Chapter One

DEAFNESS AND THEATRE

This research report investigates the relationship between hearing and Deaf performers within a theatre company. This study is important because little research has previously been undertaken into investigating the facilitation of communication between Deaf and hearing performers in collectively devising theatre. Although there are apparent differences in languages between such performers, this study investigates the use of theatre devices as important additional elements, which can be used to facilitate collective dialogue between Deaf and hearing performers in the devising of theatre. This investigation will focus specifically on the theatre devising process of a hearing/Deaf theatre company; **From The Hip: Khulumakahle (FTH:K)**.

1.1 A Global View of Disability

In late 2007, South Africa ratified the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in the hope of "promoting, protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyments of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity" (Article 1). This declaration was in response to a worldwide concern regarding the developmental challenges facing persons with disabilities, as it was considered that their basic human rights were not being catered for. The disabled community is likened to an 'invisible' minority (Nelson, 1996) that is not fully included into society due to the presence of conscious, and sometimes unconscious, negative attitudes and prejudices.

As South Africa celebrates its 14th year of democracy, it is has become apparent that despite claims of inclusivity, the disabled community has not had the privilege of self-representation within the multifaceted South African culture. The same challenges to inclusion still prevail. To address this, South Africa has had in place the Bill of Rights, and most recently, the

Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS), aimed at developing policies aiding the development of persons with disabilities. The Bill of Rights states that 'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes…freedom of artistic creativity' [Section 7 Clause 16.1.c]. This study locates itself at the intersection of this statement with the INDS's aims of integrating disabled persons into the majority society, especially in investigating the role of the arts with disabled communities in South Africa.

Disabled persons are seen as a single group in society. This is problematic, as "people in wheelchairs have become the popular representation of people with disabilities. This ignores the diversity of disability, and the variety of needs experienced by people with different types of disability" (INDS, 1997: 4). This study thus situates itself in the context of the Deaf[1] community of South Africa.

1.2 Current status of deaf persons in South Africa

In South Africa, there appears to be a lack of expert consensus regarding what constitutes deafness and this lack of consensus affects the statistical discussions of deaf persons. According to the South African Census of 2001, an estimated 5% of the national population is disabled, which is a figure of 2 255 982 (2001:12) but within this figure, discrepancies were present in the categorising of disabilities. The questions in determining the prevalence of disability posed in Census 2001 differed from Census 1996 as noted in the following:

> The categories were not identical, and moreover the Census 2001 question had the added dimension of "full participation in life activities", which expands the concept of 'disabled' from a narrow focus on impairment to a broader focus on human functioning in a social context.
>
> In 1996, the question on disability was posed thus:

[1] Deaf with a capital "D" denotes a group of individuals that consciously identify themselves as culturally Deaf and not disabled. The Deaf community identifies with the Deaf culture and proudly uses South African Sign Language and rejects hearing representations of Deafness as disability. Culturally Deaf individuals and community are referred to with a capital "D". Deafness with a small "d" refers to the simple fact of audiological impairment and is distinct from…self identification (Wrigley, 1996).

> *Does the person have a serious sight, hearing, physical or mental disability? If yes, circle all applicable disabilities for the person: Sight 1; Hearing/Speech 2; Physical disability 3; Mental disability 4.*
> In comparison, the disability question posed in 2001 read thus:
> *Does the person have any serious disability that prevents his/her full participation in life activities? None 0; Sight 1; Hearing 2; Communication 3; Physical 4; Intellectual 5; Emotional 6.*
>
> The discrepancy in the way the questions were posed to respondents in the two censuses makes it difficult to have comparable figures.
>
> (Census 2001: 8)

Furthermore, these discrepancies have affected the identification of the Deaf community within South Africa. For the scope of this research, I will employ Census 2001's definition of *disability*, as that which prevents one from full participation in life activities.

This definition then poses some challenges as to where deaf persons fit in. According to Census 2001, of the estimated disabled population, 20% of that population classifies themselves as affected by a hearing disability. This figure is the most cited in the literature. This study would have accepted such a statistic were it then not for the inclusion of a further 6.5% of persons who define themselves as affected by a communication disability.

Census 2001 does not further explain the differences between communication and hearing disabilities, this study then posits that the two disabilities can be conflated into one regarding deaf persons. This is done for the following reason. The term "hearing disability" identifies deaf persons by their audiological inability to hear, which situates the disability as a matter of health. But the term "communication disability" suggests that deaf persons are not seen as being affected by a visible impairment but rather by a social condition affecting their ability to function within the rest of society. For the purposes of this study, I will therefore be focusing on deaf persons affected by a communication disability, as this study will be focusing on the communication between deaf/Deaf persons and the rest of society.

1.3 Being d/Deaf

Historically, deafness is viewed as an illness whereby the deaf are impaired in the physiological ability to hear. It is this "health-related inability" (Shapiro, 1999:87) that identifies the deaf community as disabled. There is much more to this generalised description of being deaf than meets the eye. This seemingly dichotomous relationship between deaf persons and the rest of society aims to fix a blanket identity onto a complex group of deaf persons.

Deafness, according to neurologist Oliver Sacks, can exist in various degrees in deaf persons. To Sacks, the term "deaf" is vague at its best. The various levels of deafness include:

> "hard of hearing"; when a deaf person has residual hearing assisted by the use of hearing aids, "severely deaf", when a person loses their hearing as a result of disease or injury in early life but can hear some speech through using hearing aids, and "profoundly deaf", where the deaf person cannot hear any speech at all.
>
> (1990:4).

This challenges the widely held notion held by society that deaf persons have the same level of hearing loss and therefore are all the same. These differences in 'deafness', however, are not enough in understanding the identity of a deaf person.

For Sacks, the life stage at which deafness occurs is as important as the various degrees present to understand the deaf identity. A deaf person who is born deaf or deafened at an early age before the acquisition of any spoken language is identified as prelingually deaf. The prelingually deaf person does not have any auditory experience to draw upon in understanding speech (Sacks, 1990:6n) and they are usually described as profoundly deaf. Acquiring a signed language as a first language allows for the facilitation of communication with other deaf persons. Postlingually deaf persons are deafened in late childhood or as adults but have acquired a fundamental knowledge of a spoken language (Sacks, 1990:6n). These persons have previous auditory experience and can therefore understand speech with hearing aids yet

the acquisition of signed languages aids in improving their communication with both hearing and deaf. Severely deaf and hard of hearing individuals fall into this category.

There is, however, a stereotypical view held in society that because the Deaf community has little to no spoken language, deaf persons are therefore languageless. For Sacks, this view constitutes society's attempts at projecting or extrapolating an imagined experience of deafness in order to try and understand the state of deaf persons (1990). However, not all deaf persons necessarily see the lack of spoken language acquisition as a deficit. There are certain deaf persons who, although admitting to audiological impairment, prefer not to identify themselves according to their lack of auditory experience. Sociologist Paddy Ladd describes these persons as:

> [Having] lost some or all of their hearing in early or late life, and who do not usually wish to have contact with signing Deaf communities, preferring to try and retain their membership of the majority society in which they are socialised.
>
> (2003:xvii).

The deaf persons described in Ladd above are similar to the postlingually deaf persons this study previously identified. But this description is restricted in placing the postlingually deaf within a category of deaf persons who only identify themselves according to their audiological impairment and the preference to communicate using spoken language over signed language. Although Ladd's description is valid, this study will not place postlingually deaf persons within Ladd's description, as it does not allow hard of hearing or severely deaf persons the opportunity to negotiate an identity within the deaf community and hearing society. As for the deaf persons identified in Ladd's description, this study will hereafter refer to this group of deaf persons with a lowercase 'd' to denote an identity based on their audiological impairment and alignment with the majority hearing society, including their rejection of signed language.

In the South African context, these deaf persons communicate using what little speech they have acquired; lip-reading, which Sacks describes as "an extremely inadequate word for the

complex art of observation, inference, and inspired guesswork" (1990:2n); and the use of hearing aids. Ladd also goes on to describe prelingually deaf persons as:

> [Those] for whom the sign languages, communities and cultures of the Deaf collective represents their primary experience and allegiance, many of whom perceive their experience as essentially akin to other language minorities.
>
> (2003:xvii)

And according to Ladd, these deaf persons consciously do not identify themselves according to the societal definitions of deafness as a condition categorised by a sense of 'lack' in language. In fact these deaf persons group themselves according to a shared signed language and recognise the culture associated with the deaf collective. Thus this group of deaf persons group themselves as a community that identifies itself as a linguistic and cultural minority foremost. This study will hereafter refer to this group of deaf persons with an uppercase 'D'. In South Africa, these Deaf persons proudly use South African Sign Language and affiliate with the Deaf culture.

1.4 The Language of d/Deafness in South Africa

As mentioned earlier in the study, deaf persons in South Africa are identified according to audiological impairment and not as a cultural and linguistic minority. This view of deafness as an impairment does not allow the Deaf community adequate representation in South Africa as a cultural minority and negatively affects deaf persons on every level of society[2]. Deaf persons therefore encounter barriers in their attempts to identify themselves as a community independent of majority society. One of these barriers is the absence of language appropriate in facilitating communication and dialogue between the Deaf and hearing communities.

[2] The *White Paper on Disability*, The Integrated Disability Strategy (INDS), describes disability as historically regarded as primarily a health issue. The social attitudes that resulted from the medical model of perception have reduced the disabled community's capacity to interact with the rest of able-bodied society in an equal manner. Conversely, the disabled communities identify their disability according to a social model that is based on the belief that the circumstances and discrimination faced are socially constructed phenomena that has little to do with the impairments of disabled peopled. (1997:10,11). Both models of identification are used to describe the Deaf community.

Language is a communicative function with the purpose of transmitting information between people (Sonderling, 1996:89). It is the most frequently used form of communication through which humans are able to describe and make meaning of the world around them. Language has an important role in the social practice of a society, as it enables people to interpret the world according to the ideology of the society. It is thus "a complex system of signs used within a social context" (Sonderling, 1996: 90). These signs consist of words, sound and gestures that convey a meaning relating to an abstract or concrete idea. The combination of these signs is governed by rules present in all languages, such as combining sounds into words (phonology), word formation (morphology), combining words into phrases (syntax) and assigning meaning (semantics) (Fromkin et al, 2007).

Language has the same functions and structural rules across spoken and signed languages. The differences lie in the modes of communication between the hearing and the Deaf. Hearing society utilises an oral-aural mode of communication where messages are produced orally and are interpreted aurally. The Deaf community communicate through a visual-gestural mode. Messages are produced using gestures and facial expressions and interpreted visually. This imbalance in the modes of communication acts as a barrier in creating dialogue between the hearing and the Deaf.

There have been efforts made over the years by the hearing society to 'overcome' this language barrier but these have not been truly successful, as compromises reached did not benefit the deaf community. These compromises rather aimed at oppressing the natural visual-gestural language of the deaf and replacing it with orality and enhanced medical devices to improve hearing (Ladd: 2003). There have been misconceptions around signed language amongst hearing society. The most wide spread of these misconceptions is that signed language is uniform and universal but this is untrue. There are hundreds of "different signed languages that have arisen independently wherever there are significant numbers of deaf people in contact "(Sacks, 1990:17n). These signed languages, however, are unrelated to the spoken and written forms of the majority society's language.

Hearing society assumes that sign language is not a real language. This attitude has grown out of the belief that sign language is universal and mimetic in nature, as the language arises from gesture and gestures are assumed to contain no linguistic structure. Hearing societies therefore have accepted this misconception around signed languages as fact and have attempted to re-create manual languages that facilitate communication between the hearing and deaf.

This study agrees with sociologists Penn and Reagan in their description of sign languages as divided into three groups: "natural signed languages, pidgin sign languages and manual sign codes" (1990:91). This study gives a brief description of each but investigates a more detailed discussion later. Pidgin sign language is loosely defined as:

> [T]he utilisation of lexical items drawn primarily from a natural sign language word order and with some syntactic characteristics of a spoken language.
>
> (Penn and Reagan, 1990: 92).

Penn and Reagan further continue defining manual sign codes as:

> [A]rtificially conducted systems designed and intended to allow a given spoken language to be presented in a signed mode.
>
> (1990: 92)

These signed languages developed by the hearing society but they do not take into consideration the culture associated with the signed languages of the deaf minority. This denial of the Deaf community as a linguistic and cultural minority is perpetuated throughout the hearing society and the deaf community.

The challenges faced by the Deaf community in having their Deaf culture recognised in South Africa is not an uncommon issue, as it is a global challenge faced by the Deaf community at large. I refer to Ladd's brief historical account as an introduction to Deaf issues:

> For the last 120 years, sign languages and Deaf teachers have been effectively banned and removed from Deaf education, with severe physical punishments visited upon Deaf children whenever they attempted to sign. This policy, called 'Oralism', has had numerous disastrous effects on Deaf

> individuals and their communities. English literacy for the average school-leaver is 8 3/4 years…nevertheless it must be obvious to any observer that the quality of Deaf community lives would have been negatively affected by such relentless suppression of positive identity and language, and this is reflected in Deaf arts.
>
> (2003:1,2).

