

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTERCULTURAL PERFORMANCE

*A CASE STUDY FROM WESBANK ARTS AND CULTURE GROUP,
SOUTH AFRICA*

VLADA POPOVA

**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Social Development in The Institute for Social Development, University of
the Western Cape**



SUPERVISOR: PROF. CHARLYN DYERS

APRIL 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Prof. Charlyn Dyers and Dr. Miki Flockeman for their guidance, constructive criticism and encouragement throughout the writing of this mini-thesis.

I wish to thank every member of our drama group in Wesbank for being so eager to work hard and to learn, for supporting me along the way and becoming my dear friends.

Thanks to Mrs. Theresa Abrahams, for her enthusiasm, kind heart, compassion, courage, faith, her love for children, and for giving me all the support in the world during this time of work with Wesbank Arts and Culture Group.

I am grateful to John Haguma and Sheriff for their valuable contribution and professional advice, for their sincere interest in Wesbank group, for inspiration and encouragement they gave to every member of the group.



Thank you, Elin and Oydis, for everything you taught the children, for your creative input and for initiating such an important and beautiful project like “North meets South”.

Finally, I wish to thank my beloved husband Mike for his support. Without it I would never have been able to put so much time and energy into this project.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Abstract | 5 |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY | |
| 1.1 Introduction | 7 |
| 1.2 Background/Rationale for the study | 7 |
| 1.3 Overview of the area of Wesbank | 9 |
| 1.4 Research problem and questions | 11 |
| 1.5 Theoretical/Conceptual framework | 12 |
| 1.6 Aims of research | 17 |
| 1.7 Motivation for research | 18 |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW | |
| 2.1 Introduction | 19 |
| 2.2 The roots of educational role of theatre | 19 |
| 2.3 The beginning of theatre in education | 20 |
| 2.4 Developing inner resourcefulness in a child | 21 |
| 2.5 Drama in Education and Theatre in Education | 22 |
| 2.5.1 Experience through drama and theatre | 23 |
| 2.5.2 Experience through performance | 26 |
| 2.6 Drama is not the only way | 28 |
| 2.7 The power of cultural expression | 30 |
| 2.8 Cross-cultural performance: overcoming barriers | 31 |
| 2.9 Preservation of culture through theatre | 34 |
| 3. Conclusion | 34 |



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 35

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------|----|
| 3.1 | Introduction | 35 |
| 3.2 | Research design | 35 |
| 3.2.1 | Research problem | 35 |
| 3.2.2 | Research questions | 36 |
| 3.2.3 | Research methodology | 36 |
| 3.2.4 | Research instruments | 37 |
| 3.3 | Data collecting and analysis | 42 |
| 3.3.1 | Methods and techniques of data collecting | 43 |
| 3.3.2 | Qualitative data analysis and measuring | 43 |
| 3.4 | Limitations of my research | 44 |

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS 45

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 4.1 | Introduction | 45 |
| 4.2 | The Wesbank Project | 45 |
| 4.2.1 | Field observations in Wesbank | 45 |
| 4.2.2 | Is drama part of the curriculum in Wesbank Senior Secondary school? | 46 |
| 4.2.3 | A case study of two theatre project with a group of children and adolescents in Wesbank | 47 |
| 4.2.3.1 | Our first project | 48 |
| 4.2.3.2 | Giving each child a voice | 49 |
| 4.2.3.3 | Basic theatrical training | 50 |
| 4.2.3.4 | Focus on self-reliance | 53 |
| 4.2.3.5 | Awakening the group's creative energy | 55 |
| 4.2.3.6 | Cultural energy as a mobilizing force | 57 |
| 4.2.3.7 | Performance at the Learning Cape Indaba Festival | 60 |
| 4.2.3.8 | Strengthening togetherness and developing self-control through dance | 62 |
| 4.3 | Responses to my questionnaires | 63 |
| 4.3.1 | Responses from the participants in the drama project | 68 |

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| 4.3.2 | Responses of some parents and caregivers | 70 |
| 4.4 | Limitations of the first project | 70 |
| 4.5 | The second project – “North meets South” | 70 |
| 1.1.1 | A new story | 72 |
| 1.1.2 | “We are not so different after all” | 73 |
| 1.1.3 | The effect of the project “North meets South” | 74 |

CHAPTER FIVE: REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.1 | Introduction | 75 |
| 5.2 | Problem situations and solutions | 75 |
| 5.3 | Results of the first research project | 76 |
| 5.4 | Results of the second project “North meets South” | 79 |
| 5.5 | Conclusions | 80 |
| 5.6 | Recommendations | 81 |



| | |
|---------------------|----|
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 84 |
|---------------------|----|

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| APPENDIX I | 91 |
|-------------------|----|

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| APPENDIX II | 99 |
|--------------------|----|

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| APPENDIX III | 102 |
|---------------------|-----|

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| APPENDIX IV | 104 |
|--------------------|-----|

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| APPENDIX V | 105 |
|-------------------|-----|

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| APPENDIX VI | 106 |
|--------------------|-----|

ABSTRACT

This study documents **the action research**, which I conducted in the period from September 2003 to April 2005 and which led to the development of a case study. This research took place while I worked as a volunteer theatre practitioner with the Arts and Culture group in Wesbank township near Kuils River, Cape Town, South Africa. This organisation was founded in 2002 and was the result of one woman's efforts to keep the children of Wesbank off the streets, by keeping them busy through dance, song and drama, often in the tiny backyard of her house.

I was interested in investigating the impact of basic theatre training, working towards performance and the performative act itself on the psyche of the drama group participants (age 9-19). More specifically, I wanted to investigate in what ways being involved in a performance can help children and young people in an underprivileged community of Wesbank to develop confidence, a sense of competence, self-reliance, creative thinking, responsibility and the ability to work as an ensemble. I hypothesized that the development of these factors would motivate the group members to take individual or collective action to improve the conditions of their future lives.

Moreover, my research was to great extent focused on cross-cultural communication. How could the 'Cape Coloured' and Xhosa members of the group overcome cultural barriers and express their cultural uniqueness equally through taking part in multicultural theatre performance? And could the involvement of other cultures (in this case Norwegian and Russian) facilitate this process?

Chapter One describes the research problem, the socio-historical context of Wesbank, the aims of the research and my motivation for doing it.

Chapter Two provides a critical review of the work of the theorists, theatre practitioners, and adult educators in the field of the potential of theatre for unleashing those energies necessary for personal empowerment. I analyze these theories, and show in what ways

they formed the basis for my research, nourished and directed my project.

In *Chapter Three* I give a full account of the qualitative research design, the research instruments and methodology I used to collect the data, and explain why certain tools were chosen. The chapter describes the actual procedures of data collection and analysis that were used, as well as possible limitations of the research.

Chapter Four contains the results of my qualitative methodology and analyses of findings. I analyse the experience of my work as a theatre practitioner/facilitator, give a detailed account of my aims, the methods I used to achieve it, and the results.

Chapter Five contains the summary of my experience, the conclusions I drew from the results of my qualitative research, and a number of salient recommendations to those who plan to work as drama teachers or theatre practitioners/facilitators with children or young people in underprivileged communities.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

As an introduction to why I came to Wesbank and became motivated to use theatrical performance as an instrument for empowerment, I provide some information regarding my background and state the problem situation that required attention. This is followed by an overview of the area of Wesbank, the research problem, the aims and reasons for embarking on this project, and conceptual framework in which my research is situated.

1.2 Background/Rationale for the study

I would like to start by presenting a profile of myself. For 3 years (from 1995 till 1998) I was a drama student at the Studio of Individual Directing in Moscow, where we learned to direct and stage our own drama sketches, and to create our own artistic messages. I have 7 years' experience of creative writing and working in the advertising industry. For as long as I can remember, my dream was to live and work in South Africa, because I was fascinated by the power and beauty of this land, its cultures and peoples. I wanted to be involved in some Arts project, since arts and culture has always been the major sphere of my interests. I was particularly interested in cross-cultural exchange. In order to pursue my dream I joined a two-year post-graduate programme in African Studies at the State University of St. Petersburg in 2002.

In 2003 I got transferred to the University of the Western Cape (UWC) to start my Masters' Degree in Social Development. I was at the right place at the right time. I saw first hand that there was so much to be done in the new South Africa. If one has skills and enthusiasm, this is the place to be useful. One of the modules, which formed part of the coursework for my MA, was the Community Development module offered by the Social Development course at The Institute for Social Development at UWC. This module had a

practical component, which in my case involved an internship in the community of Wesbank. This is one of the first post-apartheid inter-racial townships, built in 1995 on the west bank of the Kuils River in Cape Town, as part of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). One of the central problems I observed in Wesbank was that many young people were uninspired, had low self-esteem, encountered a lack of faith in them from adults, had no or few goals in life and little opportunity to fulfil themselves. As one of the social workers told me: *"There is nothing for the youth in Wesbank. Girls at 14, 15 get pregnant, young people abuse alcohol and drugs, and they steal. They turn to shebeens and gangsterism"*.

Through the Community Development module, I became familiar with the concept of sustainable development, which has the following cornerstones: people's pride in themselves, their self-understanding, self-reliance and the "...flowering of people's creativity" (Rahman 1993:214). I believed that in order to have adults with such a mind-set, it had to be cultivated from an early age. How could I contribute to it?

The best value I could add was by teaching drama to a group of young people, using my experience in performing arts and creative dramatics in particular. Drama seemed to be the most relevant thing to do because it "provides students with a creative outlet for their mental and physical powers, and this in turn builds their confidence, self-esteem and spontaneity" (Kerridge and Wessels, 1988:9).

In the safe space of theatre the young people could enact their dreams, rehearse the roles they wanted to play in real life, could train themselves for real action. "The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action!" (Boal, 1979:22).

In the process of drama sessions I wanted to address one more issue. Everybody around me kept repeating the same observation: "Coloured"¹ and Xhosa children do not mix. But in order to build a rainbow nation, "...the new South Africa ought, in fact, to strive for the establishment of an inter-culturalism where its various peoples and cultures can meet without prejudice" (Seda, 2000:95). My plan was to have young "Coloured" and Xhosa

people united in creating theatre performances, getting to know each other better and in the process of overcoming cultural barriers, learn to understand and accept each other.

Gay Morris (2002) points out that though today Arts and Culture is established as one of the eight basic learning areas in the national curriculum, the struggle for the recognition of Drama and Theatre as a school subject has only just begun. I found proof of this during my interview with a visual arts teacher and a dance teacher from Wesbank High School. Both said there was a need for drama classes at school, since drama can help to develop communication skills in the pupils, such as merely being able to speak louder and to present oneself with confidence. But there was no drama teacher at this school, where the arts are taught as extra-curricular activities and only for 50 minutes a week.

It was against this background that I decided to focus my attention on using drama and other forms of artistic expression such as singing and dancing as a tool to develop confidence, self-reliance, team spirit and creative thinking in the group from Wesbank. According to Jennings (1993), creativity and self-confidence go hand in hand. This study analyses what impact the act of performing can have on the mind-set of a performer. Through a case study (see Chapter Three), I illustrate the evolution of the participation of this group in dramatizing a traditional Xhosa folk-story and a new story, which the group members created themselves.

This study wishes to emphasise the importance of using Drama in Education (DIE) and Theatre in Education (TIE) in South Africa so that young people can acquire life skills experientially and, in doing so, learn how to bridge racial and cultural divides. It does this through the analysis of the development of the group members in the process of putting together a cross-cultural performance.

1.3 Overview of the area of Wesbank

The community of Wesbank is located on the west bank of the Kuils River in the Oostenberg Section of Greater Cape Town, just east of the R300 highway near Delft South. It emerged as the first racially mixed community in 1999 in accordance with the

plan of the South African government to provide low-cost housing to the landless and the poor as part of Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Foundation for Contemporary Research, 2002:2). Wesbank has a population of approximately 25,000 people. The community developed out of a squatter community, which consisted of former farmworkers, poor people from low-income areas in the Western Cape and a smaller Xhosa migrant community who had moved to the Western Cape from the Eastern Cape in the early 1990s. The Xhosa community constitutes approximately 25% of the total population and inhabits one section of Wesbank, known as the 'E Block'. The majority of the population of Wesbank is classified as 'Coloured' (mixed race) and speaks Afrikaans as their first language.

By and large, the two groups, the Xhosas and the Coloureds, co-exist peacefully, and are gradually becoming accustomed to one another's cultures. But until recently, racial issues were a factor in tensions in the community. It is explained by the fact that Wesbank did not emerge naturally, but as the government's post-apartheid political initiative for integration, and many of its inhabitants feel that they have been forced to become neighbours (*Cape Argus*, February 2, 2004:2).

Despite the provision of housing and basic services, the community is characterized by poverty and deprivation. Gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as child abuse are major social challenges. Unemployment currently stands at 60%. According to the Foundation for Contemporary Research's socio-economic profile of the Wesbank Area (2002:12) the main causal factors can be attributed to "low incomes for those who have work, huge skills deficits that stem from the historically low levels of education, and a lack of opportunities for those who are unemployed but are seeking work" (Dyers, 2004:24-25).

The area now has three primary schools, and one senior secondary school. Owing to the absence of a community centre, these schools are used for a range of community activities, such as literacy and entrepreneurship projects, church services, and various group activities. According to a report in a local newspaper, the *Cape Argus*, there is still

some racial tension between the pupils, but because the Xhosa children and ‘Coloured’ children stay in the same area, they have had to learn to relate to one another.

1.1 Research problems and questions

The initial step of every research project is an observation of some problem or obstacle or some unexplained situation or condition. It involves being aware that something requires attention, that there is a need to resolve some problem or situation (Wiersma, 1980).

In the case of my research I identified the following problems:

- In the underprivileged community of Wesbank, lots of young people have low self-esteem and few opportunities to fulfil themselves, though many of them have the necessary resources, such as intelligence, motivation, talent, imagination, which can be used in order to pursue their goals. The young people have limited opportunities to discover these resources, sharpen them, successfully use them in practice and in this way build confidence and self-respect in their own knowledge.
- Despite the distinct educational function of traditional African theatre, today theatre is separated from education and rarely forms part of the formal educational system. Its potential to develop life-skills in young people is underestimated in schools.
- Racism is still an issue in the schools of Wesbank, where Xhosa and “Coloured” children do not always co-exist peacefully. “Coloured” children still occasionally call Xhosas “kaffirs” (a racially abusive and offensive term), while Xhosa children refer to ‘Coloureds’ as *amalawu* (meaning mixed or impure).

The observed problem situations helped me to formulate the research question, which consists of two parts:

1. *“What impact can taking part in theatre performance have on the mind-set of a performer with the view to helping him/her to develop vital life skills such as confidence, a positive self-image, a sense of competence, self-reliance, creative thinking, responsibility and the ability to work as ensemble?”*

The secondary research question arose from the work with the multicultural group (Xhosa, “Coloured”, Norwegian and Russian members all together) and the cross-cultural nature of the project:

2. *“Can taking part in multicultural theatre performance stimulate balanced cross-cultural exchange between young “Coloured” and Xhosa young people and can the presence of other cultures facilitate this process?”*

1.2 Theoretical/Conceptual framework



The development of a community first of all means the development of individuals, of their personal insights and of their understanding of who they are. “What do I feel uncomfortable and tense about?” “What do I want?” “How do I get it?” The ability to answer such questions in one’s personal life is crucial for the community to be able to identify its own needs (Roberts, 1979). As Joseph (1994) points out, such capacity for self-understanding and creative thinking should be cultivated and developed in a person from early childhood. And since children learn through play, “...this natural, powerful and fundamental impulse – the impulse to play – must be used in education as a means towards healthy and full maturity” (Burton in Malan, 1973:9). A child has a natural capacity for role-play – for projecting into imagined roles, characters and situations. This brings educators and theorists like Way, 1967; Hornbrook, 1991; Linnell, 1984; McGregor, Tate, Robinson, 1977; Heathcote, 1984; Malan, 1973; Bolton, 1984 to a conclusion, that drama and theatre can be used in schools as an effective educational tool. Bolton describes “the *precise function of drama*” as “...moments of direct experience, transcending mere knowledge, enriching the imagination, possibly touching the heart and

soul as well as the mind” (Bolton, 1984:50). For Way (1967:3) drama-in-education is concerned with developing “individuality of the individuals, with the uniqueness of each human essence”.

Most of the theory is focused on providing answers to the following questions: What is the difference between drama and theatre? What are its functions? What is the relationship between the two? And of what educational value participation in it can be for a child or a young person?

Through drama and theatre a person tries to make sense of himself and the world around him (Moreno, 1969; Way, 1967; Boal, 2001; Emunah, 1994; etc) Both drama and theatre encourage a person to explore and question his ideas, feelings and attitudes, and in doing so to develop ways of understanding, expressing and communicating them. The major difference is the idea of performance, which is the goal of theatre but not necessarily drama. Working towards performance makes the process product-oriented, thus depriving it, according to some theorists, of depth of experience of exploration and discovery (Way, 1967; Malan, 1973). And it can be a difficult, painful, very personal, and intimate process which may never be brought on stage and be shared with wide audience. On the other hand, some theorists and practitioners claim, that the impact of performance sometimes can be greater than the one of the process-oriented work. Successful performance can be a powerful confidence booster; it strengthens concentration, team spirit and gives a participant a sense of “personal power” (Emunah, 1994; McGregor, 1984; Linnell, 1984).

Creating multicultural performance has even bigger value. Exposing young people to different cultures broadens their minds and teaches them tolerance. Cross-cultural exchange is an incredibly enriching, and rewarding creative process when people learn from each other; create new ideas, ways and forms. It can play an important part in developing a child’s confidence by giving him an opportunity to teach other people of different cultural backgrounds something unique, that only he, as a representative of his culture, knows.

Multicultural performances is an important step towards fighting racism and xenophobia – the burning issues that create obstacles in the process of building “rainbow nation” in South Africa.

The study analyses the effects of creating multi-cultural performances and performing for the audience on the members of Wesbank group. Were there any tensions between Xhosa and “Coloured” participants? Did any of these groups dominate? Did both groups have a chance to show their strengths and cultural uniqueness and did they contribute equally towards the creation of the performance? And, apart from the indigenous South African cross-cultural issues, there was also the influence of diverse European cultures. After the group has been working with a Russian facilitator for one and a half years, two theatre practitioners from Norway joined us. The study examines the dynamics of the process of finding a common ground for all these cultures.

My theoretical framework is located in the following key terms and concepts.

- Authors like Mda, Way, and Malan define the terms ‘*Theatre*’ and ‘*Drama*’ differently. According to Mda, although these two notions are often used interchangeably, they are two distinct types of dramatic expression.

Drama refers to a “display of actions to the audience, in which there is an imitation of events in the real or supernatural world and there is an element of story or suspense”.

The word *theatre* is used “in a very wide sense to cover drama, many forms of ritual, dance and other performing arts such as acrobatics, mime and semi-dramatized narratives” (Kerr, 1995:1).

