit on a friend 25
 To take my fancy like the wind
 That nobody can buy or bind:
 And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

Addendum 3 - *Sonnet 23* (William Shakespeare)

As an unperfect actor on the stage
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burden of mine own love's might.
O, let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast.
Who plead for love and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O, learn to read what silent love hath writ!
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

Addendum 4 - *gaan i* (Ronelda Kamfer)

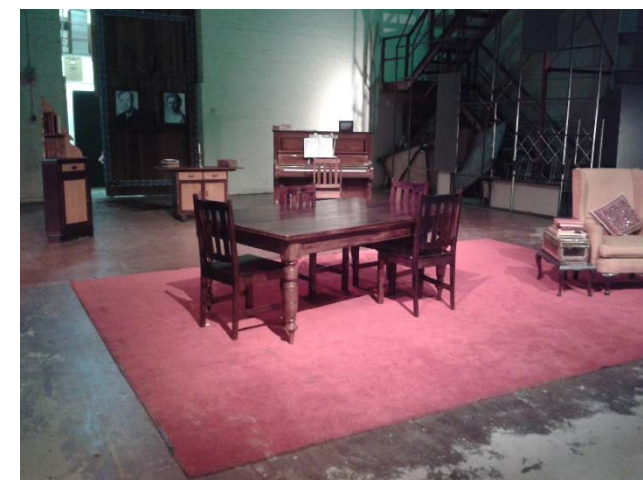
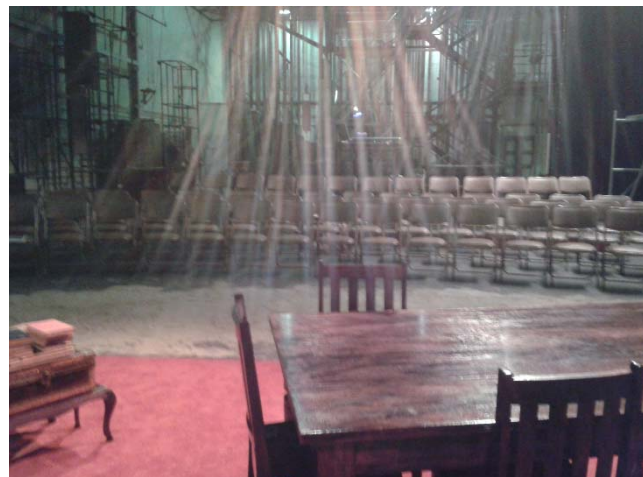
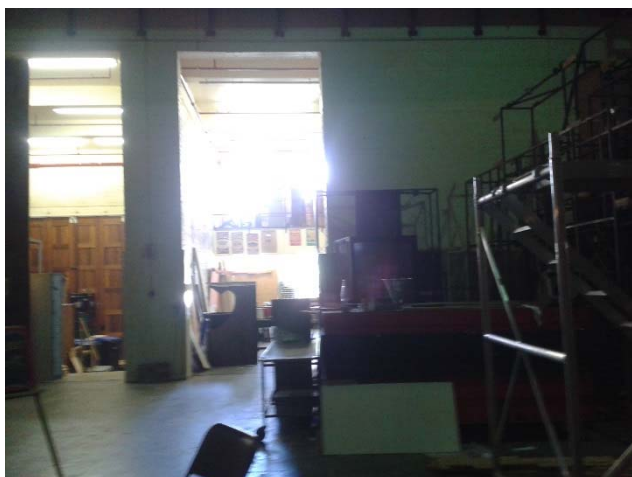
gaan i

ons moet gaan
die heelyd ons
moet gaan
teenwinde hou
ons trug
maar gaan
is wat
ons moet
gaan weer
en weer
mettertyd gaan
ons moet

