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# Exploring Embodiment in Drama Therapy for enhancing Intercultural Communication

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Arts in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts by coursework and research report in the field of Drama Therapy, in the faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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Due Date: 5 June 2017

Topic: Exploring Embodiment in Drama Therapy for enhancing Intercultural Communication

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## Acknowledgments

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# Contents


Acknowledgments ..... 3

Chapter 1: Introduction ..... 6

The South African context ..... 7

We are embodied beings ..... 10

Embodiment ..... 11

Research Question and Aim ..... 13

Research Methodology and Research Design ..... 13

Data Collection ..... 14

Ethical Consideration ..... 16

The Structure of the Study ..... 17

Chapter 2: Embodiment, Communication and Culture ..... 19

We are embodied beings ..... 19

Mind-body Dualism ..... 20

A better understanding of embodiment ..... 22

We are cultural beings ..... 24

The embodiment of culture ..... 25

We are social beings ..... 28

Conclusion ..... 32

Chapter 3: Intercultural Communication ..... 34

The effect of Globalisation ..... 34

Intercultural Communication ..... 35

Intercultural Communication Barriers ..... 38

South Africa and its immigrants ..... 43

Conclusion ..... 46

Chapter 4 Embodiment in Drama Therapy ..... 48

What can embodiment offer? ..... 52

Conclusion ..... 56

Chapter 5 Research Method ..... 57

Research Methodology ..... 57

Research Design ..... 58

Research Sample ..... 58

Drama therapy process ..... 59
Data Collective methods ..... 60
Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) ..... 61
Conclusion ..... 62
Chapter 6: Results and Discussion ..... 64
Presentation and Interpretations of the Qualitative Questionnaire ..... 64
Themes ..... 68
Overview of the sessions ..... 69
The introduction ..... 69
Sharing your story ..... 77
Let's move together ..... 80
Coming to an end ..... 85
What did the embodied process offer individually? ..... 87
Conclusion ..... 89
Chapter 7: Conclusion ..... 91
Limitations ..... 94
Recommendations ..... 95
Reference list: ..... 97
Appendix A: ..... 117
Appendix B: ..... 118
Appendix C: ..... 119
Appendix D: ..... 122

# Chapter 1: Introduction

I cannot tell you what to think

I will not dictate how to feel

But perhaps I can make you question if where we are now is truly the racial ideal

Or is there another way?

Could we give a little more?

Could we ask, care, think a little more?

Maybe if we just talked, with each other?

Listen to our stories without our hatred shields and armour

Maybe if we try a little harder

Emphasise with each other

Spread our smiles a little wider

Share our thoughts and our cultures

Maybe then there will rise a generation that truly deserves the title 'Rainbow Nation'

(Cox, 2016)

This poem challenges the social norms of racism in the country that has been named the 'Rainbow Nation' since the end of the Apartheid era and questions whether South Africa truly is a place of racial diversity and harmony, or not.

As part of our master's degree coursework I worked with a range of populations. The populations differed in age, social, cultural, and ethnic background. I was left with so many questions about our interaction. What is their perception about therapy? How do we communicate with one another in South Africa? How do we try to understand an individual who forms part of a different culture? How do they perceive me and what does our non-verbal

communication articulate to others? All these questions and experiences ignited my interest in intercultural communication and embodiment which lead me to the focus of this study.

## The South African context

South Africa has inherited a history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid (UNICEF: 2010). South Africa has been referred to by many as the 'rainbow nation', a title which Naidoo (2011:81) suggests epitomises the country's cultural diversity. The population of South Africa is one of the most complex and diverse in the world. Singh and Rampersad (2012) express that South Africa hosts various cultures and these cultures co-exist in South Africa. They continue that each culture has identified their own distinctive way of living and regard this way of life as the fundamental way that governs their behaviour. Cultures have different perspectives on beliefs, values, traditions, norms as well as ways of communicating, which will be discussed further in chapter three.

Chen and Starosta (2005) define culture as the fundamental ideas, practices and experiences of a group of people which are symbolically transmitted through generations. A culture is also made up of beliefs, norms and attitudes that are developed within a culture and then used as a guide for behaviour and to solve human problems. Du Toit (2004) explains that South Africa is seen as a multicultural country with different traditions arising from specific cultures.

In the Time's Live article: *Is South Africa a multicultural nation, or just a nation with many cultures,* Milazi (2012) communicates that multiculturalism indicates a recognition and celebration of the diverse cultures that make up a society and is based on respect for the rights of different groups. According to Singh and Rampersad (2012) multiculturalism is not only an

expression of cultural diversity; it also involves communication between cultures. One's cultural background will influence the way people communicate, what takes precedence in their life and define their perspective towards what is appropriate in any given situation. Culture influences every aspect of the individual, from thought patterns to verbal and non-verbal behaviour (Ntuli, 2012).

As human beings, we converse in two ways, verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication refers to the spoken or written signs called words which constitute language. While, non-verbal communication which is known to be a multi-channelled way of communication, relates to all human communication that does not use written or spoken signs (Naidoo, 2011). Dlomo (2003) states that between 65% and 93% of social meaning is carried through non-verbal behaviour. This is our gestures, body language, vocal tones and facial expressions. As mentioned earlier, our non-verbal behaviour is grounded on our cultural values and backgrounds (Davids, 2013).

Communicative action is therefore at the same time a concretely embodied and socio-cultural phenomenon (Roth, 2007). The meaning emerges from the simultaneous grounding of action in cultural activity and bodily operations. Dlomo (2003) proposes that verbal behaviour is conscious whereas non-verbal behaviour and messages are mainly subconscious. Consequently, spoken messages form part of the explicit factors of culture, whereas non-verbal messages are implicitly embedded within our culture. People therefore interact with various cultural groups and expect the listeners to read the non-verbal language and gestures, to understand the traditions and customs in order to interpret the message (Dlomo, 2003).

Albert (1996) considers that miscommunication transpires when the communication process does not go according to normal expectations. He continues that this is the result of cultural differences in non-verbal behaviour; this therefore advocates that non-verbal behaviour is a powerful medium for meaning that is conveyed through the communication process.

Davids (2013) articulates that the general division between South African cultural groups can be traced back to polarisation caused by the old Apartheid system of governance-, and, before that, the enduring effects of colonialism. These two factors divided the population into dissociated groups (Naidoo, 2011). This segregation amongst South African cultures has been translated into a highly divided and diverse society. Ntuli (2012) states that, due to segregation prior to 1994, people often did not make the effort to learn about one another and the different cultures that South Africa hosts.

Schutte (2013) confirms that there is still a lack of meaningful intercultural interaction within South Africa. Burger (cited in Schutte, 2013) found that there has been more interaction between different races, but he typifies the superficial nature of these interactions with no deeper knowledge of one another. Schutte (2013) proposes that the high unemployment rate; the relatively poor economy; the lack of service delivery and corruption; amongst other aspects, provides further complications as these influences create cultural, ethnic and racial tension as human beings attempt to shift the blame to find a culprit for the situation. This has ricocheted and created a climate of limited communication and perhaps encouraged the use of violence. Schutte (2013) concludes that this is a complex issue with no easy answers or methods. He advocates for open dialogue to speak about the difficult, emotional and

uncomfortable subjects. This would be the beginning of an improved climate for intercultural communication.

Intercultural communication, as explained by Kim and Gudykunst (1988) occurs when individuals or groups from different cultures communicate between one another. In this process the communicator's patterns of verbal and non-verbal, understanding may be significantly different because of cultural variation. Davids (2013) recommends that the initial step to foster effective intercultural communication is to discover what hinders the process of communication and then to seek an understanding and sensitivity towards other cultures, communication styles, and behaviour.

Dyers and Wankah (2010) postulate that intercultural communication is one of the most relevant fields for exploration. Due to the relevancy that it has; it has gained recognition since 1994. Dlomo (2013) communicates that the new era in South Africa calls for all racial groups to live in harmony and work together to build a country. This would be a country that is economically, politically, socially and technologically viable and sustainable therefore allowing the rainbow nation to become a reality rather than an ideal.

## We are embodied beings

Lewis (1996) stated that human beings are embodied organisms. Every human being has a body and this body shapes and constrains how we think (Rohrer, 2007). We feel and observe life experiences through our bodies. Halprin (2003) believes that in being embodied; we can interact and engage with the world around us (Halprin, 2003).

Everything we experience is stored in our bodies; therefore our bodies are archives of memories and experiences. These experiences and how we make sense of experiences depends on the bodies that we have, and how they interact with the environments in which we live. In other words, it is through our bodies that we understand and act within this world.

This informs an integral part of our identity. The body is therefore seen as an empty work of art in awaiting the cultural imprint, which becomes the conversational creation, a text to read, to interpret and be conceived as an organ of communication (Lévi-Strauss, 1963). Accordingly, the body is a cultural and historical phenomenon as well as a biological one and material one. The body is not simply an object, it is a subject, and culture resides in the physical processes of perception (Csordas 1999).

## Embodiment

According to Burns (2012), both dance/movement therapy and body psychotherapy define embodiment as the active, engaged process of sensory awareness of being in and living through the body. Embodiment travels beyond the scope of words and involves the non-verbal communication throughout the body. This embraces the understanding of the body and how it mirrors the way of being as humans (Halprin, 2003).

> "Embodiment in Dramatherapy involves the way the self is realised by and through the body. The body is often described as the primary means by which communication occurs between self and other. This is through gesture, expression and voice "(Elam, 1991 cited in Jones, 2009, p. 96).

The famous idiom recalls, “actions speak louder than words” (Fornieri, 2009, p. 196). Myburgh (2015) proposes that embodiment is one of the core principles of drama therapy. This refers to the way the self is realised by and through the body. Embodiment enhances an individual’s creativity and expressiveness through the use of drama and symbolic expression of emotion. Embodiment in drama therapy involves the body as the main tool of communication and expression. This belief is significant for the research as it places emphasis on the body’s way of communicating.

> “This ecstasy refers to that special moment…when we experience the call to ourselves to enjoin the other in that…exhilarating exchange, in which we come to know both ourselves and others” (Churchill, 2012, p. 2 cited in Finlay, 2014,p. 7)

Embodiment allows human beings to have a primordial embodied relationship with one another. Merleau-Ponty (cited in Finlay, 2014) argues that when humans seek to understand others, they sense them in a whole body way. This involves their body and mind. According to Finlay (2014) embodiment fosters empathy which encourages the embodied process of gently sensing another person in order to better appreciate their experience. Through this they may encounter a possibility of a subtle intertwining and mirroring that helps human beings listen and pay attention to their bodily gestures. This allows empathic attunement to emerge which encourages the releasing of one’s own being in order to be with another (Finlay, 2014).

Embodiment and other creative interventions such as art, drama and music can offer a bridge that can span across many dimensions of human existence and therapeutically link people from

different cultures through this type interaction, interpersonal relationship skills can be enhanced (Henderson & Gladding, 1998).

In light of the above discussion, my hope in creating this embodied drama therapeutic process was to justify the value of embodiment and communication across cultures in South Africa. I aimed to create a space where individuals had the opportunity to communicate through their culturally imprinted bodies. With the intention of enhancing intercultural communication and fostering cross-cultural relationships.

## Research Question and Aim

Although intercultural communication has become a relevant field in South Africa, little research has been done exploring what drama therapy, in particular embodiment within drama therapy, can offer in order to enhance intercultural communication in South Africa. For this reason, the research study proposed to explore how embodiment in drama therapy may enhance intercultural communication. The aim of this research study is therefore; to investigate what embodiment processes in drama therapy could offer in this regard.

## Research Methodology and Research Design

This qualitative study employed the purposive sampling method to gather a group of six culturally diverse women. This sampling was also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling (Palys, 2008). The main goal of purposive sampling was to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable the research question to be answered. The participants of this study were a group of six women who are from

different cultures. Some of the women have immigrated to South Africa and they originate from various parts of Southern Africa as well as Namibia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

This study was curious about the participant's perspectives about intercultural communication and how they make sense of it. This study wanted to understand the social reality of the participants as well as the culture they form part of, therefore their biological details were essential for this study and will be discussed in chapter five and six. The purpose of this study was exploratory in nature; as a result the research was situated in an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) paradigm. Smith and Osborn (2007) advocate the use of the phenomenological model to capture the essence and richness of the individual's experience.

The participants experienced an embodied drama therapeutic process. The intention was to explore the use of embodiment and what it enabled for the participants. This process offered six sessions, each of an hour duration. These sessions took place from January to February 2017 in Johannesburg at a hall in Midrand.

## Data Collection

Three data collection methods were used in this research. Patton (2002) highlights the importance of collecting data in these various ways. He continues that different kinds of data may yield somewhat different results. If I find inconsistencies, it ought not to weaken the credibility of results, but rather see it as offering opportunities for deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the phenomenon under study.

The first method was a qualitative questionnaire (Appendix D). This questionnaire was to gather information about participant's beliefs and understanding about intercultural communication.

The second method of data collection was the reflection and process notes of embodied therapeutic process as well as the themes that have emerged from the sessions. According to Hougham (2006: 5) 'symbol was at the heart of [Jung's] approach to psychotherapy'. The symbolic language arises as images from the 'psyche through fantasies, dreams, and the collective storyline of mythology'. The participants were encouraged to create metaphorical and symbolic art products that speak back to the process.

Jung believed that there is therapeutic power in creative processes, such as listening to and telling stories, as it allows for symbolic images from the unconscious to be brought to the conscious and engaged with (Jung, 1933). He further identifies the process involved in art making whereby the artist projects part of their psyche into inanimate objects (Jung, 1964). In this act the artist projects aspects of one's unconscious onto the object of his creation (Jung, 1964: 254). This is seen as another way of collecting data as the drama therapeutic process can be symbolic and metaphorical (Swanepoel, 2011).

The last method was a focus group with the participants at the end of the process, to explore the participant's experience of the drama therapeutic process. This audio-recorded focus group encouraged the participants to reflect on this process and to share what they are taking from the process. It allowed them to speak back to this journey they have shared together and whether the intervention enhanced intercultural communication amongst themselves.

All of the data: the content of the questionnaire, the core themes and art products as well as the audio-taped focus group was analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This methodology is used to understand participants' subjective realities through

personal interpretations of their lived experiences and the meanings they attach to these experiences (Callery & Young, 2015). This form of analysis extends simple description and makes sense of participants' lived experiences by developing an interpretative analysis of the description in relation to social, cultural, and theoretical contexts (Callery & Young, 2015).