Way (1967) states the major difference between the two terms in the following way: “**theatre**” is largely concerned with *communication* between actors and audience; “**drama**” is largely concerned with *experience* by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience.

The difference formulated by Malan (1973) is much influenced by the definition given by Way: *Drama-in-Education* is an experiential activity, “...in which all

participate; and all bring to the activity not acquired skills but what is basic and common to all human beings” (Malan, 1973:6).

- **Performance** is defined by McGregor, Linnell, Way and Malan as the process of actor’s communication with the audience. Goffman (in Schechner 2003:23) defines performance as “all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion, which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants”.

Empowerment is increasing the political, social, or economic strength of individuals of the groups that have been excluded from the decision-making process through social discrimination - for example, through discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. This approach is based on mobilizing the self-reliance of people, rather than providing them with social welfare. The essential elements of empowerment are building confidence, a sense of competence, and developing the capacity to make informed decisions (Rahman, 1993; Swanepoel, 1997; online free encyclopaedia Wikipedia).

- **Self-reliance** is defined as a state of mind that regards one’s own mental and material resources as the primary stock to draw on in the pursuit of one’s objectives, and finds emotional fulfillment not only in achieving the objectives as such but also in the very fact of having achieved them primarily by using one’s own resources (Rahman: 1993:19).
- The concept of **self-esteem** is defined as one’s attitude about oneself, and is an estimate of how capable, worthwhile, and successful one is (Joseph, 1994). The psychologist William James believes that self-esteem is the result of the difference between “...what I want to be and what I think I am or could be” (James, 1950). Cooley feels that a person’s self-esteem comes from feedback, real or imagined, received from others (Cooley in Joseph, 1994).

- No matter how “poor” their material conditions, people always have *resources* available: intelligence, imagination, language, the skills of their hands, history, a sense of identity, a cultural heritage, and land (Breslin, 1994).
- For the World Bank, the term *culture* has two definitions (<http://web.worldbank.org/>). The first, wider definition describes particular shared values, beliefs, knowledge, skills and practices that underpin behaviour by members of a social group at a particular point in time. The second definition describes creative expression, skills, traditional knowledge and cultural resources that form part of the lives of people and societies, and can be a basis for social engagement and enterprise development. These include, for example, craft and design, oral and written history and literature, music, drama, dance, visual arts, celebrations, indigenous knowledge of botanical properties and medicinal applications, architectural forms, historic sites, and traditional technologies.

Presently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines *culture* as the "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group". Culture encompasses "in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>).

- ***Multiculturalism*** – the simultaneous existence of several cultures side by side.
Cross-culturalism – a process when people from one cultural background learn a form from another culture and practice it.
Interculturalism is an area of interaction where new forms are created. (Martin, 2004:.2)
- ***Identity*** as formulated by Nelson is a function of how a person perceives himself and of how others perceive him. “Identities are constituted from the first-person perspective based on what matter most to us: the acts, experiences, and characteristics we care most about, and the roles, relationships, and values to

which we are most deeply committed... Identities are not simply a matter of how we experience our lives, but also of how others see us” (Nelson, 2001: 71).

Cultural identity, one of the many aspects of identity, is defined as the feeling of identity of a group or an individual, insofar as the individual is influenced by belonging to a either a specific group or a specific culture (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_identity).

- *Life skills* constitute a continuum of knowledge and aptitudes that are necessary for a person to function independently (Brolin, 1989).

1.3 Aims of the research

The aims of my study are as follows:

- To analyse, through participant observation and interviews, the effects of taking part in creative drama and theatre performance on the mind-set of the young performers from Wesbank Arts and Culture Group.
- To analyse possible negative outcomes – for example, the limitations which “coloured” participants may have encountered when they took part in dramatising traditional Xhosa story
- To show whether the involvement of participants with other cultural backgrounds established balance, reduced domination of one particular cultural group over another and motivated the “coloured” group members to express their uniqueness and to contribute with their knowledge towards creation of a new performance.

1.7 Motivation for research

- My primary motivation for the research was to see young people from the disadvantaged community of Wesbank fulfilling their aspiration through theatre.
- Another motivation for the project was to see in what ways being a foreign, white and non-Afrikaans or Xhosa-speaking female could influence my work with the children and young people from Wesbank, i.e. how it could limit or enrich it.



¹ The term 'Coloured' is still a problematic one in post-democratic South Africa, because it is fundamentally pejorative. However, as it is a firmly entrenched term, it is used in this thesis with inverted commas and a capital letter to indicate its problematic nature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of the work of the principal theorists, theatre practitioners and adult educators, in the field of educational potential of drama and theatre. I will analyze these theories, and will show in what ways they formed the basis for my research as well as my project.

1.1 The roots of educational role of theatre.

What is the definition of theatre and its historical function in African society?

According to Mlama's (2000:55) understanding the concept of 'theatre' "...includes any performing art that represents life through symbolic images or artistic expressions that are in the form of action". Kerr uses 'theatre' "... in a very wide sense to cover drama, many forms of ritual, dance and other performing arts such as acrobatics, mime and semi-dramatized narratives" (Kerr, 1995:1). As Traore (1972), Kamlongera, (1989), Mda, (1993) and Kerr, (1995) show, theatre existed in pre-colonial African cultural tradition and played an ideological and educational role. It was not aimed at pure entertainment, but often had a purpose and a message, which made the spectators think and united both the performers and the audience in their reflection on the matters of community and in finding solutions. Theatre was aimed at making people uncomfortable with their lot and determined to change it. It was meant to challenge the *status quo*, attack the problems confronted by the people and give insights into their problems (Baas in Mlama, 2000).

Drama, dance, mime, singing, story telling were essential parts of one's upbringing. Theatre was a tool for instruction and transmission of knowledge, values, and attitudes

from one generation to another in initiation rites, religious, marriage, death rituals, and at behaviour appraisal forums (Alidou, 1991).

Mlama points out that it is surprising to see that despite the distinct educational function of traditional African theatre, today it is separated from education and rarely forms part of the formal educational system. He finds it ironic that formal education systems in Africa, which are mostly copied from the Western world, continue to exclude theatre from educational methodology, despite the fact that in these very Western education systems, theatre is increasingly being emphasized. “Contemporary educators do not often consider theatre as relevant for education and often resist any attempt to introduce theatre into the schools” (Mlama, 2000:28). Morris (2002:305) outlines the situation with TIE (Theatre in Education) in South Africa: “Today Arts and Culture is established as one of the eight basic learning areas in the national curriculum, but the struggle for the recognition of Drama and Theatre as a school subject has only just begun”.



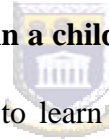
1.2 The beginning of theatre in education.

Theatre has been used in Western schools as an educational tool for a considerable length of time as a way of teaching and a way of learning. Its introduction in schools was rooted in the development of children’s theatre in the first half of the twentieth century, the aim of which was to educate children to love and appreciate the theatrical experience, or to stimulate their imagination: “To entertain, to give an enjoyable time and to provoke thought” (Ursula Jones, *The Unicorn Theatre*. Cited in O’Toole, 1976:10). According to O’Toole (1976) theatre directors became more and more conscious of the growing need to include a wider audience, to improve theatre’s narrow class-bound image. They targeted their activities at school children as the next generation of customers, trying to give the young people a taste of the power of theatre. If people did not want to go to theatre, many theatres were determined to come to people.

This changing process within theatre was in sync with the changing concepts of education, and the search for new, stimulating, creative and effective ways to teach as well as practical, experiential ways to learn.

The introduction of theatre and drama in schools was influenced by the realization of a child's natural capacity for role-play – for going into a make-believe situation with absolute sincerity and belief, which is the essence of all drama activity (Linnell, 1984). But what was the purpose of using theatre and drama in education? McGregor, Tate and Robinson (1977) point out that teachers showed a clear concern that the individual child's life of feelings and emotions was overlooked in a great deal of curriculum work. Teachers also emphasized the importance of structuring work, which encouraged the use of imagination.

1.3 Developing inner resourcefulness in a child.



Why is it important for young people to learn how to use their creative sides through drama? Way (1967) claims that drama helps to develop intuition, which is the most important single factor in developing a person's inner resourcefulness. The inner demand of personality fulfilment is fully dependent on this inner resourcefulness. At the beginning of participating in a drama, a child is practically discovering and exploring his or her own resources, irrespective of other people - like concentration, the senses, physical self, speech, emotion, etc. At a later stage s/he learns to master these resources, gaining control over his/her physical body, voice, speech and emotions. In the case of the Wesbank group, my purpose as a teacher of drama was to make the participants realise that even the most impoverished person has resources, like intellect, imagination, which s/he can use to accomplish tasks and to solve problems. The group discovered that one of their most important resources was their culture. Cultural energy, radiated through cultural expression like songs and dances became a powerful source of inspiration and motivation for the participants.

The development of inner resourcefulness can also be called the development of *self-reliance*, which is defined by Rahman (1993:19) as "...a state of mind that regards one's own mental and material resources as the primary stock to draw on in the pursuit of one's objectives". Rahman regards this as the prerequisite for successful development, but unfortunately this factor is often absent or undeveloped among many members of disadvantaged communities. The reason for it, according to Bloom (1998:130), is learned helplessness, a diminished sense of confidence in one's skills and talents and a low sense of self-esteem. In South Africa, these were the major crippling psychological consequences on black people of the system of *apartheid*.

1.4 Drama in education (DIE) and theatre in education (TIE).

Theorists and educators (see below) make it very clear that drama in education is *not* theatre, though there are a lot of similarities between the two. According to McGregor (1977:18) both theatre and drama "... rest on ability to project into roles and characters; they both use space, time and objects as symbolic media. They both centre on the person as the main medium of expression." Both TIE and DIE share the same objective – "change in understanding" (Bolton in Jackson, 1993:44). Both are concerned with communication and the exploration of the system of values. Moreno used the term 'drama' as "...the activation of religious, ethical and cultural values in spontaneous-dramatic form" (In Jackson, 1993:59). Pammenter (in Jackson, 1993:59) took this definition as the basis for his interpretation of theatre: "Theatre...is the communication and exploration of human experience; it is a forum for our values, political, moral and ethical. It is concerned with the interaction of these values at a philosophical, emotional and intellectual level".

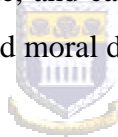
What, then, is the major difference between DIE and TIE? The major difference is the idea of *performance* – that is, communicating to an audience, which is the goal and destination of theatre. The destination of educational drama is the resolution of the problem of meaning or understanding; "...employing all past experiences of the group

and their imagination, to create a living picture of life aimed at surprise and discovery of the participants rather than for any onlookers” (Heathcote, 1984:62).

Theatre requires the learning of technical skills, which an artist acquires in order to communicate a certain meaning to a certain audience. In the contrast, drama-in-education is an *experiencing* activity, in which all participate, and all bring not acquired skills but what is basic and common to all human beings (Malan, 1973).

2.5.1 Experience through drama and theatre

The Department of Education and Science in the UK recommended drama as a learning medium, stating that it is one of the key ways in which children can gain an understanding of themselves and of others, can gain confidence as decision-makers and problem-solvers, can learn to collaborate, and can explore a range of human feelings and a whole spectrum of social situations and moral dilemmas (Hornbrook, 1991).



Heathcote (1984) names the two most common situations where drama in education can be used in order to either gain emotional experience without having the actual experience, or to re-live the situation via role-taking to gain a better understanding of it.

1. When a person feels uneasy and insecure about some possible future outcome, for example, before a job interview, meeting with authorities, important conversation, etc., and he attempts to pre-live these experiences in his imagination. This may help him to formulate the verbal phrases, or may result in conversation with others about the problem, or he may act out the sequence of events.
2. When an experience has been of extreme importance and too big to understand immediately, like an accident, an operation, a quarrel, an emotional break up with a person important to one's life, etc.

Such uses of drama resonate with the concepts of psychodrama, socio-drama, and drama therapy.

The term '*psychodrama*' was first used by Jacob L. Moreno in the 1920s. He described it as a form of psychotherapy in which personal issues or problems and their possible solutions are enacted rather than just talked about. This externalization of a person's internal world enables him to witness his dilemmas and to have others to witness it. Reliving the dramas through enactment helps a person and other members of the group to experience emotional catharsis. Psychodramatic scenes tend to be deeply emotional, dealing with painful memories, childhood traumas, unresolved conflicts and critical life dilemmas (Moreno, 1975).

Moreno was also the first to make use of the term '*socio-drama*', which he described as the application of psychodrama techniques to group, community, or organizational situations. Whereas psychodrama focuses on an individual's personal concerns, socio-drama addresses a group's issue. It is often used to help communities tackle social problems. A crisis in the community or issues like racism, abuse and sexism can be powerfully explored by means of socio-dramatic processes (Emunah, 1994).



Techniques and methods of both psychodrama and socio-drama are used in *drama therapy*, which is a creative form of psychotherapy. It makes use of role-play, re-enactment, improvisation, theatre games, storytelling, puppetry, mask work and pantomime to enable the participants to work through disorders and behavioral and social problems (Jennings, Minde, 1993). Through these techniques individuals develop awareness of themselves and their relations to the world, and "play" their way into the present, new or old relationship. Via imagination they experiment with the future and re-live the past, learn to integrate themselves into rejected experiences, and learn to face and deal constructively with their fears (Grainger, 1990). In the safe space of play people exercise new models of behavior. "Through acting we are empowered to act" (Jennings, 1992). Some drama therapists work with people's life experiences directly; others work through metaphors and symbols, as well as materials from plays, legends and myths that speak for the human condition. In this way it provides the dramatic distance through the

metaphor, and safety for the expression of thoughts and feelings that have been unexpressed (Grainger, 1990).

Drama therapy was developed in the 60's and 70's and employs many aspects of psychodrama and socio-drama.

Drama therapy and psychodrama are very personal, intimate experiences of exploration and discovery. It is typically process-oriented and for the most part it is not meant for public eye. However, there are drama-therapeutic processes that are aimed towards performance. For example *self-revelatory theatre* is a technique that facilitates creating a performance from the personal experience of the client (Emunah, 1994). The final result aims to take the client to a point that s/he has not yet reached in real life. Here the performance is considered to be an important part of the therapeutic process. It holds the therapeutic value for the audience. *“The therapeutic impact of performance is different from, and often greater than, process-oriented drama therapy. The ramifications of performance extend from groups to communities, from therapy to education, from personal to the universal...These dramas had to be seen on the outside, as a healing force for the larger community...People who had lost their voices needed to find they had something to say and a way to say it, and the rest of us needed to listen. In listening, we would find not only our compassion but our common humanity”* (Emunah, 1994:253).

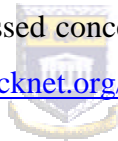
Socio-drama and performance orientated drama therapy have much in common with Boal's revolutionary method “Theatre of the Oppressed”, and Playback Theatre, developed by J.Fox.

The aim of “*Theatre of the Oppressed*” is to provide a space where people can explore problems, try out solutions and discuss plans for change. It is a safe space where people can create their own future first in fiction, in order to be better prepared to create it outside in the real world. Through relevant theatre techniques, people can train themselves for real action. “In this case, the theatre is...a rehearsal for the revolution. The

liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action!” (Boal, 1979:122).

Often the aim of the performance and the follow-up discussion was to develop a concrete, detailed plan of action and to rehearse it. But sometimes it is difficult to come up with the solution, which is good for everyone. As Boal argues, in this case, just to have a good debate is important and often is enough. “Debate, the conflict of ideas, dialectics, arguments and counter-arguments – all this stimulates, arouses, enriches, prepares the spectator for action in real life” (Boal, 2002, p.259).

Playback theatre is a form of public performance, when actors invite a member of the audience onto the stage to tell a story from his life. The actors then act out the story for the audience and the teller. It is not just a simple re-enactment, but finding the essence of the story and giving that back. While this is not therapy as such, it comes from dramatherapy and theatre of the oppressed concepts that this sort of community sharing can be therapeutic. (<http://www.playbacknet.org/interplay/journal/Daniel.html>)



1.1.1 Experience through performance

Way (1967) claimed that communication to an audience, which is the essence of any performance, is beyond the capacities of the majority of children and young people. In his opinion *audience* is one of the major factors that can destroy the wholeness of concentration of a child or a young person. If concentration is diminished, then the quality of attempt and the degree of mastery of resources by a person will be less full, less sincere and less worthwhile than a person could achieve. The major factor in developing people is that of enriching to its fullest the human capacity to give full and individual attention to any matter at hand at any given moment. As Way perceived it, public performance stood in the way of this process.

It is true that the prerequisite for any successful communication (in this context any public performance) is that the actor must have “presence” – the quality, which, like a

magnet, draws the attention of the audience to him/her. Martin (2004) defines presence as the correct control of our energy. In contrast to Way, I believe that performance can be an opportunity to strengthen and sharpen this “presence”. My research showed that the Wesbank group could be trained to control their energy and improve concentration in the process of rehearsing for performance, through a number of relevant games and exercises (see Appendix VI).

In my approach I agree with the critique given by Hornbrook (1991) to the “simple and falsifying dichotomies - ...process versus performance” (1991:x). The aim of my study is to show the social and personal value of working towards public performance as well as the act of public performance for a child or a young person. I contend that both processes can be powerful and important modes of self-discovery.

“An emphasis on the pedagogic function of drama has meant that the introduction into the classroom of the theatrical skills and knowledge necessary for a performance has sometimes been represented as a betrayal of drama’s role as an exploratory medium” (Hornbrook, 1991:19). Bolton (1993) claims that a pedagogic objective of drama (to achieve change of understanding) and an artistic objective (to improve theatrical skills) are interdependent, and both constitute the richness of drama in education. In Bolton’s opinion “...drama is to do with creating an art form in a way that is significant for its participants: from the art-making experience something new is understood or something is newly understood” (1993:39). In the process of my research I wanted to explore whether basic theatrical training, preparation for theatre performance, and the act of performing could be as effective, dynamic and intense as the exploratory processes of educational drama.

Tate and Robinson (1977) discuss 3 new learning processes involved in preparation for performance and the act of showing. The first one is recall – the ability to remember and repeat sequences of action. The second one is improvement of communication skills. A number of different people are challenged to coordinate their activities so that the performance runs smoothly. Discipline and teamwork become essential. The third

learning process is the shaping of ideas, which in its turn sharpens a child's mind and develops his intuition.

The value of a successful show is immeasurable. An actor gains a lot from the enjoyment of the audience. Good performance can have a powerful emotional and physical impact on an individual and is remembered by him long after the event. The good response helps the performer to build confidence. "If the performer overcomes the fear and copes with the increased tension he may gain a supreme sense of power, which will probably be reinforced by the response of the audience and the nature of the performance as a group activity. No wonder that this sense of power has been recognized as a religious experience in so many parts of the world" (Linnell, 1982:5).