1.5 Representing d/Deaf in South Africa

This tendency to deny the Deaf community is reflected in the representation of the Deaf community in society. In South African, little is known about Deaf arts practitioners and audiences. There are, however, recent recordings of Deaf storytellers, poets and performers but because of the visual nature of the performances, little literature, which studies their impact on the Deaf community and hearing society, is present. Deaf theatre is under-represented, as Deaf performers and Deaf theatre have not been integrated into the South African theatre community, or had a platform to display their skills. The difficulties in integrating Deaf performers into mainstream theatre often lie within the theatre devices used in creating the performance. Many theatre practitioners still prefer using text-based theatre in their performances, but as stated above, this is a barrier for Deaf performers, as their literacy levels are not on a par with hearing performers.

This study therefore focuses on theatre with Deaf and hearing performers. I will focus particularly on the dialogue that occurs between the Deaf and hearing performers in devising theatre. This study is not a comparative study of the performing arts between the Deaf and hearing theatre in South Africa. The present study aims to investigate the use of theatre devising for collective dialogue between the Deaf and hearing performers within the work of an integrated theatre company in South Africa.

Theatre devisors are not solely dependent on verbal modes; they include physical devices such as written texts, costumes, props, the voice and body of the performer as well as the symbolic tools of imagination, play, metaphors and signs. All these modes of expression or

communication are used simultaneously in devising a theatre production. This diversity of expressive modes is potentially beneficial in creating a communication platform between Deaf and hearing performers. Previous studies have been conducted into the use of theatre with the hearing and Deaf (Ladd: 2003), yet there have been few attempts at investigating the role of theatre between the hearing and Deaf in South Africa.

Before I continue any further, I'd like to situate myself as researcher within the study. Since I arrived at the University of the Witwatersrand to do my undergraduate drama degree 6 years ago, I have always been interested in the South African Deaf culture. My interest in this cultural and linguistic minority in South Africa inspired me to begin investigating how theatre and the Deaf community could intersect. My role as a non-disable researcher researching disabled persons, however, is explored further in the study. I have noticed little anecdotal evidence of Deaf Theatre in South Africa but after watching a performance of GUMBO by From The Hip: Khulumakahle at the Wits Theatre in early 2007, my enthusiasm was reignited. From my first encounter with the company I began to shift the research to how theatre could intersect with both the Deaf and hearing community. In this study, I investigate South Africa's only professional Deaf/hearing integrated theatre company, **From The Hip: Khulumakahle** (hereon referred to as **FTH: K**). I also investigate the efficacy of utilising theatre devising as a collective dialogue between the Deaf and hearing performers of FTH:K.

1.6 From The Hip: Khulumakahle – The Beginning…

From the Hip: Khulumakahle is South Africa's premier professional Deaf/hearing integrated theatre company. FTH:K's mission is to create a training institution that is accessible to Deaf persons and recognises Deaf culture and SASL; and integrates indigenous performance with theatrical clowning. FTH:K aims to create a holistic approach in theatre devising whereby these theatre tools have the potential to affect the dialogue between Deaf and hearing performers.

It is my opinion that both spoken and signed languages have a role to play in devising theatre between hearing and Deaf performers but this study will investigate the presence of an alternative language – that of theatre itself. Within the context of **FTH:K**, the use of theatre devices to facilitate communication between the hearing and Deaf will provide an opportunity for exploring a dialogue understood by both hearing and Deaf performers. Ladd's (2003) study on Deaf Theatre offers a starting point for looking at the representation of Deaf identity in theatre and, I will be paying particular attention to Ladd's definition of "Integrated Theatre".

I borrow the term 'Integrated' from Ladd's (2003) description of various models available in different aspects of Deaf Theatre in British Deaf Theatre. Ladd describes Integrated Theatre as "liberal hearing theatre companies that have either been fascinated by sign language, or have recognised that grants can be had by presenting work with a disability slant" (2003:6). From this statement, I deduced that Ladd mistrusts the notion of Deaf and hearing performers devising theatre collectively. It seems that the hearing performers benefit more from this theatre model than the Deaf performer. Ladd's argument seems valid when one looks at the historical discrimination towards the Deaf in theatre, it also provides a useful critical lens through which the way that theatre devices are used by **FTH:K,** and how they affect the dialogue between performers, can be examined. Ladd's argument leads me to investigate the efficacy of FTH:K's theatre devisors in facilitating dialogue between performers and the degree to which the respective performers' languages are respected.

This study therefore aims to answer the following research questions:

- How effective are the use of theatre games and exercises in facilitating a collective dialogue between the hearing and Deaf performers in the work of **From The Hip: Khulumakahle?**
- Can the FTH:K collective processes treat both the Deaf and hearing performer's modes of communication as equal?

Chapter Two

DEAFNESS, THEATRE AND DIALOGUE

2.1 Major Talk about d/Deafness

The vision of the Integrated National Disability Strategy (hereon referred to as INDS) proposed by the White Paper (1997) calls for a society whereby all citizens have equal opportunities to develop their full human potential in South Africa. Although the policy is not this study's main area of focus, I mention it here as an introduction to recent South African policy that has drafted innovative paradigms of defining disability, namely using the medical and social models of disability. According to the policy, the heterogeneous group of disabled persons within South African society faces exclusion from society because of their medical needs. The Deaf community is included in this description. The most evident form of social exclusion regarding the Deaf community is in the inaccessibility of information because South African Sign Language is seldom used.

According to the INDS, it identifies disabled persons historically according to their health-related inabilities and consequent to such identification disabled persons are treated by society as welfare cases to be 'cared for'. It therefore defines the medical model of Disability as:

> [O]rganisations for people with disabilities usually controlled by non-disabled people who provide services to people with disabilities…The emphasis was on dependence and the focus on the nature of impairment…Generally, ordinary needs were not taken into account…
> Thus the dependency created by the medical model disempowers disabled people and isolates them from the mainstream of society, preventing them from accessing fundamental social, political and economic rights.
>
> (1997: 10)

The medical model acts as a basis on which society defines disabled persons. As a model, it not only 'diagnoses and treats' the impairment of a disabled person, but constructs ideologies focusing on the impairment of the disabled person. To disability groups, the medical model is

seen as the root of the negative perception of disability and consequently the attitude of society towards disabled persons.

To counter such negative perceptions of disability, disability rights groups have actively campaigned against the medicalisation of their individual identities in society. The disability groups have identified the medical models' obsession with impairments as preventing the acknowledgement of disabled persons as equal citizens in society. This lack of acknowledgement by society is discriminatory towards disabled persons. In effect, disability is viewed as an identity acquired from society and therefore it must be society that must adjust to accept disabled persons and not the other way around.

The INDS describes the social model in South Africa as such:

> The social model of disability suggests that the collective disadvantage of disabled people is due to a complex form of institutional discrimination. This discrimination is fundamental to the way society thinks and operates. The social model is based on the belief that the circumstances of people with disabilities and the discrimination they face are socially created phenomena and have little to do with the impairments of disabled people. The disability rights movement believes, therefore, that the 'cure' to the 'problem' of disability lies in restructuring society.
>
> (1997: 11).

The INDS adoption of the social model is in accordance with international disability movements. The social model, therefore, implies that the reconstruction and development of our society involves a recognition of and intention to address the developmental needs of disabled people within a framework of inclusive development (ibid). This urge for civil action and inclusivity into society has become the main aim driving the social model of disability.

American disability advocate, Arthur Shapiro, argues that the medical view of disability "defines the nature of disability in terms of individual deficiencies and biology, in particular the individuals' physiological inadequacies."(Mackelprang and Salsgiver, 1999:82).

The individualising of "deafness-as-disability" (Lane, 1999:19) by hearing society has drawn attention away from society's discriminatory conduct towards the Deaf community onto focusing on the inadequacies in the deaf individual. This homogenous identification of the Deaf community does not allow for the acknowledgement of the diversity present within the Deaf community itself. The community encompasses individuals who are positioned on a continuum from those accepting the disability identity to those who resist it. The former primarily communicate through speech and are identified with a small '"d ". The latter reject the disabled identity, affiliate themselves with the Deaf community as a cultural and linguistic minority, and identify themselves with a capital "D". They communicate using South African Sign Language. These models therefore posit views and social attitudes towards disability, and in the case of this study view deafness, as dichotomous in nature.

Therefore, the widely perceived attitude of "deafness-as-disability" is a major contributor to the miscommunication between the hearing and Deaf community. According to the greater hearing society, the perception is that the biological sense of hearing is an important factor in experiencing the world and therefore, the absence of this sense in the Deaf individual is equivalent to a biological loss. This feeling of 'loss' towards the Deaf is an opportunity for assumptions to be created by the hearing community in campaigning for assistance to be available to deaf persons in order to include them as auxiliary citizens within the hearing community, as they supposedly have no language to express themselves.

2.1 Emergence of (new) talk about d/Deafness

Until recently, the dichotomous views of deafness have been uncontested and therefore adopted in many global disability rights organisations such as the INDS and most recently, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Yet in reality the deaf community is as heterogeneous as any other is, and so are the different approaches to deafness.

The present social model of identifying deafness is based on the British Social Model that formally redefined disability as oppression in the 1970's. One of the founding organisations, The Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), formalised the impairment/disability distinction. According to UPIAS, the medical condition of impairment of a disabled person does not result in disability, but rather it is society's discriminatory and oppressive attitudes that have resulted in the disability of a person with an impairment. UPIAS' position on disability as such is:

> In our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments, by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society.
>
> (UPIAS, 1976:3 cited in Shakespeare, 2006: 12)

This statement came at a crucial point in the history of disablement, as it was during a time of global political activism. According to British sociologist, Tom Shakespeare, however, the British Social Model has never been a suitable universal model of defining disability. For Shakespeare, the above statement was instrumental in the polarisation between the terms 'medical model' and 'social model', but to him the terms are more about a symbolic perception of disabled persons than an actual diagnosis (2006). This study therefore agrees with Shakespeare in the need for a deconstruction of disablement in the world in defining disability.

In the context of South Africa, disabled persons identify themselves as a minority group within society. This definition is based on the North American approaches to disability, in that disabled persons are seen as a minority constituency within the major society. Consequently in disabled persons identifying themselves within the paradigm of a population minority, this situates the source of the disablement of persons with impairments within the greater social environment. Shakespeare describes six forms of social barriers: architectural, attitudinal, educational, legal, occupational and personal (2006).

The social model provided two major benefits for the disability movement; firstly as political strategy to remove barriers and, in liberating disabled persons through their understanding of society's oppression. Shakespeare (ibid) however, identifies 3 risks of the established social model:

> 1. The model is too general to address all impairments uniformly. The impairments are dealt with homogenously and therefore there's no need to look at individual cases.
> 2. If the model is highly focused on the social arrangements of disability, then any medical interventions are viewed with suspicion. They appear to be distractions from the work of barrier removal and civil rights.
> 3. The number of disabled persons becomes irrelevant, as the model focuses on social change rather than meeting the special needs of impaired individuals.
>
> (ibid:31-32)

For Shakespeare, the apparent rigidity of the social model has been counterproductive in recent times. This study agrees with this view, as "the goals of the disability movement have always been to promote disability equality and the inclusion of disabled persons in society" (ibid: 34). These goals however are universal in nature but context-specific in implementation and dependent on individual impairments. As a result, this study agrees with Shakespeare's call for an exploration of alternative models to meet these goals.

Sociologist Paddy Ladd shares these sentiments regarding the fixed nature of viewing disability in the investigation of alternative models of viewing d/Deafness. Ladd (2003) identifies the ideological polarities of the medically influenced versus social views of d/Deafness. For Ladd, the majority of discourses around deafness are Oralist in perception, that is, "the reification of the voice, centred in a Christian discourse, the inherent inferiority of Deaf people, and the inadequacy of sign language" (2006:114). These discourses, based on the belief that deafness is fundamentally a health-related impairment, have remained dominant for many decades, yet the manner of propagating this ideology has changed through the years.

Initially, Oralist discourses focused on the integration of deaf persons into society by banning sign language in deaf education in an attempt to focus on developing speech in deaf persons. The propagating of the Oralist discourses altered with the rise of the political agenda of the global disability movement. Over time, the popularity of the disability movements' call for social transformation in the integration of deaf persons has resulted in the Oralist movements adapting to the new social environment.