## Ethical Consideration

Non-medical ethical procedures were granted through the University of Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee (Appendix A). Ethical considerations of the study were upheld through allowing the participants choice of participation and consent. Participants were given a participant information sheet (Appendix B) containing details of the study; an explanation of what is required of them and the researcher's contact details.

The participants had to provide their written consent (Appendix C) for participation in the workshops as well as the audio-recorded focus group. The participation of the drama therapeutic process group was voluntary. Participants had the right to decline participation in the study as well as pull out of the study if ever they wished. It is important to note that from the onset this was a closed drama therapy group which meant that no new participants could join after the first session.

The majority of the first session focused primarily on introducing the research, the qualitative questionnaire, the ethics of confidentiality as well as introducing drama therapy to the participants. All participants in the research were treated with respect and with sensitivity. Any material (themes and products) that emerged from the sessions was handled with the utmost care and sensitivity. As a group-based therapeutic intervention, confidentiality could not be

guaranteed and this was acknowledged by all participants. As a group we decided that we would not share any aspects of what had happened in the group, but if there is a need to share aspects of the experience with others outside of the group, we would then only speak about our own experience and from our own perspective.

A major limitation of this research is the length of time required for the intervention and that I could only offer a brief therapeutic intervention. This was important to frame for the participants in the beginning of the research process. They needed to be aware in order to take responsibility for their emerging material evoked through the therapeutic encounter. I provided the participants with a referral list for additional therapeutic support should the need arise.

## The Structure of the Study

This study consists of seven chapters. In this chapter I have intended to articulate the road that I have travelled; describing the South African context, the importance of us being embodied beings, the research problem, the aims of the research, the methodology and research design as well as the ethical considerations that was employed. Chapter two discusses human beings as cultural beings and how embodiment and communication forms an integral part of the individual's identity. This chapter intends to highlight the importance of the body, communication as well as non-verbal communication and the various influences it has. Chapter three reviews the effect of globalisation as well as intercultural communication and the various barriers in cultural interaction.

Chapter four introduces the concept of embodiment in drama therapy and the various definitions it has. It explores embodiment within drama therapy and what it has to offer. It

further casts light on how embodiment permits a primordial relationship with another through empathy and attunement. This chapter also considers how our mirror neurons foster empathy and how embodiment can be used to build relationships and enhance communication. Chapter five discusses the methodology and design of this study. This provides a detailed explanation of the chosen methodology and sample of this study, all of which will frame the analysis conducted in chapter six. This chapter is a discussion of the data findings and analysis. This chapter will elucidate the thematic themes that were evoked in the process. This research will conclude with a discussion of possible contributions, limitations of the research and recommendations for future research in chapter seven.

# Chapter 2: Embodiment, Communication and Culture

## We are embodied beings

> the body is a text, the body is a machine, the body is an organism, the body is a container, the body is a perceptual space, the body is self, the body is a dwelling, the body is an orchestra, the body is an environment, the body is an eco-system, the body is a landscape, the body is the unconscious, the body is a shape, the body is a theatre, the body is an assembly of voices, the body is chaos, the body is the enemy, and the body is a repository of wisdom (Caroll, 2011, p. 253).

We all have a body and we all are a body. As Lewis (1996) state we are an embodied organism and our bodies shape and constrain the way we think and experience life (Rohrer, 2007). We are creatures of the flesh and that which we experience, and how we make sense of experiences, depends on the kind of bodies that we have, and how they interact with the various environments in which we live (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In other words, it is through our bodies that we understand and act within this world. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) continues that there is a connection between the structure of our bodily activity and what we think of as our cognitive operations, which shows how our bodily experiences work their way into our understanding and reasoning of more abstract concepts. This means that the body and mind are intertwined and will influence one another.

Caldwell (cited in Gorman, 2003) continues that the body and mind functions as a whole, therefore their sensations, movement sequences, physical and behavioural reactions as well as the responses will formulate who we are. Accordingly, the body is able to communicate and

distribute knowledge that is reserved within the 'musculature and other physiological systems' (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009, p. xv). Often the emotional history experiences can manifest through the individual's postures, gestures and use of space and movements which can cause adversity and imbalance within the body as they reproduce the emotional and mental states of the individual (Haplrin, 2003).

We as human beings are aware of this phenomenon when our bodies relay information and indicate our emotional experiences. Sweaty palms and the feeling of butterflies in the stomach are known indicators of feeling nervous. This may be how the body reacts to emotions but it can also develop emotions from physical sensations. An example of this may be the experience of happiness and relief when one climbs into a bed after long and tiring day (Gorman, 2003). These are all indications of how the body reacts to emotions but also how the physical sensation of climbing into bed can affect the body. All of this reminds us that our bodies and mind are intertwined and functions as a whole. This also indicates that our bodies are the primary vessel of communication, not only to ourselves but to others as well.

## Mind-body Dualism

To fully appreciate the notion of embodiment, it is necessary to understand the idea of disembodiment, conditioned by Descartes' 17th-century proposal concerning the nature and relation of mind and body (Overton, 2008). One of the deepest and most lasting legacies of Descartes' philosophy is psychophysical dualism. The Cartesian theory proposes that the mind is the sole source of activity, the sole mover and that the body has to be regarded as not only separate and alien from ourselves, but also entirely inert (Costall, 2007). This theory

hypothesizes that the nature of the mind is completely different from that of the body (Skirry, n.d).

The ideology of separate entities or the split between mind and body developed with the rise of modern scientific medicine. The biomedical model and most of modern 'Western' medicine was founded on Cartesian dualism, addressing issues with the body separately from that of the mental processes (Ghane & Sweeny, 2013). Overton (2008) suggests that this splitting, this disembodiment, has remained a basic meta-theoretical background assumption for many areas of psychological inquiry to the present day. Ghane and Sweeny (2013) agree with Overton and advocate that most health psychology research fails to take the multi-directional relationship between the mind, body and environment into account. They continue that, in the context of healthcare, embodied variables can influence cognitions and behaviour.

The movement towards embodied health psychology evades the limitations of Cartesian dualism and begins to approach the study of health as a complete and integrated system of physical, mental and environmental variables that are inextricably linked (Ghane & Sweeny, 2013). The interdependence between the body and mind and how it affects the behaviour of people, coupled with the environment that they find them in, have been noted more and more over the last few years. This is becoming a research field within which various psychotherapeutic disciplines as well as other related fields are being examined (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009).

Embodiment has become a key concept in many disciplines like the cognitive sciences; sociology, philosophy and now in the broader field of human movement studies. Though the

concept is used in different ways, one reason for its increasing popularity is that it serves as a means for overcoming the problems of mind body dualisms (Standal & Engelsrud, 2013). A unique facet of the embodiment theory is that physical situations can influence psychological conditions and, subsequently, behavioural outcomes. It is with this in mind, that I employed embodiment as a method for investigation to see whether embodiment can influence the behaviour which will lead to cross-cultural communication.

## A better understanding of embodiment.

Embodiment is defined as the totality of the body and mind communications (Milioni, 2007). Burns (2012), both dance/movement therapy and body psychotherapy define embodiment as the active, engaged process of sensory awareness of being in and living through the body. They value the body as a source of information and a vehicle for transformation through which individuals unveil ways to integrate aspects of the self (Burns, 2012). The individual will be able to give their attention to perception, posture, gesture, emotion, and thought in tangible ways (Halprin, 2003). The conclusion thereof being that the body and the mind are integrated and function as one entity (Chaiklin & Wengrover, 2009).

Embodiment, according to Gomes Silva (2014) is about being conscious of the individual's self. It is to know what the individual is doing, while being alert and responsive to what is happening inside and outside in a reflective way. It requires an active sensing of bodily sensation, impulse and affect. It implies a sense of ownership of one's body, feelings, with a capacity for intersubjectivity.

According to Ghane and Sweeny (2013) the principles of embodiment derive from the theory of affordances, which are, in essence, relational. According to this theory, individuals observe their environment in terms of how they can physically interrelate with and fulfil actions to influence objects that surround them. Relationism is the claim that objects and events derive their meaning from their relations as parts of a whole, and not as split-off elements of nature. Mind without a human living body engaged in the world is inconceivable, as is the engaged human living body inconceivable without a mind (Overton, 2008). As such, theories of embodiment imply that cognition, affect and behaviour are instructed by the amalgamation of mind, body and environment (Ghane & Sweeny, 2013).

Embodiment is a concept of synthesis, a bridge that joins broad areas of inquiry into a unified whole. Thus, embodiment references not only merely physical structures, but the body as a form of lived experience, actively engaged in and with the world of socio-cultural and physical objects (Overton, 2008). The body as form references a biological standpoint, the body as lived experience actively engaged references a phenomenological or psychological personal standpoint, and the body actively engaged in and with the world, points to a contextual social, cultural, and environmental standpoint. Culture informs every aspect of the individual's body and communication. It is for this reason that it is complicated for one to deal with the body, communication and culture separately. We are all embodied, cultural social beings. It is essential that one views and discusses them inclusively as they all influence the individual.

## We are cultural beings

At birth individuals have no knowledge of the culture they form part of, but through interaction, observations, communication and imitation, their cultural ways of thinking and behaving are imprinted in them. For this reason, Davids (2013) postulates that culture is a learned behaviour and not an instinctive and inherent norm. Chaney and Martin (2011, p.6) state that we are born, raised and taught in the language of our caregivers, our 'mother tongue', as well as the people that form part of the environment in which we live.

Csordas (1994) proposes that we obtain a reality through the way we understand and give meaning to our lives. In other words, the meaning that we give to the reality is influenced through the interaction with others in a cultural context. The self does not stand-alone, but is rather a cultural creation through the process of language and experience (Meyburgh, 2006). According to Freedman and Combs (1996), realities are socially constructed, meaning that everything that we as human beings have come to accept as reality is socially created through interaction and through time. Thus, realities are established as different individuals live out their realities together.

Every culture has its own distinguishing way of living and regards this way of life as the essential way that dominates their behaviour; therefore cultures have different perspectives on beliefs, values, traditions, norms as well as ways of communicating, which will be discussed further in chapter three. Anderson et al. (2002) articulates that:

> ‘Cultural differences are not random events; they occur because cultures develop with different geographies, climates, economies, religions and histories, each exerting unique influence’ (p.90).

Culture gives human beings their distinctive identity, which is socially created and negotiated within the social institution and within communities of people (Meyburgh, 2006). It also provides them with their reality and code of conduct of how to express oneself in daily circumstances. (Dosamantes- Beaudry, 1997).

The function of culture is that it acts like a screen, filtering and influencing every aspect of the individual, from the thought patterns to the verbal and non-verbal language. The end result being that the culture one forms part of, will influence the way people communicate, what takes precedence in their life and define their perspective towards what is appropriate in any given situation. (Ntuli, 2012). Every cultural pattern and every single act of social behaviour involves communication in one way or another and for that reason, communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports (Jandt, 2007). I want to emphasize the importance of culture and how it influences every aspect of the individual, not only the thought patterns, but the way we as human beings communicate and how we embody our bodies is influenced by culture. It is vital for this research to make human beings aware of how culture influences every action, movement and thought.

## The embodiment of culture

In all cultures the body is the main vessel of communication, making use of the face, voice and hands to express ideas, roles and relationship (Jones, 2007). It is through our bodies that we

express our cultural identity. Turner (1992) sees the body as a representation of the fundamental features of society, and as a narrative of social processes and social structuring. The concept of the body is not merely a biological entity, but the body as 'being- in-the- world' and affected by social, cultural, political, and historic forces (Csordas, 1994, p. 3). It is the notion that both the personal and the cultural are grounded in an embodied self (Johansen, 2002) that permits one to review the socio-cultural aspects of the body.

Mauss (1934) formulated the idea that individuals are identified and distinguished by the way they use their bodies and boldly asserted that there can be no such thing as natural behaviour. Every kind of action carries the cultural imprint and control of the body. Therefore the natural expression is culturally determined (Douglas, 1996). He introduced the idea of habitus and describes the concept as those aspects of culture that are rooted in the body or daily practices of individuals, groups, societies, and nations. It includes the totality of habits, gestures, movements, taste, styles that influences the everyday actions of an individual without being conscious or aware of this manipulation. These actions assimilate with the individual's culture (Mauss 1934). He continues and postulates that this habitus can become a person's identifying element that is to say that the individual can be distinguished according to the implementation of the body (Abdi, 2012).

It is as Douglas (1996) has said that the human body is always treated as an image of society and there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension. She (1996) has distinguished between the natural and the social body. The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived and the physical experience of the

body is always modified by the social categories through which it is known and sustains a particular view of society.

Each body is a physical entity but also a representation; a medium of expression but one that is controlled and restricted by the social system. These two bodies constitute different realms of experience; they mirror the physical into the social and cause the physical to be experienced in social terms. The social body is a body of symbolic depiction, a representational reality that confines the way the physical body is considered (Van Wolputte, 2004). This refers to the representational use of the body as a natural symbol with which to think about nature, society and culture (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987).

There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience, so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction, the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression (Douglas, 1996). The care that is given to it, the different stages it should go through, all the cultural categories in which it is perceived, must correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen in so far as these also draw upon the same culturally processed idea of the body (Douglas, 1996). It is as Lévi-Strauss describes the body. It is seen as a canvas in anticipation of cultural imprint, stating that body modifications stamp onto the mind all the traditions and philosophy of the group. The body therefore provides an accurate depiction of an individual's cultural identity. As human beings, we communicate and make sense of our world. As this chapter has highlighted, we are all embodied cultural beings. This means that our bodies have been influenced by the various cultures we are part of and how we make use of our body and how we communicate. Our

bodies therefore become a conversational production, a text to read, to interpret and be conceived as an organ of communication.

## We are social beings

Lieberman (2013) believes that human beings are highly social and that their most fundamental needs are communal belonging and interpersonal exchange. According to Neuliep (2000), communication forms an integral part of the process of establishing one's identity. He also continues that communication is an ongoing process which is constantly changing and evolving. It has many different definitions due to the fact that each person's perception is reliant on their own set of circumstances and framework from within which they operate. All of these perceptions are subjective to the individual and form part of their own reality.

For the purpose of this study, communication is a dynamic process that is defined as a reciprocally dependent relationship that involves sharing and exchanging information (Griffin & Moorhead, 2013). It is an interaction where people initiate, preserve and persuade ideas and opinions (Sahanci, Sahin &Ozdemir, 2016).

