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Wits School of Arts

Drama for Life

Master's Research Proposal

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RESEARCH TOPIC: Forum Theatre as a Form of Protest: A Practice-Based Investigation

SUPERVISOR(S): Dr. Sibongile Bhebhe

Research assignment submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of requirements of B.A. (Masters) in the field of Applied Drama: Theatre in Education, Communities and Social Contexts.

Master's Coursework and Research Report

Wits School of Arts

Drama for Life

Honours Research Essay

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STUDENT NO: 2378472

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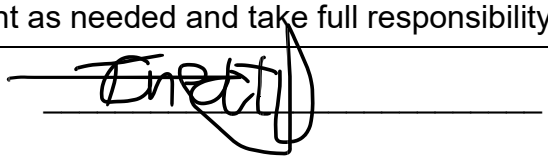
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Date: 10 September 2024

Course code: WSOA 7087A

Lecturer / Tutor: Dr. Sibongile Bhebhe

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Abstract

This study examines Forum Theatre's (FT) impact within the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement in South Africa, highlighting its role in protest and social change. Findings show FT empowers participants, promotes understanding of systemic injustices, and fosters solidarity and innovative strategies for activism. The research advocates for further investigation into FT's effects, collaboration between FT practitioners and social movements, and increased support for FT initiatives. Ultimately, FT is presented as a vital tool for social activism, enabling mobilization, education, and empowerment.

Note on Abbreviations

1. FMF - Fees Must Fall
2. FT- Forum Theatre
3. TO - Theatre of the Oppressed
4. PaR - Practice as Research

Title: Forum Theatre as a Form of Protest: A Practice-Based Investigation

Background on the study:

The use of art and creative expression as vehicles for social change has been a hallmark of human history, with art serving as a powerful means to voice dissent, challenge set-up norms, and catalyse transformative societal shifts. In this context, Forum Theatre is a distinctive tool for modern protests, and this master's study aims to explore its untapped potential through comprehensive practice-based research. In this context, FT is an interactive theatrical approach developed by Augusto Boal, involving audiences in scenes depicting oppression. Spectators become participants, offering solutions, and engaging in dialogue to explore social issues and potential transformations.

In recent decades, global socio-political landscapes have seen the rise of many protest movements looking to address diverse concerns, ranging from human rights and environmental issues to socioeconomic inequalities and systemic injustices. The FMF movement emerged in response to increasing tuition expenses and educational inequalities, showcasing how collective action effectively promotes dialogue and drives change within both academic institutions and broader society.

While traditional forms of protest, such as rallies and demonstrations, continue to be central to activist strategies, there exists a notable gap in scholarly exploration of innovative and creative avenues for protest. FT, pioneered by Augusto Boal, has the potential to offer an alternative approach, fostering a platform for dialogue, empathy, and transformative engagement. Despite its clear promise, the application of FT as a form of protest stays an underrepresented area of investigation within both theatrical studies and protest literature.

The FMF movement, which started in South Africa's higher education sector in 2015, is a notable socio-political protest advocating for accessible education by demanding reduced or eliminated tuition fees. Central to the efficacy of FT as a form of protest is its ability to help open dialogue among participants. This resonates with the ethos of movements like FMF, which emphasize the importance of diverse voices, shared experiences, and collaborative problem-solving. By structuring the research within the backdrop of FMF, this investigation aims to explore how FT can amplify the movement’s call for inclusivity, democratic engagement, and grassroots mobilization.

My study aspires to contribute significantly to the fields of both theatre studies and social activism. By rigorously investigating FT as a form of protest, the research looks to shed light on its potential to inspire meaningful change, bridge societal divides, and reimagine the dynamics between art and activism. The findings may provide practitioners, educators, and activists with valuable insights into harnessing the creative arts as tools for promoting social justice, thereby expanding the repertoire of effective protest strategies.

In essence, this practice-based investigation intends to explore how FT, with its interactive and dialogic nature, can serve as a compelling and innovative form of protest within the context of the FMF movement. By engaging with this uncharted territory, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between artistic expression and social change, while offering a potential avenue for enhancing the impact of contemporary protest movements.

The drive to examine Forum Theatre (FT) as protest stems from apartheid's lasting injustices, especially in education. The 1976 Soweto protests against Afrikaans highlight this ongoing struggle. Despite post-1994 liberation, inequities persist, notably in rising student fees that sparked the 2015 Fees Must Fall movement. This context, rooted in apartheid's legacy since 1948, underscores the urgency of exploring FT's potential as an effective protest tool in contemporary South Africa's sociopolitical landscape.

The FMF movement is a significant socio-political protest movement that appeared in South Africa, primarily within the higher education sector. It gained prominence in 2015 and has since been a rallying cry for students and activists advocating for accessible and affordable education for all. The movement's name, FMF succinctly encapsulates its central demand: a reduction in, or complete elimination of, tuition fees for higher education institutions.

The FMF Campaign, which unfolded in the realm of higher education, stands as a resonant emblem of contemporary socio-political activism. Against the backdrop of escalating tuition fees and systemic inequalities, this movement underscored the potency of collective action in challenging established norms and advocating for change. By situating the investigation within the context of the FMF Campaign, the study aims to unravel how FT can intersect with and contribute to modern protest endeavours.

It seems no wonder that the movement originated from dissatisfaction with rising university costs, imposing financial strain on students and families. South Africa's legacy of apartheid and social inequalities worsened the problem, further restricting education access for marginalized communities.