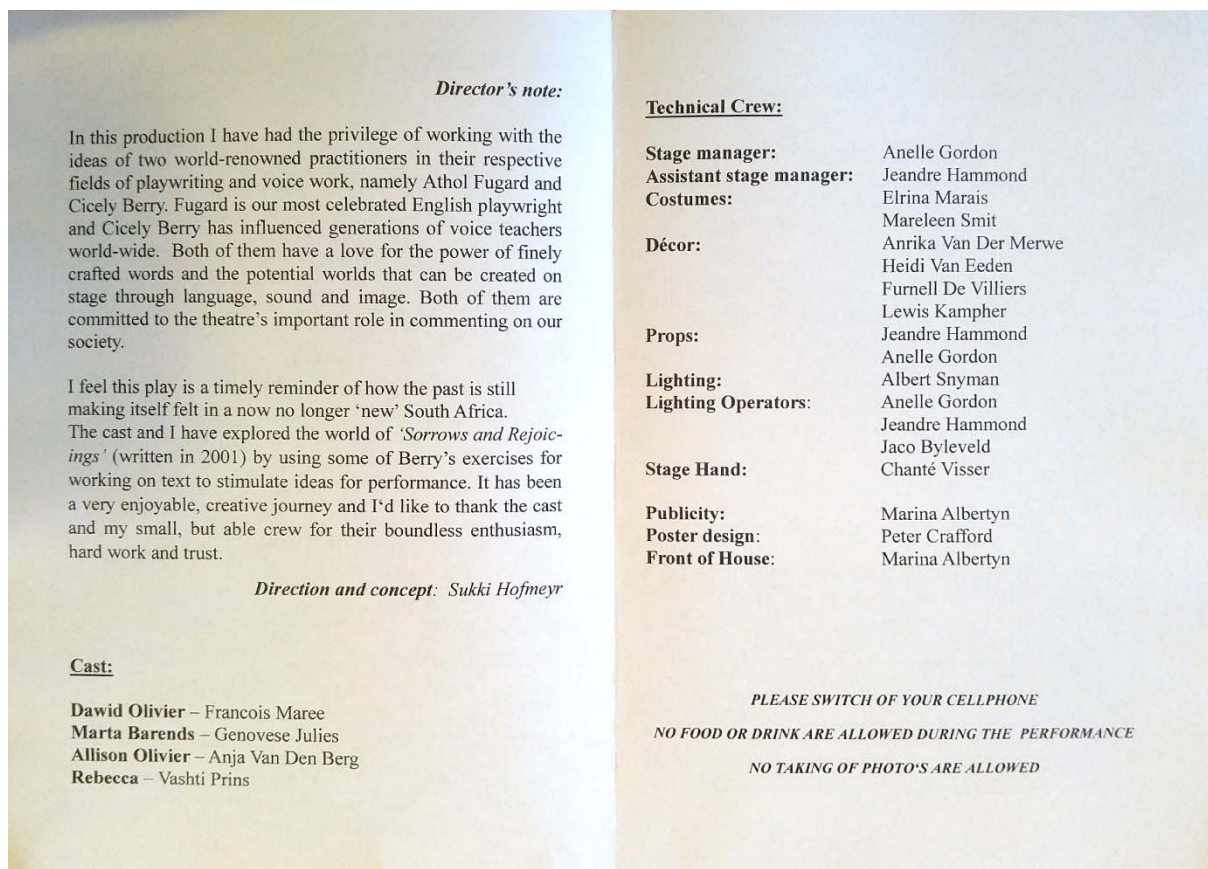
Addendum 5 - Early set drawing



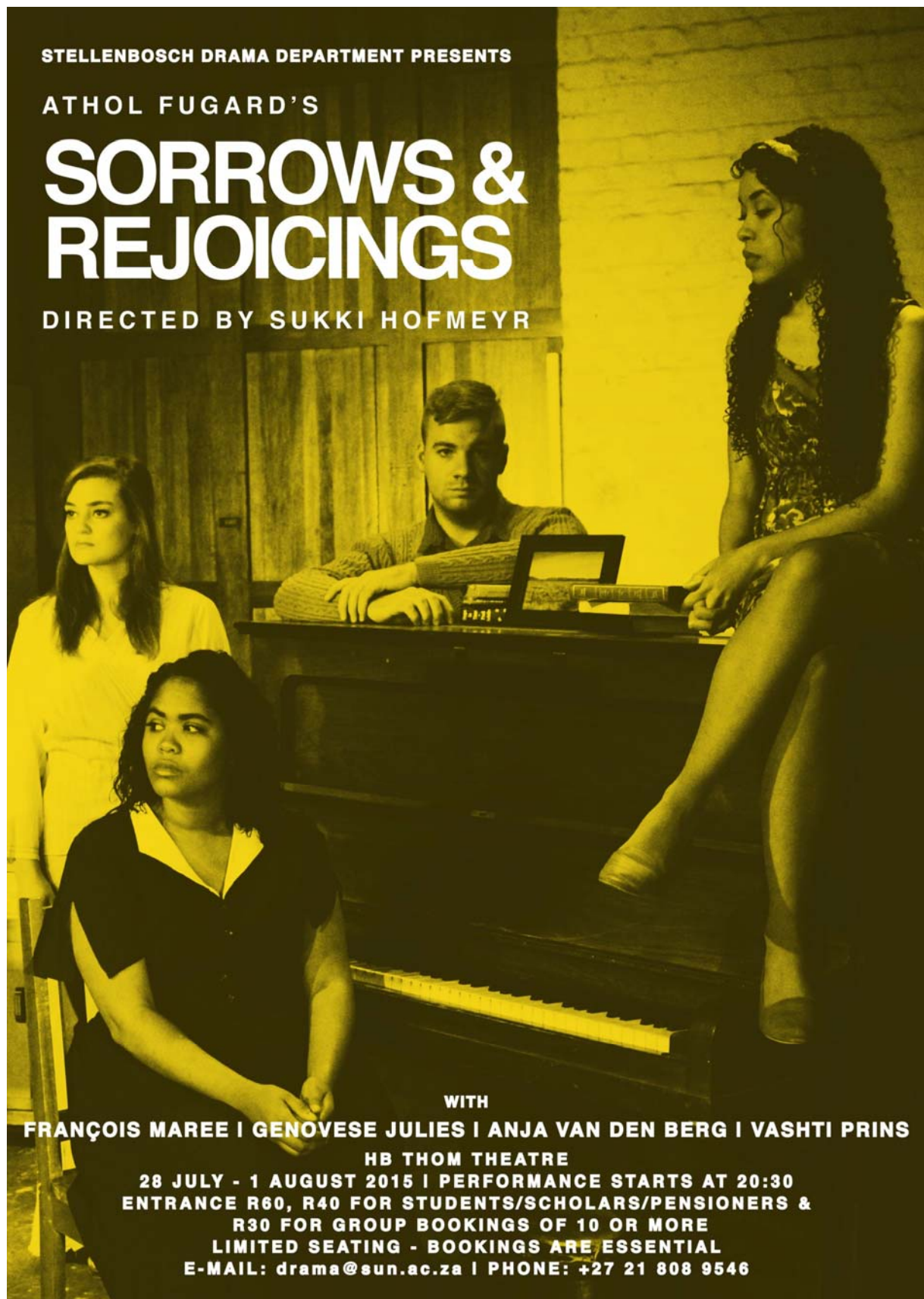
Addendum 6 - Performance space (H.B. Thom Theatre side stage)



Addendum 7 - Sorrows and Rejoicings Programme



Addendum 8 - Production poster



STELLENBOSCH DRAMA DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

ATHOL FUGARD'S

SORROWS & REJOICINGS

DIRECTED BY SUKKI HOFMEYR

WITH
FRANÇOIS MAREE | GENOVESE JULIES | ANJA VAN DEN BERG | VASHTI PRINS

HB THOM THEATRE
28 JULY - 1 AUGUST 2015 | PERFORMANCE STARTS AT 20:30
ENTRANCE R60, R40 FOR STUDENTS/SCHOLARS/PENSIONERS &
R30 FOR GROUP BOOKINGS OF 10 OR MORE
LIMITED SEATING - BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL
E-MAIL: drama@sun.ac.za | PHONE: +27 21 808 9546

Addendum 9 - Feedback (Vashti Prins – cast member)

My feedback

imap://imap.googlemail.com:993/fetch>UID>/INBOX>8910?h...