The transfer and understanding of meaning does not occur in isolation. People always communicate within a situation or setting (Davids, 2013). According to Boddy (2005) communication occurs when people share information to reach a common understanding. Skinner et al. (2007) place emphasis on the communication process that comprises a triad namely: a communicator, a message, and a receiver. Communication cannot take place unless all three elements are present. The communicator is the individual who attempts to communicate with another individual or group and the receiver is the person to whom the

message is conveyed (Skinner et al., 2007). DeVito (2001) describes these messages as stimuli for a receiver which can be expressed as auditory (hearing), visual (seeing), tactile (feeling), olfactory (smelling) and gustatory (tasting) stimuli. This stimulus is the verbal and non-verbal form of the idea, thought or feeling that an individual wishes to communicate to another individual or group of people. The message is the content of the interaction (Naidoo, 2011).

Martin and Nakayama (2000) believe that the way in which the content of the message is created by individuals, will be influenced by their own culture. In other words, the process of understanding and interpretation of reality is confirmed by one's culture (Dlomo, 2003). That is why it is important to view communication and culture as reciprocal processes.

Communicative action is therefore at the same time a concretely embodied and socio-cultural phenomenon (Roth, 2007). The meaning emerges from the simultaneous grounding of action in cultural activity and bodily operations. Dosamantes- Beaudry (1997) agrees that communication and culture are inseparable and that it has become so entrenched in one's daily life. What makes this task of investigating culture, communication and embodiment difficult is that much of what is significant about a culture is concealed and represented non-verbally and subconsciously by its members. Accordingly, what human beings regard as natural and inherent to their culture, will be because of the rules that govern their behaviour patterns. Human beings therefore, are driven by their "cultural unconscious". Hall (1981, p. 152) formulated the term and explained that it is similar to

> Freud's unconscious, [because] it is actively hidden and, like Freud's patients, one is forever driven by processes that cannot be recovered without outside help".

The latent aspects of a culture are most readily revealed through non-verbal modes of expression. It indicates that every culture has its own range of behaviour and this is expressed through body movement, body positions, postures, vocal intonations, gestures, dress codes and other ritualised actions that are specific to a particular culture (Lustig & Koester, 1993). This non-verbal behavioural repertoire provides a culture with its distinctive expressive style and this expressive style is inextricably connected to other aspects of that culture's world view (Dosamantes- Beaudry, 1997). This emphasise how the body, culture and communication are interwoven and how the one will influence the other. This speaks back to the reciprocal nature of these concepts and how one cannot view one of these concepts without the other, because they are influencing one another. It is as previously mentioned. The body is a canvas that culture has imprinted on and therefore the way the individual communicates will be grounded in the culture.

Every culture demonstrates different rules and regulations that guide their behaviour. These rules are learnt and form part of the individual's 'cultural unconscious' which regulates their behaviour in their interaction. Every culture will have its own proximity of space which indicates how far apart the individual should stand while talking (Martin & Nakayama, 2000). The rhythm, intonation, pace, resonance, volume and silence which is referred to as the paralinguistics' of the conversation will influence the interaction (Fielding, 1996) as well as the haptics which is whom to touch and where (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 1998). How the person is addressed as well as the speed and timing of movements and gestures. When to look directly at others in a conversation and when to look away, when to smile and when to frown, and the

overall pacing of communication forms part of the 'cultural unconscious' and administers the interaction between individuals (Lustig & Koester, 1993).

Misunderstandings transpire when the communication process does not go according to the expectation of the individual. As a result, there is a contradiction between the verbal and non-verbal messages that are being conveyed. In this situation, the recipient will possibly prefer to interpret and adjudge the non-verbal cues rather than the verbal, since the former are more credible than the latter. According to Dlomo (2003) an individual will seldom probe the non-verbal behaviour because it is taken as it appears at face value and can be seen as inherent and as an absolute truth.

An example of this happened in the research process. In the second session Mrs. E's body language was read differently from what her verbal communication was articulating. With her verbal communication, she was participating and sharing aspects of her life and culture but her body language indicated that she did not want to partake. Her body language may have indicated that she was opposed to any participation and did not want to be there. Her hands were folded over her chest, her legs were crossed, she constantly looked down and she did not make eye contact with the participants. Her body language appeared to influence the rest of the group. The rest of the participants' body language were open and indicated that they wanted to partake but when observing Miss. E they slowly started crossing their legs as well as their arms, even though they were partaking in the conversation. This may indicate how the non-verbal language is interpreted and informs interaction even if in opposition to the verbal communication.

Relativists argue that there are no essential truths, only the meaning we ascribe to our own experiences (Freedman & Combs, 1996). This should be considered in the social and cultural context they form part of (Du Toit, 2005). This unquestioning non-verbal behaviour can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication. If a different interpretation is given, the listener does not blame themselves or the culture they form part of, but turn towards the speaker as if it is their fault. This may lead to developing negative perceptions and prejudices about people of that culture. These generalisations arise as a result of transferring culturally relevant behaviour into intercultural situations which can be damaging to cross-cultural relationships and lead to cultural conflicts (Dlomo, 2003).

## Conclusion

Samovar, Porter and Stefani (1998) have identified three important characteristics of non-verbal behaviour. The first is that non-verbal communication is seen as multi- channelled. This means that non-verbal communication uses different modes of expression to send the content of the message to the receiver. This can be carried through body movements, facial expressions, touch, paralinguistic features and proximity (Dlomo, 2003).

The second characteristic of non-verbal communication is that it can be ambiguous. There can be more than one explanation and interpretation offered for non-verbal communication. This is dependent on the context and the culture of the communicators (Samovar, Porter& Stefani, 1998).The third characteristic is the spontaneous nature of non-verbal behaviour. People communicate and make decisions unconsciously with their non-verbal behaviour whilst they are in the process of communicating with another.

In summation, it can be seen that the body becomes the primary vessel for communicating with others, albeit of similar culture or not. There can be numerous reasons and obstacles for miscommunication some of which may be conscious or unconscious. Culture forms part of the individual's body and communication. It governs their behaviour and plays a huge role in establishing their identity from which they operate. It is for this reason that it is complicated for one to deal with the body, communication and culture separately. It is essential that one views and discusses them inclusively. This chapter highlights the importance of non-verbal communication as it plays a central role in communication and human behaviour. Effective communication requires that we understand the role of non-verbal behavior as only one of the various dimensions of communication competence.

Once the meaning of embodiment, culture and communication are understood it becomes clear that intercultural communication refers to the communication between people from two different cultures. The potential for miscommunication and disagreement is great because of cultural differences. Hence, the following chapter three will describe how globalisation has impacted South Africa as well as intercultural communication and the barriers that influence this cultural interaction.

# Chapter 3: Intercultural Communication

## The effect of Globalisation

People are living in a world that is rapidly changing, becoming smaller by the minute (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). This is due to globalisation with the advancement of technology which dissolves international boundaries and can be defined as the process of global economic, political and cultural integration (Hamdi, 2015). This concept refers both to the compression of the world as well as the intensification of consciousness worldwide (Mehlika, 2013-2015). Globalisation can be seen as an empowering entity and it interconnects the world, supports economic development, provides information availability and assists in developing a global village (Moahi, 2007). This means that the world has become a small village where borders between different countries can be broken down (Du Toit, 2004).

There is however a paradoxical dichotomy when it comes to globalisation and cultural diversity. On one hand, globalisation has the potential to mobilise and empower people, provide a means for self-representation, support a collective identity through socialisation and provide employment opportunities. On the other hand, it has the ability to disempower people by misrepresentation, stereotyping and provide a process for further colonisation (Gibson et al., 2017).

According to Mehlika (2013-2015) cultural, national and international borders are continually being crossed. This produces an influx of different perspectives, ideas, cultures and people which forces multiculturalism in countries worldwide. According to Youngman (2000) the present education, legal and power structures reflect western ideas and philosophies. These

western ideas are easily assimilated into other cultures and paradigms with far reaching effects. There is an assumption that the values and ideologies of the "Global North" will provide a suitable framework for the new knowledge economies of the developing "Global South".

Du Toit (2004) believes that if this is not administered appropriately, it may become a socio-political time bomb. As the world is rapidly improving and becoming smaller, communication and interaction between different countries is escalating and amplifying. This creates an increased potential for both conflict and cooperation between countries, thus making intercultural communication a relevant field (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Inadvertently intercultural communication has become a way that provides the individual with an understanding and recognition of the difficulties as well as advantages of living in a multicultural world. It also means that the learning about intercultural communication is an ongoing process.

## Intercultural Communication

Once the correlative nature of communication, embodiment and culture that were explained in chapter two are understood, it becomes evident that intercultural communication refers to the communication between people from different cultures. The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall originated the term intercultural communication in his book entitled: '*The Silent Language'* in 1959 (Salo-Lee, 2006).

Since then, numerous authors have defined it. Intercultural communication, as explained by Kim and Gudykunst (1988) occurs when individuals or groups from different cultures communicate between one another. In this process, the communicators' patterns of verbal and

non-verbal understanding, may be significantly different because of cultural variation, therefore the potential for miscommunication, misunderstanding and disagreement is greater. Thus, the study of intercultural communication aims to understand the influence of culture on one's perspective and behaviour to decrease the potential for misunderstandings (Chen & Starosta, 2005).

According to Dlomo (2003) intercultural communication studies in South Africa have been rapidly gaining popularity. This is a subject matter that has grown and developed into a relevant field of study. Various universities and colleges in South Africa offer programmes to enhance intercultural communication among their students. The University of the Witwatersrand offers a short course to assist students in understanding human communication in multicultural settings (Wits Language School, 2016). This short course assists students in understanding human communication in multicultural settings, with a particular focus on the mass media and the workplace. The course provides participants the opportunity to learn and to come to terms with diversity in South Africa and how to reduce intercultural misunderstandings.

The University of Stellenbosch presents two programmes in intercultural communication. One is as a postgraduate diploma (PGDip) in Intercultural Communication, and the other is a Masters (MA) in Intercultural Communication (Arts and Social Sciences). Both of these programmes are designed for participants who routinely communicate across cultural boundaries or who are responsible for training and managing others who engage in intercultural communication.

University of Johannesburg also offers various programmes that include intercultural communication and communication studies (School of Communication, 2017). These subjects form a compulsory major for all the undergraduate students in the School of Communication as it is the core theoretical component of their studies. The Department of Communication Studies (CMS) provides participants with an opportunity to learn about, explore and conduct research on the theoretical perspectives of the relevant Communication fields. CMS is primarily concerned with verbal and non-verbal communication, and how we as human beings, imbued with our own cultural experiences and expectations, make meaning out of interactions with others, and how we in turn are influenced by those interactions (School of Communication, 2017).

Several studies about this topic and the various situations that have been encountered have been written about. There are various studies that have been written about in the organisational and business world. Some of these studies are: *Intercultural communication between Blacks and Indians in the Durban Institute of Technology (2003), Intercultural Communication: a Comparative Study of Japanese and South African Work Practice (2011),Intercultural Communication amongst Employees at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (2013).*

There are also numerous studies done on other encounters and situations taking place. These are: *Intercultural Communication in the Johannesburg Public Library (1996), Contemporary African drama: the intercultural trend in South Africa (2002)*, '*Culture' and 'Communication' in Intercultural Communication (2009), Uncovering and Negotiating Barriers to Intercultural*

*Communication at Greenmarket Square, Cape Town's 'World in Miniature': an insider's perspective (2010),Intercultural Misunderstanding in South Africa: An Analysis of Nonverbal Communication Behaviour in Context (2012), Interracial communication in South Africa: Is cultural convergence possible? (2013).*

According to Dlomo (2003) studies like these are especially important in the everyday encounter as well as the work environment where people from various cultural backgrounds interact on a daily basis. He continues that he believes that it is of critical significance that people from different cultural environments respect and tolerate differences pertaining to language varieties, non-verbal behaviour, values and perspectives. All these studies highlight the complexity of the South African context and the various cultures that it hosts. These studies place emphasis on intercultural communication and how South Africa needs it to foster effective cross-cultural relationships. They all investigate and explore the variations of culture and communication and how both of these concepts cannot be separate as they have a reciprocal relationship with one another. It was with all this in mind, that I postulate that the method of embodiment can be explored and investigated to see how it will influence the communication and the interaction between different cultures.

## Intercultural Communication Barriers

Davids (2013), McKeiver (2013) and Naidoo (2011) discuss the barriers that hinder intercultural communication between different culture groups. Griffin (2000) believes that misunderstanding is the ultimate barrier to communication. The existence of cultural variability is in itself a difficulty to intercultural communication. When cultures are diverse, the possibility of cultural

variability is high, resulting in high levels of uncertainty, anxiety and misunderstanding, which ultimately causes nervousness and pressure in the intercultural communication situation (Dankwa- Apawu, n.d).

According to Davids (2013) high anxiety can be seen as one of the barriers that influences intercultural communication. She states that when a person is anxious and uncertain of how to respond and communicate, the individual will not be fully present in the communication process (Jandt, 2007).

When an individual is not fully present, the probability for miscommunication and mistranslation is however greater as indicated with the example in chapter two. Cultures make use of different coding regulations and cultural norms, which play a essential role in regulating patterns of interaction, thereby causing complications for effective intercultural communication (Beebe et al., 2011).

In some situations, the individuals can speak the same language, however due to their cultural variations, the words and the gestures may have divergent meanings and values which can cause uncertainty (Beebe et al., 2011). It is therefore important to understand various cultures during the communication process in order to communicate appropriately across cultures. Ribbens (1994) declares that when the individual in a discussion reacts in an unexpected manner to the speaker's verbal or non-verbal cues, misinterpretation or mistranslation may have transpired in the listener. This type of intercultural difference poses a difficult communication challenge.

Norms and rules of various cultures can also be a barrier in the communication process. Norms are culturally established principles of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour (Chaney & Martin, 2004). Every culture is defined through the norms and rules (Dankwa- Apawu, n.d). Norms are identified by members of a group, but expressed as rules. They include those that determine social circumstances and communication patterns. These norms and rules will influence greetings, expressions and behaviour.

The different roles are also sources of cultural variability. Roles defined by Dankwa- Apawu (n.d) are sets of norms applicable to specific groups of people in society. In a culture, different roles are assigned to each individual. The man will have a different role than that of the woman and the parent will have a different role than the grandparent. In the Yoruba context, younger children are expected to kneel while they are talking to an elderly of the community. Any violation of these roles may pose serious obstruction and difficulty for the intercultural communication (Dankwa- Apawu, n.d). This relates to the discussion of globalisation and highlights the various negative influences it can have.