The integration of Forum Theatre (FT) into the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement represents a pivotal evolution in South African theatre, transitioning from cultural expression to a potent tool for activism and societal change. Early developments from 1945 to 1962, including the establishment of formal theatre studies and the National Theatre Organisation, laid the groundwork for theatre's role in societal dialogue, despite criticisms of its initial focus on white audiences. The period of political awakening between 1970 and 1985 further highlighted theatre's capacity for protest and education, mobilizing communities and shifting public consciousness, even as sceptics questioned its tangible impact on political change. The post-apartheid focuses on reconciliation and healing through theatre underscored its ability to address societal wounds, demonstrating FT's substantial social impact beyond symbolic efforts. The dynamic alliance between FMF and FT challenges the perception of theatre as merely performative, showcasing its transformative potential in amplifying voices, engaging participants in problem-solving, and mobilizing action. This evolution from entertainment to a vital tool for resistance and dialogue underscores the indispensable role of theatre in envisioning a more equitable society, affirming its critical place in activism.

I will use Practice as Research (PaR) as my method of research. Following Robin Nelson's four stages of research practice: which are:

i) Engagement with Artistic Practice: This phase entails direct involvement in the artistic process, acknowledging the unspoken, physical, and instinctive knowledge practitioners acquire through their creative endeavours. For Forum Theatre, this would involve active participation in and facilitation of sessions to gain firsthand experience, recognizing practitioners' distinct insights derived from their artistic engagement. This stage also involves introspective analysis, delving deeply into practitioners' choices, actions, and decisions. ii) Critical Analysis: Researchers are encouraged to scrutinize assumptions, evaluate their practices' efficacy, and explore how their creative work aligns with broader theoretical frameworks. In the context of Forum Theatre, this might encompass studying participant interactions, intervention outcomes, and the role of the "Joker" in guiding the process. iii) Conceptual Contextualization: This phase involves placing the artistic practice within a wider theoretical and conceptual landscape. Researchers use existing knowledge, theories, and academic literature to enrich their understanding of their work, exploring connections between their artistic endeavours and larger socio-cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts. In the case of Forum Theatre, this could involve examining intersections between theatrical performance, activism, and societal change, drawing insights from the Theatre of the Oppressed field. iv) Audience Impact: The final

> stage concentrates on how the artistic practice affects its intended audience or participants. It examines how the practice is perceived, interpreted, and understood by those engaged with it. For Forum
>
> Theatre, audience research may involve seeing and analysing the responses, insights, and transformations of participants involved in interactive performances, underscoring the relational dimension of artistic practice and its resonance with the audience. (Nelson, 2013)

Overall, I acknowledge that Nelson's four stages of practice supply a structured approach for artists and researchers to engage in a holistic exploration of their creative work, moving from embodied knowledge to critical analysis, conceptual grounding, and a deeper understanding of audience reception. This framework encourages a dynamic and iterative process that fosters rich insights and contributes to the advancement of both artistic practice and scholarly inquiry.

The intricate relationship between art, activism, and societal change has been a subject of profound scholarly inquiry. In this pursuit, FT appears as a compelling avenue that calls for meticulous examination. The confluence of FT and the backdrop of the FMF Campaign offers a unique terrain for investigating the potential of this participatory theatrical form as a means of protest. This study aspires to delve into the praxis of FT, exploring its role in shaping perceptions, fostering active engagement, and potentially catalysing transformative societal shifts.

The central aim of this research is to explore the extent to which FT can function as a distinctive form of protest within the dynamics of the FMF Campaign. Through a nuanced investigation, I intend to uncover participants' feelings, experiences, and embodiment of protest in the year 2023, centring on the thematic underpinnings of the FMF movement. This inquiry is motivated by first-hand observations of FT's potential to galvanize collective action by facilitating discussions on oppression, thereby potentially paving the way for protests.

Employing a practice-based research methodology, this study will embrace the immersive praxis of FT. By orchestrating FT workshops and performances, I seek to gauge the influence and progress that this form of artistic expression may wield within the realm of protests. One of the paramount inquiries revolves around whether FT has the potential to challenge the mentalities of both oppressors and the oppressed, potentially leading to a shift in their perspectives and fostering a pathway toward liberation.

This level of investigation holds promise in several domains. It is poised to enrich the discourse surrounding the intersection of art and activism, particularly within the context of contemporary protest movements. Moreover, the findings may shed light on the evolving dynamics of liberation and transformation in post-apartheid South Africa, uncovering how society has imbibed lessons from preceding generations. Furthermore, the study may underscore FT's capacity to galvanize meaningful dialogue and potentially foster transformative change within the crucible of protests, potentially offering a fresh lens through which to perceive protest's multifaceted dimensions. Effective knowledge dissemination thrives on interactive reciprocity, mirroring life's call-and-response mechanism. Guided by this principle, my study delves into FT's praxis, where engagement, questioning, and transformation converge. Practice as Research underscores the performative and embodied nature of participant responses, a cornerstone for my exploration. FT, with its focus on proactive problem-solving through audience involvement, stands juxtaposed with protests, primarily designed for raising awareness.

The research targets participants aged 18 and above from diverse segments of Johannesburg, connected by their exposure to FMF or protest experiences. There will be 5 participants, namely three men and two women. I believe that five people are sufficient to hold and handle the practice itself.

This cohort unveils the nuanced interplay between FT and protest, revealing their collective impact on perceptions and actions. This research thus unravels FT's potential as a catalytic platform, intertwining with protest dynamics to shape agency and societal change.

In his seminal work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970), Paulo Freire passionately addresses the harrowing phenomenon of dehumanization. He uncompromisingly asserts that the corrosive forces of injustice, exploitation, and oppression can systematically reduce individuals to mere objects, eroding their very humanity.

Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" (1970) passionately addresses the dehumanizing effects of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. He asserts that these corrosive forces can strip individuals of their humanity and agency. His work serves as a guide for the oppressed, empowering them to rise against their subjugation, reclaim their humanity, and achieve full humanization. Freire emphasizes that understanding humanization is the crucial first step for the oppressed to rebuild their identities and regain agency. This foundational knowledge unites individuals in their collective pursuit of selfhood and rightful place in the human narrative. Freire's work embodies empathy and a commitment to justice, showcasing the resilience of the human spirit and the potential for liberation even in the face of dehumanization.

FT, as a form of protest, aligns with Freire's ideas. FT allows participants to engage with oppressive systems and roles, seeking transformative change. It provides a platform for the oppressed to collectively explore their experiences and envision alternatives. Just as Freire emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge as a vital step toward liberation, FT promotes awareness and critical thinking. It encourages participants to deconstruct oppressive narratives and collaborate in reshaping their realities, aligning with Freire's vision of empowered, humanized individuals.

I believe that FT operates as a mechanism of protest, endowing both individuals and communities with the capability to challenge and reform systems of social oppression. It offers a realm for dialogue and introspection, enabling the exploration of varying viewpoints and potential resolutions. This interactive endeavour propels us toward the cultivation of a more equitable society. The continued utilization of theatre as a tool of protest holds paramount importance in instigating constructive transformation. As participants engage with the thematic content of performances, they acquire the competencies, assurance, and mindfulness requisite for combating oppression within their contexts. This cooperative process engenders a sentiment of communal cohesion, unity, and collective accountability in the face of adversity and the pursuit of change.

This study will be guided by a cohort of influential theorists and practitioners, including Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed) and Paulo Freire (Pedagogy of the Oppressed), as well as Ashwin Desai, Mady Schutzman, Jan Cohen-Cruz, Temple Hauptfleish and Dr Sibongile Bhebhe. Notably, Augusto Boal, a distinguished Brazilian theatre practitioner, introduced FT as an integral component of his comprehensive "Theatre of the Oppressed" framework. The Theatre of the Oppressed is a series of interactive, participatory, and community-based techniques of theatre that aims to empower individuals and communities to challenge and change oppressive social systems.

> No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunate and by presenting their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their example in the struggle for their redemption (Freire, 1970:54)

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), developed by Augusto Boal, pays homage to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Freire referred to the process of poor and exploited people learning to conduct their analysis of their social, political, and economic reality as conscientization. This enables them to take action against their oppression.

Research Rationale

This study investigates the use of Forum Theatre (FT) within the “Fees Must Fall” movement, aiming to address a significant gap in the existing literature on performance arts as a tool for protest and social change in South Africa. Although Forum Theatre has been widely recognized for its applications in conflict resolution, community engagement, and educational settings, its role in student-led protests remains underexplored.

The "Fees Must Fall" movement, a pivotal event in South Africa’s recent history, provides a unique context in which to examine the potential of Forum Theatre to mobilize, empower, and give voice to participants within a politically charged environment. While previous research has focused on the educational and social benefits of Forum Theatre, there is a distinct lack of studies examining its effectiveness as a form of protest and its impact on the collective identities of those involved.

This research seeks to bridge this gap by exploring how Forum Theatre was utilized during the “Fees Must Fall” protests to articulate the frustrations, demands, and aspirations of the student body. The findings from this study are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on the intersection of performance, activism, and socio-political movements, offering insights that are valuable to both scholars and practitioners in the fields of applied theatre and social change.

Research Questions:

1. Is Forum Theatre a form of protest? If so, in what ways and to what extent can it be used within the style of protest?
2. From practice-based research, what arguments can we set forth to say Forum Theatre is a form of protest?
3. Using the backdrop of the ‘Fees Must Fall’ campaign what roles does Forum Theatre play as a form of protest?
4. Are there elements of protest in Forum Theatre? If so, what are they? Aim and Objectives:

This research endeavours to investigate the role of FT as a potent form of protest. The study’s overarching aim is to delve into how protest manifests as a multifaceted expression encompassing social, political, and economic dimensions, particularly within the context of FT. By engaging in a collaborative exploration with participants aged 18 years and older, primarily drawn from the youth demographic who have first-hand experience with economic injustices within educational institutions and active involvement in the FMF Campaign, this study aspires to unravel the intricate interplay between FT and protest.

Objectives:

My study seeks to unravel the nuanced ways in which protest finds articulation through FT, encompassing its diverse social, political, and economic dimensions. Practice-Based Exploration Through employing a practice-based approach, the research aims to delve into the TO process, utilizing tools such as Theatre of the Oppressed game, Image Theatre and positioning FT as a main technique of investigation in this research FT endeavours to uncover the multifaceted roles it assumes as a distinct form of protest. It seeks to understand how FT serves as a platform for active expression and collective engagement in challenging oppressive systems. This will be achieved through various workshops and rehearsals that will explore the subject under study.

This exploration seeks to cast a comprehensive spotlight on FT’s distinctive role as a form of protest, thereby advancing our understanding of its potential to foster socio-political change and contribute to a more just and equitable society. Through a praxis-driven methodology, this study endeavours to

unearth the intricate dynamics that characterize FT within the landscape of protest, ultimately substantiating the contention that FT is indeed a poignant and efficacious form of protest.

Literature Review:

This research is underpinned by a profound acknowledgement of those who have illuminated my path, nurturing my growth within the realm of discovery. A constellation of influential figures, including Mady Schutzman, Jan Cohen-Cruz, Steve Biko, Temple Hauptfleish and Adrian Jackson, form the guiding constellations shaping the trajectory of this study. As I embark on this intellectual voyage, I am acutely aware of the insights, wisdom, and transformative perspectives that these luminaries offer.