The Oralist movement had shifted its focus onto mainstreaming deaf persons into society by isolating deaf learners from each other. This was done by legislation, closing schools for the Deaf and forcing deaf children to attend hearing schools. Whilst this may seem in accordance with the initial disability movements' goals of social transformation of disabled persons, in reality it is detrimental to the Deaf community. A consequence of this movement is that deaf children are isolated from each other in learning their native language and the culture of the Deaf community. This, in effect, is a way of 'hiding' deaf children from each other and spreading the notion that deafness is a negative medical condition that needs to be 'treated' in isolation. This negative perception of deafness is internalised by deaf children as something that they should be ashamed of and that being hearing is an acceptable norm to be aspired to in society. Other strategies employed were the development of cochlear implants and genetic engineering. The former originally aimed at giving adults who had lost their hearing a sense of sound by surgically implanting an electro-magnetic device inside the cranium. This medical intervention was soon publicised by Oralists as a 'cure' suggesting the 'abolition of deafness' through modern technology. The latter also uses technology to determine the 'deaf gene' and the effective eradication of deaf persons (2003). In effect Oralism has divided and demoralised the Deaf community (ibid).

Ladd has noted these developments in Oralism and calls for new models of defining d/Deafness in the wake of Oralist developments. For Ladd, to create a 21st century conceptualisation of d/Deafness, there needs to be an embracing of ever-widening Oralist

paradigms to challenge the established view. For this to occur, Ladd identifies eight overlapping and interacting stages of developing a new conceptualisation of d/Deafness.

- Social welfare reform (which removed the missionaries): The gradual removal of Deaf welfare issues from missionaries' control, and the creation of new professional Social Workers for the Deaf.
- The radical Deaf Subaltern movement: The bringing into question the morality of hearing people's control over Deaf affairs and the traditional Deaf leaders content to operate under such.
- The Total Communication movement: The advocation of an apparent compromise of simultaneously using stylised forms of sign language, sign systems and speech.
- Linguistic Recognition movements: The recognition of sign languages to enable radical Deaf sectors and their hearing allies to develop political construction of Deaf communities as linguistic minorities
- Deaf visibility and the Media: The work towards Deaf access to television and the creation of sign language programmes to bring visibility to the Deaf community in the eyes of the public.
- Deaf and interpreting professionals: The presence of Deaf professionals confident in the myriad forms of Deaf language and culture and the development of trained sign language interpreters to aid the Deaf persons' professionalism process.
- The rediscovery of Deaf history: The return to more successful historical models of Deaf education, renewed respect for 'ancestors' and Deaf pride, and a more elevated self-concept.

> These seven stages have culminated in the eighth, the development of Deaf Studies departments [in universities]. These offered Deaf people access for the first time to a range of information about their recent and distant past, and provided the opportunity for numerous young and middle aged Deaf people to reflect and research into their own community.
>
> (2003: 147-148,152-156, 178)

For the purposes of this study, I identify with the linguistic recognition movements, and Deaf visibility and the media in the investigation of dialogue between the Deaf and hearing performers of FTH:K.

2.3 Language and communication with the d/Deaf

As stated above, Oralism proposes that the sign language of the d/Deaf is inadequate communication compared to spoken language used in society. In order to investigate dialogue between Deaf and hearing performers, this study needs to investigate language and communication between the d/Deaf and hearing.

The powerful influence of Oralism throughout history has influenced how society views what the 'norms' of language and communication should be. In the Oralist movements the banning of sign language amongst d/Deaf learners in schools was an overt message of disregard for the natural language of the d/Deaf. Neurologist Oliver Sacks describes the historical Oralist view of sign language as such:

> The manual sign language used by the deaf is an Ideographic language. Essentially it is more pictorial, less symbolic, and as a system is one that falls mainly on the level of imagery. Ideographic language systems, in comparison with verbal symbol systems, lack precision, subtlety and flexibility. It is likely that Man cannot achieve his ultimate potential through an Ideographic language, inasmuch as it is limited to the more concrete aspects of his experience.
>
> (Myklebust 1960 cited in Sacks 1990)

This long established ideology of sign language not being a 'real' language like spoken language is accepted and still in circulation to date. According to Oralism, it is unfathomable that a language occurring in space such as sign language is as valid as a spoken language. Spoken language has structure but "grammar makes language possible and allows us to articulate, our thoughts, ourselves in utterance" (Sacks, 1990: 75). Because Oralism perceives sign language as a pictorial language unable to express any concrete ideas, this view has spread amongst hearing society but also amongst d/Deaf persons themselves.

Prior to 1960, there had been no academic research into sign language. The dominant ideology of spoken language being superior to sign language had been internalised by deaf persons themselves. The work of hearing sociolinguist William Stokoe's (1960)

groundbreaking research into the linguistics of sign language was all but ignored by deaf persons. Stokoe's work is important to this study, as his initial discoveries of sign language linguistics aid in understanding the recent attitudes towards sign language, especially in its use within the theatre devising process between Deaf and hearing performers.

Stokoe identified that sign language was a language equal to spoken language. Stokoe proved that signs were not pictures but complex abstract symbols with a complex inner structure. The signs were analysed and initially Stokoe proposed three independent parts, namely handshape, location and movement (analogous of speech phonemes) (Sacks, 1990). Stokoe later stated that the orientations of signs as well as non-manual signs, such as facial expressions are also important in the understanding of sign language. This study therefore agrees with Stokoe's assertions that sign language is a language equal to spoken language. In understanding Stokoe's findings, it is therefore to the benefit of this study to acknowledge SASL as an appropriate language in the creation of theatre with Deaf performers. The significance of identifying Sign Language as a language aligns it with the universals present in languages, namely that a system of gestures is equivalent to sound systems of spoken languages, as well as containing morphological, syntactic, and semantic rules, as stated in Fromkin (2007).

Oralist movements, however, have not fully accepted these assertions of the validity of sign languages. Although spoken and sign languages are similar in their fundamental linguistic structures yet dissimilar in communication modes; the former being oral-aural and the latter visual-gestural, miscommunication is still prevalent between d/Deaf persons and hearing society. The irony of Oralism, notes sociologist Paddy Ladd, is that it maintains that the continued use of sign language by d/Deaf persons alienates them from society and that integration can only occur via speech (2003: 145). As my study states, the goal of integrating d/Deaf persons into society is the commonality between the Oralist and d/Deaf persons. However, for effective communication between Oralists and d/Deaf persons, the Oralist notion of speech's apparent superiority over sign language is a barrier towards achieving integration.

In this study I use Michel Foucault's notion of discourse (Faubion: 1994) to investigate the apparent power displayed by Oralism of speech over sign languages. For Foucault, analysis of discourse is not in the formalist tradition of formal descriptions of conversational 'texts'. Foucault, instead rather focuses on discourse as a matter of *knowledge.* For Foucault "knowledge is much more a matter of the social, historical and political conditions under which, for example statements count as true or false"(McHoul and Grace,1993: 29). These systems of social knowledge are generally ways, in which society speaks, thinks and writes about a subject at any point in history. For the purposes of this study, I will be looking at how Oralist discourse of d/Deafness has become the 'common knowledge' and how it is still prevalent in South Africa.

This study will not be undertaking a discourse analysis in the traditional linguistic manner. Rather, I will be using Foucault's definition of discourse as a "socio-historical function" (McHoul and Grace, 1993). In his analysis of discourse, Foucault claims that systems of knowledge are based in history and are passed on as fact in recent times, when alternative discourses could have existed concurrently. What makes the historical knowledge dominant *common sense* is that this 'truth' becomes a function of language. If it can be written, spoken or thought (ibid), then it must be true. This is a bias towards languages able to be articulated in written form and pays no attention to oral or non-verbal languages. Foucault's analysis of discourse is helpful for this study, as it will be used to critically investigate the power relations present within the theatre devising process between Deaf and hearing performers. In understanding which individuals have more of a 'say' within the theatre devising process, the study will explore the apparent power relations between individuals with theatre devising knowledge (discourse) and those without between the Deaf and hearing members of FTH:K.

This study then finds conceptual alignment with Nash & Nash (1978) in their discussion of the presence of distorted communication between the d/Deaf and hearing based on misguided social perceptions of each other. Communication is conducted in a variety of languages and modes. It can involve one person conversing with him or herself (e.g. journal writing), two

people, or one or more persons conversing with a large audience—the possibilities are varied and many. Communication can occur between people who share a language but not a mode. Those people that share both mode and language are monolingual or bilingual.

According to Nash & Nash, successful communication between Deaf and hearing persons is dependent on the social interaction and perceptions that each individual has of the other. To further develop this case, Nash & Nash have identified three categories of communication that occur between Deaf and hearing persons:

1. People who are in frequent social interaction with Deaf persons and thus have a high degree of competence in sign language. This consists of hearing children of Deaf persons and interpreters.
2. Hearing people with an increased distance from the d/Deaf experience, but some competence in sign language; where communication is within a context of shared social meanings. This includes co-workers, siblings and neighbours.
3. People who have minimal to limited competency in sign language and interaction between these people and Deaf persons are dependent on an intercessor. This includes church people, oral deaf persons and professionals.

Nash & Nash's study aids in understanding the effect of a social interaction between the d/Deaf and hearing and its manifestation in the type of communication between the respective individuals.

2.4 Dialogue between d/Deaf and hearing

This study will not only be investigating general communication between d/Deaf and hearing persons, but more specifically communication within the context of theatre devising. The power of the written and spoken text has dominated for many years in South African theatre production. And once the emphasis moved to devising theatre amongst performers through improvisation and discussion, the devising process still remained strongly bound to the spoken word, to the verbal discussion of ideas. It is this wide spread practice of the discussion of

ideas between performers in devising that seems to have normalised how theatre 'should' be devised and marginalised alternative forms of theatre devising that incorporate a more dialogic approach in terms of the hearing and d/Deaf participants. This dominance of the spoken language in the discussion of ideas impacts negatively on the theatre devising process with d/Deaf performers, as it excludes the d/Deaf performers from participating. The disparity in languages between the performers places the d/Deaf performers at a disadvantage, as the dominant spoken and written language is a barrier preventing the facilitation of a collective dialogue with hearing performers in the theatre devising process.

To address this, I use Freire's (1993) theory of mutual dialogue in analysing a collective theatre devising process, as it is an active and critical interrogation of the present and historical social environment, in order to bring about social change. Brazilian education theorist, Paolo Freire (in Taylor: 1993) advocates for social transformation through the dialogue present between a teacher and student. In this context, Freire calls for a mutual dialogue that is an active and critical interrogation of the present and historical social environment of humans, in order to bring about social change. This study will narrow its focus onto the dialogue between d/Deaf and hearing performers. When performers begin engaging in dialogue that is more than a superficial discussion, they will create a richer source of theatre as a result of the critical perception and meaning making. But then, why do I think that dialogue is so important in the theatre devising process between Deaf and hearing performers?

According to Freire, critical dialogue can develop a consciousness that can have the power to transform reality (ibid). Freire's belief in the development of the critical consciousness (in Taylor; 1993) required in interpreting an individuals' social reality through dialogue will be explored. The notion of dialogue as 'praxis' where an individual is able to act and reflect upon their world through their words is acknowledged but for adequate praxis to occur there has to be a shared language. As stated by the study that spoken and signed languages are equal, the study will not bias one language over another, but rather offer theatre as an alternative dialogue medium to facilitate praxis.

2.5 Theatre as dialogue

> As the ideology of 'participatory democracy' took international root, it was evident that for theatre to play its role in the formation of a new society, the praxis of participatory democracy could also be implemented within the theatre… [devising] as a collaborative process offered a politically acceptable alternative.
>
> Heddon and Milling, 2006 cited in Murray and Keefe, 2007)

This study suggests the use of theatre devising as a platform for the occurrence of Freire's praxis of dialogue between the d/Deaf and hearing performers within the targeted group. Freire's theory of emancipation through dialogue influenced Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal (1995) and this is evident in Boal's theory of utilising theatre to liberate an individual from personal oppression, which has grown out of his earlier work with oppressed groups (1979). Boal used this method in assisting groups to recognise social oppression and rehearse ways of overcoming the oppression through theatre.

For Boal, this type of theatre is far removed from the traditional theatre where the audience are mere 'spectators' of the action. Rather his theatre calls on the observers to become Spect-Actors, a term Boal created to describe the performer who is not only spectator of the theatre but also an actor, able to observe and actively participate in the dramatic action represented.

> The [Spect-Actor] himself assumes the protaganistic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change - in short trains himself for real action.
>
> (1979: 122)

Boal believes that an individual has the potential to recreate, and interrogate, the image of a real oppression in an imagined world and to use the imagined world as a rehearsal space for action then carried into reality. This study interrogates the use of Boal's 'metaxis': the simultaneous presence of an individual in two different worlds, the imagined world of the theatre and the real world.

Boal systemises a four stage plan in transforming the spectator in to a Spect-Actor to be more effective within the metaxis.

First stage:	*Knowing the body:* A series of exercises by which one gets to know one's body.
Second stage:	*Making the body expressive:* A series of games by which one begins to express one's self through the body.
Third stage:	*The theatre as language:* One begins to practice theatre as a language that is living and *present.*
Fourth stage:	*The theatre as discourse:* Simple forms in which the Spect-Actor creates spectacles according to his need to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions.