Beliefs and values can also impede understanding in intercultural communication (Dlomo, 2003). Culture plays an important role in belief formulation and belief depends on cultural backgrounds and experiences (Davids, 2013). A belief involves a relation between the belief entity and the characteristics that distinguish it. The degree to which individuals believe that an event or an object acquires certain characteristics reflects the level of their subjective probability and consequently, the depth or intensity of their beliefs (Davids, 2013).

Ethnocentrism (Naidoo, 2011) is another barrier that hinders the process of communication between different cultures. Du Toit (2004) defines it as the belief in the superiority of one's own culture and way of life above all others. This allows the individual to assume that their own cultural experience, their subjective way of life is defined as the reality. This serves a positive function by encouraging group solidarity and loyalty. However, it can also be problematic and negative as it can lead to social isolation, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression of one culture by another because the one culture believes that the other culture's way of life is improper or irresponsible (Tubbs & Moss, 1994). Ethnocentrism creeps into intercultural communication to filter understanding by heightening anxiety that is a threat to understanding (Stephan & Stephan, 1992). Therefore, if the level of ethnocentrism is high, there may be a greater possibility of a high level of anxiety, which as we understand may hinder communication further. It remains essential within the process to work consciously to allay anxiety through creating a space where the individual feels welcomed and supported.

According to Davids (2013) another name for ethnocentrism is cultural relativism. It does not mean that everything is equal. It means that one must try to understand other individual's behaviour in the context of their culture before it can be judged. Ethnocentrism leads to a rejection of knowledge of other cultures, which obstructs communication and blocks the interaction between individuals.

Davids (2013) expresses that stereotyping and prejudice is a critical stumbling block to intercultural communication. The Collins' Dictionary of Sociology (Lehtonen, 2005: 62) defines a stereotype as a 'set of inaccurate, simplistic generalizations about an individual or a group of

individuals which enables others to categorize members of this group and treat them routinely according to these expectations'. In other words, stereotypes are the value judgements made about individuals or groups based on any observable or believed group membership (Pang, 2001). This refers to the categorisation of an individual or a group. Verderber and Verderber (2008) articulate that stereotyping leads to prejudgment in a communication context.

Dankwa- Apawu (n.d) communicates that stereotypes are born out of insufficient information, fear, misconception or high levels of cultural variability among individuals and groups. Cultural stereotypes, like any other type of stereotypes, hinder understanding because they intensify and generalise the perception of individuals.

Research has shown that, once adopted, stereotypes are difficult to discard. In fact, people tend to remember information that supports a stereotype but may not retain information that contradicts it (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Stereotyping often operates at an unconscious level and is persistent. It is therefore difficult to discard or change this perception and this can present challenges for communication. This type of thinking is guaranteed to generate a distressing communication challenge.

In the second session of the research process, the participants engaged in a discussion around the various cultures of which they form a part. Volkas (2009) believes that the simple act of talking can be an important step towards healing, because the participants are sharing their stories. This interaction and dialogue allows the participants to identify with one another which leads to empathy and the disintegration of stereotypes (Volkas, 2009). This is vital to the process as it is creating a space for the participants to validate who they are, their culture and

where they come from. It is furthermore creating a place where they can share their stories and experiences with one another.

Another hindrance in the communication process is when an individual assumes similarity between cultures. This can cause an individual to be ignorant of significant differences, when the individual has little or no information about a new culture. The inverse can also been seen as a difficulty in the communication process, if the individual assumes that the culture's way of being is different instead of recognising the imperative characteristics that the culture shares (Davids, 2013).

> "The rationale for understanding that humans have resemblances and differences is not to reduce the function of culture as an influencing element of communication, but to understand that regardless of cultural differences, people are all members of humanity" (Davids, 2013, p. 36).

It is therefore important than when engaging in intercultural communication, to take time to explore the individual's background and cultural values before one can define their cultural similarity and differences (Beebe et al., 2011). I postulate that the embodied therapeutic process will encourage this interaction which may enhance the intercultural communication and foster cross-cultural relationships.

## South Africa and its immigrants

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, globalisation has the paradoxical effect on South Africa. It has facilitated economic and social growth but at the same time the interaction between the different cultures increases the misunderstanding and cultural conflict in South

Africa (Ibrahim, 2006). As mentioned in the introduction, South Africa is a multicultural country therefore communication is required in order for multiculturalism to succeed and peaceful coexistence to be stimulated. Apart from the different cultures and languages that South Africa hosts, there has been an influx of immigrants who have made South Africa their home. This means that the culture diversity has increased therefore adding more people to this South African melting pot.

According to eNews Channel Africa (2014) over two-thirds of immigrants from other African countries were granted permanent residence permits in South Africa. Statistician General, Pali Lehohla, said that the greatest number of people granted permanent residence were from Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans accounted for 42.6 percent of immigrants from the 10 leading African countries, followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with 12.9 percent, Nigeria with 10.3 percent, Lesotho with 4.7 percent, China with 16.3 percent, United Kingdom was 11.5 percent and Pakistan was 8.8 percent.

The increase of immigrants has caused an enlargement of various cultures in South Africa. These diverse cultures have fundamental cultural differences such as various perspectives, different beliefs and values, prejudices, different ways of constructing a message, unequal power and different ways of interpreting verbal and non-verbal communication. These descriptions emphasise the recurring obstructions of intercultural communication conflicts and difficulties in a multicultural working environment. As individuals enter into multicultural interchange, they are often faced with these generalised differences. These differences need to

be identified and people need to realise how their culture may shape their own reactions. If not, this could lead to miscommunication and disagreements due to cultural variations.

This influx of immigrants pressurizes South Africa's precarious social and economic resources such as health care, education, and employment. It is therefore weakening its ability to handle effectively both immigrant and the domestic population (Kido, 2011). With half of South Africans without formal employment, the issue of immigrants from neighbouring states has become one of the most sensitive political issues (ToxiNews, 2014). The African immigration has given fuel to a fearful and hostile attitude to immigrants from local communities, the police and immigration authorities. Hostility to immigrants has been added to the brewing discontent of South Africa's poor with the lack of service delivery and jobs despite almost two decades of democratic rule. The belief that immigrants are harbingers of South Africa's ills, bringing with them crime and disease, overloading the welfare system, and stealing jobs, is widespread (Hammerstad, 2012). All of these factors provide further complications as these influences create cultural, ethnic and racial tension as human beings attempt to shift the blame to find a culprit for the situation.

According to South African History Online (2015) xenophobic violence against foreign nationals in South Africa has worsened since 1994. The Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC), an organisation that examines migration and its impact on the South African labour market, released two studies last year. They found that 82% of the working population aged between 15 and 64 were "non-migrants", 14% were "domestic migrants" who had moved between provinces in the past five years and just 4% could be classed as "international

migrants". With an official working population of 33,017,579 people, this means that around 1.2 million of them were international migrants. A racial breakdown of the statistics reveals that 79% of international migrants were African, 17% were white and around three percent were Indian or Asian (The Guardian, 2015). It is of vital importance to note that the sample group in the research are immigrants and they reflect how this tension affects their interaction with South Africans. Mrs. B has also briefly mentioned that South Africans are quite hostile towards her because she is from Nigeria. This highlights the confrontational attitude that South Africans have towards immigrants that are from Nigeria and emphasise the intercultural conflict that she is experiencing. Communication is therefore a requirement in the pluralistic society of South Africa and in order for multiculturalism to succeed and coexistence to be stimulated (Du Toit, 2004).

## Conclusion

This chapter explored the effects of globalisation and how it influences intercultural interaction. It discussed how globalisation can deny people through misrepresentation and stereotypes. It has highlighted intercultural conflict that arises from these interactions. This chapter has illustrated that intercultural communication is an important form of human interaction. It also discussed that the lack of cultural knowledge challenges the cultural interaction whereby people with cultural differences interpret verbal and non-verbal signs differently. This in turn may lead to miscommunication and disagreements due to cultural variations.

Furthermore, the above literature review has shown the different intercultural communication barriers and the effect they could have on cultural interaction. Therefore this research

encourages individuals to have an understanding of other people's cultures and communication styles which can reduce the conflict, misunderstanding and miscommunication.

Once these intercultural barriers are understood it becomes clear how easily intercultural conflict can arise. It is important to be mindful of all these influences as the body can offer one way of mediating intercultural tensions. The following chapter four discusses embodiment in drama therapy. It also discusses how embodiment can be seen as a way that acknowledges the embodied cultural being and offers an opportunity where the individual can connect with others on a bodily level.

# Chapter 4 Embodiment in Drama Therapy

Drama therapy is an emerging field in South Africa; defining the methodology is therefore critical and important. Drama therapy falls under the umbrella of *Arts Therapies*, together with movement/dance, art therapy and music therapy. These therapies all use the arts' innate healing potential as a therapeutic methodology. Arts therapies have been shown to be an effective intervention in South Africa because they work in a non-intrusive way that **is** highly sensorial and experiential (The South African Association of Drama Therapists, 2013).

Drama therapy is a creative mode of therapy with the intentional use of healing aspects of drama and theatre as the therapeutic process. It is a method of working and playing that uses action methods to facilitate creativity, imagination, learning, insight and growth (The British Association of Dramatherapists, 2011) The approach is a complex form of therapy that integrates many different art forms and theories of development, play and role (Bottomley, 2016).

This is a person-centred approach, which means that the sessions are adapted to suit the individual's needs. The drama belongs to the client, who is involved in the dramatic action in a way that is effective for them. The script, story or dramatic activity chosen are the creative process that helps participants to explore their emotions and sense of self (Bottomley, 2016). The focus of drama therapy is largely on imagination, spontaneity and creativity, which makes it inclusive to a wider variety of people. All individuals have the potential for creativity, but not all individuals are able to express their difficulties and sense of self verbally (Bottomley, 2016).

It encourages the participants to become actively involved in the present moment by allowing the connection to be built between the mind and body. Drama therapy, like Somatic psychologies, uses body and mind techniques as a vehicle to enhance cathartic change and healing (Gorman, 2003). The use of embodiment is diverse and varied among the different drama therapeutic methodologies; however the intention always remains the same. The intention for the use of embodiment is to gain a deeper and better understanding of the self which will create transformation though the body. The dictionary describes the word 'embody' as to give a body to or represent in human form (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

In drama therapy, embodiment offers the individual: to become the character, the movement and give expression to it. As this happens, dramatic projection takes place as the individuals project aspects of themselves into the dramatic material. They are externalising (through action) inner conflicts and feelings into the characters or movement (Jones, 2007). This dramatic expression according to Jones (2007) enables change through the creation of perspective, along with the opportunity for exploration and insight through the enactment of the projected material.

When an individual is involved in drama, knowledge is gained primarily by and through the body in action (Courtney 1988). By physically participating in a dramatic activity the body and mind are engaged together in discovery. Body-enactment participation leads to a direct knowing rather than a knowing about, according to Grainge (1991). She believes that when you allow your body, feelings and mind to be engaged in an experience you have a sense of knowing which is quite different from simply reading or hearing about the same experience.

Jones (2007) continues that embodiment in drama therapy is the individual's physical encountering of material through enactment. This combines the knowledge to be gained through sensory and emotional feeling with the knowledge to be taken from more abstract reflection.

Embodiment allows the individual to use the body as a primary source of expression and so it can represent ideas and feelings in a concrete fashion. The use of movement, sound and gestures may reveal inner selves or personalities. It can reveal hurt, pain, joy and allow a deeper connection to one self and create the freedom for alternative ways of authentic expression. One's body becomes a powerful instrument for communication because it can therapeutically link people from any culture and interpersonal relationship skills can be enhanced (Henderson & Gladding, 1998).

Meldrum (1994) describes drama therapy as a social encounter, which further emphasises it as an interactive process. This social interaction is encouraged as a way to explore the self and other, which is important for personal growth and aids the development of a sense of self and identity (Bottomley, 2016). It is a communal space, where everyone is being witnessed and assisted to negotiate meaning through embodiment and the support of the group. The act of being witnessed translates into being acknowledged and supported. It gives participants the freedom to explore aspects of themselves from a safe distance and away from the disabling aspects of the social world (Bottomley, 2016).

As mentioned before in the previous chapters, the body is the primary vessel of communication in all cultures. This is through gesture, expression and voice, therefore attention is given to the

ways in which the body communicates on an unconscious as well as conscious level (Jones, 2007). It is through our bodies that we express who we are; we embody our values and live by them.

Embodiment is situated on the level of lived experience and is about understanding or making sense in a pre-reflexive or even pre-symbolic way (Van Wolputte, 2004). Du Toit (2005) is of the opinion that Africans think with the mind and body, integrating all aspects of life. He continues to hypothesize that they are much more at ease with their physical body. He postulates that Africans are in harmony with their body and with the natural environment and make more conscious use of bodily metaphors in their language (Du Toit, 2005).

I considered that this embodied therapeutic process could offer the participants an approach that focuses on the physical experiences as a point of departure. I contemplated that instead of grappling with the cultural differences, the participants could focus on the human commonality, the physical experiences, which we all have in common. Even though every participant would have experienced this differently, they had the same physical source.

This embodied therapeutic process offered the participants the opportunity to explore and develop a new relationship to their body and to the way they relate to other people through improvised movement forms and activities. This knowledge is gained through the senses. Embodiment in drama therapy combines the knowledge gained through the sensory experience of the body with the insight gained from reflection (Jones, 2007).

## What can embodiment offer?

Embodiment represents the performance of our body within the cultural contexts that sanction particular forms of comportment and display. According to Fogel (2013), individuals become so concerned with the outer body, identity and the way they are being perceived in any given situation. He continues that the inner self, the mind and the part of the self that holds their authentic feelings and beliefs can become lost, which leads to the sense of self being fractured (Bottomley, 2016). As Merleau-Ponty pointed out, the embodied individual is directed towards the world. In fact, during much of our waking time, we operate through a bodily intentionality that does not necessarily involve the use of our personal or reflective faculties (Rouhiainen, 2008).