Central to this explorative odyssey is the indelible imprint of Steve Biko, a luminary within the landscape of anti-apartheid activism. Steve Biko's legacy as a trailblazing South African antiapartheid activist resonates vibrantly through history and in this study. As the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, Biko kindled the flames of empowerment and self-awareness, forging a profound shift in the battle against systemic oppression. His instrumental role in co-founding the South African Students' Organization and the Black People's Convention during the 1960s and 1970s heralded a watershed moment in the trajectory of social change.

Tragically, Biko's unwavering dedication to justice and equality led to his martyrdom. On September 12, 1977, he succumbed to injuries sustained while under police custody—a poignant testament to his unyielding commitment to the struggle. Biko's enduring impact endows him with a legacy that extends beyond his mortal years, steadfastly etching his name as a symbol of Black nationalism and resilience. I must admit that I am very proud that my mother, a political activist in her own right chose the 12 September to be my birthday, in remembrance and honour of Steve Biko.

The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. (Biko, n.d)

This quote reflects Biko's belief in the importance of challenging not only the physical manifestations of oppression but also the mental and psychological aspects. Biko emphasized the need for a shift in consciousness, empowerment, and self-awareness as crucial elements of effective protest against systemic injustice and oppression.

While this quote doesn't explicitly use the word "protest," it encapsulates Biko's overarching philosophy that the struggle for liberation and equality requires a fundamental transformation of mindset—a form of protest the deeply ingrained structures of oppression.

In the realm of protest, Biko's voice reverberates with timeless significance. His incisive perspectives on protest illuminate the essence of collective action. While the specific quote remains a harbinger of enlightenment, Biko's overarching philosophy encapsulates the idea that protest transcends the boundaries of physical demonstration, infiltrating the realm of consciousness. His profound articulation serves as a beacon, guiding us toward a nuanced comprehension of protest as a multifaceted tool for societal transformation.

Mady Schutzman and Jan Cohen - Cruz (1994) might express the excellence of FT in its ability to empower marginalized communities, saying that:

> Forum Theatre serves as a dynamic platform for communities to not only voice their concerns but also collectively shape narratives of change, fostering a participatory space where transformation is sparked by the very individuals who inhabit the stories. (Schutzman and Cohen- Cruz 1994)

Schutzman and Cohen- Cruz believed that while FT can provide a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and engage in dialogues about oppression, I think it runs the risk of oversimplifying complex

social issues. The theatrical nature of the medium might inadvertently prioritize performance over substance, leading to superficial discussions that do not delve into the structural, systemic causes of oppression. In some cases, FT might even perpetuate the illusion of progress by offering a temporary catharsis for participants without necessarily translating into meaningful real-world change. To truly address oppression, it is crucial to complement FT with concrete, strategic activism that tackles the underlying power dynamics and policy issues. Otherwise, it can become a performative and selfindulgent exercise that does not produce a substantial impact beyond the theatre space.

Adrian Jackson, the artistic director of Cardboard Citizens, a theatre company that works with homeless people, has written about the use of FT to provoke intervention from audiences. In his book "The Applied Theatre Reader," he writes:

> At best Forum Theatre retains the subversive intentions of its origins, as a counterweight to the standard power relations obtained in the theatre context and, by extension, in the society which supports that theatre. However, on both occasions, the work succeeded in provoking quite extreme reactions, and indeed interventions, from members of the audience. A considerable preoccupation of mine since then has been how to provoke and seduce meaningful intervention from audiences – and how sometimes one sees Forum Theatre in which intervention is solicited (or even begged) for all the wrong reasons and by all the wrong methods. (Jackson: 9)

While Adrian Jackson's perspective on the use of FT to provoke intervention from audiences has its merits, there are also grounds for a critical disagreement. The approach to provoking intervention can be seen as both a strength and a potential weakness of FT, and here's a critical viewpoint on this matter. While Jackson's intention to provoke intervention and engagement from audiences is noble and aligns with the transformative potential of applied theatre, there are concerns about the potential pitfalls of actively asking for or even "begging" for intervention. This approach might risk compromising the authenticity and spontaneity of audience responses. Genuine interventions should stem from a sincere connection to the issues presented and a personal desire to engage, rather than being prompted by external pressures. Furthermore, the focus on deliberately eliciting extreme reactions and interventions may divert attention from the primary purpose of FT, which is to encourage critical reflection, dialogue, and problem-solving. The emphasis on provocation could lead to sensationalism and distraction from the underlying socio-political issues that FT seeks to address.

Additionally, the idea of "meaningful intervention" might be subjective and complex. What is considered meaningful can vary greatly based on individual perspectives and experiences. While asking for intervention may yield immediate visible responses, it might not necessarily lead to deeper and lasting societal change. The true power of FT lies in its ability to facilitate genuine dialogue and collective exploration of alternatives, rather than focusing solely on immediate and perhaps superficial reactions.

In essence, while Adrian Jackson's approach highlights the importance of engaging audiences and evoking responses, there is room for criticism in terms of the potential consequences of actively seeking interventions for the sake of provocation. Balancing the desire for meaningful audience engagement with the integrity of the artistic and transformative process is crucial in the realm of applied theatre like FT.

The statement by Adrian Jackson about provoking interventions from audiences in FT could potentially restrain the roles that FT plays as a form of protest, especially when using the FMF movement as a backdrop. Here's how this perspective might impact the roles of FT within this context in my opinion:

FT should focus on sensationalism over substance and if the primary goal of FT is to provoke extreme reactions and interventions from the audience, there is a risk that the focus might shift towards creating dramatic and sensationalist moments rather than fostering deeper understanding and critical reflection. In the context of the FMF movement, this could overshadow the real issues of institutional racism, inequality, and the struggles of students. Superficial Engagement involves actively soliciting interventions for the sake of provocation might lead to superficial engagement from the audience. Instead of genuinely empathizing with the challenges faced by students and understanding the complexities of the movement, audience members might react impulsively without fully grasping the nuances of the issues. Neglecting collaborative solutions in FT's strength lies in its ability to encourage collective problem-solving and dialogue. However, if interventions are prioritized over collaborative solutions, the potential for finding sustainable and actionable resolutions within the context of the FMF movement could be limited. Undermining grassroots empowerment The FMF movement is rooted in grassroots activism and empowerment. An approach that seeks to elicit interventions for the wrong reasons or by the wrong methods might overshadow the voices and agency of the actual participants in the movement. This could in my opinion inadvertently undermine the authenticity and impact of FT as a form of protest. The distraction from structural change that FT has the potential to ignite discussions about broader societal structures and systemic issues. An emphasis on provocation for its own sake might distract from addressing the deeper structural changes needed to address the root causes of the FMF movement and similar protests.