(179: 126)

Boal's theatre focuses on the physical and active presentation of oppression rather than on expression through the ambiguity and disputatiousness of language. In the third stage, Boal delves deeper into transforming language used to create theatre into tangible actions, encouraging the theatre itself to become the language for analysis. Further theatrical 'languages' used are namely: simultaneous dramaturgy, where spectators simultaneously 'write' the dramatic action with the actors; image theatre, where Spect-Actors rely on producing images using their bodies to create the dramatic action; and finally, forum theatre, where Spect-Actors are invited, not to verbally discuss the issue presented, but to act out their suggestions or discussion physically on the stage through possible alternative actions. (ibid). All of Boal's degrees of creating a Spect-Actor resonate with this study's investigation into theatre devising between Deaf and hearing performers. Boal's theatre devising techniques are less reliant on a spoken or signed language than on the language of the body, a gestural language collectively understood by Deaf and hearing performers in the expression of dramatic action.

This study will explore the possibility of praxis in the dialogue between the Deaf and Hearing participants within the metaxis of the work of **From The Hip: Khulumakahle (FTH:K).** I will also locate the study within the developing contemporary Deaf discourse of Deaf visibility. Within the context of **FTH:K**, the use of theatre devices to facilitate communication

between the hearing and Deaf provides an opportunity for exploring a dialogue understood by both hearing and Deaf performers.

Ladd's (2003) study on Deaf Theatre, 'Deafhood' offers a starting point in looking at the representation of Deaf identity in theatre, and I will pay particular attention to Ladd's definition of "Integrated Theatre". I investigate the intersection of theatre and disability where Deaf and hearing performers use their respective languages to devise theatre. I borrow the term 'Integrated' from Ladd (2003) in his description of various models available in different aspects of Deaf Theatre in British Deaf Theatre. As quoted earlier, Ladd describes Integrated Theatre as "liberal hearing theatre companies that have either been fascinated by sign language, or have recognised that grants can be had by presenting work with a disability slant" (2003:6). From this statement, one can deduce that Ladd mistrusts the notion of Deaf and hearing performers devising theatre together, as it seems that it is the hearing that benefits more from this theatre than the Deaf does.

Ladd's point seems valid, yet his assertions on the tokenist nature of Integrated Theatre are based on the traditional view of theatre devising from a pre-existent text that favours written text spoken on stage. This study has also previously stated that communication can occur between people who share a language but not a mode, which is the case with the d/Deaf and hearing performers of **FTH:K.** I therefore agree with Murray and Keefe in their investigation of the differences between physical theatres and text–based theatre forms, that there is:

> A distinctiveness, rooted in the performer's body as a starting point, in the compositional and dramaturgical strategies employed in the composition of the emerging performance text.
>
> (2007: 19)

They further articulate this view in relation to gestural language:

> As a form of communication (usually) without 'voice', the miming body depends on a theatrical vocabulary that we may think of as a… gestural language…[we] see the mime using his body and face without words to express and communicate the archetypes and stereotypes of basic human emotions and ideas.
>
> (2007: 58)

Although, Lecoq did not name his approach to theatre devising 'miming', the present study draws intellectual strength from Lecoq's *The Moving Body* (2000) in his interest in the use of the body in space and Lehmanns' (2001) notion of using the body as a source of communication. The interrogation of the notion of a theatrical process taking place between bodies is included in how the performers and director challenge the reliance on speech to create communication in the theatre devising process. This study strongly supports Fleishman's (1996) argument against the important position of the word over gesture in the creation of meaning in South African Theatre. Fleishman's attention to the body as the creator of meanings on various levels in theatre is in alignment with Royce's (1984) argument that movement is a visual metaphor that conveys and manipulates meanings for the performers.

This view of gestural language as suitable in theatre devising between Deaf and hearing performers appears to be in agreement with the Oralist notion of sign language as mimetic and not a real language. Yet this study argues against such a similarity, as Oralists believe sign language has no intrinsic structure to allow meanings to occur and gestural language in theatre does. Individual gestures may not mean anything in themselves but within a theatrical context, systems of gestures are able to create meaning within the theatre performance. Whilst Oralism sees signs as disconnected gestures with limited meaning, sign language like gestural language generates meanings from the relationship between the signs.

Whitmore (1994) describes the impact of gestural movements as being part of the visual elements of a performance that aid in revealing the meanings of the performance itself. The study thus does not identify the body as arbitrary in its ability to create communication between performers. Rather, the focus shifts from observing the body as a literal carrier of information in social contexts to a more expressive carrier of meaning in the theatrical context.

Chapter Three

SPEAKING POWER TO DIALOGUE

3.1 Critical Social Theory

"Critical social theory is a multidisciplinary knowledge base with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge"

(Leonardo: 2004)

Since this study aligns itself with identifying the Deaf community utilising the social model of identification as a cultural and linguistic community, I investigate the social context of the Deaf community within the larger hearing society using Critical Social Theory. This theory provides a framework for recognising how the negative social construct of the Deaf community is represented in the South African Theatre context. As the study is working within the context of an integrated theatre model that incorporates both Deaf and hearing performers, this theory shapes the critical investigation into how the social construction of the Deaf community affects the context of the integrated theatre model utilised in the theatre devising of FTH:K.

The term 'Critical Social Theory' in itself is problematic, as it does not conform to a set line of enquiry in a particular discipline with ties within philosophy and social sciences. In its philosophical definition, Critical Social Theory denotes theories grounded in the Western European Marxist Tradition known as the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School is concerned with the "liberation of individuals from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer in Bohman: 2005) and this also translates into including a resistance to "fixed systems (of thought) generally" (Mutnick, 2006: 34). It is this school of critical theory that this study aligns itself to, as critical theory is aimed at challenging established social constructs. Before investigating the theatre devising process between Deaf and hearing performers, this study deploys critical social theory to firstly explore and secondly to

challenge already existing social systems of thought regarding d/Deafness and hearingness in dominant society.

Critical Social Theory goes as far as resisting the dominant ideologies in society and questioning them in their ability to perpetuate oppression onto the minority communities they isolate. Supporters of the Frankfurt School believe that for a dominant society to control and therefore oppress minority communities the exerting of heavy force is not necessary, but rather the dominant society achieves actual control through subtle uses of ideological forces to manipulate minority communities. The Frankfurt School therefore identifies dichotomies within society between those who adhere to society's ideology and those outside the same ideology. Society doesn't treat individuals in these dichotomies equally, as those adhering to its ideologies are treated more favourably than the 'outsiders', who tend to have negative labels ascribed to them. Critical theory advocates for society's close examination of itself to address these inequalities.

These covertly perpetuated inequalities result in oppressed minorities beginning to accept and internalise the negative labels, which society has ascribed to identify them, as reality. This oppression by the dominant society has manipulated the oppressed minority's identity to such an extent that they are not aware of the oppression or of their inequality in society. Critical theory acknowledges that oppression of minority communities has become so ingrained within such communities that it has identified knowledge as the agent to consciousness raising and emancipator of the oppressed minority from the dominant society's oppression.

Deafness, then, falls outside of the dominant society's definition of how the body should function. Dominant society ascribes in its ideology what is 'normal' in how an individual's body operates in society and being deaf falls outside of this ideology and is thus classified as a deviance of a pathological nature. This potentially long-term 'illness' impairing an individual's sense of hearing, is therefore viewed as a lack in the experiencing of the world in the same way as those in the dominant society. In trying to categorise this lack, dominant

society then identifies a disability. How then is the impairment identified as a disability by the rest of dominant society? According to Oliver, he defines this differentiation as:

> Impairment as…having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body and disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities.
> (Cited in Shakespeare 2006: 13).

It is then evident that identifying deafness as 'outside' of dominant society's ideology is an act of domination over the minority deaf community.

Because the aim of Critical Social Theory is to decrease the oppression of the dominant society and increase freedom through greater awareness of minority communities, this critical theory has spread into other disciplines, such as disability studies and literature. Critical Social Theory influences disability studies in creating an alternative understanding of disability and disabled people from the dominant definition. Shakespeare states that the benefits of the social model used in identifying disability are that it "shifts attention from individuals and their physical…deficits to the ways in which society includes or excludes them" (2006: 30).

For this study, I use a combination of two social models, the British Social Model and the North American Minority Model described by Shakespeare (ibid), and as adopted by South African disability activists' organisations such as the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DEAFSA). This latter model enabled the focus to be widened from studying (*isolated*) individuals to exposing broader social and cultural processes…[and] is crucial in the disability movement for two reasons; a) political strategy: barrier removal, and b) impacting disabled people. (ibid) (Italics own).

In the case of the Deaf community, the models were beneficial in raising consciousness for and in the Deaf community as well as the dominant hearing society. The model is valuable in identifying barriers present in society preventing the inclusion of the Deaf. According to Shakespeare in his discussion of early social-contextual theories on disability, he notes:

> Disability, for all these authors, is not simply a matter of biology, nor is it an objective departure from norms. Instead, attention is paid to the meaning, expectations, roles and relationships which operate in society.
>
> (2006: 22).

This strategy of "social transformation" (ibid) aims at dismantling the barriers preventing the Deaf from being included in society, and in the case of the deaf community, these are predominantly linguistic barriers. Addressing these barriers includes the recognition of South African Sign Language as the language of the Deaf community, and the provision of equal access to information in the greater society by utilising that language. As a result, this social model is a positive influence on the Deaf community, as this is a radical shift from the dominant societies' 'norm' of what communication in a society should be. This affords the Deaf community the opportunity to be conscious of the knowledge that their exclusion from society is not the result of a fault of a Deaf individual but rather a choice made by the dominant society in an effort to control or exclude the Deaf community through its emphasis on the spoken language over signed languages.

3.2 Foucault's Language of Power

For Foucault, the production of power in societies lies in its discourse. The discourse involved in producing knowledge in society contains the power and for Foucault he saw discourses as systems of representation. Generally, discourse refers to a linguistic term, and I therefore agree with Foucault's Discourse theory that states that discourse is the production of knowledge through language. Foucault's aim therefore, "was to defamiliarise, to expose seemingly natural categories as constructs, articulated by words and discourse" (Jones and Porter, 1994: 5). Though Foucault focuses on the power of literature, I will instead shift the focus in applying it to the spoken word used in dominant society. The dominant spoken language used in discourses around minority communities is responsible for representing the knowledge about these minorities. The medical model of identification influences the labels

assigned to represent the Deaf community by the dominant society and it is displayed in the marginalisation of the Deaf community.

Foucault points out that the power in discourses is not a clear dichotomy between a discourse of power and a discourse that runs counter to it (Jones and Porter, 1994: 10); I would like to propose a continuum of discourses relating to the deaf present in our society. In the context of the Deaf community, at the one end of the continuum is the dominant discourse of the dominant spoken language and counter to it is the discourse of signed language. The normalising of spoken language by the dominant society affects the view of signed languages in society. The words and mode of language used in the discourse in describing and representing the Deaf community hold power, as the discourse covertly has the power to marginalise the Deaf minority within the dominant society.

Between these two extremes lies another discourse which attempts to challenge these radical discourses. The third discourse that I would like to introduce between these discourses on the continuum is that of the subaltern. The term 'subaltern', as noted by Ladd, refers to any group of people denied meaningful access to 'hegemonic' power (2003: 81). While it might seem that the Deaf counter discourse may fit into the subaltern discourse, it is often generalised in its representation of the Deaf collective experience. Subaltern discourse aims to represent individual experiences of Deaf persons within the dominant societies discourse. It is within this discourse I situate Integrated Theatre; a theatre that integrates Deaf and hearing involvement to be accessible to both communities.

3.3 The Disparity between the Deaf and Theatre

This representation of the Deaf community by the dominant society and by the Deaf community is perpetuated in the arts. The arts, and particularly theatre, are a key illustration of the different discourses available in representing the Deaf community. In the dominant

discourse, the representation of the Deaf community is according to the medical model of deafness as a disability. Prominence is not given to Deaf performers in the devising and performance, as the discursive practices throughout this process are all conducted in spoken languages. This 'absence' of the Deaf community sends a covert message to the dominant society that deafness is an undesirable deviation from the 'norm' and that spoken language, and not signed language, has more power in representing society, thus excluding the Deaf community from theatre. At the other end of this continuum is Deaf theatre that is a radical shift from dominant theatre.

Deaf theatre is problematic to categorise as Ladd (2003) states that historically there has been little record of such theatre within the British Deaf theatre (2003:5), and this is indicative of a global phenomenon of Deaf history including that of the South African Deaf community. This attributes to the fact that in the time before spoken languages took precedence in society; recordings concerning the style, content and sign language use were few (ibid). The aim therefore of this latter theatre is to have a prominent representation of the Deaf community and culture in the performance. In addition, the devising and performance is in signed language with Deaf actors.