Embodiment offers the individual various ways to cultivate awareness of their bodies. This means that the individual attunes to one's internal bodily sensations, inadvertently developing skills for physically sensing movement (Burns, 2012). The individual is listening deeply and attending to one's body, developing and becoming an inner witness for observing the self. Through this skill, one will become aware of emotions, track impulses, listen to needs, learn the sense of being grounded in the body, and begin to develop the capacity to consciously choose what and how to respond to inner experiences (Burns, 2012). This intrapersonal awareness can facilitate the development of internal integration, the experience of inner connectivity, and skills for authentically expressing internal phenomena (Burns, 2012). This process encouraged the individuals to first become aware of their bodies and once they have reconnected with themselves, they could become conscious of the other individuals and the way they communicate with one another.

Hussler (Gallagher, 2007) suggests that our understanding of others involves processes that happen on the level of bodily sensations and this provides access to others that predates or prefigures anything that would involve inference or analogy. It is a matter of sensory activations that are unified in the lived body that perceive another animate organism. This was important as I framed the process, because as Merleau-Ponty (cited in Finlay, 2014) argues we as human beings seek to understand others, in a whole body way. Embodiment allows human beings to have a primordial embodied relationship with one another. Burns (2012) states that when an individual is grounded, aware of, and honest with their internal experience, their inner connectivity emanates outwardly to manifest in authentic relationships. Thus, the embodied relationship is about the individual being in contact with their own felt experiences while at the same time being in contact with another.

Embodiment fosters empathy which encourages the embodied process of gently sensing another person in order to better appreciate their experience (Finlay, 2004). The word empathy was first employed by the psychologist Edward Titchener in 1909. This word derived its meaning from the German word Einfühlung (which is interpreted as feeling-in). The word empathy also originates from the Greek word empatheia which is defined as 'meaning to enter feelings from the outside or to be with a person's feelings, passions or suffering' (Howe, 2013:9). Bottomley (2016) proposes that the definition of empathy acknowledges the significance of relationships because it includes the understanding of the other. Empathy depends on an understanding of self and other. It also involves the ability to relate to that feeling, to imagine how someone feels and why they are feeling that way (Bottomley, 2016).

According to Gallagher (2007), when we see someone else act in a certain way, our own body-schematic system is activated. This kind of process is directly relevant to imitation and in part, is what provides us with the primary understanding of the other person. May (n.d), hypothesize that mirror neurons enable human beings to have empathy. These nerve cells enable individuals to mirror emotions. These nerve cells seem to provide a fairly simple mechanism for acting, perceiving, and imitating behaviour, which could be crucial to the development of human communication and language (Ahlsen, 2008).

Neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzolatti, was the first who identified mirror neurons inside the brains of macaque monkeys. He noticed that neurons in the same area of the brain were activated whether the animals were executing a particular movement or simply observing another monkey perform the same action (Winerman, 2005). It appeared as though the cells in the observer's brain 'mirrored' the activity in the performer's brain. Although the existence of mirror neurons so far has been experimentally confirmed only in monkeys, there is strong empirical evidence that such a system is present in human beings as well (Lindblom & Ziemke, 2007).

A similar phenomenon takes place when the individual watches someone experience an emotion and then feels the same emotion in response, says Lacoboni, a neuroscientist at the University of California, Los Angeles (May, n.d). The same neural systems gets activated in a part of the cortex called the "insula", which is part of the mirror neuron system, and in the emotional brain areas associated with the observed emotion (Winerman, 2005: 48).This helps

the individual understand another's behaviour and feel empathy for them, which is important to consider when framing and reflecting on the intention of this research.

Finlay (2014) expresses that embodied empathy requires the individual to surrender to uncertainty in the process of being with another. It means allowing embodied feelings, thoughts, impressions and intuitions to appear; permitting the individual to be touched and to respond; opening to the other and moving to their rhythm (Finlay, 2014). Embodied empathy means welcoming everything that is evoked, the images, the movement, the feeling, even if it is figural at the time. Embodied empathy is sensitively attuning to the affective content of the individual's body expressions and authentically mirroring, subtly intertwining and elaborating one's body expressions which encourages the individual to listen and pay attention to their bodily gestures (Burns, 2012).This embodied empathy was explored in the fourth and fifth session where the participants were encouraged to start moving together. Simple exercises of moving together, giving each other weight was explored in the process which developed a sense where the physical self ends and the other begins. This exercises also encouraged an understanding of emotions and gestures that were previously merely an impersonation. This exercises created a context for building trust and dialogue amongst one another in the process (Burns, 2012).

Embodiment offers the individual the opportunity to liberate one's body and become aware of one's whole body away from the pressures and stress of the world, and begin to concentrate on feeling and expression rather than imitation and conscious thought of the expectations of others. It proposes self-understanding and the complex and ambiguous nature of embodied

subjectivity. This can lead to an understanding for the other in their otherness, which might lead to an ethical relationship with others (Rouhiainen, 2008).

## Conclusion

The first section of the chapter discussed embodiment within drama therapy which is a core principle. The chapter moves on and explains the role of embodiment and what it can offer human beings as well as the process. It places emphasis on understanding the body and how the body and mind functions as a whole. As a result of that, embodiment encourages the individual to interpret the various signals from the body and transmit those feelings when communicating with others from all spheres. The awareness to understand the signals and intentions of others and deal with them effectively as well as the awareness of the signals and communication their own body is delivering. This research postulates that drama therapy and embodiment can foster relationships through an embodied driven process.

The following chapter will describe the research methodology as well as research design that was used in the study. It will discuss the sample group as well as the data collection methods.

# Chapter 5 Research Method

## Research Methodology

Creswell (2007) represents qualitative research through an image:

> Think metaphorically of qualitative research as an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material. This fabric is not explained easily or simply. Like the loom on which fabric is woven, general worldviews and perspectives hold qualitative research together (p. 35).

In considering the description of the image for qualitative research above, it is important to regard the philosophical assumptions of the qualitative paradigm that this research upholds. Qualitative researchers typically envisage the social world as fluid, contingent, and always-emerging. Correspondingly, they see people as active agents of their affairs, engaged in constructing the worlds they live in. Each person's reality is subjective and multiple perspectives exist. There is an enduring appreciation for the working subject who actively injects life into, and shapes, his or her experience (Creswell, 2007).

I was mindful that all the data under analysis was a product of each participant's subjective experience of the embodied drama therapeutic process. The data was not considered as objective fact, but rather personal understandings with many complex layers of interaction. Throughout this research, I aimed to be as self reflective as possible of my own positionality. I attempted to better understand the underlying values that were not overtly expressed but perhaps implicitly evident in the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007).

This qualitative research study explored six participants' experiences about embodiment for enhancing intercultural communication. This process explored and interpreted data from the participants in order to elicit meaning and gain in-depth understanding of what the participants experienced (Louw & Louw, 2014).

Corbin and Anselm (2008) believe that knowledge is constantly evolving; therefore a theory should be reconsidered and adjusted to meet the situation at hand. It was with this in mind that I approached this study. The aim is to review the available body of knowledge to understand whether embodiment in drama therapy may be employed for enhancing intercultural communication.

## Research Design

According to Mouton (2001), the research design is a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the research. The research design was aimed to be a case study of six participants. A case study can be explained as a story that represents the realistic, complex, and contextually rich situations that one or more of the participants in the case must negotiate. However, one of the limitations of a case study is that the results of this study cannot be generalised because of the small population group that is being investigated. Only three participants could complete the whole process of the study. The other three participants only contributed to the qualitative questionnaire and the first two sessions of the process.

## Research Sample

The sample for this research study did not intend to be only a female group. Before the embodied drama therapeutic intervention, I requested both male and female culturally diverse

participants, however only females responded to my request. Therefore this research study only consists of women, which had an influence on the outcomes and themes that have emerged. The beginning sample of this research consisted of six culturally diverse women that were recruited through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is the most commonly used method in phenomenological inquiry (Crotty, 1996) and is the preferred choice for interpretive phenomenological studies (Langdridge, 2007).

The main goal of purposive sampling was to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable the research question to be answered. The age of this sample group ranged from twenty four to fifty years. They were from various cultures and places, but presently living in Johannesburg. The places where some of the women were born are South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Two of the ladies identified themselves as Yoruba, one as Shona and the other acknowledged herself as Damara. Two of the participants did not identify with any culture and decided not to write anything in response to this question. Four of the women were black and the other two were coloured.

It is important to note that from the onset this was a closed drama therapy group which meant that no new participants could join after the first session. The researcher understood these inconsistencies in relation to the participants' life circumstances which will be discussed thematically and linked to the data interpretation and themes in chapter six.

## Drama therapy process

The research consisted of six sessions with the participants. This embodied drama therapeutic process initially considered Armand Volkas's *Healing the Wounds of History*. His process was

developed to address collective trauma and intercultural conflicts (Leveton & Volkas, 2010). It uses techniques of socio- and psychodrama to allow participants to experience their personal and collective stories through spontaneous role-playing. His therapeutic goals are to recognise and deconstruct cultural identity, to strive towards a resolution for intercultural conflict and to teach intercultural communication, to help the participants to move deeply into and experience personal and collective grief and mourning, to create a culture of empathy and to create meaning out of suffering (Volkas, 2009).

This embodied drama therapeutic process considered these goals but because drama therapy is a person-centred approach and the group ended up being an all-female group the goals shifted. It was adapted more towards personal growth, self-expression that expands communication skills, creativity and spontaneity skills. The aim of the embodied drama therapeutic intervention remained the same which was to explore what embodiment enabled and whether this embodied process offered communication across cultures.

## Data Collective methods

Three data collection methods were used. The first method was a qualitative questionnaire (Appendix D). This questionnaire was to gather information about participant's beliefs and understanding about intercultural communication. The second method was the themes that emerged throughout the embodied drama therapeutic process as well as the collection of art products that was created during the embodied drama therapeutic process. The last method was an audio-recorded focus group with the participants at the end of the process. It allowed

them to speak back to this journey they have shared together and whether the intervention enhanced intercultural communication amongst themselves.

The content of the questionnaire, the reflection of the process, the themes as well as the audio-taped focus group were analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). As discussed in the introduction, this approach will look at the core themes that emerged during the data collection from the various methods and compare the findings to one another.

## Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The data of this research study was subjected to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The primary objective of IPA is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world (Smith &Osborn, 2007). IPA is the drive to discover the deeper meaning of an experience and is described as 'exploring the lived experience' (Reid et al., 2005). This approach employs the fundamental principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography.

This analytical process in IPA is often described in terms of a double hermeneutic or dual interpretation process. The reason for this is the participants make meaning of their world first; and secondly, I try to decode that meaning and make sense of the participants' meaning making (Smith & Osborn, 2007). This is seen as an in-depth qualitative analysis as it is interested in how participant's think about what is happening to them. The assumption in IPA is that the analyst is interested in learning something about the participant's world. This may be in the form of beliefs, constructs or the participant's story that manifests through dialogue and action that transpires into themes (Smith &Osborn, 2007).

The first step in the data analysis involved the reading and re-reading of the material. I made notes of any thoughts, observations and reflections that occur whilst reading the transcripts and the sessions' reflections. These notes included any recurring themes, my questions, the participants' emotions, and comments on the body language and the metaphorical or symbolic language used (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

The next step, according to IPA, I had to re-read the text and identify themes that best encapsulate the essential qualities of the data (Hefferon & Ollis, 2006). I identified themes and compiled the themes from within each section of the transcript and sessions. I also looked for any possible or likely connections between the themes.

The third stage involved the more analytical or theoretical ordering. The themes were clustered into minor themes and major themes. The aim, at this stage, was to arrive at a group of themes and to identify super-ordinate categories that suggest a hierarchical relationship between them (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008: 181). Thereafter a 'master list' of themes was developed and presented in a summary table. The next stage was concerned with translating the themes into a narrative account. At this point the analysis became expansive again, as the themes were explained, illustrated and nuanced (Smith &&Osborn, 2007: 76).

## Conclusion

This chapter comprehensively detailed the research methodology and the research design. It further discussed the sample group that was chosen for this study. It looked at the drama therapeutic process and briefly discussed the session that took place. This chapter concluded

with the data collection methods and the IPA approach that will be used to analyse the data gathered.

Chapter six analyses the data gathered from the questionnaires, the reflection of the process as well as the audio-recording from the participants. Within this chapter I will further discuss the findings and the results.

# Chapter 6: Results and Discussion

The following section is an exploration of the results of the questionnaire and the six drama therapy sessions yielded. The exploration first takes the reader through the information of the qualitative questionnaire and thereafter discusses the drama therapeutic process and the themes that emerged.

## Presentation and Interpretations of the Qualitative Questionnaire

The first part of this chapter is going to analyse the qualitative questionnaire and how this informed the themes within the embodied drama therapeutic process.

Section 1: The Biological Information

| Participant | Mrs. A | Mrs. B | Miss. C | Mrs. D | Mrs. E | Mrs. F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 30-40 | 40-50 | 20-30 | 30-40 | 40-50 | 30-40 |
| Culture | Damara | Yoruba | Shona | (left blank) | (left blank) | Yoruba |
| Race | Black | Black | Black | Coloured | Coloured | Black |
| Religion | Christian | Christian | Christian | Christian | Christian | Christian |

Interpretation

This was an all female group, which ranged between the ages of twenty four to fifty. The majority of the participants identify with the Black racial group whereas two of the participants identify with the Coloured racial group. It is evident that all participants belong to the Christian religion group. As illustrated in the table above, the participants were from various cultures. The questionnaire intentionally asked the participant's to write their culture they associate

with. Two of the participants, Mrs. D and Mrs. E did not complete this section of the questionnaire.

I feel that it is important to note that in the second session of the embodied drama therapeutic process, the participants had a discussion around the culture they associate with and both Mrs. D and Mrs. E identified themselves as being a 'Proud Coloured' (Mrs. D, 2017). They continued to share the difficulties of being part of this community and how others have labelled them as 'mixed bloodlines', as having 'no origin' and 'no heritage' (Mrs. D, 2017). Mrs. E continued disclosing that her children refuse to associate with the Coloured community because they feel it ties them to the heritage and history of Apartheid. This raises interesting questions around belonging and how it became a prominent theme within the research process.

The next section is going to present and interpret the participant's perspectives.