While Adrian Jackson's perspective on provoking interventions from audiences has its merits in certain contexts, I think it could potentially limit the effectiveness and roles of FT as a form of protest, especially when applied to movements like FMF. The movement's complexities and the need for nuanced understanding and meaningful dialogue could be overshadowed by an approach that prioritizes immediate reactions and interventions.

> Boal (1970: n,d) states:
>
> Forum Theatre is an interactive form of community-based theatre that empowers marginalized groups to challenge oppressive systems. Key aspects include:
>
> 1. Empowerment: Allowing marginalized voices to express and envision change collectively.
> 2. Spect-actors: The audience becomes active participants, solving problems on stage.
> 3. Oppression: Focusing on systemic marginalization like racism or sexism.
> 4. Simultaneity: Scenes unfold together, enabling intervention to alter outcomes.
> 5. Rehearsal for reality: Preparing participants to confront oppression in real life.
> 6. Intervention: The audience interrupts to suggest alternatives, promoting critical thinking.
> 7. The Joker: Neutral facilitator ensures a safe, supportive environment.
> 8. Reflection: Discussion after interventions encourages critical thought and learning.
> 9. Flexibility: Adaptable to various contexts and issues, tailored to participants.
> 10. Collaboration: Relies on active engagement, fostering community and shared responsibility for change.

I could argue that while FT may share certain elements with traditional protest movements, it's important to question whether its impact can truly match the scale and urgency of real-world protests. While FT provides a controlled and artistic environment for exploring social issues, it might not generate the same level of public attention, disruption, or policy change as large-scale street protests. The concept of "spect-actors" participating in a theatre performance, while engaging, could also be seen as a diluted form of activism compared to the bold and often risky actions taken in protests. While FT may raise awareness and promote dialogue, its ability to directly challenge oppressive systems and effect tangible change remains questionable when compared to the historical and societal impact of traditional protest movements.

I concur with Bhebhe's (2013) assertion that participation in FT begins with understanding the body. However, it's worth delving deeper into the implications and significance of this initial step. By aligning with Bhebhe's perspective, we acknowledge the foundational role of bodily awareness in the FT process. This recognition highlights the fundamental connection between physicality and empowerment in confronting oppression. In essence, knowing the body serves as the crucial groundwork upon which the subsequent stages of expression, language, and discourse are built. This acknowledgement not only validates Bhebhe's findings but also underscores the transformative potential that Forum Theatre holds in fostering active resistance against oppressive forces through embodied spect-actorship.

Central to Bhebhe's (2013) study on FT is the Joker (who is the facilitator in FT). The Jokers role aligns with the empowerment of the spectators' empowerment. This perspective according to Boal (1970), the Joker and spect-actors function to combat oppression through embodiment. The process consists of four sequential stages: understanding the body, expressing the body, employing theatre as language, and advancing to theatre as discourse. The various stages eventually lead to the exploration of solutions and multiple viewpoints, all under the guidance of the Joker.

I fully agree with Bhebhe's assertion that the first focus on understanding the body in FT is of paramount significance. However, it is imperative to delve deeper into the nuanced implications of this foundational step rather than merely acknowledging agreement on the surface. By examining how this initial bodily awareness informs and shapes subsequent stages, we can more comprehensively appreciate the pivotal role it plays in cultivating the transformative potential of FT.

Between 1945 and 1962, South African theatre evolved from literary focus to a diverse, professional industry, marked by the 1947 establishment of the National Theatre Organisation and the start of university theatre studies. This period, part of five critical phases in South African theatre history from 1925 to 1999, saw the growth of politicized theatre, the rise of applied theatre practices, and the development of a theatre research community. It laid the groundwork for theatre's role in addressing social issues and exploring identity, amidst debates on recognizing creative output as research. This evolution reflects theatre's increasing engagement with South Africa's socio-political landscape, particularly its contribution to the liberation struggle and post-apartheid reconciliation. (Hauptfleish, 2010)

Theoretical Framework:

This research proposal is grounded in a theoretical framework encompassing the profound insights of esteemed theorists: Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, and Ashwin Desai. Their contributions form the foundation upon which this study seeks to explore the transformative potential of FT as a form of protest oppressive systems.

Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) serves as a cornerstone for understanding the dynamics of dehumanization. Freire's framework unveils the harrowing consequences of injustice, exploitation, and oppression, resulting in the objectification of individuals. At its core, the Pedagogy

of the Oppressed seeks to ignite a reclamation of humanity among the oppressed. Freire charts a path towards this reclamation by advocating for knowledge acquisition as a potent tool. He asserts that the journey to reclaiming lost humanity begins with an intimate understanding of the very concept of humanization itself.

Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed augments the theoretical underpinning by providing a transformative platform for marginalized voices. Boal's methodology empowers individuals and communities to engage actively in challenging and reshaping oppressive societal structures. Central to his approach is the concept of "spect-actors," participants who transcend passive observation to become active agents of change. Boal's framework aligns with the essence of protest, fostering critical dialogue, reflection, and intervention.