But unsuccessful performance can have a totally opposite, damaging effect. This is why my objective was to train the group for successful performance and use the successful performance as a powerful confidence-booster. In doing so I had to be very careful and work only with what a child did best. I was following the recommendations given by Heathcote (1984:59): "The non-verbal child should never be placed under a verbal pressure...it is the teacher's task to plan the expression of the idea so that the child's strengths are used, not the weaknesses". None of the participants had ever performed for the audience before, so in order to make this experience safe and less stressful for them, I focused on each child's strong points.

1.2 Drama is not the only way.

After reviewing the available literature on TIE and DIE, my sense was that the theorists all laid major emphasis on acting or role-playing, and less or no emphasis at all on other modes of performance like singing and dancing. One of the possible explanations can be that the energy of rhythm is not as fundamental in Western culture as it is in African culture. In non-European theatre action, text and music are intimately connected, but "...the majority of Western theatre exists without these layers of emotional, evocative

and commentating expression” (Martin, 2004:81). We can only hypothesize that for African children and young people it is easier to communicate to the audience than for British children, for example, because the energy of rhythm through songs and dance make their performances more expressive and “...they are more linked to the audience on a common pulse” (Martin, 2004:81).

In the 1970s and 1980s, when theatre practitioners came to Africa and Latin America to promote Theatre for Development and Popular Theatre, one of the mistakes was that often they pushed people to use acting as the only form of artistic expression, downplaying the place of people’s own theatre forms like dance, songs, recitation, and mime. The possible reason for insisting on the use of acting is that the organisers of the earlier Popular Theatre workshops were Europeans like Kidd, Byram, Kerr and Crow, who were inspired by Freire’s ideas on education and the success of Theatre of the Oppressed by Boal in Latin America. They were trying to apply the same role-playing model in Africa, ignoring the local theatrical traditions and indigenous theatre forms like dance, songs, mime and story telling. Their European cultural background limited their theatrical knowledge mainly to the genre of drama. For them to be experts in Popular Theatre meant to be experts in drama. They could not be experts in African traditional dance, heroic recitation or story telling (Mlama, 2000).

This is why I tried not to limit the work in Wesbank to only one mode of artistic expression – acting. The storyteller was always the key figure in our performance. She narrated the story and other performers illustrated it by means of various Xhosa traditional forms of artistic expression like dance, singing, drumming and mime. Thus their performance did not look like an execution of another imposed foreign idea, but it looked and felt very indigenous and authentic.

The young people of the group in Wesbank had a lot of resources. They had knowledge of their culture, like songs, dances, and the ways to perform traditional ceremonies; they were imaginative, and some had good vocal skills, an amazing sense of rhythm. All this was a solid base on which we could build our work, and the aim of our work was to

encourage the group to make good use of their resources, and to strengthen and sharpen their skills.

1.3 The power of cultural expression

Traditional forms of artistic expression can also be referred to as “*cultural expression*”. These are actions such as music, dance, puppetry, story telling, mime, and the use of cultural artefacts, which represent a group’s collective heritage – its history, aesthetic values, beliefs, observations, desires, knowledge, wisdom and opinions as expressed through language, symbol and action (Kleymeyer, 1994:2).

According to Kleymeyer, cultural expression is a major means of generating a vital social force that can be called “*cultural energy*”. This force is a powerful source of motivation that inspires people to confront problems. Cultural expression can energize people, add sparkle to their participation, uplift their spirits and give them the feeling of group pride, collective strength, the sense of “we can”. “Drums and tambourines and maracas appeared. One young woman gave a signal, and with a burst they all began to play their instruments and sing in high, clear voices. They performed with a verve that kept our eyes riveted on their faces and made us forget our cold hands and feet and our empty stomachs. Glancing away to look at the crowd, we saw backs straightening and eyes brightening. Every face in the room glowed with pride” (Moreno in Kleymeyer, p.69).

Most important, cultural expression boosts the sense of cultural pride, self-respect and the sense of cultural identity. As Moreno argues, a sense of shared identity can energize people, stir up their enthusiasm and inspire them. It is especially important when there is a need to direct people’s collective action towards achieving shared goals.

1.4 Cross-cultural performance: overcoming barriers.

Songs, dancing, story telling, open-air drama, etc., can be ways of weakening negative stereotypes, which different ethnic groups in a community can have about one another. “In the right circumstances it can help to reduce conflict by bridging socio-cultural gaps between people who would otherwise have little or no contact. A form of expression as basic as a handicraft can overcome barriers of language, race, and social class to bring people together, at least momentarily, on a common ground of mutual appreciation. Crafts can raise the estimation of a disadvantaged group in the eyes of others far more than verbal appeals or formal educational programs can. As goods of obvious aesthetic and practical value pass from hand to hand, they transform perceptions and meanings in a very personal but effective manner” (Kleymeyer, 1994: 30-31).

This is why it is so important to organize a wide variety of cultural activities in the community, so that people of different ethnic groups can demonstrate the true beauty and energy of their cultures to each other, tell each other who they really are, and what their life experiences are. The appreciation of a powerful theatrical performance by a group, including dancing, singing, story telling, drama, etc., can create respect for their culture in others. The more people can learn about other people’s cultures and life experiences, the easier it becomes to challenge racist stereotypes, to broaden minds and enrich the cultural experiences of all (Ife, 1995).

This is so relevant to South Africa, where the prejudices of the past still exist despite political changes and people’s willingness to meet as equals. The forced separation of apartheid resulted in cultural polarisation, in fear and ignorance of the “other”. Barnes (1999) examines the role culture can play in addressing this problematic legacy of apartheid. The author documents the project “*Inhlanzi Ishelwe Amanzi – As Fish Out of Water*”, which was conducted in the Drama Studies Department of South Africa’s University of Natal in 1998. ‘Inhlanzi’ was facilitated by Ericka Block and Hilary Ramsden of the Walk & Squawk Performance Project situated at Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. ‘Inhlanzi’ was conducted as part of Block and Ramsden’s 3-month residency at the

University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg. It was a project that was meant to bridge the racial and cultural gap between white and non-white students in a previously racially divided South African university. Black, Indian and White students created a show out of their own lives, honestly exploring those feelings, which were normally not spoken. The project used technique of Physical Theatre, which involves a harnessing of the expressive potential of the human body to communicate, using the biographies, stories and cultural backgrounds of the participants. Working closely together on the production gave the group an opportunity to discover each other, and to reach high levels of honesty and personal acceptance. This intimacy gave them knowledge and willingness to see each other as individuals, above cultural differences, and gave them the opportunity to enjoy finding out more about each other and to form important friendships. This production was proof that intercultural harmony is achievable in the new South Africa.

Another example of successful multi-cultural theatre performance was “*D’Cipher: Set the Record Round*”, by the Brown Paper Studio at the University of the Western Cape in 2004, in which I also took part. Twenty-two students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Xhosa, “Coloured”, Zulu, Sotho, white Afrikaners, Tswana, Kikuyu, Russian, and Swedish) came together under the direction of Fullbright Scholar Judyie Al-Bilali from New York to create dynamic performances, which combined physical theatre, spoken word, songs and dance. The idea of the show was to explore and to reflect on the issues of the birth of the new South Africa, social changes, love, sex, democracy, freedom, racial and cultural stereotypes, and the need to change those stereotypes and prejudices, “to set the record round”. In the process of this work, which continued for almost one year, the participants grew so close together, that they began to feel themselves as one big family. One of the company members said: “All my life I was convinced that white people are evil. But now I see it is not like that. Here I made such amazing friends!”

Both inter-cultural theatre projects described above managed to create the space where different cultures met on the equal ground of mutual respect, acceptance and sincere interest in each other, where differences between people inspired and nourished creativity, giving birth to new ways of artistic expression.

The vision of these two projects is similar to the vision of the project in Wesbank. The idea of Wesbank experiment was to encourage Xhosa and “Coloured” children and adolescents to take part in each other’s folk-stories, learn each other’s songs and dances, and through the experience of theatre to really learn how to cooperate. I often heard the comments that though the two groups are together in the classroom, when it comes to games, they play separately. It is one of the consequences of apartheid. The system deprived people of different cultures of playful non-functional intercourse, and ensured that they interacted primarily on an instrumental level. This has made it difficult to discover and express a common humanity (Barnes, 1999; Morris, 2002).

My aim was to create the space in which “Coloured” children would be engaged in the fun of Xhosa folk-story, in the rhythm, and beauty of Xhosa songs, and dances. And the Xhosa participants would experience the spirit of the uniqueness of “Coloured” culture. One of the most inspiring description of this people is given by Van Der Post (1986:279):

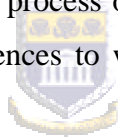
“ They (‘The Cape-coloured people’)... have Bushman, Bantu, Malayan, Javanese and European blood all mixed together. And they have produced a special type of their own, a culture of their own. Some of the loveliest things in the so-called Afrikaans culture came from the Cape-coloured people. They are full of music, full of humor, full of fun. They are creative, very gifted, dynamic, and full of temperament. They are really...something precious, and until recently they were regarded as part of European Africa...and it is only the present State which has removed them and put them back into a separate and somewhat inferior category. I know many, many poets and artist amongst them. And...when they have their carnival in the Cape, the whole place is transformed – music and singing and laughter and merriment. They are wonderful people. With them the Cape of Storms becomes the Cape of Good Hope”.

At a later stage, two facilitators from Norway joined the Wesbank project. Both of them were exchange students from UWC and the major requirement of their internship was to create a multicultural performance “North meets South”. Their vision and purpose was absolutely in line with ours and so all of us began the work on a new performance, aimed

at finding commonalities between our different cultures (Xhosa, “Coloured”, Norwegian and Russian) through story-telling, songs, dances, tongue-twisters, and games.

2.9 Preservation of culture through theatre

Theatre can be an effective way of preserving culture. It can be done through collecting the nearly forgotten and nearly lost folklore and bringing it back to life in theatrical performances. For many ethnic groups, oral histories, songs, and other forms of traditional expression are the best, and often the only sources of their own history, that give the clues to where the people of the group come from, and what resources they have. It is important to strengthen this base in order to move forward. Theatre can be a very relevant and effective way of introducing the wider community to the revived or rescued traditional culture. Rehearsal of the songs and dances, and the dramatisation of traditional stories, can involve more people in the process of learning their cultural heritage. Public performances can involve bigger audiences to watch and learn (Breslin in Kleymeyer, 1994).



3. Conclusion

The literature reviewed above influenced my choice and direction of work. The discussion around performance and the way it can affect a person who performs formed the corner stone of my research project. Realization of the importance of the development of inner resourcefulness in a child and a young person, highlighted by authors such as Bolton and Rahman, laid the foundation for my work. The process of cross-cultural exchange, overcoming racial and cultural boundaries through art, through learning and appreciating the beauty of each other’s rhythms, songs, dances and stories has always been a great source of inspiration for me and motivated me to embark on this project. Finally, the theory of cultural energy being a powerful mobilizing force and energizer, as discussed by Kleymeyer, was the most relevant to the analysis of the work in Wesbank.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I give a full account of the research design, the research instruments and methodology I used to collect the data, and explain why certain tools were chosen. The chapter provides details on the respondents and informants and describes the actual procedures of data collection and analyses that were used, as well as the limitations of the research.

1.1 RESEARCH DESIGN



1.1.1 Research problem

The initial step of every research project is an observation of some problem or obstacle or some unexplained situation or condition. It involves being aware that something requires attention, that there is a need to resolve some problem or situation (Wiersma, 1980).

In the case of my research I identified the following problems:

- In the underprivileged community of Wesbank lots of young people had low self-esteem and few opportunities to fulfil themselves, though many of them had the necessary resources like intelligence, motivation, artistic talents, imagination, knowledge of their culture, to pursue their goals. The young people had limited opportunities to discover these resources, sharpen them and use them successfully in practice, in this way building self-respect and confidence in their knowledge.
- Racism was still an issue in the schools of Wesbank, where Xhosa and “Coloured” children did not always co-exist peacefully.

-
- Some theorists (Way, 1967; Malan 1973), who promote drama and theatre in education, laid strong emphasis on its experiential side, expressing serious concerns regarding children's exposure to audiences and underestimating the value of public performances.

1.1.2 Research questions

The observed problem situations helped me to formulate the research question, which consists of two parts:

“What impact can taking part in theatre performance have on the mind-set of the performer with the view to helping him/her to develop vital skills such as confidence, a sense of competence, self-reliance, creative thinking, responsibility and the ability to work as part of an ensemble?”



The secondary research question arose from the cross-cultural nature of the project:

“In what way can the involvement of Western cultures in cross-cultural theatre performance stimulate the process of balanced cross-cultural exchange between the young “Coloured” and Xhosa people?”

1.1.3 Research methodology

Qualitative research design and methodology was chosen for this study and is most relevant to it because, according to Finch (1985), it can “...provide theoretically grounded, analytical accounts of “what happens” in reality, in ways which statistical methods cannot accomplish...In providing the “colour”, qualitative studies reflect the subjective reality of the people being studied” (1985:113). Qualitative research examines people's words and actions in descriptive ways (Wiersma, 1980). In the case of my study, it contributed to an understanding of what it is actually like to be trained for a public performance by means of theatre methods and techniques; to be given an opportunity to

express oneself and to explore and develop one's own talents and skills; to perform in front of a large audience; and being motivated to express one's cultural individuality and find one's unique voice in a multilingual, multicultural theatre production.

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) use the term "ethnographic research" as a shorthand rubric for investigations described as 'qualitative' and 'case study' research, because they have one thing in common – both deal with comprehending human behavior. Fetterman (1988) uses the term "ethnographic approach" to describe qualitative research. The key elements of this approach involve conducting fieldwork and maintaining cultural perspective. This is applicable to my research. I conducted the field study in the form of participant observation over a period of one and a half years to identify patterns of behavior of the group of children and adolescents. A cultural perspective was kept in focus throughout the whole period of research, because my work was concerned with bringing different cultures together through cross-cultural performance.

3.2.4 Research instruments



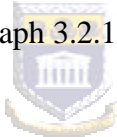
In addition to a literature review, a variety of research tools were used in order to gather my qualitative data. These were: action research, participant observations, explorative research, personal visits, unstructured and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, as well as video recordings of two performances. All of these led to the development of the case study. In Appendix V of this thesis, there is an ethical statement in the form of a letter, which was sent to the parents of my group for their approval.

The detailed **literature review** is given in Chapter 2 of this study. It serves as the point of departure for the pursuit of the research problem. It provides an overview of the theories on the empowering potential of drama and theatre: drama and theatre in education (Way, 1967; Malan, 1973; Bolton, 1984, 1993; Heathcote, 1984; Linnell, 1984; Hornbrook, 1991; O'Toole, 1976), theatre for conscientisation (Boal, 1979), and for healing (Jennings, 1993, 1995; Emunah, 1994). Those theories influenced my choice of theme, the formulation of my research problem and the direction of my work. Some of these

theories (for example, the theory of successful performance as a confidence booster and an opportunity to develop “personal power”; the theory of cultural energy as a source of motivation and growth) were practically applied in my project. The literature review created a theoretical and intellectual background to my study, and placed it against similar studies done in South Africa and in Europe.

In my work different types of qualitative research instruments were used.

As a form of **pre-test** I closely observed the general behavior of Arts and Culture Group members before I joined the organization. As part of a team of student researchers from the Institute for Social Development at UWC, I spent a period of two months just visiting the township and the group, and noting my observations in a diary. Once I was part of the group, I also recorded my observations of the drama group participants at the initial stage of our work in the diary. The results of these observations confirmed the general problem situation in Wesbank, outlined in paragraph 3.2.1.



Personal visits: With a view to collecting data by means of personal interviews, I conducted an unstructured interview with the president of Wesbank Arts and Culture Group, who is also a social worker in the Wesbank community. The aim of the interview was to investigate the major social problems the young people of Wesbank encountered and to get a clear idea about the vision of the Arts and Culture Group. (See Appendix II).

I visited some of the respondents at their work place. In order to have a full picture of the place of drama and arts in the school curriculum, I met with one visual arts teacher and one dance teacher from Wesbank High School. I found **unstructured interviews** to be the most appropriate, because I had no knowledge about the use of drama in the schools of Wesbank. At the start of the interviews, I simply suggested the general theme for discussion: *“Is there a need for drama and theatre at your school and is this subject part of the curriculum?”* I put the further questions as they came up during the spontaneous interaction between the interviewees and me (See Appendix II).

My other qualitative research instruments included **action research**. As originally formulated by social psychologist **Kurt Lewin** (in McNiff, 1992), action research is a disciplined method for intentional learning from experience. The work in Wesbank was concerned with my intentional learning from the experience of being a theatre facilitator. I intended to learn if theatre training, working towards performance and the act of performing itself could be an effective way of developing confidence, self-reliance, personal power in the young people, and what personal and social value a multicultural performance could have.

The ‘action’ of action research, whether on a small or large scale, implies change in people’s lives, and therefore in the system in which they live (McNiff, 1992; Online Wikipedia). It is conducted in order to find a solution for a particular practical problem situation (Welman and Kruger, 2001:21). The problem situation is outlined in section 3.2.1.



Action research corresponds to **case study research**, the objective of which is to investigate the dynamics of some single bounded system, typically of a social nature, such as a family, group, community, or participants in a project (Welman and Kruger, 2001). For my case study a mixed group, consisting of 10 Xhosa and Afrikaans speaking children and adolescents between the ages 9 and 19, were chosen. This group was formed in September 2003, when I started my work as a voluntary drama teacher at the Wesbank Arts and Culture Group. This organisation was the result of one woman’s efforts to keep the children of Wesbank off the streets, by keeping them busy through dance, song and acting, often in the tiny backyard of her house.

I met with the group once, sometimes twice a week for drama classes in Wesbank Number One Primary School. Each class lasted for 2 hours. We were dramatising a traditional Xhosa story “The Rabbit and the Tree Spirit”, and were working towards a public performance. In the process of my research I observed the evolution of the participants, their development through basic training in the fundamentals of Voice,

Movement and Acting; through discovering cultural energy; and through public performance. I observed the dynamics of the participants' discovering and expressing their cultural uniqueness through coming in touch with other cultures.

Participant observation requires the researcher, for an extensive period of time, to take part in, and report on, the daily activities of a group, community or organisation, or the people involved in a process or event (Welman and Kruger, 2001:184). As a participant observer, I had to perform a dual role. On the one hand, as a member of the inner circle of this group, I was part of the activities of the group. On the other hand, I had to keep a certain distance to be able to observe and record my experience. But no matter how involved I was in the activities, I never abandoned my role as observer in this process. By means of participant observation as a drama teacher I analysed the dynamics and evolution of the participation of the group members in dramatizing the folk-story, in creating a new one, and the impact our work made on them.



I used **questionnaires** as a data-collection technique to gain the group's opinion of the process they were going through (See Appendix I). As Wiersma (1980) points out, the use of questionnaires are often subjected to criticism because of a variety of reasons, such as excessive non-response; respondents are not truthful in their responses; and questions deal only with trivial information. I was trying my best to avoid such faults when constructing questions for my questionnaire. All the items were open-ended and gave the respondents the freedom to express their feelings and thoughts. They allowed the respondents to think, and analyse their experiences. I had the advantage of comparing the group's responses with my personal observations and to see how honest their answers were.