These two models of theatre become challenging as they are on opposing sides of a continuum. They both respectively claim that each has the power to represent their own community in an elevated manner to the other. The fixed stance by each model of theatre is also problematic as it posits that those are the only two models of theatre available to the respective communities, yet this is not the case. This study posits the addition of a third model of theatre introduced by Ladd (2003), that of 'integrated theatre' (2003:6). According to Ladd, who has a clear political agenda of advancing the status of the Deaf community through the arts, integrated theatre is seen as ridiculing the Deaf community and performers. His disregard for it as a legitimate theatre model is evident in his description of it:

> [T]he classification of Deaf with disabled, and the consequent discourses which stressed art with disabled people as either therapeutic for the handicapped or 'awareness training' for the audience. Both underpinned by

> the discourse of 'helping', has led to numerous one-off productions during the last 20 years in which a token Deaf person is inserted into the cast, teaching rudimentary and often laughable levels of sign language to the rest of the cast.
>
> (2003: 6-7).

I will be using Ladd's definition of Integrated Theatre as a departure point in this study. Using the case study of **From The Hip: Khulumakahle (FTH:K)**, Ladd's integrated theatre model is investigated alongside the current practices of **FTH:K.** According to Ladd, the power of representing the Deaf community in theatre does not belong to the Deaf performers within an integrated theatre company, but rather with the hearing administrators. The implication of this disproportionate participation by the hearing into the theatre process is pointed out in his reference to the "laughable" levels of sign language used by the performers. Ladd's study speculates that the dominant language of the integrated company would be a spoken language, with minimal signed language included, disadvantaging the Deaf performer in the devising and performance.

According to Foucault's ideas on discourse as a production of power, I will focus on the discursive practices between performers in an integrated theatre devising process. The power of the written and spoken language in theatre devising is dominant in South African theatre. For the purposes of this paper I focus on spoken language in discussion used for exploration and decision making in devising and the speaking of text during a theatrical performance. Occasional reference is made to the use of written language within the theatre devising process. It is the wide spread practice of the discussion of ideas between performers in theatre devising that seems to have 'normalised' how theatre ought to be devised. This marginalises alternative forms of theatre devising which incorporate a more dialogic approach between performers.

This dominance of discussion using spoken language negatively affects the theatre devising process for Deaf performers, as it linguistically excludes the Deaf performers from

participating in the process. The disparity in languages used between the performers in an integrated theatre places the Deaf performers at a disadvantage, as the dominant spoken and written language is a barrier preventing the facilitation of a collective dialogue with hearing performers in the theatre devising process.

3.4 Freire Talks to Dialogue

The interrogation of the power of spoken language over sign language in the construction of dialogue in the theatre devising process is pertinent to the study. Freire's (1993) emancipatory dialogic theory is applicable in analysing a collective theatre devising process. Czech Marxist Karel Kosic influenced Freire's ideas on emancipatory dialogue and this resulted in Freire's humanistic Marxism (Taylor, 1993:41) whereby he advocates for social transformation through the dialogue present between a teacher and student. In this context, Freire calls for a mutual dialogue that is an active and critical interrogation of the present and historical social environment of humans, in order to bring about social change.

For Freire, dialogue between individuals is a source of liberation from the oppressive forces he saw in his society. He saw dialogue as an act of creation and not serving as a crafty instrument for the domination of one man by another (1970:77). In his context of education, Freire believes that within the traditional teacher-student relationship, the teacher assumes to possess more knowledge than the student does and thus dominates the learning process. The teacher transfers this knowledge to the student in what Freire calls the Banking Learning System; here the teacher possessing more knowledge deposits it into the student's mind. This presupposes that the student did not possess any knowledge before the teacher deposited their knowledge.

Freire saw this model of teaching as oppressive to the student, as the teacher dominated the sharing of knowledge without recognising the knowledge the student possessed. In this

method the student is viewed as an object to deposit knowledge into instead of an individual who could also actively participate in their education. To combat this banking education system, Freire calls for the creation of an authentic Dialogue between learners and educators as equal knowing subjects, with both having an awareness of the real concrete context of facts, the social reality lived in. (1970:214). I will be using Freire's model of the banking system of transferring knowledge in understanding his Dialogic theory.

Freire saw the emancipatory function of dialogue but he also noted that dialogue can easily become superficial unless it is engaged in critically. Critical engagement in dialogue is necessary to Freire, as he believes that without a critical understanding of an individual's present reality and history, the individual cannot create a future any different from their present. If an individual is unable to look critically at their position in their present context, they are denied the opportunity of creating a future for themselves. The individual will then be perpetuating the oppression Freire states as being present in society.

A prerequisite for the critical dialogue to occur is a level of what Freire (cited in Taylor) calls "conscientisation", a process of developing consciousness, but a consciousness that has the power to transform reality (1993:52). In order for dialogue to be successful, there's a need for critical consciousness of an individual's present reality and an identification of the dominant hegemony that controls the power. Freire believes that in order to create true social transformation, there has to be critical thinking that precedes critical action to achieve social transformation. This critical awareness of an individual's present reality is essential in critical dialogue between individuals.

Within the critical thinking which Freire advocates, reflection is included for the discovery of new insights. Reflection itself cannot be responsible for the transformation; Freire states that suitable appropriate action as a result of this reflection is important. Freire terms this Praxis, which is the action and reflection of people upon their world in order to transform it. In his

discussion of Freire's notion of Praxis, Paul Taylor describes it as "action's active reflection and reflective action" (1993: 56).

This study therefore aligns with Freire's notion that for transformative dialogue to occur there has to be praxis. The notion of dialogue as 'praxis' whereby an individual is able to act and reflect upon their world through their words is acknowledged and this assumes that the individuals involved in the dialogue use the same language to communicate. Praxis in dialogue is then challenged once there is a noticeable difference in language within the individuals' dialogue. This is the challenge encountered between the dominant hearing society and the Deaf community.

3.5 Boal's insight into Theatre

It is this imbalance in language, which I am interested in investigating in an integrated theatre with hearing and Deaf performers. Freire's theory of emancipation through dialogue influenced Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal (1995) and this is evident in Boal's theory of utilising theatre to liberate an individual from personal oppression, which has grown out of his earlier work with oppressed groups (1979).

According to Boal, drama is a powerful liberatory tool between people because it is based on people's ability to play**.** Play is a social activity that all humans have engaged in, consciously and unconsciously, whereby complex material, social and personal behaviours and lessons are learnt in the imaginary world. Early play theorist, Johan Huizinga saw play as a "special form of activity" and a well defined quality of action which is different from ordinary life. In his definition, Huizinga included what he described as the "chief characteristics" of play:

- Play is voluntary
- Play is not ordinary or real life
- Play is secluded and limited
- Play creates order, is order

- Play surrounds itself with secrecy

(cited in Henricks 2006:12-14).

According to social scientist Sutton-Smith (1997) some researchers of Play have focussed on "play as progress, . . whereby play is an expression of the developing, mental, and emotional capabilities of the child" (Henricks 2006: 3,5). This view has been instrumental in understanding the potency of play in serving a function beyond the recreational realm of children. Understanding play is instrumental to understanding its role within theatre. Play is a pleasurable activity, which is unlike reality but rather an enjoyable version of reality, lacking real consequences. This study therefore chooses to deploy African theatre scholar Kennedy Chinyowa (2005)'s references to the artistic features of play. These features "have a particular bearing on play as a medium in development communication" (2005:23).

This study finds alignment with Chinyowa's discussion of play as a medium in the development of communication, or rather in the case of my research, of the role of play in the development of communication and dialogue in the theatre devising process. Chinyowa identifies six artistic features of play:

1. Enjoyment: The players are able to partake in an activity free from any guilt or fear of real consequences while having fun.
2. Freedom: Play exists outside the confines of ordinary time and space but remains subject to the making and breaking of rules by the players.
3. Rules: Players abide by a binding contract that contains the imaginary world of the play.
4. Space: A set apart area dedicated to the observation and execution of the rules of the play.
5. Imagination: A place within the player's mind where there are ranges of possibilities; where something may exist in the players' minds but has not yet materialised.
6. Secrecy and disguise: The bond between players is exclusive of outsiders who are not part of the 'group' activity

(2005)

Drama is a formalised extension of play, as the purposes of drama and play are similar. Cecily O'Neill describes the purposes of process drama as 'to establish an imagined world, a dramatic "elsewhere" created by the participants as they discover, articulate and sustain fictional roles and situations' (1995: ixv). It is also within this dramatic elsewhere that Boal recognised that he could assist oppressed groups in his native Brazil to recognise social oppression and rehearse ways of overcoming the oppression through drama. For Boal, playing was the prelude to creating dramatic action upon impulse. In creating his theatre with the Spect-Actors, a heightened level of improvisation was needed. For Boal's theatre devising process "participants are invited to 'play', not to 'interpret', characters but they will 'play' better to the extent that they will 'interpret better'". (1979:130)

To create a powerful way to express meanings through drama, Boal identifies using expressive images to convey understandings through metaphor and symbols as better than any language. Boal reiterates that the search to make meaning of the real world lies within the imagined world and the body is an appropriate and immediate tool to interrogate this. Boal explains the intersection of bodily expression and play in theatre devising as such:

> What is important in games of this type is not to guess right but rather that all the participants try to express themselves through their bodies, something that they are not used to doing. Without realising it they will in fact be giving a "dramatical performance."
>
> (ibid)

Boal uses the individual's body as a text through which to represent reality; he uses the individuals' bodies to make images of oppressions they see in their reality and to interrogate these images in the imaginary world of drama. For drama practitioner, Dorothy Heathcote drama "enables participants to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meanings" (Cited in Wagner 1999:1).

In order for individuals to perform a more active role in interrogating their real oppressions using drama, Boal chooses to challenge the traditional roles of actor-spectator. In individuals becoming Spect-Actors, they are able to discover different worlds between their world, selves

and community in the metaxis (Linds, 2006). In dominant society devising meaningful theatre in the metaxis often entails a dialogue between the performers throughout the process in the dominant language. In a Deaf and hearing integrated theatre this is problematic, as performers are not able to fully engage with both real and imaginary worlds simultaneously because of an absence of a common language. The study agrees with Boal when he states that 'metaxis is not an act of solidarity; in order to share in the image…the image of reality is presented in another form to bring out metaxis in the other person' (1995:43). In the same way as drama is a social art form, so is theatre, and theatre devising requires a collective co-operation. For Deaf and hearing performers in an integrated theatre, the linguistic division existing amongst them may have a negative impact on the theatre devising process where discussions will occur, but no collective critical dialogue is present to ensure the creation of meaningful theatre.

This study explores the possibility of Freire's praxis in the dialogue between the Deaf and Hearing participants within the metaxis of the work of **From The Hip: Khulumakahle.**

Chapter Four

INVESTIGATING INTEGRATED THEATRE

According to Barnartt and Altman (2001), there have been recent developments in the study of disability in the social sciences, yet little research has been undertaken intersecting disability and the performing arts. As earlier stated by Ladd (2003), new discourses regarding d/Deaf persons should not be separated from the relationship between hearing and d/Deaf persons and the present study investigated Deaf visibility in the arts with hearing performers.

Barnartt and Altman (2001) note that, historically, research including disabled persons has been quantitative, and therefore tends to be uninformative about the more subjective and qualitative aspects of being disabled. The same applies with d/Deaf persons. The present study undertook a qualitative approach in the collection of data, as Mazumdar and Gilbert (2001) note that qualitative methods in disability research "convey the most significant elements of the world of persons with disabilities and provide […] advanced understanding of that world" (2001: 256).

4.1 The case study

In this research I chose to employ the case study method in collecting my data. Case study can be defined in many ways, but this study will identify with sociologist Robert Yin's definition of a case study as:

- An empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

And,

- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion

> In other words, the case study as a research strategy comprises an all-encompassing method – with the logic of design incorporating specific approaches to data collection and to data analysis.
>
> (1994: 13)

I identified **From the Hip: Khulumakahle (FTH:K)** as my case study because it is South Africa's only professional integrated theatre company with Deaf and hearing performers. I am aware of the presence of an integrated dance company in South Africa, Remix Dance Project, yet the case of FTH:K is appropriate to this present study. In focussing on the dialogue between Deaf and hearing performers, this study has been able to do what Yin (1994: 21) describes as an "exploration" case study. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether theatre devising was effective in facilitating a collective dialogue between the hearing and Deaf performers in the work of **From The Hip: Khulumakahle**. In addition, if such dialogue was present, this study investigated whether the use and treatment of the spoken language and SASL were equal throughout the theatre devising process.

4.2 The methods used

In order to have a deeper understanding of dialogue within the theatre devising process of FTH:K, I chose various data collecting methods through which to investigate the theatre devising process. In order to have a credible case study, I as the researcher had to "spend time searching, seeking and probing to obtain data to provide the necessary insight for a deeper than superficial understanding of the phenomenon, its origins, development and current form" (Mazumdar and Geis, 2001: 262). For this I chose to collect data from selected participants in FTH:K. The company consists of 6 members; the three trainee-actors, two are Deaf and one is hearing, company director, creative director and company administrator. As the present research is focused on dialogue in the theatre devising process, I made the conscious decision not to include the company administrator as a participant. The administrator has been

involved in the writing of the major production, GUMBO, but the research aimed at gathering data from the key members involved in the theatre devising process in all productions from the inception of the company until to date.