Ashwin Desai's (2016), a South African sociologist "Protest Nation" theory developed by highlights how protest is deeply ingrained in South Africa's history and society due to colonization, apartheid, and ongoing struggles for justice. It emphasizes grassroots movements, labour unions, and social justice campaigns as integral to a culture of protest. This theory underscores how protest in South Africa goes beyond grievances, shaping the nation's identity and fight for transformation. Spectacle over substance critics might argue that both "Protest Nation" and FT prioritize spectacle and emotional engagement over substantive solutions. While these forms of protest can raise awareness and evoke empathy, they might not necessarily lead to concrete changes or policy reforms. Instead, they could be seen as fleeting moments of sentimentality that don't address the underlying structural issues causing the protests.

Limited reach and impact both "Protest Nation" and FT may have a limited reach, primarily attracting audiences who are already sympathetic to the cause. This can create an "echo chamber" effect, where participants and audiences are simply reaffirming their existing beliefs without reaching broader segments of society. As a result, the potential for widespread change might be limited. Intellectual elitism some I would argue that both "Protest Nation" and FT are more likely to appeal to educated and privileged segments of society who have the leisure to engage in cultural activities. This could reinforce a sense of intellectual elitism and alienate those who are directly affected by the issues being protested. Lack of tangible action sceptics could claim that forum theatre and similar forms of protest often fail to translate emotional engagement into concrete actions. While these forms of expression might encourage dialogue and awareness, they might not lead to the practical changes needed to address systemic problems. Apathy and Complacency I would say might contend that "Protest Nation" and Forum Theatre could inadvertently lead to a sense of complacency among participants. Engaging in these artistic and performative activities might create the illusion of making a difference, reducing the motivation for more direct and impactful forms of activism. Depoliticization and Symbolism for FT and similar forms of artistic protest might be accused of depoliticizing complex issues by reducing them to symbolic gestures. Critics might argue that these approaches don't delve deeply into the intricate political, economic, and social dynamics that underpin them. In amalgamating these influential theoretical perspectives, this study endeavours to unravel the intricate relationship between FT, protest, and societal change through the backdrop of the FMF movement. By examining how these theories converge and interact, I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how FT can serve as a potent form of protest oppressive systems, offering a creative and participatory avenue for marginalized voices to reclaim their agency and humanity. (Desai, 2016)

Paulo Freire's (1968) Pedagogy of the Oppressed directly relates to the study of FT as a form of protest. Freire addresses dehumanization stemming from injustice, exploitation, and oppression. His work aims to empower the oppressed, guiding them to regain their humanity through acquiring knowledge. Similarly, FT offers a space for rehearsing change, reflecting on social injustices, and

acting. Both approaches unveil oppressive structures and counter false consciousness, aligning with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

Within the context of the FMF campaign, FT and protest synergize to raise awareness and ignite activism among the oppressed. FT breaks barriers between actors and audience, fostering understanding and intervention. Spect-actors practice action, resisting manipulation and envisioning change. Freire's concepts of liberation and the role of the oppressed resonate, enhancing the study of the FMF campaign.

> No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunate and by presenting their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their example in the struggle for their redemption. (Freire, 1970:54)

In the context of the FMF campaign, where students are advocating for free or reduced tuition fees, Paulo Freire's words are particularly relevant. The ongoing struggle for affordable education is evidenced by protests and demonstrations, highlighting the unresolved nature of the issue. Despite facing challenges, students remain determined and resilient in their fight for their rights and a more just and equitable society. The term "Theatre of the Oppressed," the framework devised by Boal, pays tribute to educator Paulo Freire (1988), who highlights in his work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" the transformative journey of marginalized individuals from being mere objects to becoming empowered subjects. Freire terms this process "conscientizacao", wherein exploited individuals grasp the tools to analyse their social, political, and economic reality. They evolve into proactive participants in the historical process, shedding light on their oppression and taking action against it (Freire 1988:20). This aligns with Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz's perspective (1994: 2-3) on Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, underscoring the significance of marginalized people transitioning from being acted upon to acting for their liberation.

> The Theatre of the Oppressed, developed by Augusto Boal, is a theatrical practice that uses theatre as a tool for social change. Influenced by Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Boal's techniques aim to promote democratic and cooperative interaction among participants, encouraging social and political change. In this participatory form of theatre, the audience becomes active "spect-actors" who explore, analyse, and transform their reality through the theatrical experience. (Boal, 2008).

Protest embodies a spectrum of strategies and principles aimed at voicing opposition and catalysing social or political change. Key elements include:

> Cause or Grievance: The core of protest, driven by issues ranging from social injustices to political grievances, seeking to spotlight and address these matters.

- Mobilization: Gathering individuals and groups through various means, including groups of people, to unite for a common cause.
- Public Demonstration: Visible actions like marches or rallies, serving to publicly assert support for the cause.
- Symbols and Messages: Utilizing visual and verbal cues to communicate the protest's core messages to unite participants.
- Nonviolent Resistance: Emphasizing peaceful methods to effect change, avoiding violence with the belief that Forum Theatre is one peaceful method. •
  Direct Action: Taking assertive steps to disrupt the status quo and draw attention to the cause.
- Media Engagement: Leveraging both traditional and social media to amplify the protest's visibility and reach.

- Solidarity and Alliance Building: Forming partnerships with other groups to strengthen the protest through shared resources and support.
- Persistence and Adaptation: Maintaining efforts over time while adapting tactics as necessary.
- Outcome and Impact: Aiming for concrete results, such as policy changes or increased public awareness, to measure the protest's success. (Tarrow, 2012) In the FMF FT event, the integration of protest with theatre effectively mirrored student struggles, empowering the participants and sparking dialogue on educational equity. By using nonviolent resistance and collective action within a theatrical framework, these events became a powerful platform for activism, deepening understanding of the FMF movement and preparing individuals for societal engagement. This approach underscores the role of art in driving social change, highlighting the need for strategic unity and adaptability in activism.