The questions were as follows:

3. What brings you to our Drama and Theatre classes? Why are you here?
4. What do you like about our classes? What would you like to change or improve about our work?

-
5. What unites us?
 6. What inspires and motivates you?
 7. What has changed in you since you joined our group? What is the difference between *you one year ago*, and *you now*? What new characteristics you discovered about yourself? How do you feel about it?
 8. Describe the happiest moment or happiest day that you experienced in our work. When did you feel most proud of yourself?
 9. Describe the day when you were most disappointed.

I employed **semi-structured interviews** with 3 parents/caregivers and 2 theatre practitioners from Norway, involved in the project at the later stage. The idea was to compare their observations with mine in order to have a more complete picture of the transformation the group was going through.

I visited the parents or caregivers of 3 members of drama group at their homes and asked a general question: *“Have you observed any positive or negative changes in your child during the last year? Is it possible, that some of these changes can be attributed to his/her involvement with the Drama group?”* Semi-structured interviews were used because the respondents came from divergent backgrounds (2 parents were Afrikaans-speaking, one was Xhosa). I adapted the formulation to fit their background and added more aspects of the theme in the course of the conversation. The interviews were held in English (See Appendix II).

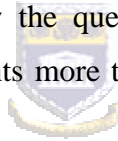
The general question to my colleagues from Norway was: *“What is the value of the project “North meets South for the group and for you personally?”* Their observations and reflections helped me to have a more complete picture of the results, and strengthened the objectivity of the conclusions.

I had 2 semi-structured interviews with 2 Afrikaans-speaking children (age 9 and 14)

during the first project. The general theme was *“How do you feel about wearing traditional Xhosa outfits and playing characters in a Xhosa story?”* The questions that followed depended on their responses and on the issues raised by them. These 2 interviews were important to come to a final conclusion whether participation in the drama had helped the participants to overcome cultural differences and to bridge the cultural gap between them.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 group members after we completed the second project. These interviews consisted of a few questions: *“What is the value of “North meets South” for the group and you personally?”*, *“What is the difference between our two projects?”*, and *“To which project do you feel you contributed more?”*.

Interviews were valuable because I could receive immediate feedback on my enquiries and I could control the information I was receiving. Sometimes interviews revealed additional information not covered by the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also valuable because it gave the respondents more time to think, to formulate their feelings and to analyze their experience.



3.3 DATA COLLECTING AND ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Methods and techniques of data collecting

In my research I used various methods and techniques of data collecting.

I systematically **kept field notes** during the whole one-and-a-half years period of work with the group. The most important observations were written down after our rehearsals and performances.

In the cases of the interviews with the teachers of Wesbank High School, the president of Wesbank Arts and Culture Group, the members of Drama group, theatre practitioners

from Norway, and the 2 parents, I **took notes of the participants' responses** and wrote a complete report immediately afterwards.

I made one **video recording** of the group's performance at the Learning Cape Indaba Festival at UWC on the 30th August, 2004, and one video recording of the rehearsal of "North meets South" in Wesbank Primary School Number One. (See Appendix IV)

3.3.2 Qualitative data analysis and measuring

Various authors point out the same problem researchers face when trying to analyse qualitative data. LeCompte (1993) refers to Miles and Huberman, who write: *"The chronic problem of qualitative research is that it is done chiefly with words, not with numbers. Words are flatter than numbers and usually have multiple meanings. This makes them harder to move around and work with...Most words are meaningless unless you look backwards and forward to other words...Numbers, by contrast, are usually less ambiguous"* (LeCompte, 1993:234).



The procedure of data analysis and measuring I used consisted of the following steps of the "action-reflection cycle" (McNiff, 1992):

- I identified problems (see section 3.2.1);
- I imagined the solution and pre-tested the behaviour of the participants before the solutions were implemented;
- I described and explained the solutions and approaches I implemented in practice;
- I evaluated the outcome of my action by comparing the behaviour of the participants at the initial stage of our work and the later stage;
- I looked at the evidence (my notes, questionnaire responses, video tape, parents' observations) and determined the criteria that indicated progress (e.g. that the participants of the group were more confident in their performance, and that there was much more energy in it); and

-
- I pointed to specific instances to show those criteria in action (e.g. some members spoke louder, felt free to improvise, were more expressive, sang with their full voices, whereas before they were shy, inaudible or felt embarrassed when they tried to sing for the first time, or when asked to be more expressive when acting).

In this way, I was able to judge if there was clear evidence of improvement and if the implemented solutions actually helped to solve the problem. A very important part of my analysis was self-evaluation, a reflection on how my work influenced my development as a drama teacher and facilitator.

As with any qualitative research, my study was to a large extent intuitive and subjective, which can lead to problems with validity and objectivity. However, I feel that the participants' responses to the questionnaires, compared with my observations and those of the parents, and facilitators from Norway, gave my data and conclusions sufficient objectivity.



1.1 Limitations of my research

The only limitation was the fact that some of the children and young people dropped out of the group at various stages of our work (due to their parents moving to another area, or school commitments, employment, or initiation rites) and I couldn't keep track of their progress through observations or questionnaires. But nevertheless, I believe it was important that they had had the experience of public performance, audience praise, exposure to other cultures, creative work, and being part of a multilingual and multicultural ensemble, working together in harmony, encouraging, inspiring, and teaching one another.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

As reported in Chapter Three, my qualitative data for this thesis consisted of:

- Interviews with
 - The founder of Wesbank Arts and Culture
 - Two teachers at Wesbank Senior Secondary School;
 - Three children participating in the first project;
 - Three parents/caregivers of the children;
 - Two theatre facilitators from Norway; and
 - Five children, participating in the second project
- And a case study of a group of Wesbank children and young people engaged in two performances.

In this chapter I will analyse the experience of my work as a theatre facilitator with a group of 10 children and adolescents from Wesbank. I will give a detailed account of my aims, the methods I used to achieve them, and the results.

4.2 The Wesbank Project

4.2.1 Fieldwork observations in Wesbank

During my first visits to Wesbank, I was struck by the complete lack of amenities and opportunities for young people. Before I joined the Arts and Culture group, I attended a performance by a group of young dancers. I observed that there was a lot of talent in the group members, they were motivated to learn and to move forward, but the creative

leadership lacked several skills, and this affected the group's confidence, mind-set and quality of their performance. It was very poorly organized, and if the group's leader was not there, they had difficulty in coordinating their efforts, and displayed a lack of energy and inspiration. A few teachers had already left the organization because they were receiving no money for their work, since the Arts and Culture Group was not yet registered as a non-governmental organization, and had no financial support. The founder of the organization was the only person teaching almost 150 children dancing, modeling and singing, and she was by no means skilled in any of these areas.

This observation showed the need for a teacher in the Arts and Culture Group, who would teach, inspire, strengthen the young people's belief in themselves, encourage them to stretch their skills and creative capacities.

My observation was followed by an interview with the founder and director of Wesbank Arts and Culture Group, who was also a social worker. Through this conversation I hoped to get a better understanding of the opportunities the community offer to the young generation. One extract from our interview revealed the depth of the problems faced by the young people in Wesbank: *'There is nothing for the children and youth in Wesbank. Girls of 14 / 15 get pregnant. Young people abuse alcohol and drugs, they go to shebeens, become gangsters. They steal. I want to see success with children. I want them to do something with their life, go forward. They must go see the world. If I can make at least one child's life different, maybe he will be the President. There are many opportunities for the children there. They just don't know how to grab it with two hands'*.

4.2.2 Is drama part of the curriculum in Wesbank Senior Secondary school?

My plan was to teach drama in Arts and Culture Group and through drama help young people to develop and grow. I decided to find out if drama was a part of curriculum in Wesbank Senior Secondary School and if there was a need for it.

The research revealed that drama was not in fact taught as part of the curriculum. What I found out from the responses of the teachers interviewed was that ballet, African and contemporary dance, music, and visual arts were taught in the school to grades 8 and 9 once a week as extra-curricular activities. The pupils could only choose one discipline from the above-mentioned list of art-related subjects. In grade 10, dance became part of curriculum program. Both teachers were unhappy with the fact that only 50 minutes a week was allocated for arts. According to them this scheme was not effective because the pupils tended to forget what they had learnt during dance or visual arts classes since there was not enough time for practice.

Both respondents said they would love to have a drama teacher at school. They believed that through drama classes the pupils would be able to learn to speak louder and gain more confidence. Both interviewees said it was important to develop such skills for life after school when young people have to find jobs and face competition.



4.2.3 A Case study of two theatre projects with a group of children in Wesbank

Following my meeting and interview with the founder of Wesbank Arts and Culture Group on the 27th of September 2003 at her house in Wesbank, I joined the group as a drama teacher in September 2003. At that stage, there were nearly 150 children and adolescents in this organisation. Since the population of Wesbank consists of only two groups – the Xhosas and the “Coloured” (see Chapter 1, paragraph 1.3) this cultural mix constituted the group, which I selected for my research. I selected 15 Xhosa and “Coloured” children, both girls and boys. The main criterion was their ability to understand and speak English fluently. This was the only language in which I could communicate with them, since I spoke neither Xhosa nor Afrikaans. My next step was to find an engaging, funny and simple story for the group to dramatize. The idea was to select one traditional Xhosa and one Khoisan story and to engage the members of each group to take part in each other’s folk-tales. To my mind, this was a very practical way to bring children together.

4.2.3.1 Our first project

For our first project I selected a traditional Xhosa folk story “The Rabbit and The Tree Spirit”, which I found in the book *Madiba Magic* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

I adapted the story and shortened the text, so that it would be easier for the children to remember the words. After having read it to the group, I suggested that each child should choose a character s/he liked and read his/her part alone. I brought masks and pieces of colourful material, so that the girls could wrap themselves in it like traditional Xhosa women, while the boys could put on masks while reading the story. I hoped that this entertaining first session, which everyone enjoyed, would make them eager to attend the rest of the sessions. I suggested that we should meet twice a week, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, to continue with the dramatization of the story so that we could eventually perform it in front of an audience.



At our second session, we began to dramatize the story. I observed that most of the group members were very shy, quiet children, who spoke very softly and were very self-conscious.

During the first few weeks of our work, the composition of the group constantly changed, with some members leaving and new member joining us. Some could not commit to the rehearsal schedule, or failed to turn up every time they were supposed to. I can attribute this to the fact that the period of our work at that stage was too short for the children to become committed. It normally takes time for a group of committed people to be formed. In addition, some parents did not take our drama classes seriously and believed there were more important things for the children to do like helping in the house or doing homework for school. Another reason was that some children came from dysfunctional families (where the parents had separated), and these families did not stay in one place for very long.

After a month and a half, a core group of 10 children and adolescents remained.

Wesbank #1 Primary School allocated one classroom for our sessions. Each time we had to move the desks and chairs and sweep the floor before starting the classes.

4.2.3.2 Giving each child a voice

Each member of the group chose that character of the story s/he liked most. In order to play a character in the story, each participant had to make an effort to get out of his/her usual “shell”, and to do something s/he had probably never done before, like speaking loudly, showing emotions in public, and engaging his/her whole body in movement. Some threw themselves into this new experience and enjoyed it; others were very self-conscious and afraid to become a laughing stock for their peers. During our drama sessions, I was constantly reminding the children that respect, encouragement and support for each other was our major rule. In the spirit of a forum, we all collectively agreed on this. My attitude was that a child “should never experience failure”. The smallest attempt to act, project their voices, or dance was met with my delight and encouragement. In this friendly environment each child “was bound to succeed” (Johnstone, 1979:20). Our drama sessions were supposed to be a safe space, where the participants could experiment freely trying on new roles. It was essential that each person felt comfortable and safe enough to be ready to open up, and not afraid to be laughed at.

As I had expected, at the beginning most of the creative solutions concerning aspects like music, costumes, props and acting came from me as their teacher. I considered this an essential but temporary stage, where the group was observing and learning from me. But little by little I began to encourage the group to come up with creative input. Any suggestion that came from any of them was considered and put into practice, so they could see that the opinion of any member, no matter how young, was respected and taken into account. Giving each child a voice within the safe confines of the drama group was the first step in boosting his/her self-esteem and sense of self-worth.

4.2.3.3 Basic training

After the first 4 sessions, during which the children were getting used to playing the parts of fairytale characters, I began to train the group in the basics of Voice, Movement and Character development. For example, if we rehearsed in the Big Hall of the school, I would go to the far end of the hall and ask a person to imagine that we were two friends, separated by a noisy river, and we had to talk. Of course in order to be heard, a child had to speak at the top of his voice, often shouting.

Another breathing and vocal exercise was “Humming”. I asked the members to breathe in and then start to hum very quietly, getting gradually louder, and finish before they began to feel uncomfortable. Then they had to reverse this process: they had to breathe in deeply, start humming very loudly and gradually get quiet as they ran out of breath. This exercise helped the children to discover their voices, and how high and how low each person could reach.



To train body movement I used a number of physical games and exercises, such as “Statue Shapes”, “Balloon”, “Demon”, “Mirror” and others. For complete description of the games see Appendix VI.

The aim of those exercises was to help the participants to get out of their habitual gestures and movements and to explore the whole expressive potential of their bodies. “By improving physical skills...through movement training, and applying these skills to express himself, the pupil is given the opportunity to lose physical inhibitions and build up personal self-confidence through the control and command of his body” (McGregor, 1977:33).

To learn the suspension of disbelief was another task for the children in order to build their character. I taught them that they should actually believe what they were doing as if they were doing it in real life. To achieve this I would give each child a task to develop a story about his/her character by answering the following questions: Who was s/he? What was his/her age? What did s/he want? How was s/he going to achieve it? etc.

At a later stage I became more demanding. When a child was playing his part, I would stop him at any moment if I felt there was no truth, no effort or engagement in his acting and tell him “I don’t believe you.” This technique was based on Stanislavsky’s view of dramatic action as ‘an intention to make believe’ (Stanislavsky, 1948). A performer would have to find a way of replaying his scene in such a way that it was stronger and more persuasive. In this way I wanted a child to develop the attitude “I will do my best”. This was important for the development of “...resilience because it helps the child develop ‘mental muscle’. To do one’s best one has to push “...himself into the habit of working hard” (Joseph, 1994:41). In this way I encouraged the group to be more expressive when acting, putting 100% of their energy into what they were doing.

There was another educational element to this training. This element was very insightfully analysed by Bolton (1984:101). “In drama...the range and subtleties of roles are far greater than in... real life. Because of this the skill required is often very challenging, but it is not the skill of the performer; it is the skill of bringing oneself to function with a degree of maturity that one’s normal “life” role does not demand”.

The idea behind this training was to work towards performance and to expose the group to the audience at some stage when everyone was ready. Since none of the participants had ever performed in front of the audience before, it was essential to make this experience safe and less stressful for them. To provide this I focused on each child’s strong points. For example, Y. was a soft-spoken child, but had talents as a comedian, so in the story he got the part of The Tree Spirit, and would wear a lot of tree branches and big leaves. J. had a good memory, was very proud of this gift and enjoyed being a narrator, so she would definitely be the Storyteller. A. had a strong sense of cultural identity, love and good knowledge of Xhosa culture, so she would play an African mother.

By November 2003, the group consisted of 9 people, who played the following characters:

- A storyteller, played by a 14-year-old girl;
- An old witch, played by an 18-year-old boy;
- A hard-working man, his wife and their 7-year-old daughter, played by 18-year old boy, and two girls aged 15 and 8 respectively;
- Two medicine-men, played two boys aged 8 and 10;
- A man in love, played by 13-year old boy;
- A tree spirit, played by a boy of 10; and
- The rabbit, played by the same boy who played the part of the hard-working man.

As the result of our weekly rehearsals, all the children knew their words well and I felt they were ready for a public performance.



Our first performance took place in the Library Auditorium at the University of the Western Cape, in November 2003, as part of a Conference on Community Development. My group's performance was meant to illustrate some of the work being done in communities by UWC students. The audience consisted of university students and academics.

Naturally, the children were quite nervous about their first public performance, but with my encouragement, they made an amazing effort to overcome their fear of the huge imposing space and to overcome their shyness in front of the dozens of eyes watching them. Nobody forgot his/her words; everyone was focused and knew what to do. The group put on a bright, vibrant show. It really moved and stirred the audience, who saw an African fairytale, where all the children, both Xhosa and "Coloured", acted together and had fun.

After the performance each member of the group was rewarded with much applause and presents as well as certificates, which said: “*Certificate in Storytelling and Drama presented to (the name follows) by Wesbank Arts and Culture Group for Excellent Effort and Achievement. S/he has earned the honourable title of Master of Storytelling*” (See Appendix IV). This first success left the group triumphant. For most of them, it was their first big victory. Most of them had never left Wesbank and the surrounding area. Several came from troubled families. Few, if any of the children, had had prior experience of projecting their voices into an audience and to be at the centre of attention and be appreciated by dozens of people for what they did well.

4.2.3.4 Focus on self-reliance

Following a break for the Christmas holidays, we resumed our drama classes in January 2004. Unfortunately, by then some children had dropped out of the group for various reasons. One boy moved to Delft with his mother, while another two boys – the youngest in the group - had commitments to their Sunday school, and left the organization completely. Now there were only 5 children and adolescents left (two Xhosa-speaking, aged 14 and 18, and three Afrikaans-speaking youngsters, aged 9 and 14). Nevertheless, we resumed our Wednesday sessions in one of the classrooms of Wesbank #1 Primary School.

The next stage in the group’s development was the application of the concept of self-reliance (Rahman, 1993:19). I wanted to see in what ways it could take us to a new level, and could enhance in the group even more confidence in their knowledge and skills, a stronger sense of competence, creative thinking, responsibility and the ability to work as an ensemble.

The first step on the way to developing self-reliance in the group members was to stop using the recorded music in our performances and to encourage the participants to sing and to play instruments themselves. I wanted them to put into practice all the resources

they had, like a knowledge of their culture and folklore, imagination, sense of rhythm, vocal skills, etc.

I suggested that we continue with the old story “The Rabbit and the Tree Spirit” but instead of playing a record of African music, I asked the Xhosa members to sing any songs they knew. One of the girls agreed to sing a very short simple song. However, she sang very softly. When I asked her to sing louder, she became embarrassed, and the other group members were laughing at her attempts to raise her voice. It took me a while to persuade the girl to sing the song as loud as she could and the others to be supportive and not to laugh. It turned out that the girl had a beautiful voice that had to be developed and strengthened. I gave the group a task to ask their parents to teach them more traditional songs.

For our next session only one person - the same Xhosa girl, who was singing at the previous rehearsal - brought more songs that she learnt from her mother. She quickly taught a couple of songs to the Xhosa boy in the group and showed the rest of the group how to clap and to dance to the beat of those songs. She also wrote the words of the simplest Xhosa song on the blackboard, so that those who did not speak Xhosa could sing it as well. All the “Coloured” children learnt the words quickly and obviously liked the catchy simple beat of the song. I had a couple of traditional African instruments, so we added their sound to the beat. Our first “jam session” showed that we would not need the recorded music any more and the group had enough potential and resources to sing and play music themselves.