Subject: My feedback**From:** "Prins, VA, Mej <17708648@sun.ac.za>" <17708648@sun.ac.za>**Date:** 2015/11/09 05:50 PM**To:** Zoettje Hofmeyr <sukkih@gmail.com>

Working on the play, Sorrows and Rejoicings, must have been the most interesting process for me as an actress; I have never ever worked like that before. So that being said, at first I didn't quite understand why we were doing these other sound based/language based improvisations instead of just working on the text alone. However this soon became clear to me and it proved to be very effective in helping one to imagine and interpret a space or character.

I remember one night, in the beginning phases of rehearsal (we had done a read through of the text by then so we knew what was going on) we created some sort of nature with just a few stones, branches and leaves. Then we had to go into the space and imagine we were in the nature and make sounds that we thought one might hear in that specific space. There were a few frogs, birds, monkeys, elephants, crickets, wind, bustling trees and water. Some of these sounds then became part of a soundscape that really helped us to create the Karoo space for ourselves and maybe an audience member that has never even been to the Karoo. I, for instance, have never ever been to the Karoo, but these sounds created such a lonely/dry/gentle atmosphere that I could imagine the Karoo to be exactly as people or pictures had always described them. And many nights during the performance, I felt so connected to the Karoo space because of these simple wind/cricket/frog/bird sounds we used. I am convinced that the play might not have been the same had the use of sound along with the text not been incorporated. I think then the play might've lacked an extremely necessary layer, one that would help an actor to feel and experience a space that he/she might not directly or physically be in, but emotionally and mentally be able to imagine and experience as if he/she were in it.

We made use of Shakespeare (Sukki, I'm not sure of the name at the moment, I think it might have been a sonnet) and Ovid poems which really helped us to interpret and understand the feeling of the time, as well as the feelings of our characters.

The Ovid Poem- This poem really gave me insight to the pain of exile and how lonely it can be. In his poem, Ovid states how much he is robbed of his own words, freedom and language and how much he just wishes to look on his native sky and see his family again. The poem is quite sad, or at least I felt that way after reading it. It did however help me as an actress to imagine the space that Dawid must have been in and as a result I was able to formulate my attitudes and opinions as Rebecca towards him. Marta, Allison and Rebecca often had to stand as 3 ghosts or fates that taunted or haunted him in this poem. We had to make use of breath or sound that would show our attitude toward Dawid. Mine, as Rebecca, would always be a hard, forced breath or frustrated/trapped moans or sounds. This helped me to develop Rebecca's character as one that was frustrated and angry at her father, but still sort of trapped by her curiosity of him. The Shakespeare sonnet- This poem mostly helped me to develop a subtle softness towards Dawid which I had struggled to show before. We all had to choose a line that spoke mostly to us about our character or how we felt about another character and through this sonnet I was able to understand that Dawid isn't perfect at all but he tries his best to fulfill his role as lover or father. He isn't the way he is on purpose. That made me, as Rebecca, feel sorry for him a little bit.

Addendum 10 - Feedback (Mercy Kannemeyer – student)

Sorrows and Rejoicings deur Athol Fugard

Regie: Sukki Hofmeyer

Een van Athol Fugard se vele meesterstukke, *Sorrows and Rejoicings* is meesterlik vertolk deur die Drama Departement van Stellenbosch.

Die ruimte is op 'n kreatiewe manier gebruik deurdat die optrede nie op die tradisionele manier (waar die spel op die verhoog gebeur) plaasgevind het nie. Intimiteit is bevestig en behou deurdat die gehoor op die verhoog geplaas is. Dit het 'n warm gevoel aan die toneelstuk verleen en dit was asof ek as gehoorlid in die karakters se leefruimte ingetrek word. Die dekor is op so 'n wyse aangebring dat dit gelyk het soos 'n behoorlike sitkamer – “a slice of life” effek is as't ware geskep.