Research Method:

I will be using Practice as Research as my research method. Practice as Research (PaR) is a smart way of studying that mixes artistic or creative activities with academic research. It's about using what artists know, like their gut feelings, practical skills, and experiences, to learn new things. In PaR, artists think carefully about what they do, like trying things out and figuring out what they learned. They also consider how their work fits with what other artists have done before and how people see it. They use important ideas and how people understand things to make their work better. The main goal of PaR is to discover fresh ideas and knowledge by connecting art with learning in an ongoing way (Nelson, 2013).

Data will be gathered through the observation of gestures, actions, bodily movements, and emotional responses. In my role as the researcher, I will engage in a process of attentive witnessing, recognizing, and recording the visual, auditory, and tactile elements. This method is inspired by Nelson's practical know-how approach to data collection, which has been deliberately selected for its ability to facilitate an immersive exploration of FT's application as a theatrical form.

The embodiment of FT takes on a crucial role in this data collection process, serving to unravel its significance within the context of protest. Employing a PaR methodology through with FT, I will adopt a multifaceted approach as the researcher. This approach entails orchestrating and guiding FT sessions (also known as Jokering) and extracting data through a range of dynamic activities, including hot-seating, spect-acting, and reflective exercises.

Central to this research is the astute observation of how participants' physicality responds within the FT space, offering insights into the interplay between embodiment and protest themes. This intricate exploration will enable a comprehensive understanding of the spatial dynamics where the essence of protest becomes intertwined with the FT practice.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations will be taken as I journey throughout my research however through my general introduction which is FT as a form of Protest. Through my Theoretical framework with theorist such as Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire, it will be in my methodology as I develop the FT, Analysis of protesting and spect- actorship, analysis through Jokering, analysis of Has Forum Theatre become a new form of Protest. What new ways has been learnt and finally in my general conclusion?

In conclusion, the study "Forum Theatre as a Form of Protest: A Practice-Based Investigation" illuminates the potential of participatory theatre for empowering marginalized voices and challenging oppression. Ethical clearance and consent are paramount due to the involvement of human

participants. Obtaining proper approval and informed consent safeguards participants' rights and dignity, ensuring responsible and respectful research. Upholding these ethical principles not only enhances the research's integrity but also reflects our commitment to scholarly excellence and societal progress.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review:

2.0 Introduction

This chapter delves into the intricate relationship between FT and contemporary protest movements, with a particular focus on the FMF campaign, a pivotal movement among South African university students. The FMF campaign, emblematic of the current wave of student-led activism, provides a fertile ground for examining the transformative potential of FT as an innovative medium for social change. This exploration is predicated on the hypothesis that traditional forms of protest, while instrumental in past liberation struggles, may not fully resonate with today's generation, necessitating the exploration of alternative, more engaging forms of activism.

Central to this explorative odyssey is the indelible imprint of Steve Biko, a luminary within the landscape of anti-apartheid activism. Steve Biko's legacy as a trailblazing South African antiapartheid activist resonates vibrantly through history and in this study. As the founder of the Black Consciousness Movement, Biko kindled the flames of empowerment and self-awareness, forging a profound shift in the battle against systemic oppression. His pivotal contribution to establishing the South African Students' Organization and the Black People's Convention in the 1960s and 1970s marked a significant turning point during social transformation.

Tragically, Biko's unwavering dedication to justice and equality led to his martyrdom. On September 12, 1977, he succumbed to injuries sustained while under police custody—a poignant testament to his unyielding commitment to the struggle. Biko's enduring impact endows him with a legacy that extends beyond his mortal years, steadfastly etching his name as a symbol of Black nationalism and resilience. I must admit that I am very proud that my mother, a political activist in her own right chose the 12 September to be my birthday, in remembrance and honour of Steve Biko.

> The most potent weapon In the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. (Biko, n.d)

This quote reflects Biko's belief in the momentousness of challenging the intangible manifestations of oppression but also the mental and psychological aspects. Biko emphasized the need for a shift in consciousness, empowerment, and self-awareness as crucial elements of effective protest systemic injustice and oppression.

While this quote doesn't explicitly use the word "protest," it encapsulates Biko's overarching philosophy that the struggle for liberation and equality requires a fundamental transformation of mindset—a form of protest the deeply ingrained structures of oppression.

In the realm of protest, Biko's voice reverberates with timeless significance. His incisive perspectives on protest illuminate the essence of collective action. While the specific quote remains a harbinger of enlightenment, Biko's overarching philosophy encapsulates the idea that protest transcends the boundaries of physical demonstration, infiltrating the realm of consciousness. His profound articulation serves as a beacon, guiding us toward a nuanced comprehension of protest as a multifaceted tool for societal transformation.

Mady, Schutzman and Jan Cohen – Cruz (1994) might express the excellence of FT in its ability to empower marginalized communities, saying that:

FT serves as a dynamic platform for communities to not only voice their concerns but also collectively shape narratives of change, fostering a participatory space where transformation is sparked by the very individuals who inhabit the stories. (Schutzman, Mady and Cohen- Cruz 1994)

Schutzman, Mady and Cohen-Cruz (1994) praise FT for empowering marginalized communities by providing a space to voice concerns and shape change narratives. However, there's a risk of oversimplifying complex social issues. The focus on performance might lead to superficial discussions, neglecting deeper systemic causes of oppression. While FT can offer temporary catharsis, it may create an illusion of progress without real-world impact. To effectively address oppression, it should be paired with strategic activism that confronts underlying power structures and policy issues. Without this, FT risks becoming a performative act with limited impact outside the theatre.