Though the repertoire of the group was being enriched with more and more new songs for every new session, the biggest challenge for the singers was still to get used to singing at the top of their voice. They felt scared and embarrassed when trying to sing louder, but at the same time I could see that they enjoyed the freedom of making a good sound. I added more exercises on vocal training in order to strengthen their voices (see Appendix VI).

I observed an interesting phenomenon: though the traditional Xhosa story was at the centre of our attention at the beginning of our work (the period from September till December 2003), I had not heard the Xhosa group members saying much about their culture. So when we were dramatising the story, they did not contribute much of their own cultural knowledge. But as soon as they began to sing and to teach others the songs and the dances, they gave free rein to the fascination and love they felt for their culture. The teenage boy of 18, who was an introvert (“secretive”, as his group friends called him), began to open up and began to argue on what were the better or right ways of performing this or that song or dance. Soon the Xhosa boy and girl brought more people – their Xhosa friends - into the group. One of the newcomers was a girl of 15, who was trained in the church choir and thus had a strong beautiful voice. She was not embarrassed to sing loudly and she knew many traditional songs. An Afrikaans-speaking girl brought her friend, a “Coloured” girl of 10, to the group. This new girl had a remarkable sense of rhythm. Though she did not have a drum at home, and nobody had ever taught her how to play one, she immediately found the right strong beat when asked to accompany the group on drum, and left everyone agape at her perfect sense of rhythm and drumming skills.

4.2.3.5 Awakening the group’s creative energy

By March 2004, our group consisted of 10 people - six Xhosa adolescents aged 14, 15, and 18, and four “Coloured” children and adolescents aged 9, 10, and 14.

Now, with the new forms of cultural expression at our disposal, we had to retell the story “The Rabbit and the Tree Spirit” in a new way. I demanded more contribution from the group; I made them understand that we could make the story more interesting and engaging only if they contributed their knowledge of Xhosa culture to it. The Xhosa group then collectively acted out the wedding celebration with singing, dancing and praising. Soon all the “Coloured” children picked up the words of the songs and were

clapping, dancing and singing as well. Every event within the plot of the story generated group discussions about how this or that was normally done in Xhosa culture.

At this point we were creating the story together. As teacher, I was no longer the only person coming up with the solutions. There were moments when I felt that I could hardly call myself a teacher any more. The group was taking over, engaged in creative research, and I could only facilitate this process. I also felt that certain things in our work were now outside my competence. I needed the cooperation of an African person, preferably Xhosa, who was familiar with the concepts and principles of theatre and would advise and inspire the group. I failed to find such person in Wesbank. Meanwhile, a friend from Rwanda, who is a musician, became interested in my work and I invited him to our rehearsal.

When he saw the group rehearsing certain scenes, he made valuable comments on the way the girls were acting. He would say: “Make your greetings more expressive. Have you noticed how people in the villages greet each other? One woman is standing on one hill, another standing on the other hill and they shout and wave to each other. This is the way you should be. African women are very expressive.” The girls immediately followed his advice and acted out a very vibrant, loud scene, which everybody loved and laughed at. When my friend from Rwanda heard the Xhosa group singing, he noticed that the boys were holding back, while only two of the girls led the singing. He realised that the boys’ singing needed to improve. Being a musician, he gave the boys some useful advice on how they should sound, inspiring them with his own example. It was under his supervision that the boys ventured to come out of their habitual “shell” and began to project their voices when singing.

For some time, singing became the cornerstone of our rehearsals. It was the best way for the group to see that the more energy one puts in what one does, the better the result is. I noticed that traditional Xhosa songs were a real source of inspiration for the group, bringing everyone together. The “Coloured” children were singing in Xhosa as well, energised by the rhythm.

I also noticed that the group became more disciplined. Most of them began to come to the classes on time, and something changed in their whole appearance. Their postures and facial expressions showed that they became more confident and focused, and I could feel more strength emanating from them.

4.2.3.6 Cultural energy as a mobilizing force

Kleymeyer (1994:17) writes: “Cultural expression, in all its richness and variety, is a major means of generating and focusing a vital social force that can be called *cultural energy*. This force is a prime source of motivation that inspires people to confront problems, identify solutions, and participate in carrying them out.”

Singing, dancing, drumming and everybody’s genuine involvement in developing the story together strengthened the group’s sense of cultural and group identity and this resulted in increased solidarity and energy.

But there was another side to this coin. The major focus of our work at this stage was on Xhosa culture. It was the major resource of the participants, and the major source of their energy. It resulted in the fact that only young Xhosa people felt most comfortable to join our group, and the new “Coloured” adolescents, who were attracted to our group at first, felt out of place and tended to drop out after a while.

Nevertheless, those “Coloured” children and adolescents, who stayed in the group from the very beginning and didn’t drop out, benefited from this more than six months’ experience. Our work helped to unite the two groups with different cultural backgrounds. The rhythm, the beauty of songs, and the vibe created by collective singing and dancing helped to overcome the barriers of language, race and background and helped to bring everyone together. Respect and interest towards different cultures was at the centre of our work. We also managed to combine a Russian song and a Xhosa song as part of our

performance. I would sing half of the song in Russian, and the group would continue the song in the same tune but in Xhosa. Later I asked one of the 14-year-old “Coloured” girls, whom I shall refer to as J, how she felt about playing a part in the Xhosa story, and wearing a traditional Xhosa outfit. She replied that she felt comfortable about it, and that she liked the fact that in our group all cultures were mixed together. She had also learnt new Xhosa songs and dances at every session.

But when I mentioned that we were going to start working on a new story, she said to a boy from the group: “Don’t even think that the new story will be about you Xhosas again”. I didn’t interfere in this process, but I noticed that at our next class a Xhosa girl told me that she would like to make a story about the Khoisan culture. I was impressed by the expression of such sensitivity and solidarity. The message behind it was: J had made an effort to learn about our Xhosa culture, so the Xhosa children would make an effort to learn about Khoisan culture.

I noticed that for a period of approximately six months, J, unlike the other “Coloured” children, did not feel comfortable and often refused to dance Xhosa dances and sing Xhosa songs. And she was completely free not to do it. But as the cultural energy of the group became stronger, J lowered her defences naturally and surrendered to the beauty of the songs and power of the beat. She often murmured Xhosa songs to herself, and took pleasure in learning the gumboot dance. It was J. who wrote in the questionnaire: “I like the songs and the traditional things that we have learnt over the past few months.”

Another thing that promoted togetherness in the group was the fact that I cultivated respect towards everyone, support and encouragement. Everybody’s opinion was taken into consideration, every voice was important. Our rehearsals were a forum, where everyone was expected to contribute with creative ideas and solutions. At the beginning of our work the group members had a tendency to laugh at anything they were unaccustomed to. It discouraged the others from trying. To change this attitude I had to explain again and again that our classes were a safe space where people should not be laughed at or should not be afraid of it, that we all came there to learn and to experiment,

to try on different roles, to try to get out of our usual selves, to break the habit and to explore, to become stronger and to learn from our mistakes.

Later in the year, as our work continued, I made several contacts and found new opportunities for the group to perform. Such opportunity arrived when we were invited to take part in Grand Cultural Evening held at Hector Petersen Hall in Belhar Student Residence on May 18, 2004. Groups from different African countries were expected to perform on that day in front of a few hundred people. There was one problem – our group did not have traditional Xhosa outfits. Previously, they had improvised costumes out of colourful pieces of material. But now we were preparing for a serious event, the group had become stronger as performers and the show itself was radiating a strong cultural energy. We needed real outfits. One of the Xhosa girls from our group took the responsibility of providing everyone with costumes. She made an arrangement with a woman from Khayelitsha, and for our next session everyone had traditional costumes, beautiful beaded belts and necklaces. The boys borrowed hats and various objects for props from their friends and relatives. For the first time, the group had found the ways to solve a problem themselves.

On the 18th of May, a bus brought the group and their parents to Belhar Residence. That performance was the most difficult task each member of the group had ever accomplished. In a huge hall in front of six hundred people they joined forces and put on a show. It was the perfect opportunity for them to put into practice everything they had learnt. They had to project their voices strong and far, in order to be audible without a mike in a big hall with a noisy crowd, so they had to sing and speak at the very top of their voices. They had to overcome fear and shyness, to concentrate in order not to forget their words.

Once again, they saw that it took team effort to create strong energy on stage and to put on a good show. Our group won the second prize, having beaten three groups from South Africa and one group from Nigeria. Everyone was overwhelmed with joy and pride. “We didn’t practise for nothing!” proudly concluded one of the girls. This achievement made

those parents who saw the show feel proud of their children, take our work more seriously and be willing to give us more support in our work.

In June 2004, a friend of mine invited the group to perform at the Old Aged People's Home of the Jewish Community in Cape Town. Since there was a problem with transport, it was difficult for the whole group to go and perform a story. I could take only 5 people in my car, so I suggested that only 3 singers, 1 drummer and a friend of the group - the musician from Rwanda, should go. The singers prepared around 10 songs. When we came to the Old Aged Home, there were around 20 elderly people waiting to watch the performance. I briefly told them about our theatre project in Wesbank and then the group took the floor. It was a beautiful kaleidoscope of Xhosa, Russian and Rwandese songs. The audience was so inspired by this performance, that from their side they began to sing their favourite popular Jewish songs. Our drummer, a girl of 10, quickly found the beat and accompanied the singers on the drum. That performance was an inspiring cross-cultural exchange. My group from Wesbank was exposed to a new cultural experience, which broadened their horizon. They also helped to find a new, "African" way of singing some Jewish and Russian songs. This time those songs were accompanied by a drumbeat and clapping.

4.2.3.7 Performance at the Learning Cape Indaba Festival.

In June 2004 I was invited to bring the group to perform at the UWC as part of Learning Cape Indaba Festival. Our performance was supposed to be an example of the Community projects, run by UWC students. This invitation fit perfectly into my tactics of strengthening the group members' confidence, sense of competence and team spirit through performances. We immediately started rehearsing, but after the group's success at the Grand Cultural Evening on the 18th of May, I was not worried about their confidence and the quality of performance.

The 30th of August was the first day of the week before exams, so the University was almost empty. When the bus brought the group to the venue at UWC, there was hardly any audience to watch the performance. I saw that this factor disheartened the group. I tried to uplift everyone's spirit explaining that sometimes there were six hundred people watching you, but sometimes there was only one person. And it was important not to let this influence the flow and quality of the show. One should learn to put 100% of one's energy into what one does no matter what the circumstances.

I hoped it was a good lesson for the group. The group was relaxed and confident enough to be able to have fun while playing their parts. A couple of boys forgot their words, but others were more funny and playful than before. Generally it was a good, vibrant show. But it was also a lesson for me. On one hand it was part of my tactics – to expose the group, in order to strengthen them, to the experience of public performances and being appreciated by the audience. On the other hand, I put too much emphasis on public appreciation. The group had gotten used to being watched, and if there was no audience, there was no stimulus for the group to put the maximum effort and energy into what they were doing. Now my task was to help the group to change this attitude, to teach them to be focused on what they were doing at any moment of our work.

This time the praise of the audience was not there, but on the other hand there were other forms of encouragement. Joseph (1994) believes that praise needs to be balanced and combined with encouragement in order to not let the children become “approval junkies”. “Encouragement is a powerful socializing tool for resilience and self-esteem. It teaches children how to evaluate and monitor their own behaviour...Self-evaluation followed by self-reinforcement and self-correction reduce reliance on other persons and on external controls. Children who learn to monitor themselves develop self-control and are better able to carry on in stressful times because they have the internal and personal resources to do so”(Joseph, 1994: 106).

1.1.1.1 Strengthening togetherness and developing self-control through dance

I thought that togetherness and self-control could be developed in the group through teaching them the ‘gumboot dance’, popularised by black mineworkers working in the goldmines of South Africa. What is important about this dance is the beat that must be maintained through rhythmic clapping, slapping of thighs and stamping of feet, and the way in which the dancers must work together to achieve this beat. This is the focus of everyone’s attention, whether there is an audience around or not. I asked a friend of mine, a young man from Lesotho, who was a gumboot dancer, to teach this popular dance to the group to enrich their repertoire. I believed that this was an excellent way to teach the performers to listen to each other, as the dance teaches participants to stay 100% focused and be absolutely sure about what s/he is doing on stage. The beat is right and strong only when people act in perfect unison.

The group had 5 lessons, and I saw that they took pleasure and pride in learning the dance. When they all managed to achieve a strong, distinct beat, it energised the group members like nothing did before. They first performed it to an audience at a show organised by Wesbank Arts and Culture Group in October 2004. The audience rated it as the most solid, focused and entertaining item of the evening, compared to other less well rehearsed and somewhat chaotic items like modelling, singing, and dancing, which were prepared by other children from the Wesbank Arts and Culture Group.

As was mentioned before I introduced different games at the beginning of every session (see Appendix VI). Some of the games were aimed at energizing the participants and at bringing everyone together. But I noticed that group members were bored with these games. It reminded me of the critique Mluma gave to those European theatre practitioners who were imposing the Western approach to traditional cultures. I had to look into African forms of expression to find more appropriate energizers. So I suggested that we danced the “toyi-toyi” – the dance of resistance, which used to bring black people in townships together in the time of apartheid. It was my favourite warm-up “exercise”, used by the Brown Paper Studio at UWC, when the company was warming up before

going on stage to perform in front of the audience. It energised my spirit and helped to establish a strong connection with the rest of the group. This went down well with the Wesbank group, and we adapted it to fit in with our own contexts and names.

4.3 Responses to my questionnaires

My notes, observations, and the ultimate results of our practice, helped me to conclude that our work with the group generally was a success. As a participant-observer, I could attest that they all became confident performers, they learnt many skills and were proud of their knowledge and achievements, they became more loyal and supportive of each other, and they showed that they could take joint efforts to solve the problems and were responsible enough to sustain the work on their own without me. My observations were supported by the feedback I received in my interviews and questionnaires.



4.3.1 Responses from the participants in the first drama project

Firstly, I obtained feedback from the participants in the first drama project. I distributed a questionnaire and encouraged each person in the group to give honest answers. The full responses can be found in Appendix I. Six people out of nine gave written responses. With other three I had to meet and ask the same questions personally during an interview, because those three group members preferred to give oral responses. Here are the emerging patterns of participant responses and a discussion of these responses.

Question 1: *What brings you to our Drama classes? Why are you here?*

The answers given to this question revealed that the following factors attracted the participants to the drama classes:

- A genuine love for acting and drama
- The enjoyment of working and creating something with others
- To have fun

-
- A desire to develop new skills

These answers show that our rehearsals had evoked a passion for drama in the group. It was great fun for everybody. It can be explained by the fact that acting helped the children to get out of their “shells”. They were trying out new roles, which they did not experience in real life, like a sangoma, a witch, a tree spirit, a mother, etc. Real life imposes only a limited number of roles on children. Our drama classes were also a liberating experience in the way that it encouraged everyone in the group to be spontaneous – the kind of thing that, as Johnstone (1979) points out, is not encouraged in schools.

Question 2: What do you like about our classes? What would you like to change or improve about our work?

The responses can be summed up as follows:

- Working with people from different cultures
- Bridging linguistic and racial barriers
- Learning through enjoyable activities like acting and games
- Creating stories
- An atmosphere of happiness
- Feeling part of a group – one participant said it was like being part of a family.

In our group, children and young people from different cultures (Xhosa, “Coloured”, Norwegian, Russian, Rwandese and Sotho) were united in their creative work on performance. It helped to spark an interest in each other, and it helped to fight stereotypes and to overcome the barriers of language and race “...on a common ground of mutual appreciation” (Kleymeyer, 1994:30). One of the boys wrote that the different cultures of the group were actually its unifying factor.

In addition, the respondents liked the fact that they could learn through our activities. “Education is always there”, wrote one of the boys. My approach in the work with the

group corresponded to the methodology, developed by Cook (1917), which was based on the principle that proficiency and learning come not only from reading and listening but from action, from doing, from experience.

Question 3: What unites us?

Three factors prevailed in the responses:

- Respect for others - it enables everyone to be creative and free
- A spirit of togetherness built through working together and loving the end-products
- The willingness to learn and to develop skills

Respect, support for each other, and encouragement were the major rules in our group. It created an atmosphere of acceptance, which released creativity and made everyone feel free and appreciated. Joseph (1994) cites Abraham Maslow, who argued that respect and acceptance are important in formation of positive self-esteem, sense of competence and achievement. The group learnt to work as a team, and experienced in practice that it took group effort, 100% involvement and energy from each and every person to create a good product. This kind of input brought the group to their victories, and the celebration of those victories also strengthened the team spirit.

Question 4: What inspires and motivates you?

The main responses to this question were:

- Doing something useful for the community
- Seeing everyone working together to improve the performance
- Showing others what the group is capable of
- Xhosa songs and traditional music
- Creating new stories

A lot of young people from underprivileged communities suffer from low self-esteem and diminished sense of confidence in their own skills and talents, which, according to Bloom

(1998), are the major crippling consequences of apartheid. The questionnaire responses show that for some of the group members the biggest source of inspiration and motivation was to prove to others and themselves that they had talents and skills. Learning from mistakes, seeing people working together to improve the performance, the rewarding feeling that they are doing something useful for their community was the source of inspiration for others. Two people were inspired by their culture, by knowing where they come from. The rest of the group drew inspiration from “creating new stories”, getting “what you always wanted”, feeling free, and knowing “that God loves me”.

Question 5: What has changed in you since you joined our group? What is the difference between you one year ago, and you now? What new characteristics have you discovered about yourself? How do you feel about it?

Here, the main responses were:

- Greater self-confidence, evidenced by being more talkative and enjoying public performances
- Having something meaningful to do in life
- Having something worthwhile to do in the community
- Greater awareness of own talents

Practically all the respondents wrote that they used to be very shy, but now some spoke louder, had become more talkative and argumentative, and were not afraid of crowds. Some respondents wrote, that they got a feeling that “nothing is impossible”, “I can do almost anything”, and that made them feel good and proud of themselves. Respect, encouragement, pushing the group to work hard, successful performances and acceptance by the audience made the group members aware of their talents, gave them confidence in their abilities and skills. For some older respondents our work gave the opportunity to do something meaningful in life, to do something useful for their community. One girl wrote that she lost some of her friends along the way because they were just “rolling around the streets, doing nothing about their lives.” Now she had only one real friend – another girl from the group. This reflects the system of values of the respondents – they wanted to

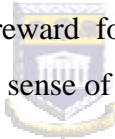
succeed, to live meaningful lives, and they chose to be with like-minded friends, who were also determined and wholesome.

Question 6: Describe the happiest moment or happiest day that you experienced in our work. When did you feel most proud of yourself?