Die akteurs se spel was uiters geloofwaardig en hulle is die geleentheid gebied om hul musikale talente ten toon te stel. Die klank het 'n magiese kwaliteit aan die stuk verleen en ook die gehoor op 'n reis geneem. Afwagting is geskep deur die geluide wat gemaak is en dit het my as gehoorlid opgewonde gemaak om te sien wat gaan gebeur. Die atmosfeer is verder versterk deur die beligting en beide die klank en ligte het saamgevloei met die spel, want nie vir een oomblik was dit asof die effekte lukraak gebruik is nie. Daar was 'n gemaklikheid onder die geselskap wat verseker het dat die optrede as geheel suksesvol na vore tree.

Die regie het Fugard se werk so goed gekomplimenteer deurdat die teks met soveel volwassenheid en waardigheid hanteer is. Sterk en definitiewe besluite is geneem en dit het nie vir een oomblik voorgekom asof die akteurs nie weet wat hulle doen nie. Van begin tot einde was die teks, spel en mikpunte van die spel duidelik en dit was 'n absolute eer om saam met die karakters op hul onderskeie reise te gaan.

Addendum 11 - Feedback (Caitlin Wiggill – student)

'Sorrows and Rejoicings' Review – Caitlin Wiggill

I thoroughly enjoyed the production, particularly the intimate mood that was created through the setting. Setting the play in the wings of the stage with the tiered audience seating on the stage created a sense of voyeurism that I felt was incredibly effective. I watched multiple performances and was impressed with the consistency of the performers. The costuming, set and makeup were very well integrated and complimented the text.

The voice work in the show was my favourite part, especially when the cast worked together to create a soundscape. It was so well done that I did not realise that it was not a backing track and that it was performed live until I asked. The dynamic between the performers was also well refined, particularly the dynamic between Francois and Genovese. The emotion that they evoked in the audience was tangible from beginning to end. I enjoyed the use of the piano as the audience took their seats as it immediately created an atmosphere and set up the feeling of audience as voyeur.

While all the speaking in the show was very clear and well projected, I felt that Anja's accent needed work as it broke the illusion of her character as an English woman. Vashti's silent play was one of my personal highlights as the audience was constantly aware of her presence in the room and this only increased the emotional impact of her character's vocalisation toward the end of the piece. I also felt that the flashbacks were well integrated with the narrative. One part in particular stood out as Francois walked on the far right of the stage with a spotlight trained on him. The shadow that was cast by his body as he moved was evocative and I would have liked to see that device reintroduced in a different part of the show. While I did like the use of sand around the set as a distinction between the inside and the outside of the home, I did feel that the distinction could have been made more deliberate, perhaps through the use of a thicker band of sand.

All in all, I loved this production. It was an intelligent take on a classic and I felt that justice was done to the text. It was wonderful to be able to invest in characters and go through a catharsis with them as an audience member.

Addendum 12 - Emails from public

Subject: Thanks for enjoyable Fugard

Date: Fri, 7 Aug 2015 09:28:24 +0000 (UTC)

From: Michael Arendse <michaelarendse@yahoo.com>

Reply-To: Michael Arendse <michaelarendse@yahoo.com>

To: zh@sun.ac.za <zh@sun.ac.za>

Dear Zoettje,

Just a quick note to thank you for an enjoyable production of Sorrows and Rejoicings last week. I was in two minds about braving the cold last Saturday night, but am I glad I did ...I'm grateful that you took care with the Fugard, otherwise so much of the richness is lost.

Please convey my thanks to your cast as well.

Kind Regards,
Michael Arendse

Subject: Baie dankie!

Date: Tue, 4 Aug 2015 09:43:22 +0200

From: Moolman, AM, Mrs <amm@sun.ac.za> <amm@sun.ac.za>

To: Hofmeyr, Z, Mev <zh@sun.ac.za> <zh@sun.ac.za>

More Sukki

Die Moolman-familie het Sorrows en Rejoicings so baie geniet! Elkeen het geskitter in sy rol, maar Francois Maree was vir my Dawid Olivier. Jy het heeltemal vergeet hy is n jong student! Dit was ongelooflik. En daai stem ...

Nogmaals dankie vir n heerlike ondervinding.

Lekker week.

Annatjie Moolman

Sentrum vir Studente Administrasie/Centrum for Student Administration

Registrateursafdeling/Office of the Registrar