The data collection methods I utilised in this research were observation, individual interviews and recorded video material.

4.3 Observation

I had allocated two weeks at the end of July 2008 as the data collection period with the company in Cape Town. Those two weeks were the most convenient time that FTH:K could host me during my data collection period. Before arriving at the company, I had arranged with the company director telephonically and via emails four months earlier that I would be present in the day-to-day activities of the performers during the company working hours. As she was my contact with the rest of the company, I had also requested that I also had assistance in the form of a videographer who would be helping me in the recording in the second week. I had decided that my videographer would join me on the site with the participants in the first week in order for the participants to be familiar with him, and he with them before the recording of data the following week. I made this decision in order to minimise any problems of the participants acting unnaturally in the presence of a video recorder. I also chose to not impose myself on the participants after hours in order to continue collecting my data; instead, I left that decision with the participants in determining how much I interacted with them outside the company environment.

O'Leary describes the observation in qualitative research as a "systematic method of data collection that relies on a researcher's ability to gather data through his or her senses" (2004: 170). Before I observed the performers, I had to plan what kind of observations I would undertake in collecting the data that is necessary to answer my research questions. Before I

began with the observations, I had to first determine how much I should disclose to the participants about the nature of the research. I decided to be candid about the first research question, explaining that I was looking at the dialogue used between the Deaf and hearing performer in devising theatre.

In offering some disclosure about the nature of my observations to the participants, I allowed participants to know what they might expect to find during the observation process. In return, the participants allowed me to take notes on site (O'Leary, 2004). This was challenging as the participants became uncomfortable at various times during the two weeks. I felt that the participants felt that they were under surveillance and I felt that I was eavesdropping on conversations between the participants.

The participants then decided to invite my videographer and I to participate in various activities, such as morning exercise classes. This also made remaining objective challenging, as the feeling of being immersed in the company's culture threatened to taint my critical view of the company. To counter this, I used a semi-structured plan (previously devised) for the observation method as, I attempted to focus more intently on the research question of dialogue between Deaf and hearing participants while also being able to record the unplanned and/or unexpected (O'Leary, 2004). This planning came in handy when I unexpectedly moved to being a participant-observer from the initial 'straight' observer. During this period, I took extensive field notes that were structured both towards identifying the dialogue of the participants in different sites as well as any unexpected or unplanned events that affected the participants.

4.4 Interviews

For the research, I employed semi-structured interviews in collecting data from my participants. The reason I chose to have semi-structured interviews was to keep the tone

between the researcher and participants as relaxed as possible. O' Leary describes semi-structured interviews:

> [T]hese interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free, and are perhaps best seen as flexible. Interviewers generally start with some defined questioning plan, but pursue a more conversational style of interview that may see questions answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation. They may also start with a few defined questions but be ready to pursue any interesting tangents that may develop.
>
> (2004: 164).

Semi-structured interviews were also beneficial in this case study, as they provided a source of evidence and allowed the participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, nuanced with additional non-verbal suggestion. This enabled a richness of data, not only large amounts of data, but in-depth data about crucial factors (Mazumdar and Gilbert, 2001).

4.5 Video recording of data

The visual nature of the research required me to video record interviews as well as rehearsals. I chose this data collection method in order to be able to later analyse the interviews conducted and rehearsals at a later stage. Drama has an ephemeral nature and combined with the visual language of SASL to be able to adequately research it, recordings of events are required. The recording of data, allowed me the opportunity to focus on the question/answer process at hand while all visual cues were preserved on camera (O'Leary, 2004), but it also came with challenges.

Whilst recording the performers in rehearsal, the performers initially avoided being within sight of the camera. Although, I wanted to be as unobtrusive as possible, I also had to be close enough to be able to see the SASL communication clearly for analysis later. However, after a few hours, the performers would forget the camera and continue with their rehearsals. When recording the participants with the Deaf learners, the learners would begin losing focus on the Tell/Tales or intermediate workshops and begin performing to the camera instead. The performers noticed it and requested that my videographer and I show the learners how the

camera operated first before the beginning of the workshops. This was successful, as the learners had their curiosity satisfied about the camera and temporarily went back to their respective workshops. This did not prevent the learners from performing to the camera towards the end of the workshops. Throughout the majority of the workshops, however, the learners temporarily forgot about the camera.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The research aimed to comply with the ethical standards set by the University of the Witwatersrand. Consequently, care was taken to see that participants' rights to confidentiality were respected. While no obvious harm to the participants was anticipated, pseudonyms are used in this report for participants who requested anonymity, as well as the disguising of all identifying data of the participants. Recorded interviews will also be kept confidential and will be stored securely until after this report has been finalised and marked at which point they will be returned to individual participants, as per their requests.

Participation in the study was voluntary and the research aims were made transparent to participants prior to the study. All participants were required to sign a consent form detailing the nature of their participation and the procedures to be followed by the researcher. To ensure that all parties involved were fully informed, permission to conduct the research was gained from the company management. I gave the Deaf participants the opportunity to read the letter of consent but I also signed the contents of the letter to them. Since the Gauteng dialect of SASL is different to the Cape dialect, hearing members of the company also assisted me in interpreting to the Deaf participants the full details of the letter and study. Permission to video-record the participants while conducting the workshops at the school for the Deaf was obtained by the company on behalf of the researcher.

I have taken into account my role of being an able-bodied researcher researching a hearing/Deaf integrated theatre company. I'm aware that historically the role of the non-disabled researcher is seen as parasitic on the lives of disabled persons (Branfield, 1998) by

disabled persons. In addition, although I am not in the majority of non-disabled researchers who have experiences of Deafness through my family, as suggested by Shakespeare (2003), Ladd (2003)'s term of the subaltern researcher resonates with me. As a black female researcher, I fall within a minority in dominant society. This knowledge of my apparent societal minority status attracted me to researching other minorities in society. Since I have a history of exposure to the South African Deaf community and culture, it became apparent to me to focus my research within the Deaf community. Within my experiences with Deaf and hearing colleagues and activists, I am influenced by their emancipatory paradigm of examining issues relating to the Deaf community. Although I share in the emancipatory sentiments of my colleagues, this study focuses on investigating the emancipation of Deaf performers within an integrated Deaf/hearing theatre company such as FTH:K and this will become evident in the following discussion and analysis of my findings.

Chapter Five

SIGNS OF COMMUNICATION IN FROM THE HIP:KHULUMAKAHLE

5.1 The Language of FTH:K

The first thing that I noticed about the members of **From The Hip: Khulumakahle,** was that both the Deaf and hearing company members communicate predominantly in South African Sign Language. FTH:K has made a conscious effort to communicate in SASL whenever the Deaf performers are present in rehearsals, company meetings and when teaching at the local school for the Deaf.

Initially, the company had not considered using SASL as the language to communicate in. As Tanya Surtees (TS) and Rob Murray (RM), the company manager and creative director respectively, were not yet familiar with SASL they began devising theatre using written scripts. It was initially expected that the Deaf performers would be able to read the scripts and from there, sign the text while the hearing performers would use some speech from the same scripts. With little knowledge of SASL, the company assumed that a written script would be a suitable alternative to communication and theatre devising amongst Deaf and hearing performers. But it soon became evident that understanding the written scripts was problematic for the Deaf performers, as RM noted:

> "We discovered two immensely important things, well actually a whole bunch, but the two major ones was that there is still a domination of language; giving them something and it's not their mother tongue, and going, "Right, this is what, this is what you want to do,"… Um, secondly, there is a huge literacy problem with the Deaf community…"
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

The Deaf performers' perceived apathy around the use of scripts confused FTH:K management. Only when the Deaf performers approached company management regarding their struggle with written language did FTH:K understand the linguistic dilemma facing

them. The Deaf performers could not be expected to use speech and the use of written scripts had also become problematic in communication amongst the company members. This was noted as a learning experience, as it prompted FTH:K to re-evaluate the concept of theatre devising with Deaf performers. As a result, the company decided that it would be beneficial for SASL to be the fundamental language used in communication and in theatre devising. It would also be easier for the hearing members to learn SASL, a visual-gestural language, than for the Deaf performers to learn speech. The hearing Company members underwent a short intensive training in SASL through a local organisation, SLED (Sign Language Education and Development). The Company began studying SASL in Feb 2005 and all current hearing employees have passed stages 1 and 2 of the accredited 3-stage course. In the interests of equity and development, the Deaf performers also began attending adult literacy classes at a local NGO, Deaf Community of Cape Town, where they continue to attend the classes on a weekly basis.

5.2 A new understanding of theatre devising

As a result of the lessons learnt from the initial miscommunication between the Deaf and hearing company members, FTH:K began re-evaluating their theatre devising processes. Increasingly less emphasis was placed on the use of scripts in the devising process, and more on the discovery of alternative theatre devising modes that would be effective with Deaf and hearing performers. For FTH:K, this was a turning point within the company as they began looking at the manner in which people might communicate before a shared language is present.

The emphasis on SASL, has resulted in the company including more visual modes of communication in their theatre devising process. FTH:K began rethinking the ways in which people communicate without relying on spoken or signed language and they explored the body as a primary means of communication. Gestures have become important in the conveying of meanings and communication between performers. For FTH:K, the introduction of physical gestures into the theatre devising process marked the beginning of the company

investigating their notion of integrated theatre between Deaf and hearing performers. The company also began exploring the use of other modes of theatre devising such as puppets, masks, lights and sound. Although the Deaf performers may not hear the sounds like the hearing performers, they can experience the sounds through the vibrations on stage. The use of sound combined with lights and the physical cues from the hearing performers makes it possible for the Deaf performers to be involved in the theatre devising process.

5.3 Theatre devising in the FTH:K programme

This study initially aimed to observe the company's process in devising a performance, but in the end, I was able to observe a combination of the Tell/Tale Signs and Intermediate Programme run at a local school for the Deaf, and rehearsals for the company's upcoming residency programme in Worcester. The theatre devising modes employed by FTH:K are also used in their Tell/Tales and Intermediate workshops but at a more basic level with the learners as an introduction.

The Tell/Tales Signs and Intermediate Programme workshops are facilitated by the company trainees; R*, J* and T*. All the trainees are part of FTH:K's IPDP (Integrated Deaf/hearing Professional Development Programme) which is a three year program in itself. The following diagram is an illustration of the training and development levels employed by FTH:K with the trainees and learners from the school for the Deaf.

**Not their real names.*

The Tell/Tales Signs Programme is run twice a week in the two schools indicated with the Intermediate programme facilitated once a week. The workshops run for a period of 10 months and culminate in a final performance piece showcased to the rest of the school at the end of the year during the schools' Arts and Culture Festival.

Within the Tell/Tales programme, R and J have been training the learners in expressing themselves through their bodies by using games. These workshops held in the school hall accommodate the group of learners, which is on average about 14 in number. At the beginning of the workshop, R and J explain a simple game aimed at making the learners aware of themselves and their partners' bodies. Before beginning the game, R and J demonstrated the game and its rules. The game is such: A learner walks around the room with their partner following close behind them. The leader of the pair can walk in any manner across the room but it is the job of the 'follower' to closely observe the leader's walk and try to emulate it as closely as possible. R and J emphasise while they demonstrate that the learners must not only focus on the walk of the leader but also look at the small gestures and movements of the rest of the body. This includes closely observing if the follower has a stooped head and clenched fist etc, while walking. The learners found this challenging to observe and emulate the physical characteristics of their partners' and their own. At the end of the one partner's 'leadership' walk, R and J would signal to the learners to swap over; the leader is now the follower and vice versa. Some of the learners would be very cheeky and try to outrun their followers but R, J and T always reminded the learners that they were to work as a partners and not individuals in the game.

Towards the end of this game, R, J and T began explaining to the learners that they would be further developing the game by performing it all together as a group. J began this demonstration with a simple walk. R then followed but she modified the walk briefly by changing a small characteristic of it, such as over-exaggerating her arm movements as she walked. T also followed and made a small change in a physical characteristic of R's walk. As the trio continued walking around the room, J explained the game further to the learners to

make sure that they were clear on the instructions. The learners began joining the trio tentatively but within a few seconds, the class was participating creating their own physical characteristics based on the walk of the person ahead of them.

In the following Tell/Tales Signs Programme, R and J began introducing the learners to mask work. Though R facilitated these workshops because she had a prior knowledge of mask work, J and T were her assistants. R asked the learners to get into pairs again and gave each pair a mask she had brought with her. She first demonstrated with J what she expected the learners to do; one learner would have a mask and their primary goal was to 'sculpt' their 'partner's faces' into that similar to the mask. Once that was completed, the sculptor would them continue sculpting the rest of the 'partner's body' into a physical characteristic they saw as fitting the mask 'sculptor'. Upon completion, the sculpture would press an imaginary remote control to make the mask character move. It is up to the mask character to decide how they move but they must keep the sculpted mask and physical characteristics as they walk across the room. The Tell/Tales Sign Programme usually accommodates a few games with the learners, as there is such limited time available.