Section 2: Participant's Perspectives

| | **What does intercultural communication mean to you?** | **How important is to you to gain knowledge of the different cultures in South Africa?** | **How important is to have some kind of knowledge about the person with whom you are communicating?** | **What is the level of importance for you about having knowledge about other cultures?** | **In your opinion, do you think there is a lack of cross-cultural knowledge amongst different cultures in South Africa?** | **What is your preferred way of learning about another culture?** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mrs. A | Having basic knowledge about different cultures. | Important. | Very important. | Important. | Yes because what I have seen is that people are deeply rooted in their culture. | Talking and visiting different cultures. |
| Mrs. B | Communicating across cultures. | Not important. | Not important. | Not important. | Yes I think to some extent. | Through people's stories. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Miss. C | Understanding and accepting different cultures. | Important. | Important. | Very important. | Yes there is. | Interacting with a person. |
| Mrs. D | Learning about different cultures. | Important. | Important. | Important. | Not sure. | Interactivity between people. |
| Mrs. E | Communication across cultures. | Important. | Very important. | Important. | No. | To do more research on the individual. |
| Mrs. F | Communicating between individuals of a different cultural origin. | Not important. | Not important. | Important. | | Communicating with different people from a different culture. |

Interpretation:

The table above shows many of the similarities and divergent answers amongst the participants. The first question about intercultural communication indicated that a lot of the participants agreed that intercultural communication is about the communication taking place between cultures. Some of the participants viewed intercultural communication as learning more about another culture or understanding and accepting the other culture.

The majority of the participants agreed that it is important for the participant to gain knowledge of the different cultures in South Africa as well as to have some kind of knowledge about the person with whom one is communicating with. Two out of the six participants disagreed with this statement and suggested that this is not seen as important. The two participants, who disagreed with the statements above, identified themselves as part of the Yoruba culture. After the first session, Mrs. B referred to this question and stated that she feels that it is not important to have knowledge beforehand because when one is interacting with another, one would make the effort to learn more about that person. She continued that

through the interaction one would gain the necessary knowledge of the individual and their culture.

The three participants namely Mrs. A, Mrs. B and Miss C agreed that there is a lack in cross-cultural communication, whilst Mrs. D and Mrs. E disagreed and Mrs. F did not fill anything in. The three participants who agreed with the statement were the three participants who completed the process whereas the other three participants only attended two of the six sessions. The participants who could not complete the process explained that this was due to work commitments as well as time and financial constraints.

This was a difficult moment in the process as my anxiety oscillated. This was because of the known limited time of this research as well as the uncertainty of their absence and how it would influence the dynamics of the group. After some consideration, I realised that my initial reaction to this absence was impetuous. I acknowledged that I needed to remain sensitive, sympathetic and grateful as this research study was voluntary, therefore the participants made efforts to be there of their own accord. These circumstances were to a certain degree, out of the participants' control. This reminded me to stay reflexive of the conditions and acknowledge the presence and information they have already given to the process.

Another possibility might be that this process could have been vulnerable making for the participants and evoked feelings of frustration, pain, discomfort, being misunderstood, rejected or betrayed (Newman, 2002). They therefore chose not to participate in the process as a way to protect their sense of self in an adaptive fashion (Messer, 2002). This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

With the last question, most of the participants shared similarities in answering the question. They all preferred to learn about another culture through communicating, interacting and listening to other people's stories. This was what the embodied therapeutic process appeared to allow the participant's to experience. It created a space where they could share who they are and tell their stories.

The questionnaire was used to gather information about participants' beliefs and understanding about intercultural communication. A potential pitfall in my questionnaire was that I focussed on knowledge about the culture as opposed to communication. This questionnaire inquired how participants gain cognitive knowledge about the various cultures which was in contradiction with this research as it inquires about embodied knowledge.

## Themes

This master list attempts to indicate the range of themes and the pattern of the themes that were elicited by the embodied drama therapeutic process in the six sessions.

| | **Need of belonging** | **Role of the woman** | **Stereotypes** | **Fear of unknown** | **Fear of being vulnerable** | **Need to relax** | **Power** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Session 1: Introduction | • | | • | • | • | | • |
| Session 2: Discussion | • | • | • | | • | • | • |
| Session 3: Share your story | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Session 4: Let's move together | • | | | • | | • | • |
| Session 5: Playing with power | • | • | | | | • | • |
| Session 6: Coming to an end | | • | • | | | • | • |

In the course of the six embodied sessions that were held with the women, there were several themes that emerged in the sessions. The master list of themes is summarised in the table above. These themes are the need for belonging, the role of women, stereotypes, fear of the unknown, the fear of being vulnerable, the need to relax and escaping to one's utopia as well as power. The central themes that kept reappearing were the need for belonging, the need to relax and power.

## Overview of the sessions

### The introduction

The first session was the introduction of the embodied drama therapeutic process. It introduced the research to the participants, the qualitative questionnaire as well as introducing the participants to one another. Starting this process could be a very anxiety-provoking experience for the participant. Despite reasonable efforts of explanation and preparation for

the participants, many uncertainties remained. Often, due to this anxiety or preoccupation, the participant would only be partially listening, or absorbing verbally conveyed information (Piper et al, 1992). This initial session was filled with drama-based ice-breaking games and exercises. This session was playful in nature to encourage participants to partake in the session.

The participants appeared nervous and unwilling to engage in the process which is a common reaction to the beginning of any intervention (Yalom, 2005). Not only am I an outsider to them, drama therapy was a foreign concept and they did not know any of the participants. There was a mixture of uncertainty and hesitancy. My role as therapist was to allow these initial feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and hesitancy to be expressed. However, my own anxiety guided my actions and I avoided talking and moved quite quickly into play and the embodied process. Play is a core therapeutic principle in drama therapy and is a particularly useful element in developing the self and gaining confidence to develop new ways of being (Bottomley, 2016). I reflected that play can be frightening and vulnerable making which further highlights the participant's anxiety about the group.

I modelled a lot as I introduced the games and exercises to the participants. Some of the participants jumped into the play straight away, whereas others took some time. I was patient with the games and encouraged the play to evolve. Mrs. E appeared to display resistance from the beginning of the session as her body language was closed off and she was not making any eye contact.

According to LaPlanche and Potalis (1973) resistance to the therapeutic intervention develops as the person's organised attempt at opposing the processes of becoming aware and of the

emergence of unconscious forces. Resistance in therapy may be defence mechanisms that protect the participants when they are feeling threatened or overwhelmed. This may take many forms such as lateness, non co-operation, and so on (Astor & Sherman, 1997). In Moreno's view what seems like resistance may actually be the result of participants not being warmed up adequately (Sternberg & Garcia, 2009). This serves as a critique to me that it was perhaps too early in the intervention to jump into play and perhaps the participants had not formed a strong enough relationship- necessary for trust and sharing.

Emunah (1985) suggests that resistance is particularly acute at the very beginning of the session by challenging the therapist with provocative and rebellious behaviour. Mrs. E appeared to instigate and engage in a power struggle in an effort to strive to defeat authority, which was me. She may have wanted to test my ability to maintain control. I realised at that point in time that if I had commented about this, it might have increased her feelings of distrust and annoyance about me and the process. I decided that I was not going to confront her or make any comments about her resistance and body language, but just allow her to express this resistance. Her resistance had an influence on the dynamics in the group as it made the other participants cautious; therefore it was important for me to acknowledge her throughout the session. In the play, she would challenge the roles that I offered and constantly stepped into an authoritative position of every role that I decided to enact. For example, if I enacted the role of a child; she stepped in and played the parent.

This dynamic that emerged in the session between Mrs. E and myself might have been Mrs. E articulating her ethnocentrism, which is belief in the superiority of one's own culture and way

of life above all others. She constantly chose to step into the opposing authority role of what I offered. This might have communicated the oppression of the one role by the other; therefore the child had less authority and has to adhere to the parent's authority. This indicated the inequality between the roles of Mrs. E and me. Another possibility of her resistance might be because of the colour of my skin and the age. I am a young, white South African woman. I have no adult experience of Apartheid, and very little access to the communities who were affected by political oppression and torture. By culture and history I theoretically belong to the group and race of the perpetrators during the Apartheid era. I am subjective in this interpretation, in that I brought my own life's experiences, interpretations, values and beliefs into the process.

Themes that emerged from this session were the different roles we play, authority and respect or the lack thereof. This was quite fitting as it speaks back to the resistance to the process and my position as being an authority figure. Throughout the session, I incorporated the potential feelings and attitudes of all the participants and articulated them in the play. I was deliberate in changing my position as being an authoritative figure to the facilitator who played with these potential feelings and attitudes. I believed that once it is mentioned in the play, we could start playing with the different feelings and attitudes which gives expression and acknowledgement to it. It is also creating a space where participants are allowed to feel the way they feel and express it. The participants offered the following images and roles in the scenarios through improvisation. For example one of the participants offered the image of a tree that was static and did not want to do anything; the other participant offered the role of police officer who had to bring the criminal to justice and the other participant offered the scenario where the patient required medication from the doctor.

This gave the participants permission to express their feelings and they were encouraged to exaggerate these feelings and behaviour. Emunah (1985) proposes that the incorporation of the resistance in the play will alter the image of therapist or facilitator who is seen as an authority figure who will make the group do things. All of these different roles spoke back to the intercultural communication and the various barriers that exist amongst the participants. Not only do these roles indicate the ethnocentrism amongst the participants, it also indicates the stereotypes and the beliefs that they have of the different participants and the roles that they play.

The second session continued with the introduction of drama therapy to the participants in a playful nature. At the beginning of the session, the participants expressed their tiredness and not wanting to do anything. Remembering the resistance to the authority figure in the first session, I realised that it may be another form of resistance as some of the participants were challenging the authoritative position and the instructions that I offered. It also may be resistance to the unfolding content of the sessions and the frame I offered. In that moment I remembered that Mrs. D shared her anxiety around performance and drama and that this might also be one of the various reasons why they expressed their tiredness and not wanting to do anything. Another reason for their resistance might be because participants considered dramatic play as being childish (Emunah, 1985).

As mentioned in the chapter four, drama therapy is a person-centred approach, which means that the sessions are adapted to suit the participant's needs. I felt that there were still feelings of distrust and hesitancy, so I decided that I would work with the 'here-and-now'. According to

Yalom (2007) the 'here and now' refers to the immediate events of the therapeutic hour, to what is happening here and now, in this immediate hour. Cain (cited in Corey, 2009) considers that it is a necessity to adjust the therapeutic style to meet and integrate the specific needs of the participants. This session developed into a group discussion about the similarities and differences in the various cultures that the participants form part of. The participants spoke about what they value in their culture as well as the role they play in their culture.

As mentioned earlier in chapter two, Lieberman (2013) advocates that human beings are highly social beings and have the primal and fundamental need to belong. This theme is prominent in session two, as the participants were explaining to one another where they come from and with what culture they associate with, which gives participants their distinctive identity as well as providing them with the code of conduct of how to express oneself in daily circumstances (Dosamantes- Beaudry, 1997). The participants were encouraged to share their individual background as well as their cultural values.

Volkas (2009) believes that the simple act of talking can be an important step towards healing, because the participants are sharing their stories. After some consideration I realised that some groups would need the time to talk because the communication method was the most comfortable method and was known to them. This interaction and dialogue allowed the participants to identify with one another which lead to empathy and the disintegration of stereotypes and ethnocentrism (Volkas, 2009). For a moment the participants were listening to each other and the tension between the participants eased.

This was vital to the process as it was creating a space for the participants to validate who they are, their culture and where they come from. It is furthermore creating a place where they could share their stories and experiences with one another. This discussion created a space where the participants could feel safe which may have allowed the participants to start exploring communication in an embodied non-verbal way.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, two of the participants did not write any culture they associate with on the questionnaire, however when I asked them, they identified themselves as being a 'Proud Coloured' (Mrs. D, 2017). The participants shared that they seek to fulfil and adhere to the expectations, roles and duties of their culture because of the need to belong. I considered that there may be anxiety amongst the participants that if they do not adhere to their cultural practices and identities, they will be isolated and rejected. It appeared that the role of culture, in this session became the societal rule book, something that was untouchable or could not be challenged. It was seen as this abstract phenomenon that has control over the participants and their daily actions.

The theme of womanhood emerged out of the dialogue. To be a woman within each of the cultures represented in the group appears to be filled with complexities and contradictions. The participants shared the various roles they fulfil. They are seen as the wife, the mother, the caretaker of the home, the friend, sister and neighbour as well as providing food on the table for the husband and children. They continued to share that they are expected to fulfil these roles and will be frowned upon if they do not. This fear for being frowned upon is associated with the need to belong. The women fulfil the duties that are expected of them to belong in

their culture. They will put their own needs second, which in turn leads to the fact that their own needs become hidden when they are attending to other people (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1983).

When we discussed the role of women in culture, the transference that I was experiencing was helplessness, exhaustion and inability to act. Transference, according to Prasko et al. (2010) is the phenomenon characterised by unconscious redirection of feelings from one person to another. In the case of the intervention it was from the participants to the therapist. From the onset of the sessions, I was aware of the power dynamic between the participants and me. I was aware of my position of being the researcher, the therapist, an outsider as well as being white, Afrikaans and privileged. Kronner (2013) states that by revealing personal information such as where I am from, the culture I associate with and what I value in my culture allows the participants to see who I am. Yalom (cited in Wyatt, 2006) believed that self disclosure allows the therapist to be transparent.

This was a conscious decision as I was changing my position of being the authoritative figure again so that the participants not only saw me as an outsider but also heard my story of where I come from and with which culture I associate with. I realised at the point in time that it was necessary for the participants to hear my story so that they can humanise me and empathise with the story I shared. I noticed that when I shared my story, the participants were more willing to tell their narratives and cultures they associate with. This group activity encouraged knowledge, empathy and an understanding of one another. It created a space where the

participants can share what they value about their culture and also speak about the things in their culture that they do not agree with.

In this session I experienced the need to tell my story, so that they could understand who I am and where I am from. I propose that this need was the transference I experienced from the participants. This might have come from the participant's agitation of being deprived of their individuality, their cultural identity and their current state of mind (Emunah, 1985: 73). This need to share the participant's stories and experiences was the catalyst for the next session.

## Sharing your story

The third session was framed around journey mapping. Bruner (1986) stated that stories make meaning. Andrews et al (2000) says that we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell. Widdershoven (1993) believes that narratives not only help us to organise and make sense of experience and imbue our lives with meaning, but it is in these very acts of meaning-making, that the human subject sculpts a narrative identity. Epston (1998) proposes that narratives give meaning and frames for lived experience, and they provide a means by which to order those experiences. He explains that it is in narratives that we situate our experiences, it is the narrative that determines how we will shape and express those experiences and it is the narratives that determine real effects and directions in our lives and in our relationships.