Most of the respondents mentioned

- Winning the second prize at the International Cultural Day, other performances at UWC, and making people at the Old-Age People Home happy
- Being given a worthwhile part to play.

For the group as a whole, the performance at the International Cultural Day was the biggest challenge, and their victory – winning the second Prize, was the happiest event. It was recognition of their talents and reward for their hard work. It was a powerful confidence-booster and gave everyone a sense of “I can do it!”



The talents of the singers were recognised once again during their performance at the Old Aged People’s Home. The cultural energy of the group and the way they were singing their songs inspired and energised the old people. The fact that these 10, 14 and 15-year olds could inspire and entertain old people, was very important. Besides the fact that it strengthened the performers’ sense of competence and positive self-image, it provided the group with the feedback about the usefulness of what they did. *‘I felt so proud of myself when I saw smiles on their old faces’*, wrote one of the boys.

Question 7: What was the day when you were most disappointed?

The main responses were:

- When there was hardly any audience to watch us at UWC
- When either the respondent, or another performer, let the group down

As was discussed in paragraph 4.1.2.5, the group members had become dependent on the positive evaluation of an audience. In their self-appraisal they were dependent on the feedback from outside. The attention and approval of an audience was the strongest source of motivation. The presence of the audience was essential at certain stages of our work in order to help the group to overcome shyness and become more confident and stronger performers. But at some stage, as was also discussed above, the group had to learn to evaluate, correct and improve their own behaviour, input and eventually the quality of the performance themselves, without the feedback from an audience. I believed it was the cornerstone of being self-reliant. On one hand I understood it was very natural for the group of adolescents and children to become disappointed if they prepared the show and nobody came to watch it. On the other hand it left me with the question: how much appraisal from outside does one need to become self-confident and self-reliant enough to be motivated from within, without needing more praise? I realised that the group members were self-reliant in terms of being able to make a good show, using just their talents and skills. But at the same time, they were not self-reliant and self-confident enough to be self-motivated. The group still depended on outside resources such as attention and praise from the audience.

Some of the respondents wrote that the biggest disappointment for them was when they or other group members forgot their words. The reason behind their disappointment was that the group had been let down. It showed that team spirit was among the high-order values of the respondents. At the same time it showed that the group needed to develop constructive thinking. Instead of letting this failure bring the performers down, it should be viewed as a positive experience, as something that helps the group to grow, to learn from their mistakes and to perform better.

4.3.2 Responses of some parents and caregivers

To get more evidence of the change in the group, and to compare it with my observations, I interviewed three parents/caregivers. My general question was: *“Have the Drama*

classes had any positive influence on your child? Have you observed any positive changes in him/her? What kind of changes?”

Their responses (see Appendix II) revealed the following general patterns:

- They noted that the children appeared to have improved their performance at school owing to a change in attitude – the children appeared more responsible and communicative;
- The children appeared happier, were more obedient and more outgoing;
- The children appeared to have greater dreams for the future and became more determined in pursuing their dreams.

The parents or caregivers emphasized that their children’s communication skills had improved.

“Before he didn’t want to talk to people. He would just sit and look at you, and watch TV. Now he talks to people. He is full of fun”, said mother of one of the boys.

“At first she would never come and talk to me, if there is some problem. Now she shares if something is bothering her”, reported the caregiver of the 14 year-old girl.

I attribute the improvement in the communication and social skills of the children to a few factors. The games, which were aimed at developing imagination, voice, and awareness of one’s body, helped to remove the inner barriers that inhibited some individuals. The creative minds of the children gradually learnt to “...withdraw its watcher from the gates” (Johnstone, 1979:79), and the children became more spontaneous. Another factor is that in our group activities, I always encouraged the group to express their thoughts and feelings openly and honestly. I often *demand*ed their opinion on what had happened, on the ideas that were offered, on the experience the group had. The students could hardly ever get away with no opinion or just “yes” or “no” answer. They would always have to explain “why”. To my mind this approach was important to develop self-understanding in the young people and children. According to Roberts (1979), and Rahman (1993) the process of development starts with people’s perception of a problem or need. What do I feel uncomfortable and tense about? Where

do I go from here? The ability to understand and articulate one's problems and needs, self-knowledge and self-understanding is crucial for successful community development. This is why I was trying to help each member of the group to develop his/her voice.

1.1 Limitations of the first project.

Though "Coloured" participants enjoyed taking part in dramatizing a traditional Xhosa story, I felt that there was no real space for them to express their own unique cultural energy. It was subdued by the Xhosa participants' stronger sense of identity, and better knowledge of their songs and traditions. This led to the development of our second project.

1.2 The second project - "North Meets South".

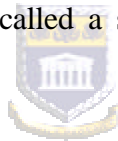
In order to redress the balance, the second step of this research initially was to prepare a performance based on a traditional Khoisan story. But our plans changed when two drama students from Norway joined the Wesbank group in November 2004. They were part of an exchange programme between the University of Stavanger and UWC. The idea for the new project, which they offered, was "North meets South" and it was a brilliant opportunity to place each culture on an equal footing and to expose the Wesbank group to broader cultural diversity.

In the process of brainstorming about the plot of the new story the group decided we should focus on similarities between our different cultures, not our differences. For example, what lullabies do we remember? One pointed out that the Xhosa lullaby "*Thulathu, thula baba..*" (Hush, hush, baby) sounded very similar to the Afrikaans lullaby "*Slaap, baba, slaap...*" (Sleep, baby, sleep). This was our starting point. A Norwegian song, which was very much in tune with the Xhosa and Afrikaans ones, was added, and I sang the Russian lullaby "*Bayu-bayushki bayu*" (Sleep, baby, sleep). It was

a real breakthrough to achieve equal contribution from the “Coloured” children for the first time.

The group decided it would be interesting to learn the words of each other’s songs. We wrote it down and by the next rehearsal everybody could sing lullabies in Xhosa, Norwegian, Afrikaans and Russian.

The next step was to come up with faster songs, which would also have fairly synonymous meanings and tunes similar. It didn’t take long for most of us and soon we were ready with songs in different languages that were naturally flowing one from the other. African drums, clapping and dancing, accompanied each song, irrespective of the language used. Although the “Coloured” children initially found it difficult to contribute, they were driven by everybody’s example and in a way, experienced “pressure” from the rest of the group. The major rule of the project was equal participation of all cultures. One of the “Coloured” girls finally recalled a simple rhythmic song in Afrikaans and everybody rejoiced.



The next thing was to compare our tongue twisters. We almost instantly came up with Xhosa and Russian ones. For our next session, L. brought one in Afrikaans.

The real fun began when we decided to collect children’s games for our performance. The two Norwegians taught us one Norwegian game and everybody quickly learnt the words of the song, which accompanied this game. One of the Xhosa participants taught us a Xhosa clapping game - very rhythmic and fast, and a song one could sing while playing it. The “Coloured” children enthusiastically contributed 3 excellent games (See the video recording of the rehearsal of this performance in Appendix VII).

When it came to dancing, we devised a very interesting and powerful combination of gumboot and Spanish flamenco. Both dances are concerned with distinct foot beats and can complement each other beautifully – one from Africa, and the other from India and

Spain, and these two dances was one more territory in our performance, where North met South.

With the songs, tongue twisters, dances and games in place, we had to add drama and narrative. The Norwegian students suggested a short Norwegian fairy tale “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” for the group to dramatise. We selected a narrator and 4 actors. With scary masks and dynamic action the performance was fun and kept the rest of the group, who was watching it, “on the edge of the chairs”.

By this time there was a change in the cast. Three Xhosa boys left because one of them found job and two others started preparing for the circumcision, which meant they couldn’t spend time in the company of children). We had two new participants – a Xhosa girl, aged 16 and a “Coloured” girl aged 14. So now the group consisted of five “Coloured” pre-teens and teenagers aged 9-15; two Xhosa girls aged 15 and 16; two drama facilitators from Norway and one Russian facilitator.



4.5.1 A new story

Finally we had to put this bright and vibrant kaleidoscope of various art forms into one simple and clear pattern of a story. As the result of brainstorming the group came up with this idea: (For the full version of the story see Appendix III).

It would be a story of a boy – Y. whose mother introduces him to a multicoloured world of different languages, and cultures. He is listening to a story from Norway and hears lullabies from all over the world. When morning comes and the world wakes up to different rhythms of songs and dances, the boy becomes part of this world. He goes to school and meets his friends – Xhosa, Norwegian, Russian, learns their languages, teaches them his own, learns new games and songs. Though all his friends are from different cultures, they all connect on a common pulse. In the evening time comes to go home and to say good-buy to everyone until the next day. Before going to sleep, in his

prayer the boy thanks God for a great day, great friends and for all the great things he experienced and enjoyed. The lullaby he hears while falling asleep is the one, which unites all the cultures and erases all the boundaries.

On March 23, 2005, this story was performed in The Big Hall of Wesbank #1 Primary school in front of an attentive audience of almost 50 children from Wesbank Arts and Culture Group.

4.5.2 “We are not so different after all”

During one of our sessions the group had a discussion about the value of the last project “North meets South”, the difference between the two stories that we staged and the personal feelings of each participant about his own participation.

The Norwegians felt that they had gained greatly by learning a lot of new games, songs and dances, which they could use again in Norway. *“I can’t wait to go back home, - said E., I will do it with my children...It is lovely to work with this group because they are willing to teach us something. They know that we are here not to teach them; we are here to teach each other. They also see the value of learning something else from another culture. They can see we are not so different anyway”.*

O.:*“We are not like strangers. North and South are not actually that different. Maybe we look at each other very differently because we don’t know anything about each other. So the world is getting smaller in a way. We get to know one another”.*

From the responses of the group members I can summarize that the major value they took out of the project was being able

- to learn about other cultures;
- to learn other languages;
- to teach others about their own cultures; and
- to be able to contribute more.

Y., the boy who played the part of the son in “North meets South”, was the most non-verbal child I had ever seen. In the story “The Rabbit and the Tree Spirit” he played the silent tree spirit, just because he felt most uncomfortable to speak. He began to talk a little as the story developed, but was still very inaudible. But in the process of our work he made great progress and in the last show he played the central part, really trying hard to project his voice. *“I can express myself in this story, I can talk. It feels really nice that I now can participate more”*, he said.

J., our storyteller, summarised the difference between the two projects: *“The first story was mostly about Xhosa culture and here we have Russian, Norwegian, Afrikaans, Xhosa. We really learnt a lot”*.

1.1.1 The effect of the project “North meets South”

The value and effect of the project on the participants was profound. The group members experienced ‘intercultural harmony’, in an environment where the multiplicity of cultural forms was respected and where the exploration and expression of cultural uniqueness was encouraged and inspired. The Wesbank group was a unique space where each child was a teacher to other members. Xhosa and “Coloured” children taught one another and their facilitators their language, songs, dances, games and tongue twisters. This exchange of ideas was the most fruitful creative process, which resulted in combining different forms of cultural expression, and gave birth to the new rhythms and combinations.

CHAPTER FIVE

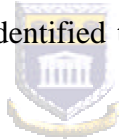
REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I reflect on, and attempt to explain whether I found both parts of my research project to have been carried out successfully, and whether the group benefited from both. I also reflect on the changes, which Wesbank group and I, as a facilitator, underwent during our work together. The chapter concludes with a number of recommendations to those who plan to work as drama teachers or theatre practitioners with children or young people in under-privileged communities.

5.2 Problem situations and solutions

Before I embarked on my research, I identified the following problem situations, which required attention.



- In the underprivileged community of Wesbank lots of young people had low self-esteem and few opportunities to fulfil themselves, though many of them had the necessary resources, to pursue their goals. The young people had limited opportunities to discover these resources, sharpen them, successfully use them in practice and in this way build confidence in their knowledge and self-respect.
- Racism is still an issue in the schools of Wesbank, where Xhosa and “Coloured” children do not always co-exist peacefully.
- Despite the distinct educational function of traditional African theatre, theatre was currently separated from education and rarely forms part of the formal educational system. Its potential is still underestimated in schools.
- Some theorists, who promote drama and theatre in education, put strong emphasis on its experiential side, expressing serious concerns regarding

children's exposure to audiences and underestimated the value of public performances.

At the initial stage of my action research project I aimed at investigating experientially if participation in drama activities, working for public performance and the act of performing itself could help a child to develop confidence, a sense of competence, help him/her to strengthen his concentration, realize the importance of ensemble work, and experience the sense of "personal power" (Linnell, 1984).

To my mind, performing on stage in front of an audience could be an effective way for the children and young people from Wesbank to overcome shyness and fear, to develop "stamina", and to gain confidence. Performing well under such challenging conditions and the praise and encouragement from the audience could boost the children's self-esteem, and give them a sense of "I can do it". Giving each participant an opportunity to experience the taste of victory as a means of boosting his/her confidence was my developmental aim.



I expected to achieve the above-mentioned through using basic theatrical training in Voice, Movement and Character Development, such as various theatre games and exercises, aimed at strengthening the voice and liberating the body of the participants, teaching them to stay in performance mode, and putting maximum effort into what they were doing. This practice helped these children to get out of their "shells", and to explore other roles.

5.3 Results of the first project.

As a result of the methods used in the initial stage of my project, the children of the group became more confident. The proof of this was their first successful public performance in front of the scholars and university students at UWC in November 2003. By means of

drama, the group were able to experience a sense of achievement and to experience feelings of self-worth.

After the above performance, I focused on techniques aimed at helping the group members to develop self-reliance, and, as a result of this, a sense of self-competence. I wanted the group to discover the inner resources they had, and to put those resources into our work. I attempted to achieve this by encouraging the group members to collect and perform traditional Xhosa songs and dances themselves.

As the young Xhosa people became stronger in their singing, the cultural energy of the group grew stronger. At this point my project provided support for the theory of Kley Meyer about the role of cultural expression in social mediation and motivation. Cultural energy - the rhythm, the beauty of songs, and the vibe created by collective singing and dancing, really helped the group members to overcome the barriers of language, race and background and brought young people from different cultural backgrounds together. Those “Coloured” adolescents, who refused to dance Xhosa dances at the beginning, gradually and naturally began to appreciate it and enjoyed learning the “traditional things”, as one of the “Coloured” girls called it.

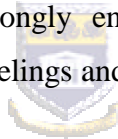
This energy turned into a powerful source of motivation. If the group had initially depended on me for creative ideas and solving practical problems such as costumes, they now took collective action to find the costumes and props themselves and contributed a lot of their own ideas when we were working on the story. As Kley Meyer (1994:18) puts it, “...*cultural expression...unlocks creative forces that otherwise remain dormant or go unrecognised*”.

My participation as a foreigner and a person from a different culture, on the one hand, also encouraged the group’s interest in people from other ethnic backgrounds; it helped to broaden their horizons and promoted tolerance. On the other hand, it was a limitation. The fact that I didn’t speak Xhosa and didn’t have a profound knowledge of traditional Xhosa (or African) ways of life left me feeling helpless at times, especially when I

needed competent advice or an inspirational example for the group. This was why I drew my Rwandan friend into our project, as I believed that I needed the assistance of an older person rooted in African culture.

The Second Prize at the Grand Cultural Day at UWC attested to the fact that the group members were now able to put on a good show in front of hundreds of people without being scared or confused; they were able to tell an interesting story, to sing a lot of traditional Xhosa songs and later to do the gumboot dance. All this strengthened their sense of competence and self-worth.

Some of the participants acknowledged that their social skills had improved as a result of our work. Those who were shy now became more talkative, those who used to be quiet and inaudible began to speak louder, and the girl who had difficulty in communicating her problems now began to share them with her caregiver. Such improvement can be attributed to the fact that I always strongly encouraged the participants to give their opinions and I always respected their feelings and thoughts.



A mother of one of the boys reported that her son had improved his performance at school owing to a change in his attitude – the boy appeared more responsible and communicative.

The methods I used, which were aimed at developing in the group members an attitude of “I will do my best” and which pushed the young people “...into the habit of working hard” (Joseph, 1994:41), produced positive results. For some of the young people the reward for their hard work was the discovery that they were “talented and special”. It strengthened their determination to achieve something in life. With different participants such determination manifested itself in different ways: some were happy to do something useful in their community, others felt motivated to pursue their dreams in life, and one of the girls even stopped associating with those friends who were holding her back and chose to be with the people who inspired and motivated her to move forward.

One of the developmental aims of this research was to strengthen unity and a sense of togetherness between “Coloured” and Xhosa participants by means of promoting their participation in each other’s cultural activities while working towards performance. This was supposed to give one group the space to explore and express their uniqueness, and another group a chance to get to know, understand, and appreciate another culture better.

While working on the story “The Rabbit and the Tree Spirit”, the Xhosa youngsters expressed themselves in the best possible way, and “Coloured” children managed to get to know and appreciate Xhosa culture. But in this process the “Coloured” children did not have space to explore and express their own uniqueness. I observed that it took the involvement of other (European) cultures for the “Coloured” children to stand out and express their individuality.

5.4 Results of the second project – “North meets South”.

The involvement of two facilitators from Norway with our project and the exposure of the group to Norwegian and Russian cultures helped to establish the space where different cultures could meet on an equal footing. My experience and observations brought me to the conclusion that exposure to foreign cultures can play a big role in building confidence and sense of self-worth in a child, on condition that different cultures meet as equals and on the ground of mutual respect and interest. A child can realize that s/he can teach an adult from different cultural background something new and exciting. S/he can realise that s/he has unique knowledge and resources that other people do not have. In the case of “North meets South”, “Coloured” and Xhosa children had a chance to express the vibe and rhythm of their cultures, and to teach others games, songs and dances. They loved the fact that they learned new languages and became familiar with Norwegian and Russian cultures, while teaching aspects of their languages and cultures to others. This experience proves that the most intensive creative process happens on the crossroads of different cultures.

5.5 Conclusions

The experience of almost 2 years of work with the group of children and young people from Wesbank proved that working towards performance and performing in front of wide audience can be a very effective tool for personal growth.

Having to meet the deadline of the short-term objective, viz. performance, makes the process of exploration, self-discovery and development more intense and dynamic. The training in Voice, Movement and Character Development becomes more demanding, pushing a participant into the habit of working hard, helping him/her to develop an attitude “I will do my best”, and strengthening his/her “mental muscle” (Joseph, 1994).

The act of performing for an audience can help a child to increase his/her ability to concentrate, to develop responsibility and to strengthen the team spirit. The performers begin to realise that in order to put on a good show, all of them really have to pull themselves together, concentrate their attention on their individual actions and words, focus their energy, and connect with the other people on stage. When children and young people overcome anxiety, shyness and fear, and receive appraisal and encouragement from the audience, it increases their energy, giving them a sense of achievement and personal “power”.

Multicultural performance has great personal and social value for the participants. Taking part in each other’s cultural activities brings the participants closer, helping them to overcome the barriers of race and cultural differences. They learn to know, understand and appreciate each other better.