Through the exercises described above, the performers aim to train the learners to communicate using the gestural language of the body. To facilitate an understanding of gestural language, the learners are taught through observation and awareness of the body. For the learners, the awareness of gestures and movements of the body are no longer arbitrary, as the exercises begin to build a 'vocabulary' for the learners. The performers teach this theatrical vocabulary experientially, i.e. the learners observe the demonstrations and then perform the actions themselves.

In demonstrating the exercises to the learners, the performers emphasise that gestures are not 'general' but consist of movements of and specific relationships between a number of smaller parts of the body in the communication in theatre. During the demonstration, the performers

often point out the parts of the body at work within a gesture and the specific movements in minute detail. The emphasis on details is important in the training of the theatrical vocabulary. Often a demonstration would be paused and analysed by the performers by locating the parts of the body utilised in the gesture, and the specific details of the movement in terms of energy dynamic, dimensions of space used, and speed. It would first begin with looking at the whole body and identifying what the body is communicating. The performers encouraged the learners to describe the interpretations of the movements and gestures. The performers would then question the reason behind the interpretations. The analysis of the body is important in cultivating awareness around the importance of various parts of the body in creating communication through the body.

When the learners began using the masks in addition to learning communication through their bodies, the masks served as a prop in enhancing the gestural language of the learners. In his discussion of masks in performance training, Lecoq (2006) argues that masks are played in two ways; with the mask or against it. In order to understand this notion, learners need to be aware of the gestures the body can produce that correlate with the expression on the mask or are an antithesis to it. To achieve either effect, the learners need to demonstrate through kinaesthetic awareness how their bodies add to or detract from the mask. Through the learners performing the exercises, they move from being aware of the broad gestures that the body makes to looking at the minute detail such as the facial expressions, and the head/body alignment to add detail to the broader gesture. The learners do not initially wear the masks because that will detract from the dual awareness of the broader bodily gestures and the finer details involved, as they have not yet mastered the difference between the obvious broader gestures of the body and smaller gestures that are not as obvious but add detail to the broader communication.

The intermediate programme is more advanced than the previous one. A selected group of talented learners identified by the performers from the school programme are educated and trained further in performance. In the intermediate workshops, trainees have a smaller group

to work with and therefore spend more time devising with the learners. R and J facilitate these workshops at the FTH:K premises assisted by T. These workshops build on the learners' foundations of using the body to express themselves by focusing on the importance of building trust between performers as trust enhances communication within a creative context. The workshops often began with trust games that consisted of a learner becoming able to trust their colleagues with their bodies. R and J demonstrated this exercise. With the learners standing in a circle around R, she explained that being in the centre of the circle, she would close her eyes and let her body fall in any direction. While she fell, whichever learners' nearest to her would catch her softly and gently guide her body back into the circle. All the while, R's feet would be grounded in one place and she would be moving her upper body the most. After R and J had demonstrated the game, the learners were uncertain regarding their safety and a few even refused to be in the centre of the circle but they continued to give support to those inside the circle.

The above exercises are important in the training of theatre devising with the learners, as they involve trust, which is an important element in any communal creative process and even more so in a situation of unequal power relationships with performers communicating with each other using gestural language. Once learners have progressed from learning about the basic kinaesthetic awareness needed in theatre, they begin to learn to trust one another with their bodies. The exercises described are important in developing an awareness of the body's communicative ability as well as its limitations in terms of what it can communicate. The aim of a trust exercise is receptive interaction among participants to enhance responsiveness and orientation in the body, being comfortable with others and awareness of kinaesthetic boundaries within which the participants can feel safe.

Trust exercises are important in communication between the performers, as they encourage the performer to take risks with their bodies within the creation of theatre. The theatre devising process relies on gestural communication and requires performers to be able to communicate in various ways using their bodies on stage. For this to happen, performers need

to trust each other with their bodies. Trust exercises are an important aspect of theatre training and the theatre-making process, as it is essential in facilitation to open up communication between the performers. Open communication between performers helps to facilitate uninhibited creativity. When performers are able to communicate openly and trust one another with their bodies in creating a gestural language in theatre, the theatre devising process itself is less inhibited and more playful.

The trust games evolved as the workshop progressed and consisted of learners running from the far end of a room and jumping to be caught by the rest of the group. Once again, R and J demonstrated where the learners would be running from, and also how the remaining learners would stand at attention waiting to catch the jumper. It was interesting to note that the learners who were reluctant to join in the previous game often enjoyed jumping and being caught by their colleagues. The games usually ended with R, J and T playing a ball game that consisted of the whole group working together to make sure that the ball would continue to bounce between the group and never touch the ground. The learners enjoyed this game thoroughly. They competed amongst each other to keep the ball in the air the longest by making sure that they positioned themselves well to receive and pass the ball during the game. There was a great deal of emotional investment in the game; once the group surpassed the previous record of keeping the ball up, they celebrated together. On the other hand, when someone made a mistake and dropped the ball, the rest of the group was disappointed with the individual because the individual caused the game to end prematurely. Yet they were always ready to restart the game.

The aim of the above game, to keep the ball in the air, is similar to communication in the theatre devising process. The performers need to be aware of their own bodies as well as other performers in the space to be able to move around without colliding into each other but also to communicate with each other with, in this case, the goal of keeping the ball in the air. In theatre devising it is the ideas and their connotations, which are explored by keeping them ‘in the air’. When describing games, such as one of the Seven Aspects of Spontaneity,

practitioner Viola Spolin states that through the spontaneity in games, the player's (participant) personal freedom is released and the total person, physically, intellectually and intuitively is awakened (1963). It is through games, like the exercise above, that the performer is able to open channels of creative freedom in the theatre devising process. It is when performers become more familiar with each others' bodies in creating a gestural language that communication can occur.

It is after the group ball game, which can continue for a long time, that the trainees begin focussing on the devising of the end of year performance with the learners. The trainees had previously introduced a story idea to the learners and the learners divided into smaller groups and had an opportunity to devise short scenes around the proposed story idea. Although it is evident that the learners are being trained in theatre devising through developing a gestural language with which to communicate, Spolin stresses the importance of the performer not coming with preconceived ideas in a dramatic action, as she believes it inhibits true spontaneity (1963). I have noticed that the performers do not use a story to inhibit the learners, the story acts as a catalyst in exploring different creative theatrical ideas with the learners. When I questioned the performers, they emphasised how using a story contributed to the communication between the hearing and Deaf performers, and learners. The Tell/Tales and Intermediate Programme have the dual purpose of educating the learners, and functioning as an audition process with the aim of incorporating Deaf performers into FTH:K or into the South African Theatre industry.

Throughout my period of observation and interviews with the performers and management of FTH:K the following themes became apparent to me:

5.4 Theme One – Concepts of Family

FTH:K was born out of a vision for a company that would be a combination of a community of clowns and Deaf performers involved in the South African Theatre Industry. According to

TS, when members have joined the company, they assumed certain roles within the company. However, these roles are not static in that as the company grows, the company members' roles will also change. TS describes the company structure in the following way:

> We have like a little family here…And then you have mom and dad and that's Ugli (RM) and I.
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

It is interesting to note that this feeling of a familial structure is shared amongst the hearing company members. Both RM and R shared TS's sentiments around FTH:K being similar in structure to a family. On the other hand, J and T made no explicit claims to either support or disprove the notion of FTH:K as a family. However, through my observations of the rehearsals for the Worcester residency, it became evident that J maintains closer 'familial' ties to the rest of the company members than T. This could be because T is new to the company and has not firmly developed a role for himself within the company.

J sees his role within FTH:K as more complex than that described by TS.

> (Transcription of SASL into English)
>
> R and I get on VERY well. It's because we've been performing together since the beginning in 2005….But now I feel torn between R and T; I want to be up ahead with R but when I look back and see T behind (sigh) I have to come back and encourage him to make sure that we're all equal.
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

J also describes this feeling of being torn between people to also feeling torn between home and work.

> It gets difficult for my family (spatially locating the sign FAMILY away from WORK). My family sometimes gets frustrated with me because of all the travelling I do. I seem to have to juggle between both to keep them happy. (sigh) I'm tired.
>
> (2008, Cape town)

These complexities in the differing concepts of family are seen in the theatre devising process of FTH:K. From the beginning, RM has always been the creative director father-figure with

the aim of providing the expert eye in the devising process. In effect, RM's role is to train the performers in his background of physical performance and make sure that the performances are clear in their vision. The implications for power relations are that RM often has the most input in the outcomes of the performance. While suggestions may come from the performers and there might even be the beginnings of some sort of discussion regarding ideas, RM ultimately decides. Even between the hearing and Deaf performers themselves, RM's opinion on devised performances is held in higher regard because of the role that he plays within the company. To RM's credit, in the initial theatre devising stages, he learnt quickly that his having the ultimate say in the devising process was not an appropriate way to devise theatre between hearing and Deaf performers due to the linguistic barriers. This also brought to light the power implications of having a hearing man deciding the outcomes of a devising process that is supposed to be collective. By virtue of RM possessing the theatrical training knowledge (discourse), he possessed more power in influencing the trainee performers and the outcomes of the theatre performance. This level of power also affected the dialoguing process between the performers and himself, as the power of his theatre devising knowledge would silence the other performers. The theatre devising process would not be dialogic as Freire (1970) advocated in the exchange of knowledge, but rather a transfer of knowledge from RM to the performers. The performers did not have the opportunity to contribute any knowledge or experience into the theatre devising process. RM describes an early theatre devising incident as such:

> So we were kind of imposing on them that idea that we the hearing are telling them this is what we want you to say; which is, which is not a cool way to start…
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

FTH:K became aware of the power that it had over the theatre devising process by virtue of their 'expert' knowledge in theatre devising techniques. Yet at the same time, the initial assumption that the Deaf performers would understand the written scripts as a substitute for spoken language was problematic. It is then evident that the company possessed a double linguistic power over the Deaf performers. Firstly, FTH:K assumed that the Deaf performers

had no ‘language’ to express the theatre devising process and secondly, in the presenting of scripts as a suitable alternative to SASL language for the Deaf performers. This initial process of theatre devising was similar to Freire’s banking system of education; whereby the hearing members of FTH:K possessed all the theatre devising knowledge and transferred it into the minds of the Deaf performers during the theatre devising process.

This depositing of knowledge from FTH:K to the Deaf performers is also an example of Foucault’s Discourse Theory. In FTH:K those with formal theatre training possess the discourse of the theatre devising process, this unconsciously marginalised the Deaf performers as it was assumed that the Deaf performers didn’t possess an appropriate language for an alternative theatre devising process. This is not to say that that FTH:K were conscious of the power they exercised over the Deaf performers, rather, FTH:K had unconsciously accepted the dominant society’s medical definition of deafness as disability and the Deaf as ‘languageless’ in relation to the hearing performers.

As the father figure within FTH:K, RM was then able to see that their initial manner of theatre devising was not working because there was a fundamental dominance of written language that prevented a collective dialogue between the Deaf and hearing performers. The theatre devising process could be described as a jostling of power between the hearing and Deaf performers within FTH:K. The hearing performers couldn’t understand the apparent apathetic attitudes of the Deaf to the written scripts, while the Deaf performers tried to understand theatre devising in a language dissimilar to their own. It was then that issues of power were understood and it was decided that the hearing members of FTH:K would attend SASL classes.

As a result, TS, as FTH:K’s mother figure, took on the role of making sure that everyone in FTHK could communicate and understand each other within the theatre devising process and in the company as a whole. FTH:K therefore encouraged the Deaf performers to improve their written language skills by attending literacy classes taught in SASL. In having both hearing

and Deaf members of FTH:K learning each other's languages, the theatre devising process therefore became easier to negotiate. It offered the opportunity for dialogue to occur between the performers. This dialogue not only opened up channels of communication but also resulted in genuine engagement and partnership, including an awareness of power relations (Freire, 1979). This marked the beginning of FTH:K's investigation of the notion of integrated theatre. Rob describes it as follows:

> The more successful we are, the more we continue and grow and develop and…um…the more we…can help other people and show them that it's fine, you can actually let people who are from a different culture, people who can't hear, but it's, you know, you can learn their language, you can learn the basics of their language and adjust and be accessible. And be more open and listen to the stories, spend some time with another person. Um, and that's incredible, it's a, it's a culture we know so little about, and still know so little about but are learning the whole time and now I have a couple of years of experience of being together. And that's quite remarkable. And, and, and the influence that it's had on us as people is profound, but also as theatre makers. We come from a very physical background, so it's not, it's not necessarily about…words and language and stuff like that…
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

It is in this process of both hearing and Deaf performers learning each other's languages that praxis is possible. It is when both the hearing and the Deaf performers are able to communicate in a language both understand that significant theatre can be devised. However, the common language of SASL and the improvement in literacy is not a guarantee that the theatre devising will be equitable; rather a constant awareness of power relations is needed.