The participants were encouraged to create a map of their lives therefore externalising their life stories and look at the key aspects of their lives in visual form. The mapping concept corresponds with the individual's life journey through time and space and the ways in which

they, as individuals and part of the broader society, have grown and changed over the course of their lives (Almeleh, 2004). I asked various questions to guide the participants in creating this journey map of their lives. These questions were where the participants were born, where they have lived, and the different life stages they have encountered and where do they want to see themselves in the future. I asked the participants to fill in a date at each entry as well as to write something or draw something that they remember at each of these entries. I then asked them to highlight a few moments that stood out for them and to create something that captures this moment. This allowed the participant to think about different aspects of their life and make sense of these in story form.

After the creation of the map, the participants were encouraged to choose moments of their narrative map that resonated with them, and represent this moment with an object that I provided, as well as an image that they embody. The participants created a sequence of movements that encapsulated the various moments of their life that they have embodied and gave it a title. Through stories and embodiment, drama therapy can help participants connect emotions, body and intellect. It helps the participants to explore personal, social and psychological problems. By encouraging creativity as well as imagination, drama therapy helps participants re-examine or redefine their self-description and internal narratives. Drama therapy leads to new insights through artistic expression and expansion of roles (Dunne, 2000).

This session allowed the participants to speak back to their stories and encouraged the participants to identify with one another through their stories, which created empathy. This enabled the participants to humanise one another and their stories, which permits the

participants to see the individual past their cultural barriers and to acknowledge them for who they are. This leads to disintegration of ethnocentrism, prejudices and stereotypes and recognition of the similarities amongst participants.

Only three participants were present for the third session, which changed the dynamics of the group completely. The absence of the participants affected me profoundly and fear, doubt and hesitation crept into my thoughts. It was important to carry on with the session as well as to be reflexive of this moment. I acknowledge that this drama therapeutic process can be vulnerable-making especially in the early stages of the process and needs to be engaged with on a developmental continuum. I postulate that this might also be one of the many reasons why the other three participants did not return. Upon reflection, I wondered how the participants may have experienced my counter transference which refers to transference of feelings from therapist to participants (Prasko et al., 2010). I was feeling vulnerable and fearful as only three participants attended the session. However in my vulnerability they could experience their strength. This was reflected in Miss. C's title of her narrative: 'Survival of the fittest' (2017), as only three participants had survived.

Something to take note of was that all three participants who continued with the process were foreigners who have moved to Johannesburg and they indicated that there is a lack in cross-cultural communication amongst South Africans. Mrs. B has also briefly mentioned that South Africans are quite hostile towards her because she is from Nigeria. This highlights the confrontational attitude that South Africans have towards immigrants that are from Nigeria and emphasises the intercultural conflict that she is experiencing.

The themes that emerged out of the third session were the need to be courageous and bold, uncertainty for the future and fear for the unknown as well as power and being in control. In this session, participants stated the need to be in control of their own lives, as they feel helpless because of the life challenges thrown at them. When the participants reflected, there was an openness and honesty when they shared their life narratives. Instantaneously, the group became smaller, more open, calming and relaxed (Miss. C) and much more intimate than before (Mrs. B).The group was experiencing the developmental stage of 'norming' (Tuckman, 1965) or 'intimacy' (Garland et al., 1973). The group begins to demonstrate and foster a supportive environment, trust (Wheelan, 2005) and openness.

In the focus group discussion after the drama therapy process, Mrs A and Miss C said that the small group enabled them to relate with one another and create meaningful relationships. They continued that the process became a space where they could interact with one another and look past the stereotypes and labels and see the person for who she is. The drama therapeutic space allowed the participants to see one another because this space became their 'comfort zone' (Mrs. A, 2017). This drama therapy process created cohesion amongst the participants which allowed a sense of belonging, acceptance, commitment and allegiance to the group to be created (Bloch & Crouch, 1985; Yalom& Leszcz 2005).

## Let's move together

In first few sessions I explored the various cultures and the narratives of each participant. In this session, I wanted to start investigating how we interact between cultures non-verbally. This involved working with the body and the movement thereof. As Laban describes, '[t]he body is

our instrument of expression through movement' (1960: p.34). Movement in drama therapy allows participants to explore their physicality and the way they relate to the world in a physical capacity. It is focused on expressing the mind and self through movement and attempting to connect the two (Bottomley, 2016). It brings the self and the mind together with the physical self, creating a connected sense of identity, rather than a fragmented one. Movement therefore is a way for the inner self and the unconscious to be expressed, connecting the internal self and external identity.

The fourth session was framed around connecting and re-connecting with the participant's body and how it communicates with the other participants. This session encouraged the participants to listen to their bodies and express what needed to be articulated. In this session, they were invited to communicate with one another through their bodies and movement. They were encouraged to let go of their thoughts and allow spontaneous movement patterns to evolve. The group was purposively chosen with the different cultures to investigate whether movement encouraged communication amongst participants. After some time, the group started moving together as one unit. Moving together created a shared energy and strength and enabled the participants to move beyond their personal boundaries or anxieties. It created a joy of moving together and allowed the participants to appreciate and validate their own worth and recognition of the personal difficulties and obstacles (Chaiklin & Wengrowe, 2009).

This is valuable for the research as it indicates that the movement decreased the anxiety amongst participants, which is seen as one of the intercultural barriers. This decrease in anxiety appeared to allow the participants to develop this primordial relationship with one another

(Burns, 2012), where they are experiencing the bodily sensations of the other participants. This 'attunement' with the participants encourages a bodily understanding that predates or prefigures anything that would involve inference or analogy (Gallegher, 2007). Thus, this 'attunement' and embodied relationship permits the participant to be in contact with their own felt experiences while at the same time being in contact with another.

After the participants moved together, I encouraged to them to find a space of their own and just allow themselves to come back to their own body. This was done by making the participants aware of each body part and allowed them to be present within their body. This encouraged the individuals to come back to their own identity. This activity enabled the participants to check in with their own body. Afterwards, I gave the participants a piece of paper and invited them to draw or write anything that came to mind. Art work, by being distanced from the body provides a safer medium for the expression (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). This activity allowed for symbolic images or words from the unconscious to be brought to consciousness and engaged with (Jung, 1933). I used a projected art making activity at this point to enable the participants to move gently from an embodied experience into a verbal reflection. Meyburgh (2006) offered that the discussion of the picture may be less threatening for the participant because the picture is concrete and external to the self.

Themes that emerged through this session were the fear for the unknown, the need to escape one's daily responsibilities and roles and the need to feel supported. All three participants had the uncertainty of not being sure of how to move and what would be expected of them. Once they became conscious of their body and what was articulating to them, this fear and

uncertainty of the unknown slowly faded away and their bodies were led them through the movement. All of the participants needed to escape the responsibilities and expectations of their daily lives and just to allow themselves to be immersed in their own thoughts and body. The movement transported the participants into the imaginative space through their body and allowed expression in a distanced manner. This imaginative space offered the participants the journey of exploring personal material and to dialogue with the unconscious (Hougham, 2006).

In the reflection, all three participants spoke about how the movement created dialogue between them. Mrs. B stated that this session offered her the opportunity to 'understand her fellow participants better' (2017). She continued that she does not have the words to explain it, but that it is on a 'bodily level' (2017). This indicates that the movement offered the participants the opportunity to empathise with one another. As mentioned earlier Volkas (2009) believes that when one starts empathising with another, the stereotypes disintegrates and a relationship can develop. Movement therefore became another language with which the participants could communicate.

The participants reflected that this movement, especially in the end when they returned to their own space, they escaped to their utopia. For that few minutes, they wanted to elude their daily responsibilities and roles that they have to fulfil. Their utopia was about being somewhere in nature or being far removed from their reality. Mrs. A mentioned that she was on the beach, staring at the ocean and feeling the light summer breeze in her face. Miss. C communicated that she was standing in a field with her childhood summer dress on and feeling the wind blow through her hair. Mrs. B did not utter her utopia but she mentioned that she felt as if she was in

a completely different space, far removed from reality. In this utopia, the participants spoke about becoming courageous, being bold and letting all things go. This is one of the various things the drama therapeutic space offered them.

In analysis of the session, the need to escape their daily realities and responsibilities translated into the expectation of the role of culture. The theme of power also emerged throughout the session and in the rhetoric around culture. South Africa has often been referred to as the 'rainbow nation', which symbolises this utopian ideal that all the cultures in South Africa are living in peaceful co-existence. However, this is not translating into daily interactions (Schutte, 2013). Every culture has their own distinctive way of living and regard this way of life as the fundamental way that governs their behaviour. This makes the interactions between the various cultures difficult.

After some consideration, I decided that I wanted to frame this session around power and how the participants experience power through their body. I also wanted the participants to speak back to this experience of exploring power and whether they have felt something similar in their bodies externally to the space. In the fifth session, I encouraged the participants to explore movement through exercises of giving weight and receiving weight. This exercise allowed the participants to achieve a reciprocal interaction with another person and encouraged physical contact with another individual. Callery (2015) states the body knows things about which the mind is ignorant. This activity permits the participants to discover the body, its strength and resistance. Chesner (1995) believes that what begins as an exploration at a physical level may enhance self-image and confidence and have a real-life impact in terms of

communicating in everyday situations. This exercise gives the participants an alternative form of interaction that explores rules of communication, such as reciprocity and turn-taking, as well as empathy and understanding of the other person (Bottomley, 2016).

All three participants reflected that this session was an insightful session as it challenged the participants to think about the theme of power and how it affects them in their daily lives. Themes that were evoked through the session were power, responsibility, societal and cultural pressure and trust. All three participants offered that through the movement they realised that they have the control to give another person power. They continued that it was their responsibility to decide whom to give power to control them. They concluded that this realisation made them feel empowered because they became conscious of the power in their lives and who has control over them. Boon and Plastow (2004) define empowerment as

> the liberation of the human mind and spirit, and with the transformation of participants who see themselves – and are often seen by others – as subhuman, operating only at the level of seeking merely to exist, into conscious beings aware of and claiming voices and choices in how their lives will be lived (p 7).

## Coming to an end

In this session I noted the difference in the atmosphere of the session. In the beginning, the ambiance of the drama therapeutic process was stiff and there was a sense of anxiety and uneasiness. As the process developed, so did the relationships between the participants. From session four onwards, chatter and laughter filled the space. The atmosphere was more relaxed and inviting. In the first session, the participants sat on their own with chairs in between them.

From the fourth session, the participants sat next to one another and even joined me, who sat on the floor most of the times. The participants became more comfortable with one another, therefore this created the space where they could be 'open and vulnerable' (Mrs. A).

The last session was an overview of the embodied drama therapeutic journey. It considered all the sessions and invited the participants to choose something that they were taking away from this journey. They were invited to create a collective map of this journey and share what they were taking away from this process. This session was mainly to review and celebrate all that they had achieved together and this collective road they had journeyed together. It was integration and assimilation of the feelings and insights that were explored during the process (Volkas, 2009). I encouraged the participants to reflect on whether the embodiment in the processes enhanced communication amongst them.

Miss. C is of the opinion that that this process allowed her to 'develop meaningful relationships with participants' (2017). She continues that this process offered her the 'opportunity to see past the stereotypes and labels and see the person for who they are' (2017). Mrs. A agreed with Miss C and shared that this process was a 'confirmation about what she experienced of prejudice and by listening to others share their stories and move together, she was able to trust them' (2017). Mrs. B stated that she feels this 'can work with people who cannot communicate verbally, because of the language and when you put them together, they will actually start communicating' (2017). She continued saying that 'they might not become magically friends but it will help with the communication between them' (2017).

After this sixth session of the embodied drama therapeutic process, the participants summarised this journey as 'Bodies talk' (Mrs. A, 2017), 'Journeying across cultures' (Mrs. B, 2017) and 'Reality check' (Miss C, 2017). This process created group cohesion amongst the participants and offered them a space where they could breathe, relax and re-connect with themselves and their needs. It became a comfort zone where the participants had the freedom to express, create and discover in the therapeutic space. In this space they discovered commonalties in the movement as well as in the narratives, which allowed them to discuss and move in non-threatening ways (Volkas, 2009). Volkas continues that this builds mutual empathy and strengthens the bonds between the participants (2009). It permitted them to see and accept others and themselves fully, without the stereotypes and labels. They could share their stories and experiences, therefore creating universality amongst the participants. It allowed them to emphasise with one another which developed into 'meaningful relationships' (Miss C, 2017). I propose that this process allowed the participants to foster cross-cultural relationships; to understand each other and to communicate amongst one another.

## What did the embodied process offer individually?

Mrs. A shared that this process allowed her to discover more of herself and place her needs before others. She continued that she had an insightful moment in session five when she realised that she struggles to trust people. The participants were experimenting and exploring the exercise of giving weight and taking weight and how this influences the body. It was in this moment when she realised that she needed to give her partner her weight that she could not because she did not trust her enough. She continued that she feared that her partner would not be able to carry her weight, so she preferred to carry her own weight.

I encouraged her to play with this notion, giving a little bit of her weight at the time. In this session, her body revealed that there was a fear of trust and surrendering over to another person, therefore giving them control. Through the movement exercises of giving weight and taking weight, this exercise allowed her to slowly start trusting another human being with her weight, therefore surrendering her weight to the other person. She explained that this was difficult but as the session developed, she intuitively gained trust and knew the participants would have her back.

Mrs. B said that this process allowed her to become more reflexive of certain things in her life. This reflexivity was sparked by an insightful moment that also took place in the fifth session when they were exploring the movement of giving weight and taking weight. Through the movement of her body, she came to the realisation that she was in control of giving her weight to her partner and she could only fully give her weight to her partner if she surrendered control to her. This thought sparked a dialogue in Mrs. B's head and she realised that nobody has power over her unless she gives them the power to have control over her.

This was a significant moment for her as it made her conscious of whom she gives power to in her life. She communicated that this moment was the starting point to think and reflect about all the moments where she has given control to someone else and allowed them to take control of her thoughts and actions. This was an empowering moment for her as it created personal freedom over certain things in her life.

Miss C said that this process allowed her to become more conscious of the narratives and experiences her body holds. She realised this in the fourth session where the participants were

encouraged to move according to the body, therefore allowing the body to articulate what it needs to communicate. Halprin (2003) believes that movement allows the individual to experiment and investigate themselves to uncover what they have been feeling and bring it into a purer view. Miss. C realised that her body contained so much information and that she needed to listen more to her body and what it is telling her. Miss. C said that her body was stressed and this caused her to feel anxious and restrained. She believed that she needed to relax, to let go of that which she cannot control and to be gentle with herself.