Exposure to other cultures broadens the participants’ horizons, and cultivates tolerance in them. The fact that different cultures meet equally, with mutual interest and respect towards each other can stimulate the participants to explore their cultural uniqueness as well as similarities. Cross-cultural exchange can be a powerful confidence-booster, when

each person realises that s/he possesses unique recourses like knowledge and skills and that s/he can teach it to the people of other cultural backgrounds.

Multicultural performance can be the space of an intense creative search, when people make an attempt to find commonalities between different cultures, mixing different rhythms and forms of expression in order to create new beats, forms, and energies.

Our work was an example of how theatre can help to preserve culture. In the Wesbank group, young people collected traditional songs and stories from their parents and grandparents for the performance. The fact that the group members were singing those songs themselves, performing traditional dances and imitating traditional ceremonies, showed that they, as a new generation, were willing to preserve and continue the cultural tradition of their ancestors. Their knowledge of folklore, and cultural energy, energized them, and strengthened their sense of cultural identity.



5.6 Recommendations

I would like to conclude my thesis by making some recommendations to those who plan to work as drama teachers or theatre practitioners with children or young people in marginalized communities.

1. First of all, find out what resources the participants have: what are their talents and skills, and what do they know about their culture? Make good use of these resources when creating a play.
2. Do not be afraid of exposing the group to the public audience. Make performance your short-term objective and work towards it.
3. Employ as many modes of artistic expression as possible, and do not limit yourself to using drama only. Instead, include singing, dancing, story telling,

-
- mime and making music. Let each participant find his/her niche and do what s/he does best.
4. Do not impose your decisions on the group. Let your class be an open forum, where everyone, even the youngest child, can express his/her opinion and feel that his/her voice will be heard and respected. Encourage everyone to come up with creative solutions when working on the story.
 5. If a foreigner works as theatre practitioner with a group of African children, it would be more productive if s/he works with a person who belongs to the same culture as the group, and, preferably, has experience in performing arts.
 6. Lead the group to the point when, through their traditional songs, dances, drumming, and story telling, they begin to feel the cultural energy. Let this energise the group and become their driving force and source of motivation.
 7. If there is a big age difference between the group members as well as differences in the levels of their maturity, you may need to pay extra attention to discovering the talents of the youngest members or help them to be more focused and attentive. Their meaningful participation and contribution can facilitate the process of their acceptance by the older participants. For example, in my group the age difference was between 9 and 19. But the younger members had talents such as an excellent sense of rhythm, drumming skills, narrative skills or just willingness to work hard and do their best to give a good performance. Thus the youngest participants made a valuable contribution to the group and this was appreciated and respected by the older group members. It helped to reduce the tension between the age groups and facilitated the young people's acceptance of the fact that they had to work together with the juniors in the same group.
 8. When working with multicultural groups, make it clear that each person must contribute knowledge of his/her culture as equally as possible. It stimulates the participants to do some action research in their cultural communities in order to find cultural forms such as songs, games and proverbs, which they can bring to

the drama workshops. Encourage the participants to teach each other songs in their native languages, as well as traditional dances, stories, tongue twisters, etc. In this way each child will be given a chance to discover his/her uniqueness and to realise that s/he has something interesting to teach others.

9. Be flexible in your aims, approaches and methods. Sometimes aims grow bigger or methods have to be changed as you proceed. What was good at the first stage of the project, may not work at the third. For example, the exposure to the experience of public performances, to the praise and appreciation of the audience can be employed to develop self-confidence and a positive self-image in the group at the first stage of work. At the same time it is important not to turn the group into “approval junkies” (Joseph, 1994: 104). So, at the next stage, the task may be to help the group to develop resilience, self-motivation, self-control and such a level of confidence that the group members do not need the approval of the audience to perform well.



BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Alidou O.D, 1991. *Popular Hausa Drama in Niger and the Politics of Its Appropriation*, (Eds) Mwaria C.B, Federici S, McLaren J, 1991. African Visions. Penina M Mlama and Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1991.

Bahtin M, 1986. *Literary critical articles*. “Nauka” publishin house, Moscow.

Barnes H, 1999. *Ihlanzi Ishelwe Amanzi — As Fish Out of Water: finding authentic voices in a multicultural student production*. Research In Drama Education.vol. 4, no. 2.

Baumeister R, 1997. *Identity, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem: The Self Lost and Found*, (Eds) Hogan R, Johnson J, Briggs S. Academic Press, USA.

Bhabha H, 1996. *Culture’s In-Between*. (Eds) Hall S. and Paul du Gay, 1996. Questions of Cultural Identity. SAGE Publications, London, US, New Delhi.

Bloom L, 1998. *Identity and Ethnic Relations in Africa*. Ashgate Publishing.

Boal A, 2002. *Games for actors and non-actors*. Routledge, London and New York.

_____ 2001. *Hamlet and the Baker’s son. My life in theatre and politics*. Routledge, London and New York.

----- 1998. *Legislative theatre*. Routledge, London and New York.

----- 1979. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Pluto Press, London.

Bolton G, 1984. *Drama as Education*. Longman, England.

Bolton G, 1993. *Drama in Education and TIE. A comparison*. (Ed.) Jackson T, 1993.

Breitinger E, 1994. *Theatre for Development*. Rossdorf.

Breslin P, 1994. *Identity and Self-Respect*, (Ed) Kleymeyer C.D, 1995. Cultural

Expression and Grassroots Development. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder and London.

Brolin, D. E. (1989). *Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach* (3rd ed.). Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Curtis D, 1995. *Power to the people: rethinking community development*, (Eds) Nelson N. and Wright S, 1995. *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. Intermediate Technology Publications, UK.

Davis H S, Ebbe K (Eds), 1993. *Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Development*. Proceedings of a Conference held at The World Bank Washington, D.C.,

Davies M.H, 1987. *Dramatherapy and Psychodrama*. (Ed) Jennings S, 1987. *Dramatherapy: theory and practice 1*. Routledge. London and NY.

Dyers, C. 2004. Ten Year of Democracy: Attitudes and Identity among some South African School Children. *Per Linguam* 2004, 20.1:22-35.

Emunah R, 1994. *Acting for Real. Drama Therapy, Process, Technique, and Performance*. Brunner/Mazel, Inc. New York.

Escobar A, 1995. *Encountering Development*. Princeton University Press.

Fetterman D.M, 1988. *Qualitative Approaches to Evaluation in Education. The silent Scientific Revolution*. Praeger Publishers.

Freire P, 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Gordon R, 1987. *Playing on Many Stages: Dramatherapy and the Individual*, (Ed) Jennings S, 1987. *Dramatherapy: theory and practice 1*. Routledge. London and NY.

Grainger R, 1990. *Drama and Healing. The Roots of Drama Therapy*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd, London.

Hall S, 1996. *Who Needs "Identity"?* (Eds) Hall S. and Paul du Gay, 1996. *Questions of*

Cultural Identity. SAGE Publications, London, US, New Delhi.

Herrera X, Lobo-Guerrero M, 1994. *From Failure to Success: Tapping the Creative Energy of Sikuani Culture in Colombia*, (Ed) Kleymeyer C.D, 1995. Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder and London.

Hitchcock R, 1999. *Indigenous People's Consultation on Empowerment, Culture and Spirituality in Community Development*. Kuru Development Trust.

Hornbrook D, 1991. *Education in Drama*. The Falmer Press. London.

Ife J.W., 1995. *Community Development: creating community alternatives – vision analysis and practice*. Addison Wesley Longman Australia Pty Limited.

Jackson T, 1993. *Learning through Theatre. New Perspectives of Theatre in Education*. Routledge. London and NY.

Jennings S, Minde A, 1993. *Art Therapy and Dramatherapy*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd, London.



Jennings S, 1995. *Dramatherapy with children and adolescents*. Routledge, London.

Johnstone K, 1979. *Impro. Improvisation and the Theatre*. Faber and Faber, London & Boston.

Joseph J, 1994. *The resilient child: preparing today's youth for tomorrow's world*. Plenum Press, NY

Kamlongera C, 1989. *Theatre for Development in Africa with Case Studies from Malawi and Zambia*, Bonn, German Foundation for International Development.

Kerr D, 1995. *African popular theatre: from pre-colonial times to the present day*. James Currey, London; Heinemann, Portsmouth N.H.; EAEP, Nairobi; David Philip, Cape Town; Baobab, Harare.

Kerridge, Heather and Wessels, Charlyn, 1988. *The drama option: language learning with a difference*. Modern English Teacher, 15.2, Winter 1987-8.

Kleymeyer C.D, 1995. *Women's Theatre in Jamaica*, (Ed) Kleymeyer C.D, 1995. Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder and London.

----- *The Uses and Functions of Cultural Expression in Grassroots Development*, (Ed) Kleymeyer C.D, 1995. Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder and London.

----- *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development*, (Ed) Kleymeyer C.D, 1995. Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder and London.

Klitgaard R, 1992. *Taking Culture into Account*, from "Culture and Development in Africa", WorldBank.



Knowles G, 1998. *Rays of Hope. Reflexions on Community Development Experiences*. National Capital Printing.

LeCompte M., Preissle J., 1993. *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*. Second Edition. Academic Press.

Linnell R., 1984. *Approaching Classroom Drama*. Edward Arnold. Australia.

Madiba's Magic: A Collection of Folktales to Charm Young and Old. Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales. 2002. W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London.

Malan R., 1973. *Drama-in-Education and Theatre for Young People*. David Philip Publisher. Cape Town.

Marc A., 1992. *Community Participation in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* from Culture and Development in Africa, WorldBank

Martin J, 2004. *The Intercultural Performance Handbook*. Routledge. London & New York.

Mavrocordatos A, Martin P, 1995. *Theatre for development: listening to the community*, (Eds) Nelson N. and Wright S, 1995. *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*. Intermediate Technology Publications, UK.

McGregor; Tate M; Robinson K, 1977. *Learning Through Drama*. Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. London.

McNiff J, 1992. *Action Research. Principles and Practice*. Routledge, London.

Mbiti J. S., 1969. *African Religions and Philosophy*. Heinemann

Mda Z, 1993. *When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre*. Witwatersrand University Press, South Africa.

-----1998. *Current trends in Theatre for Development in South Africa*, (Eds) Attridge D, Jolly R, 1998. *Writing South Africa*. Cambridge University Press.

Mlama P.M, 2000. *Culture and Development: the Popular Theatre Approach in Africa*. Praeger Publishers, USA.

Moreno J.L, Moreno Z.T, 1975. *Psychodrama*. Beacon House. New York.

Morris G, 2002. *Reconsidering Theatre-Making in South Africa: A Study of Theatre in Education in Cape Schools*. Theatre Research International. Vol.27/No 3.

Nelson H, 2001. *Damaged identities, narrative repair*. Cornell University Press, London.

O'Toole J, 1976. *Theatre in Education. New objectives for theatre – new techniques in education*. Unibooks Hodder and Stoughton. UK.

Palmer P, 1994. *Self-History and Self-Identity in Talamanca*, (Ed) Klymeyer C.D, 1995. *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder

and London.

Powley D, 1987. *Dramatherapy and Drama*, (Ed) Jennings S, 1987. *Dramatherapy: theory and practice 1*. Routledge. London and NY.

Press K, Van Graan M, 1990. *Popular and Political Culture for South Africa*. University of Cape Town.

Rahman M.A, 1993. *People's Self-Development: Perspectives on Participatory Action Research*. University Press Limited, Dhaka.

Roberts H, 1979. *Community development: learning and action*. University of Toronto Press.

Schechner R, 2003. *Performance Studies. An Introduction*. Routledge, London.

Stanislavsky C, 1948. *An Actor Prepares*. Geoffrey Bles, London.

Swanepoel H, 1997. *Community Development*. CTP Book Printers.

Thompson J, 1999. *Drama Workshops for Anger Management and Offending Behaviour*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Traore B, 1972. *The Black African Theatre and its Social Function*. Ibadan University Press, Ibadan.

Van der Post L, 1988. *A Walk with a White Bushman*. Penguin books.

Way B, 1967. *Development through Drama*. Longman. London.

Welman JC, Kruger SJ, 2001. *Research Methodology*. Oxford University Press.

Wiersma W, 1980. *Research Methods in Education*. F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.

<http://www.unomaha.edu/~paterson/> accessed in March, 2004

<http://www.artslynx.org/heal/theatre.htm> accessed in March, 2004

<http://www.artslynx.org/heal/theatre.htm#Prison> accessed in March, 2004

<http://healthworkstheatre.com/> accessed in April, 2004

<http://www.geese.co.uk/> accessed in March, 2004

<http://handson.org/ideas.html> accessed in March, 2004

<http://extsearch.worldbank.org/servlet/SiteSearchServlet?qUrl=&ed=&q=definition+of+Culture> accessed in August, 2004

<http://www.playbacknet.org/interplay/journal/Daniel.html>) accessed in March 2005.



APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1: What brings you to our Drama classes? Why are you here?

Answer 1: *I am here to enjoy myself at the same time to do something with my life. What brings me here is to do drama and entertain people who want to be entertained.*

Answer 2: *My passion and eager for acting and drama brings me to these drama classes. I am in these drama because drama is next to my heart and, not because I lack something to do but because I am committed to drama.*

Answer 3: *I love to act, love to get to know people. The other thing is that I love to be outdoors, love challenges, and the last I love stage, and they say life is a stage.*



Answer 4: *I like to make stories and the games we play.*

Answer 5: *I am at drama classes because I like acting and make something out of my life.*

Answer 6: *What brought me to the drama group is that drama has always been the best thing that I wanted to do and I knew that I was good at it, and being an actress has always been a dream of mine and the reason why I joined the group is to pursue my dream.*

Answer 7: *It's the part of people's life. We show to people who drink, we show them what we are. There is no rough stuff here. We live together. We strive and stand for freedom. There is no one who can stand in our way.*

Answer 8: *I am here because I like drama. It also helps people to prove their talents.*

Answer 9: *Because I want to develop skills. We develop something as a group, helping each other.*

Question 2: What do you like about our classes? What would you like to change or improve about our work?

Answer 1: *I like the people who are doing it; they have different cultures and ideas. I would like us to have more people in the drama and I would like us to dance when they are singing the songs to show our emotions.*

Answer 2: *I like seeing young people from different backgrounds coming together beating language and racial barriers, showing determination to do something they all enjoy and having fun in the process. I wouldn't change a thing about our classes except getting more people to join our classes.*

Answer 3: *It is that we are from different cultures, different languages, I would love to know those. The other one is that in our classes there is always happiness and laugh. Education is always there, learning more things from acting, games, etc. There is nothing to improve right now.*

Answer 4: *I like when we create a new story.*

Answer 5: *I like the songs and traditional things that we have learnt over the past few months.*

Answer 6: *What I like about the group is that they are like a family to me, and they are very funny, and I would like to change the way that Masibulele sings.*

Answer 7: *We all must have traditional clothes, because we are together. Not just like J. is wearing a traditional dress and I am not.*

Answer 8: *Our classes are good and we must change the gumboot dance. It must be older people who do it. (My comment: there are always younger children who learn to dance gumboot with us, and some of them are really struggling, holding the whole group back sometimes).*

Answer 9: *If we are drama actors, the little children must not disturb us. We also must have another dance – pansula.*

Question 3: What unites us?

Answer 1: *What unites us is drama and loving what we do best.*



Answer 2: *Respect for everyone's opinion and ideas that enables everyone to be creative and feel free to express his feelings and that builds a spirit of togetherness and most of all respect and love of what we do.*

Answer 3: *It is drama, above all is respect.*

Answer 4: *Because we want to learn.*

Answer 5: *What unites us is the different culture and ideas we have to uplift the group.*

Answer 6: *What unites us is that whenever we start a new story we work as a team.*

Answer 7: *We are acting, we sing traditional songs.*

Answer 8: *What unites us is that we all love drama and we are friends. And you like us. That's why you are here.*

Answer 9: *We want to show our skills and to bring it together to make something out of it.*

Question 4: What inspires and motivates you?

Answer 1: *I've been inspired by my friend from Delft. He said: "Doing something in your life doesn't mean you must do it for money". He said: "You can do it for the community". He is now a volunteer for Love Life.*

Answer 2: *Seeing everybody work together to improve our performances and that inspires me. The things we experience as a group motivates me to do my best every time we perform because in striving to be better than I was yesterday. I found my long lost love that I lost three years ago and that's drama.*

Answer 3: *It's waking up every morning and smelling the fresh air from mother nature and knowing that I will have my time taking things slowly. And knowing that God loves me.*

Answer 4: *When we create a new story.*

Answer 5: *What inspires me is Xhosa songs. I love the songs very much. They remind me of my grandmother.*

Answer 6: *What inspires me is that our group can show other people what we are made of.*

Answer 7: *Traditional music inspires me.*

Answer 8: *I like my character here. When I am here I feel free.*

Answer 9: *What inspires me is when you get what you always wanted.*

Question 5: What has changed in you since you joined our group? What is the difference between you one year ago, and you now? What new characteristics you discovered about yourself? How do you feel about it?

Answer 1: *It's that now I am doing something and it's not for me only, it's for the community too. The difference is that I have something to do in my life.*

Answer 2: *I am more talkative, argumentative and not afraid of crowds. I don't shy away now instead I like to improve my mistakes and all of a sudden I believe that nothing is impossible. I feel so good about myself.*

Answer 3: *Nothing has changed personally (only the hair style). Last year I didn't love acting. Now I love to be on stage to be watched. It's that I make my friends laugh most of the time and that makes me a little comedian. To see people laughing, happy is a great thing.*

Answer 4: *A little bit. I talk louder.*

Answer 5: *I've changed a lot. I've always been shy but now I am open and I can almost do anything. Well, I've discovered that I am talented and special.*

Answer 6: *I personally have changed emotionally over the months. A year ago I didn't know anything about drama and I have learnt new things.*

Answer 7: *I did change. It's part of my life and I am also talking at school, I tell what Arts and Culture is about and that our organisation is very happy.*

Answer 8: *I've changed. Now I go to church. Also I was shy before. Now I am not shy. Now I have only one friend – A., (my comment: A is a girl from our group.) but before I had many friends. But now I see - they are just rolling around the streets, doing nothing about their lives.*

Answer 9: *It changed me. I can do drama, I can do music.*



Question 6: Describe the happiest moment or happiest day that you experienced in our work. When did you feel most proud of yourself?

Answer 1: *It was when we won at the International Cultural day. There we became # 2. That day I was happy and proud of others and myself.*

Answer 2: *When we came out second at the ISO cultural day on the 22nd of May this year. I didn't believe it when we were called because it never crossed my mind that we could make it to the top 3. When we performed at the Old Age Home in Cape Town I felt so proud of myself when I saw smiles on their old faces.*

Answer 3: *It's when we were number two at the UWC Hector Peterson residence, and we beated our teacher's dance group. And to see many cultures all together in one place with peace and love.*

Answer 4: *The happiest day was when we performed at the Conference. (11 of November, 2003)*

Answer 5: *I felt proud when we were performing at the Walter Sisulu hall near the University. When we came second I was so happy I felt like a celebrity. I was so proud of myself.*

Answer 6: *The happiest moment for me was when our drama group was invited to UWC to go and show the people what Vlada was busy doing.*

Answer 7: *When you (me – my comment) said I must play the drum. I was very happy.*

Answer 8: *When I started to act as an old woman. I am doing good this character.*

Answer 9: *At Hector Peterson Hall. We can achieve more and bring other friends with us.*



Question 7: What was the day when you were most disappointed.