FTH:K also began examining how people communicate without a verbal language because they found that written and spoken language are sometimes a liability in the theatre devising process. Spoken language, according to FTH:K, began to display deficiencies in conveying theatre devising possibilities, as spoken language inhibited creativity between Deaf and hearing performers. Theatre devising, when solely relying on one language, tends to inhibit

spontaneity within the performer. FTH:K saw the body as being instrumental in the conveying of meanings between people before any spoken or signed utterance. They continue to explore how two performers can devise a piece of theatre using their bodies as primary communicators. This does not exclude the occasional inclusion of signs and words but the focus is on the body as a primary means of communication.

This form of theatre devising aims to be more democratic in its approach, unlike commercial theatre that is hierarchical. Commercial theatre has the playwright and director having more power than the performers themselves in the creating of a performance. The performers are mere pawns in the hands of the director and playwright (who can also be one person). The model of theatre devising that FTH:K is trying to create is in its experimental phase, as the concept of family held by the company helps in facilitating a more democratic and communal theatre devising process. Although there are inherent power relations within each role played by each member of the FTH:K family, the theatre devising process becomes more dialogic in nature, as the company attempts to create a collective dialogue amongst the FTH:K family.

The concept of family in FTH:K in the theatre devising process follows the traditional hierarchical set up in which there is a father figure (artistic director),a mother figure (company manager) and children (performers). Although there has been an established communication of gestural language equally understood by all in the theatre devising process, there are still power relations present within FTH:K. This study is therefore cognisant of the fact that the power within the theatre devising process lies more with the parental figures (RM and TS) than the child figures (R, T and J). Sociologist Richard J. Gelles (1995) defines family as a social group that possesses an identifiable structure made up of positions and interaction among those that occupy the positions. The power within those positions, no matter how gently exhibited, determines the function of the family.

5.5 Theme Two – The role of Play

As the primary instigator within the theatre devising process, RM often includes play in the process with the Deaf and hearing performers. In fact play is a fundamental component within the theatre devising. When I asked the performers what they do for fun outside of FTH:K, all of them could not make a clear distinction between play and work because they felt that work at FTH:K was play. TM notes:

> We play a lot, and it gets very tense and very passionate, um, but there, there's a classic example, setting up these, organizing these activities by putting rules on to it and see what happens, see what kind of interesting drama comes out and help people get … so fired up and so disappointed, so angry and so…jubilant because there you've got drama happening, you got the beginnings of a story and then if somebody was watching that with an eye to make it a theatre piece it would then be to pick up the elements… and, and to redo it but in a slightly different way and to slowly put it all together.
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

Playing is an important part of the theatre devising process for FTH:K as they have discovered that it is an appropriate medium to devise theatre that is not reliant on language. Play has become such an important element to FTH:K that RM has included it in the daily training schedule of the performers. As reiterated by the performers, playing has become instrumental in their theatre devising process. In my interviews with the performers, each one would talk extensively about the positive effect the playing in the theatre devising process is for them. The ball game previously mentioned, is a number of the performers' favourite game. The excitement it generates keeps them wanting to play it repeatedly. In the game, the rules are simple:

1. Begin by passing the ball from the far end of the room across the barrier of chairs.
2. Pass the ball to the opposing team before your teammate.
3. Do not drop the ball!

In just those simple rules, dramatic performances occur between the performers when a teammate makes a mistake or when a team wins. The victory dances and gestures used by the

team are ephemeral but, according to RM, when the performers begin devising, those spontaneous moments are captured, to be used later in the process. The physical nature of FTH:K's performances requires performers to be able to trust each other with each others' bodies and playing games assists to build teamwork, community and the trust needed for performers to rely on each other.

Keith Johnstone (1979), in his discussion of teaching performers improvisation and spontaneity, emphasises that performers should not try to consciously control the improvisation because that limits spontaneous creativity. Johnstone argues that any action a performer does can be used to create theatre with other performers. All that is needed is willingness between partners to accept what occurs and to respond instinctively and instantaneously to it, bypassing the 'judging' or considering process which is so much part of taking action in reality. This giving and receiving of cues by each performer is important for Johnstone as it encourages the creative process to continue. Johnstone also emphasises that spontaneity in improvisation is a collective process where each performer works at making the other performer 'look good' by making and receiving cues. In this way each partner works towards creating the most interesting theatrical moments possible, for each other. The same notion of making and receiving spontaneous cues applies to FTH:K. During the playing, performers make conscious efforts to pass the ball (cue) to the other performers so performers can also continue the game. Wherever the ball spontaneously goes, it is from there that the performer has to decide where the ball should next go with the aim of continuing the play. It is also within the spontaneous playful moments that elements for the theatre devising occur. However, there are still roles that the performers undertake in this process; because of the level of immersion in the play they can miss theatrical moments between them. In such instances, J describes RM's role within the theatre devising process as:

> We start devising by playing together but often RM stops the play to freeze moments to be used later.
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

It is in these moments of freezing the action and repeating it to be used later again, that the playing within theatre devising between Deaf and hearing performers becomes important.

According to Chinyowa (2005), discursive frames of play are important in the theatre devising process, as it is in this frame that meanings are made within theatre. Although he situates his discussion in African theatre for development, the same applies in the context of this study as both contexts are of a communal form of theatre devising.

RM does not only rely on the performers' playing amongst themselves in the theatre devising process; he has also devised an autocourse. Autocourse is a weekly session, whereby RM gives the performers a theme, an image or an item. The performers task is then to either play individually or amongst themselves and devise a performance to be presented to the rest of the company the following week. During the autocourse performances, RM notices a moments that the performers can play with further and develop in devising a theatre performance. According to the performers, after RM identifies certain moments from the autocourse performances, he'll ask the performers to play around and improvise scenes around the identified moments. In this, performers are able to collaborate with each other based on the playful moments of the performances. Within these playful improvised moments and under the guidance of RM, the performers are able to dialogue with each other spontaneously in the theatre devising process.

Play is not the only method used in devising theatre. As a professional integrated theatre company, FTH:K is constantly in the process of exploring the most appropriate modes of devising theatre between Deaf and hearing performers. Theatre is, as previously mentioned, a more formalised extension of play. In his discussion of the role of the Joker in Forum Theatre, Boal (1979) sees the Joker as important in encouraging Spect-Actors to critically reflect during the theatre devising process.

> Jokers personally decide nothing. They spell out the rules of the game, but in complete acceptance from the outset that the [Spect-Actor] may alter them, if it is deemed necessary…
>
> (1992: 232)

This study therefore posits that RM plays the role of the Joker within the theatre devising between the hearing and Deaf performers. RM is the Provocateur within the theatre devising process, when playing with the performers he provides the critical insight required into the process. RM describes it as such:

> [I]mprovisation for example… suggestions are made and information is given and you as the facilitator, or provocateur, can then use that counter suggest…and that in turn will (gestures hands back and forth across from his body) it's this, again a give and take all the time, but it needs to come from a, a it needs to come from a, from on the floor…with what you've got in front of you. Um, rather than…the director or the writer coming in, "Here, this is what we're doing." It's like, no, no, no, "This is an idea of how we might end up preparing about it," but you can't have the whole thing mapped out…like that…
>
> (2008, Cape Town)

This insight into play as essential in theatre devising is present within Boal's concept of the Joker. In her call for a new Joker in keeping with recently developed Theatre of the Oppressed practices, dramaturg Mady Shutzman asserts that

> Such a Joker would be a communicator not seeking *common* ground so much as maximising the possibilities of the articulation (and re-articulation) of *uncommon* beliefs, working toward a vision of community that thrives on a constant reformulation.
>
> (2006: 143).

Although the context of this statement is within Theatre of the Oppressed, this study resonates with it, as it is a call for a critical 'outsider' perspective in theatre devising. The Joker Shutzman calls for must be present both in the imagined play world and the real world. The Joker is therefore within the metaxis, a term created by Boal (1979) to describe when the performer, and in my case the Joker is conscious of being present in two worlds; the imaginary play world and the real world. RM is present within both worlds, where he can play with the other performers and be able to stop the play action and encourage the performers to 'play' with the moment to devise a theatre performance. This is a powerful position for RM, as in traditional Forum Theatre the Joker position contains the most power as he is able to steer the direction of the theatre. Within the familial power structures present within FTH:K, these power relations take on a different form within the actual process of

theatre devising. Although RM is Joker, within the playing moments with the performer he often stops the action on hand but consciously attempts to give more power to the performers. RM does this by questioning the stopped action and trying to mutually understand the motivation of the performer which generated the action, before suggesting his own motivation and development of the action. Whether or not the performers have been able to challenge the role of RM's Jokering, is not clear within this research, yet the performers seem to be temporarily content with the familial power dynamics being continued within the theatre devising process. Although RM has made his intentions clear, that he aims for a more egalitarian approach to the theatre devising process, I wonder how this process will come about.

In this chapter, I have described the few theatre devising processes that I observed with FTH:K. As an integrated theatre company, they have identified deficiencies in traditional theatre devising processes that were inherently hierarchical in structure and biased towards a spoken language. Whilst being able to observe their processes and choices, the identified themes of The Role of Family and Play, have introduced an alternative dimension to the theatre devising process. FTH:K has worked at creating a family structure within the company for two reasons; to create a sense of community amongst the performers and to create a collective experience within the theatre devising process. Inherently in any family structure, no matter how democratic it may seem, there are power relations that occur. As discovered, RM who is the father figure within FTH:K has a slightly elevated power above the Deaf and hearing performers by virtue of his theatre devising knowledge. This however, does not adversely affect the theatre devising process between the Deaf and hearing performers. In fact, RM as the Joker is the one who provokes the Deaf and hearing performers to interrogate and make new discoveries within their playing in the theatre devising.

The following chapter will therefore conclude whether FTH:K's theatre devising process is truly dialogic as an integrated theatre company. This study will then compare the dialogue of

the integrated theatre model investigated in FTH:K to that of the previously mentioned Integrated Theatre model by Ladd (2003).

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I have given an overview of the definitions of d/Deafness and the linguistic fundamentals shared between spoken and signed languages. I have also described the models of identification of the deaf persons from the Deaf community themselves and of the Oralist discourse in dominant society. These discourses have been instrumental in situating the role of the Deaf community in the context of the South African theatre community. The Oralist discourses are still the dominant discourses that effectively attempt to "fix" the medical problem of deafness and therefore seeing the Deaf community as an invisible minority. This study therefore situated itself within the subaltern discourse which situates the Deaf experience as existing alongside the Oralist discourse. Marginalised but not absent in history.

This dominant discourse has been especially prevalent within the performing arts whereby the representation of the Deaf community has historically been one of an invisible person or a person to pity because of their impairment. Although there has been a recent attempt in reviving Deaf theatre that resembled that of pre-Oralist times, little success has been achieved. Sociologist Ladd (2003)'s description of the history of Deaf theatre in the United Kingdom, has been influential in tracing a similar chart within the history of Deaf theatre in South Africa. Within the context of FTH:K as South Africa's integrated Deaf/hearing theatre company, I became interested in investigating how FTH:K devised theatre collectively. In addition, I also investigated whether both language modes of spoken and signed language were equally respected within the theatre devising process. I was led to ask these two questions, because I found Ladd's assertion that integrated theatre was nothing more than a tokenist theatre form, intriguing. I aimed to investigate if indeed FTH:K's model of integrated theatre is similar to Ladd's model of Integrated theatre.

Collecting my data using participant observation and interviews allowed me to make a comparative analysis between what the FTH:K members informed me about their practices and their actual practices. What I discovered was a company that is both in agreement and disagreement with Ladd's assertion. Firstly, FTH:K as a company strive to achieve integration on many levels that go beyond performance, beginning with making it mandatory for all hearing members to sign and encouraging Deaf performers to improve their literacy skills. Effectively, FTH:K is creating a bilingual company. FTH:K's methodologies in devising theatre are not dependent on either signed or spoken language, although SASL is the language of communication within the company. In their effort to discover and achieve new ways of integration in theatre, FTH:K have instead focused on looking at the gestural language of the body through play as a primary means to communicate and devise theatre. Gestural language is a language that most people within a shared social context can understand. Conversely, FTH:K in their theatre devising process do respect the signed and spoken modes of language, but preference is given to the body as the performer's primary means of creating a performance. It is noted that when clarification of concepts was needed between the company members, SASL was the preferred language as it could be understood by all members.

Within the theatre devising process, collective dialogue has not been fully achieved between Deaf and hearing performers. Although neither SASL or spoken language is used within the theatre devising process, the presence of a hearing Joker, or provocateur, within the process does indeed add a different power dynamic to the theatre devising. The role of the Joker is there to provoke the performers to critically interrogate the theatre devising process within the playing process. A subsequent question that arose for me was; if there was no Joker to mediate the theatre devising process would the process have been dialogic? Or if there was a Deaf Joker present, would the power relations have been any different within the theatre devising process? The last question that became apparent arose after a Deaf performer expressed an interest in directing, or rather Jokering, a hearing theatre performance. This left me asking myself, if FTH:K is as integrated as it was attempting to be, when will the Deaf subaltern be allowed to 'speak'?

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