After a lot of consideration, I realised that this process enabled the participants to connect with themselves through their own humanity. For Mrs. A it was her ability to trust other individuals, for Mrs. B it was about becoming aware of the power in her life and for Miss. C it was about being aware of her body and the various experiences that it holds. It was also about being gentle with herself and to let go of the things that she cannot control. This process links with the Grotowskian idea of the 'via negative', which is the eradication of blocks and obstacles that stifle the full expression of the spirit through the body (Matson, n.d). Grotowski believes that this stripping away the obstacles will allow the individual's impulse and action to be concurrent (The Komodo Dramaturg, 2009). The process enabled the participants to become aware of these blocks and obstacles and encouraged them to connect with their humanity which cultivated dialogue amongst participants.

## Conclusion

This chapter sought to undertake an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the content that emerged from the questionnaire, how it influenced the drama therapy session, as well as

the themes that emerged from the embodied drama therapeutic session. In this chapter, I discussed the multiple approaches I used as well as working in a client lead way. I acknowledge that all drama therapy approaches are inherently embodied, because when the participants took the exercises and played it out, they made it their own. This allowed the exercises to transform into personal play that they embodied. This chapter also identified the overall themes that emerged and became apparent in the sessions, in support of the research question when focusing on the ways in which embodiment can be used to build cross-cultural relationships among South African citizens and allow them to understand one another better.

# Chapter 7: Conclusion

This final chapter provides an overview of the qualitative research study that has been conducted, with embodiment as the element of investigation. When reviewing all the parts of the body of this thesis together, the question arises whether I have answered my research question? Throughout the research study, I tried to explore the ways that embodiment in drama therapy can be used to foster and enhance intercultural communication.

In chapter one I highlighted the fact that South Africa is a multicultural country that hosts various cultures and languages. According to Schutte's (2013) research, there is still a lack of intercultural interaction within South Africa; however there has been some marked improvement because there is more interaction amongst the different races. He continues to typify the superficial nature of these interactions with no deeper knowledge of one another.

As emphasised in chapter two, the fact that the body is the main vessel of communication is common in all cultures through verbal and non-verbal communication to express ideas, roles and relationship (Jones, 2007). The communicative action is therefore at the same time a concretely embodied and socio-cultural phenomenon (Roth, 2007).This indicates that culture forms part of the individual's body and communication. It governs their behaviour and plays a huge role in establishing the identity from which they operate. It is for this reason that it is complicated for one to deal with the body, communication and culture separately. It is essential that one views and treat them inclusively.

We are embodied cultural beings who interact and communicate with individuals from varying cultures on a daily basis. Not only does the lack of cultural knowledge challenge this cultural

interaction, but the different intercultural barriers also play a role, whereby people with cultural differences interpret verbal and non-verbal signs differently. As mentioned in chapter two, people believe non-verbal behaviour more than verbal communication. If one misinterprets or transfers the meaning of non- verbal behaviour from one's own culture, serious communication problems may arise which may result into disagreements due to cultural variations. I postulate that drama therapy can assist in fostering effective intercultural communication as it seeks an understanding and sensitivity towards other cultures, communication styles, and behaviour.

After our six sessions of working together, the group concluded with the following statements. 'This was a beautiful journey where we got to know one another better and became a much closer group' (Mrs. B, 2017). It allowed me to 'develop relationships with other people from different cultures and to let go of certain things in my life' (Miss C, 2017). 'This became my place to relax, where everything was calm and open' (Mrs. A, 2017).

As mentioned in chapter six, I observed that the early stages of the process were marked by the participants' resistance and as the sessions progressed, so did the communication between the participants. It was remarkable to be a witness of the shift in the interaction between the participants. In the beginning, the ambience of the therapy group was quiet, and apprehensive. The quality of the interaction evolved into laughter and chatter towards the fifth session. I also observed that the reflection became more spontaneous and open and the participants shared honesty and authentically. It became a space where they could share what they were feeling or had discovered. Where they could be heard and validated.

In hindsight I have realised that I was ambitious to have thought that six sessions would be enough to explore and investigate embodiment as a drama therapeutic intervention in creating the possibility for intercultural communication. As mentioned in chapter two, culture is embedded into the participants, their daily life, actions and language. It informs the participant's distinctive identity and provides them with the code of conduct of how to express themselves in daily circumstances. Since we only had six sessions it felt as though we only scraped the surface of culture and that there is so much more to uncover.

These sessions of embodiment offered the participants a space where the anxiety between the participants decreased and eventually eliminated as it became a 'comfort zone' (Mrs. A, 2017). A space where embodiment not only catered for the well-being of the participant but in the process resulted in building a community amongst the participants. The use of groups as a therapeutic intervention can have multiple benefits for its participants: building group cohesion, fostering trust, safely exploring feelings, building self-esteem, enhancing social skills, social acceptance, encouraging support, experiencing validation and empathy (Ahmed et al., 2010). This process was effective because of these multiple benefits as the group participants have mentioned. This process allowed them to slow down, relax, to imagine, become less anxious, be listened to and become conscious of how they inhabit their bodies. The participants were able to reflect upon their body and their movement with feeling and understanding. This led towards the self-discovery of what their bodies want to articulate and how they interact with one another.

It was in these moments that I realised that despite any verbal communication barriers or differences, the experience itself was a shared language. The embodiment offered the participants an opportunity where their 'bodies could do the talking' (Mrs. A, 2017) and 'create unity without speaking about it' (Miss C, 2017). Not only did the participants find a way of communicating in these moments, but the cultures also found a place to meet. Miss C stated that this process allowed her to 'remove the stereotypes and labels and see the person for who they are' (2017). Mrs. A even stated that 'some people wear their culture and it is like a wall or barrier that you need to go through' (2017). She continues that this is what the process enabled for her, to allow her to see past the 'culture wall and look at the people behind it' (2017). This process aided in eliminating ethnocentric views, a barrier in intercultural communication, since all the participants felt empowered after this process. It also afforded participants the opportunity to became conscious and expand their body language and non-verbal behaviour.

## Limitations

I acknowledge that the major limitation of this research is the length of time required for the intervention. It takes time to establish the trust needed between the drama therapist and the participants. In this case the turning point was reached during the fourth and fifth session when we really started to unpack and explore power and culture. It was at this point that some of the most interesting developments were happening within the group but unfortunately I also knew that there was a need for closure. The sixth session was about integrating and assimilating the feelings and insights about the process.

I also realised that the group ended up being an all female group had a unique impact on the outcomes and themes especially around the theme of power. However do to the time

limitation and intention of this research; it did not lie within the scope of this report to explore this phenomenon in detail. I feel that it is important to name its unique contribution that it has had on the process.

I recognise that this intervention was far too short to fully investigate how embodiment can influence intercultural communication. A longer-term group would certainly be preferable and would allow even greater depth of insight into the themes which arose. I would however, argue that this short intervention has influenced the participants and the relationships they developed with each other. This research therefore shows the relevance of embodiment as a drama therapeutic intervention in South Africa.

There was no follow up since the intervention, which is another limitation to this study. The long-term effects of the work therefore cannot be evaluated. The recommendations section that follows provides suggestions of how this can be done. In addition, another limitation of this study is that it is a case study made up of a small sample size of a highly specific target group. This is just one group and my findings are challenged as it cannot be generalised, as the context is very specific. One may possibly use the information gained on this group to make inferences about other diverse groups and the wider context.

## Recommendations

Having established the limitations of this study, it then follows that it would be useful to replicate this study with other populations, including different genders and various cultural groups. I also feel that our complex, multicultural and layered nation will make the work challenging and rich. This may yield information that can be used to compare and contrast the

findings of the present study, thereby evaluating its results and concretising it in the field of drama therapy.

I believe that the intervention can be a valuable addition to South Africa and the intercultural communication field of research. The idea of commitment to working at the participant's pace and providing core conditions of empathy, acceptance and congruence is essential in creating a treatment plan for South Africans, allowing them to feel accepted and for a sense of safety and trust to begin to develop (Rogers, 1951).

In conclusion, I believe that this study provides a rich description of the complexities that we face in South Africa. I hope that this case study has illustrated how embodiment in drama therapy can provide an environment where intercultural communication can be enhanced and foster cross-cultural relationships. In the short time that I have spent with the participants, I learned that every human being has the need to belong, to be seen and validated. I have also learned to acknowledge the different cultures we form part of and learn more from them which will lead to a deeper level of connection with others. Embodiment was the thread of human connection in validating each individual's body and the culture they form part of.

I postulate the value of creating space for individuals from South Africa to communicate and I believe that that drama therapy could be of use. With this study being just one building block in the literature on working with individuals of South Africa, it is hoped that future studies on the effectiveness of working in groups specifically in the South African context can be done.

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# Appendix A:

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG**

**HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)**
Amari Annandale

| | |
|---|---|
| **CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** | **PROTOCOL NUMBER:** WSOA161114 |
| **PROJECT** | Exploring Embodiment in Drama Therapy for enhancing intercultural communication |
| **INVESTIGATORS** | Amari Annandale |
| **DEPARTMENT** | Wits School of Arts |
| **DATE CONSIDERED** | 12.10.2016 |
| **DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE** | Approved |

**Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application**

**DATE** 23.11.2016 **CHAIRPERSON** .....
(Dr. Tanja Sakota)

cc: Supervisor: Ms Tamara Gordon-Roberts

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**DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)**

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to a completion of a yearly progress report.**

**Signature**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

# Appendix B:

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Exploring Embodiment in Drama Therapy for enhancing Intercultural Communication.**

Dear Potential Participant

My name is Amari Annandale and I am a Drama Therapy Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am investigating whether embodiment in Drama Therapy can enhance intercultural communication.

This research will explore intercultural communication in South Africa. It will further investigate whether embodiment as a therapeutic technique can be utilized in Drama Therapy to enhance the intercultural communication that is taken place between participants. I would like to invite you to be part of this study.

This study requires the participants to partake in all three components of the research. The first part of the research study is to fill out a questionnaire that will take 15 minutes. The first part of the questionnaire will contain questions about the participant and the culture he/she forms part of. The second part of the questionnaire will be about the participant's understanding and opinions regarding intercultural communication within his/her environment. Your responses will be treated with the utmost of confidentiality and are for research purposes only; therefore no provision is made for you to indicate your name on the questionnaire. The second part of this research will be an embodied intervention to investigate whether embodiment in Drama Therapy can be used to enhance intercultural communication. If you do agree, you will need to commit to the workshop, for 6 sessions. The sessions will only be an hour and the time and place will all be discussed and negotiated to suit the participants. The last part of the research will be a focus group to discuss whether the intervention was effective and able to enhance intercultural communication. This focus group will only be an hour and will be audio-recorded. All data will only be available to myself and my supervisor.

This participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no adverse consequence of any sort. You may refuse to answer questions if they make you feel uncomfortable, and may withdraw from the study at any time. If you would like to be a part of the group, but you change your mind during the course of the intervention, you can always ask to stop attending the group. Confidentiality and privacy will be adhered to at all times. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. However, you have a choice whether to disclose some basic information such as age, gender and culture. At the end of the group, I will write a report that will speak back whether this intervention was effective or not.

At the culmination of the study, the research report will be made available to you should you wish to read it. As the report will be available freely as a Masters Research Paper, this paper may be read by many different people, but they won't be able to tell that it was you in the group. If you need someone to talk to during or after the process, you can call Sian Palmer, a qualified drama and movement therapist, and she can help you for free. Her phone number is 082 8549821.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for availing yourself and thereby contributing valuable input towards my research.

If you have any queries, more information may be obtained from me or contact my supervisor.

Thank you very much for your time,

Amari Annandale (annandaleamari@gmail.com/ 0725345945)

Supervisor: Tamara Gordon-Roberts (tamara.gordon-roberts@wits.ac.za)

## Appendix C:

Dear Participant.

Consent form:

**Exploring Embodiment in Drama Therapy for enhancing Intercultural Communication.**

I hereby consent to participate in a research questionnaire regarding my understanding of intercultural communication. I consent to the embodied Drama Therapeutic intervention as well as the focus group held after. I consent to the focus group being audio- recorded, and understand that only the researcher and the research supervisor will have access to this audio recording.

I understand that I am giving this consent freely and without being forced to do so. I also understand that I can withdraw from the process at any time should I not wish to continue and that this decision will not affect me negatively in any way.

The purpose of the study has been explained to me. I take into consideration that the topic of intercultural communication may be a difficult topic to discuss and I am aware that should I feel the need or require additional counseling support whilst engaging in the research the facilitator will provide me with a referral to appropriate services. I will remain nameless and confidentiality and boundaries will be established with the group.

Consent to fill out the questionnaire ☐

Consent to be part of the embodied Drama Therapeutic process ☐

Consent for audio-recording during the focus group ☐

Signed by: Participant_____ Date_____

## Appendix D:

Intercultural Communication: Questionnaire

Biographical Information: Section: 1

Please indicate with a cross (X) in the block applicable to you.

| 1. Gender | |
|---|---|
| Female | |
| Male | |
| 2. Age | |
| 18-20 | |
| 20-30 | |
| 30-40 | |
| 40-50 | |
| 3. Culture | |
| Please specify your culture: | |
| | |
| 4. Race | |
| Black | |
| Coloured | |
| White | |
| Indian | |
| Other (please specify) | |
| | |

| 5. Religion | |
|---|---|
| Christian | |
| Islam | |
| Judaism | |
| Hinduism | |
| Other (please specify) | |
| | |
| 6. Preferred language | |
| English | |
| Afrikaans | |
| Zulu | |
| Xhosa | |
| Northern Sotho | |
| Sotho | |
| Ndebele | |
| Swazi | |
| Tsonga | |
| Tswana | |
| Venda | |
| Other (please specify) | |
| | |

Section: 2

1. What does intercultural communication mean to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Listed below are a series of statements that represents the topic intercultural communication. Please select an answer by making a cross (X) in the appropriate block that resembles your opinion

| Scale: | 1: Very Important | 2: Important | 3: Not important |
|---|---|---|---|

2. How important is it to you to gain knowledge of the different cultures in South Africa?

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

3. How important is it to have some kind of knowledge about the person with whom you are communicating?

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

4. What is the level of importance for you of having knowledge about other cultures?

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|

5. In your opinion, do you think that there is a lack of cross- cultural communication amongst the different cultures within South Africa?

_____
_____

6. What is your most preferred way of learning about another culture?

_____
_____
_____
_____