Answer 1: *It was when we were at Indaba Festival. I was disappointed because we were not doing it well and the worst part was that it was going to be televised on Bush TV.*

Answer 2: *Our recent performance at UWC on the 31st of August. It was so disappointing that there was hardly any audience and I think that kind of had an influence on our performance.*

Answer 3: *It was August 31st in UWC when I forgot the words and let down my friends and I felt like a fool who forgot his identity.*

Answer 4: *30th of August, when Yolanda (his sister with the group of hip-hop dancers) joined us and the CD didn't play.*

Answer 5: *I was disappointed when the one of our actors couldn't do what she was told on stage.*

Answer 6: *The day that I was going on to say my words and I didn't know one single thing.*

Answer 7: *It was the day when they were shouting at me (meaning the other young members of the group – my comment) that I mustn't play drum like that. No one must be telling me, - I said. Vlada will clap the beat and I will play.*

Answer 8: *It was the day we came here and it was raining and you didn't come.*



Answer 9: *I never was disappointed.*

APPENDIX II

RESPONSES OF THREE PARENTS, TWO TEACHERS AT WESBANK HIGH SCHOOL, AND A SOCIAL WORKER/HEAD OF WESBANK ARTS AND CULTURE GROUP.

The general question to the parents was: “ *Have Drama classes made any positive influence on your child? Have you observed any positive changes in him/her? What kind of changes?*”

First parent

A mother of 9-year-old boy told me, that this year her son had mark 4 (good) for arts and culture subject at Westbank Primary School #1. Last year the mark was lower. “*Before he was weak. Now he is on top*”, she commented his progress proudly. When she showed me the school report, it turned out, that other marks improved as well from 2 and 3 in the first term to 3 and 4 in the second.



The boy’s attitude has changed as well. He became more responsible. “*He won’t let me do things for him. He would tell me: “Mammy, I am big now. And the way he speaks, the way he acts... I see he is really big”*”, says his mother. “*He became more clever, more open-minded. Before he was just sitting in front of TV, before he didn’t want to talk to people. He would just sit and look at you, and watch TV. Now he talks to people. He is full of fun*”.

Second parent

An older sister of J. - a 14-year old girl from the group, who is now her only caretaker, shared with me her observations. “*She learns a lot. It motivates and uplifts her, and it keeps her from doing wrong things in the street. Before I had lots of problem with J. She didn’t want to listen to me, didn’t want to do things. Now she is listening. Her personality, I had lots of problems with, changed also. At the beginning I was not sure of all the drama thing. But now from what I’ve seen, only good stuff is coming out of them (the participants of the group). J. is very excited about it. She talks a lot about your work,*

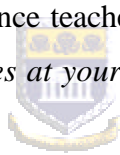
and people there and UWC. At first she would never come and talk to me, if there is some problem. Now she shares if something is bothering her.”

Third parent

The third respondent was the mother of the 15-year-old girl, who is the heart of the group, in whom classes woke up the passion for acting and she is determined to follow her dream and one day to become an actress. Her mother said: *“Since A. joined this group she tells everyone about it. Everybody knows. Every Wednesday we don’t forget this day. We are all waiting for you. And at school principal, and the teachers, they all know about these classes and they all are happy for A. She tells everyone.”*

Two respondents from Wesbank High School

The general question to the arts and dance teachers from Wesbank High School was: *“Is there a need for drama and arts classes at your school and is this subject a part of the curriculum?”*



What I found out from the responses was that ballet, African and contemporary dance, music, and visual arts were taught in the school at grades 8 and 9 once a week as extra-curriculum activities. The pupils have to choose only one discipline from the above-mentioned list of art-related subjects. At grade 10 dance becomes part of curriculum program. Both teachers were unhappy with the fact that only 50 minutes a week is allocated for arts. According to them this scheme is not effective because the pupils tend to forget what they’ve learnt during dance or visual arts classes since there is not enough time for practice.

During the visual arts classes the teacher was trying to introduce the pupils to the basics of drama. Both respondents said they would love to have a drama teacher at school. They believe that through drama classes the pupils would be able to learn to speak louder and to present themselves with confidence. Both interviewees said, it was important to

develop such skills for the life after school when young people have to find job and face competition.

Response of the head of Wesbank Arts and Culture Group, who is also a social worker in the community.

There is nothing for the children and youth in Wesbank. Girls of 14/ 15 get pregnant. Young people abuse alcohol and drugs, they go to shebeens, become gangsters. They steal. I want to see success with children. I want them to do something with their life, go forward. They must go see the world. If I can make at least one child's life different, maybe he will be the President. There are many opportunities for the children there. They just don't know how to grab it with two hands.



APPENDIX III

“NORTH MEETS SOUTH”

This story is about a 9 year-old boy, who goes to sleep and asks his mother, played by J., who also was our storyteller, to sing him a lullaby. His mother sings a beautiful song in Afrikaans. The boy asks if other mothers sing lullabies to their children and finds out that every mother in every corner of the world sings her child a song when putting him to bed, only different mothers sing it in different languages. At this stage, we sing our Xhosa, Norwegian and Afrikaans lullabies.

But the boy doesn't want to sleep and asks his mother to tell him a story. She tells a story from Norway – a country far away, surrounded by lakes and snow-covered mountains. As she narrates the story, we see all its characters – 3 Billy Goats Gruff and a Monster - acting it out for us in colourful masks.

When the mother finishes the story, the boy is already asleep. And all the characters of the story come to him in his dream and dance around to the music from the opera Per Gynt by Edvard Grieg.

An alarm clock goes off, and the boy wakes up.

The whole world wakes up with him to the sound of the African drum and fast songs in different languages, accompanied by dances.

The boy is late for school. His mother hurries him and he rushes together with other children. As we all walk fast in the circle, we say tongue twisters in Xhosa, Afrikaans and Russian that are pronounced very quickly and this represents the rush of children hurrying to school, and adults hurrying to work.

One person gives a signal and we stop abruptly, holding this energy for a few moments. One participant offers to play a game. It's break time and all the pupils are playing in the schoolyard. They show and teach each other different games – the Xhosa clapping game

with the Xhosa song, the Norwegian game with the accompanying song, three games that “Coloured” children play in the streets of Wesbank, accompanied by an Afrikaans song. We all sing those songs and take part in each other’s games. Out of the rhythm of clapping game comes the gumboot beat, and it receives the response – a strong, distinct flamenco beat. The dances merge into one art form, one beat flowing from another.

At this point we hear the mother calling Y. home. It’s already late, he has to have supper and go to bed. He has spent the whole day with his friends; his day was full of different cultures, of different languages and he feels completely at home in this vibrant mix of cultures and languages. The boy’s friends wish him good night, and they promise to see each other the next day.

Next, we see Y in bed, asking his mother to sing him a lullaby. We all sing the Xhosa lullaby.

After his mother leaves the room, Y. gets up to do one more important thing. He prays, thanking God for having such an amazing mother, such great friends, and for all the good things that happened to him during the day. After this he falls asleep.

APPENDIX IV

1. Photo of the group after their first performance at the UWC Auditorium on November 11, 2003.
2. Copy of a certificate, which every group member received on that day.
3. Copy of the Certificate of Participation in the Cultural Day Festival on the 22nd of May, 2004.
4. Copy of the poster, announcing the performance for Learning Cape Indaba Festival on the 30th and 31st of August, 2004.
5. CD R with the recording of the group's performance at Indaba Festival at UWC on the 30th of August, 2004.



APPENDIX V

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (see the following pages)



APPENDIX VI

THEATRE GAMES AND TECHNIQUES USED DURING SESSIONS IN WESBANK

DISCOVERING VOICE

Secret whisper

An actor delivers his lines in a very soft voice, almost inaudibly, as if it is a top secret.

Talking to deaf

The actor delivers his lines at the top of his voice, as if he is talking to a group of deaf people.

Jumping

An actor has to find natural ways to release the voice from the body to fill the space. He begins with a basic neutral voice, his mouth wide open, and tongue relaxed. Then he starts a gentle jumping from both feet with the body very relaxed. Jumping pushes the breath up and it produces a short sharp burst of sound. An actor continues jumping and tries to feel where the voice is coming from. Later he will have to be able to reproduce this level of clarity through his own muscle control. (The same spontaneous freeing of the voice is achieved through raising and dropping the shoulders).

Abdomen pushes

An actor begins with neutral tone. His body is relaxed. Then he places his hands on the abdominal muscles. These are the muscles, which are very important in good voice production. During the tone he gives some firm pushes to the abdomen, just a quick push and release. It produces the same clear effect as in the previous exercise. Do not pre-empt the push. Try to surprise yourself by varying the rhythm and frequency of pushes.

The River

One partner places a hand firmly on the abdominal wall of the other and starts to apply a moderate force, which would normally push the other person backwards. The second partner resists this to stay in the same position and takes a deep breath and starts to produce a neutral voice. One partner is producing the force of the river flow, the other is resisting it and using this pressure to strengthen the voice. At first each breath may be

quite short, but slowly it will lengthen and a person will find the voice stronger from this support.

Humming

An actor breathes in and then starts to hum very quietly, getting gradually louder, and finish before he begins to feel uncomfortable.

Then he reverses this process: breathes in deeply, starts humming very loudly and gradually gets quiet as the breath runs out. (creates vibrations, resonance)

Variations: Ask the group to hum up and down the scale, discovering how high and how low each one can reach.

The Balloon (Breathing and Vocal)

First, as a whole group, mime blowing up a balloon until it is large. Tie the top. Count to 3. Then burst it!

Next, invite people to imagine themselves as balloons. Crouch low on the floor, and grow bigger and rounder with each imaginary puff.

Divide members into pairs; get one partner to be a balloon, while another inflates him. Synchronise the bursting of all the balloons, e.g. “Tie the top; find a pin; 1,2,3 – BANG! “Balloon” then slowly deflate and relax. Give both partners a chance to be the balloon.

Variations: Blow some people up into interesting shaped balloons, which must be led carefully home so they don’t burst.

DISCOVERING BODY AND EMOTIONS

Trust Walk

Ask the group to divide into pairs, numbering themselves “1” and “2”. The “1”s close their eyes, and the “2”s take them for a gentle walk. The pairs hold each other finger tips to finger tips. The eyes should remain closed and the pairs should not talk to each other.

Variations: Ask half the group to close their eyes before being given a partner. At the end of the Trust Walk, can each guess who their partner was?

Statue Shapes (10 minutes) (Physical)

Precede this exercise by warming up gently with rhythmic movements to music, or ask them to stretch and shake each part of their bodies, beginning with the hands. Keep all these movements loose. Then invite the group to walk briskly around the room, forming

patterns on the floor. Instruct the group as follows: “When I say stop – stand still and listen to me. I shall call out a movement which I want you to do until I instruct you to start walking again”. (statues of a pirate, a rabbit, an elephant, a monkey etc.)

- Variations:** 1. Invite members to make a movement with a partner.
2. Let others call out movements spontaneously.
1. Each member can call out a movement, taking turns.

The Demon

A way to shake out tension. an actor hops from one foot to the other, doing arm movements similar to those one does to shake water off one’s body, or to chase out a demon.

Person to person.

Everybody gets into pairs. The leader calls out the names of parts of the body, which the partners must join together: for instance, “Head to head”, or “Foot to elbow”. When the partners have conjoined two parts of their bodies they must keep those together while doing the next instruction. After 4 or 5 instructions, when the game is taken to the limits of physical possibilities, the leader shouts “Person to person!” the pairs separate and everyone finds different partner.



The bear

One participant is the bear. He must turn his back on the others, who are the foresters. The latter busy themselves with their forestry tasks – woodcutting, planting, tree-felling, taking a break, whatever. After a while the bear must give an enormous growl, whereupon all the woodcutters must fall to the ground and “play dead”, not making the slightest movement, absolutely motionless as if their life depends on it. The bear goes up to each one of them, growling at will, and touches, tickles, prods, tries any trick she can think of to make them laugh, or move; in short, her goal is to force them to reveal that they are alive. When the bear succeeds, the forester who has given himself away becomes a second bear, and the two bears set off to do the same thing to the other foresters, who will try not to move. Eventually there are 3 bears, then 4, then 5.

This exercise is very curious in that it produces the effect exactly opposite to its guiding principle. The principle is: if the woodcutter can send his senses to sleep, if he can feel nothing, see nothing, hear nothing, if he can successfully play dead, the bear will not attack because bears do not eat dead people. But the instruction “Feel nothing” provokes exactly the opposite reaction, and all the senses become extraordinarily highly developed – you sense much more, hear much better, etc.

Body parts and Body language

Every part says something.

Our neutral stance, with energy “ready to go”, is like a clean canvas for a painter. Any slight change in that neutral body puts us into a different state, as it will slightly or considerably change the flow of energy around our body, and this will affect our feelings. First, we need a sensitivity to look into the different states, and therefore the different stories, which emerge when the body changes from neutral to a particular position, and then from position to position.

To explore this we need a physical control to isolate a single part of the body. As we isolate it there is a change in the body state. In this new state we must be able to explore the space, meeting with other people, noting the changes in our feelings, our speed, rhythm, reaction-timing.

Exercise 1. Head

A. Push the head forward without changing the rest of the body. In this position feel the difference in yourself, in the way you see the space and others. As you start to move allow your walk to be determined by the new balance and new tension in your body. Your normal walk is bound to change. Explore the room and meet other people.

It is very important to discover how this position changes you. What are you like in this position? Who are you in this position?

B. Now pull the head right back behind the vertical. Feel the change in your body, the new way of moving; explore the space and meet the people.

When you have tried both of these positions, explore changing between them, using an object or a person to affect the change.

Exercise 2. Shoulders

A. From a neutral position pull the shoulders up as high as possible. Explore the changes in feelings. (It can be a protective position, or one of fear. It can also provide the “armour” of strength to become more aggressive.)

B. Push the shoulders as far down as possible and explore this position. (Here the shoulders are exposing a vulnerable neck, but in an over-demonstrative way as if insisting “I am not afraid. I can show my weak parts!”)

Play with changing between these two positions while meeting people and finding a stimulus for each change.

C. Now push both shoulders as far forward as possible. Explore. (It’s another protective position, gives nervous, frightened feel).

-
- D. Push both shoulders back as far as possible. (This one exposes the heart and chest as if nothing can harm you. It is an exaggerated position implying over-confidence, over-assuredness).

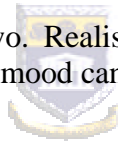
Also be aware of the changes of the rhythm with each new position.

Exercise 3. Chest

This area is less involved in movement than any other part of the body. Placing the fingers of one hand on the breastbone and pushing the chest back, and be pushed forward by the chest.

- A. Push the chest in backwards as far as possible. (This chest is depressed. The breathing is limited and not a lot of life-giving air can be converted to energy. Just by taking this position you can again understand the link between physical and psychological states.)
- B. Push the chest forward as far as possible and explore the room and people in it. (This is openness that maximizes breathing. It is by teaching depressed people to adopt this position that a lot of therapeutic healing has been achieved).

Explore changing between the two. Realise that only with a few centimetres of physical change a radical change of mood can be experienced.



Exercise 4. Pelvis

- A. Push the pelvis (heaps) forward. Explore your feelings in this position. (Openness, vulnerability. Can imply great confidence.)
- B. Pull pelvis right back and explore. (This can also be a position of lack of confidence and great nervousness).

Explore the changes between the positions. Experiment with walking slower, faster in it.

Exercise 5. Knees

- A. Open your knees. Explore.
- B. Close your knees and walk in this way.
- C. Walk on your toes, explore the world from a few centimeters higher and note how much energy you need to stop.
- D. Walk on your heels and explore how impossible it is to stand still.
- E. Walk on the outside of your feet – this gives a remarkably stable and mobile position.
- F. Walk on the insides of your feet. It blocks the energy of the lower body.

It is a very rich vocabulary through which a vast range of emotions and reactions can be expressed. Sometimes two or more of these body parts can be used to create a character.

An actor is given a task to enact a sketch, using these different positions of his body to create characters.

Mirror

This exercise requires concentration and sensitivity.

Two actors are standing opposite each other. The leader begins with slow, steady movements. The follower has to repeat exactly the leader's every gesture. The aim is not to challenge or trick the partner, but to achieve synchronization. A second stage occurs when the partners are asked to switch roles. A third stage of this exercise is to eliminate both roles; at this point one detects and immediately mirrors all subtle shifts in the partner.

Variations: Instead of body movements, voice and sound are "mirrored"; only facial expressions are mirrored; emotional states are mirrored.

Presents

Divide people into pairs and call them A and B. A gives a present to B, who receives it. A just holds his hands out and he doesn't have to determine what gift it is. The trick is to make a gift you are given as interesting as possible. Everything you are given delights you. Maybe you wind it up and let it walk about the floor, or you sit it on your arms and let it fly off after a small bird, or maybe you put it on and turn into a gorilla.

An important change of thinking is involve here. When the actor concentrates on making the thing he *gives* interesting, each actor seems in competition, and feels it. When they concentrate on making the gift they *receive* interesting, then they generate warmth between them. Suddenly great joy and energy is released. Playing in gibberish helps.

Blind pose

An inexperienced improviser gets annoyed because his partner misunderstands him. He holds out his hand to see if it is raining, but his partner shakes it and says: "Pleased to meet you". "What an idiot", thinks the first actor, and begins to sulk. When you make a blind offer, you have no intention to communicate at all. Your partner accepts the offer, and you say "Thank you". Then he makes an intentionless gesture, and you accept that, and he says "Thank you".

A strikes a pose.

B photographs him.

A says "Thank you".

B stands on one leg, and bends the other.

A straddles the bent leg and “nails a horseshoe on it”.

B thanks him and lies on the ground.

A mimes shovelling earth over him.

B thanks him...And so on.

It's best to offer a gesture which moves away from the body. When you've made a gesture, you then freeze in the position until your partner reacts.

Once the basic technique has been mastered, the next step is to get the actors to play the game while discussing some quite different subject.

A touch of autumn in the air today, James”, says A, stretching his hand out. “Yes, it's a little chilly”, says B, peeling a glove off A's hand. And so on.

The effect is startling, because each actor seems to have a telepathic understanding of the other's intentions.

The Line.

Draw the line. Behind it is another space. As you cross the line, you enter this new space. (It can be burning hot, or ice cold, or an anti-gravitation chamber, a very frightening forest). Your new walk will have a new tension, new rhythm, new movement. New space can be real, physical space, emotional space, space in which you become older, younger, etc.

Approach the lines with clear, open mind, not knowing what will happen. If you succeed, you will be constantly surprising yourself with what you discover. New rhythms, new moods, new body shapes.