

A stamp of existence!

Manoko Francisca Tlhako

There is an expression in Sepedi that says “Pinyana ge e re ping, e kwele ka ping e kgolo” (Rakoma, 1963). This is an idiomatic expression that gestures to the idea that children do as they see and hear, that they take their cues from the adults in their lives. Post-colonial scholars and researchers Bagele Chilisa, Fiona Cram and Donna Mertens (2013) speak about indigenous knowledge and the importance of using indigenous languages to frame academic research. I am interested in the use of indigenous languages as a way to expand knowledge paradigms. Additionally, performance studies scholar Mark Fleishman (2009) makes the claim that “knowledge is not vertically but laterally integrated, formed or in constant process of formation as we move around in our environment”. And so, as a way of meaning making, performance is particularly appropriate to Africa. It is a way of knowing that challenges many knowledge orthodoxies. Through the employment of creative performance practice, indigenous Northern Sotho performance and the use of idioms as a site of oral cultural knowledge, I am interested in staging a performance demonstration that explores the relationship between indigenous language and creative performance practice whilst re-claiming and centring indigenous epistemologies in doing so.

Keywords:

Idioms, Meaning-making, Cultural knowledge, Performance as Research, Indigenous Performance

Biographical note:

Manoko Francisca Tlhako is an interdisciplinary South African performer, choreographer, theatre-maker and academic scholar. Tlhako holds a BA degree and a joint BA Honours (English and Drama) degree from Rhodes University. Her research interest lies in notions of identity and ideas of home, black womanhood and cultural knowledge paradigms. In addition, Tlhako has just completed her studies towards a Master of Arts degree in theatre and performance at the University of Cape Town in the Western Cape, South Africa. She is currently a member of the AFDA Cape Town’s academic staff.