Adrian Jackson serves as the artistic director of Cardboard Citizens, a theatre group that engages with individuals experiencing homelessness, has written about the use of FT to provoke intervention from audiences. In his book "The Applied Theatre Reader," he writes:

FT seeks to disrupt traditional power dynamics in theatre and society, sparking active audience engagement. The focus is on refining strategies to foster meaningful participation while avoiding misuse of audience intervention. (Jackson: 6)

Adrian Jackson's approach in FT, focusing on provoking audience interventions, is a double-edged sword. While it aims to engage audiences and stimulate responses, this method risks compromising the authenticity and spontaneity of these interventions. Genuine audience engagement should come from a real connection to the issues, not from external pressure or sensationalism. Overemphasizing provocation can distract from FT's goals of fostering critical reflection and addressing socio-political issues.

Moreover, the concept of "meaningful intervention" is subjective. Pushing for interventions might result in visible but superficial responses, which may not lead to lasting societal change. FT's strength lies in facilitating genuine dialogue and exploring alternatives, rather than just eliciting immediate reactions.

In the context of movements like FMF, prioritizing dramatic interventions over substance could overshadow the real issues, such as institutional racism and inequality. Superficial engagement, neglecting collaborative solutions, and undermining grassroots empowerment are potential pitfalls of this approach. The focus should be on fostering understanding and dialogue, not just on provocation. While Jackson's method has merits, balancing audience engagement with the integrity of the artistic and transformative process is crucial in applied theatre.

Boal (1970: n,d) states:

Forum Theatre is an interactive form of community-based theatre that empowers marginalized groups to challenge oppressive systems. Key aspects include:

1. Empowerment: Allowing marginalized voices to express and envision change collectively.
2. Spect-actors: The audience becomes active participants, solving problems on stage.
3. Oppression: Focusing on systemic marginalization like racism or sexism.
4. Simultaneity: Scenes unfold together, enabling intervention to alter outcomes
5. Rehearsal for reality: Preparing participants to confront oppression in real life.

6. Intervention: The audience interrupts to suggest alternatives, promoting critical thinking.
7. The Joker: Neutral facilitator ensures a safe, supportive environment.
8. Reflection: Discussion after interventions encourages critical thought and learning.
9. Flexibility: Adaptable to various contexts and issues, tailored to participants.
10. Collaboration: Relies on active engagement, fostering community and shared responsibility for change.

FT, while sharing elements with traditional protests, may lack their scale and urgency. Its controlled setting and "spect-actor" participation, though engaging, might not match the direct impact of realworld protests. Despite promoting awareness and dialogue, its effectiveness in enacting significant change is uncertain.

Bhebhe (2013) highlights the importance of bodily awareness in FT, a key step in empowering participants against oppression. This foundational aspect underpins further stages of expression and discourse, emphasizing FT's potential for active resistance.

The study also focuses on the Joker's role in empowering spect-actors, following a process from bodily understanding to employing theatre as language and discourse, guided by the Joker. This process is crucial for exploring diverse solutions and perspectives.

Agreeing with Bhebhe, it's essential to recognize the significance of bodily awareness in FT, which plays a pivotal role in its transformative potential. Investigating protest through the lens of FT, as inspired by Augusto Boal's assertion that "Theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it," (Boal, 1979: 122) Exploring protest through FT, inspired by Augusto Boal's perspective of theatre as a powerful tool giving backing to social activism, offers a fresh perspective on performative arts in activism. This study examines how FT empowers, especially marginalized communities, turning the stage into a platform for social change. In FT, audiences become active 'spect-actors,' directly engaging and suggesting changes to oppressive scenarios, embodying Boal's idea of theatre as a weapon for change. This involvement goes beyond passive observation, preparing participants to confront real-life oppression with strategies and confidence.

FT's use of real-world issues, like those in the FMF movement, facilitates direct engagement with the multifaceted nature of protest. It mirrors societal issues, fostering critical analysis, diverse perspectives, and understanding of protest complexities through interactive participation. The collective experience in FT, like the collective power in protests, brings individuals together to collaboratively find solutions, enhancing the understanding and participation in protest movements.

This research leverages FT to explore its role in social activism, aiming to contribute to the understanding of performative arts in socio-political change. It aligns with Boal's vision, recognizing theatre's potential as a catalyst for social change and empowerment.

Bertolt Brecht asserts, "Art is not a mirror to reflect reality, but a hammer with which to shape it," (Brecht, 2007:15) is particularly relevant in the context of South Africa's FMF movement. This student-led protest rising university fees and for increased government funding highlights how FT goes beyond merely depicting student struggles to actively shaping solutions. In FT, participants from the movement re-enact their experiences, using this creative platform not just to reflect on their challenges but to actively participate in shaping their socio-political reality. This empowers them to explore and articulate potential solutions to economic injustices in education. Furthermore, FT sparks broader discussions and awareness among audiences, extending its impact to the larger community and emphasizing the role of art as a transformative tool in social activism and addressing issues like educational accessibility and economic fairness.

“We can consider theatre as a rehearsal for revolution” (Boal, 1970) Boal’s concept that “theatre is a rehearsal for revolution” transforms FT into a tool for social change. Participants simulate real-life injustices, preparing them for actual activism. This approach extends beyond the stage, empowering individuals to enact change in their communities.

Moreover, FT promotes critical thinking and skills essential for activism, using hands-on techniques for practical learning. Its collaborative nature, involving diverse participants, breaks traditional performance barriers, fostering empathy and a shared understanding of social issues. This inclusive and dynamic exploration encourages a comprehensive view of problems and collective commitment to social action.

In essence, FT, inspired by Boal’s vision, becomes more than performance art; it’s a platform for personal and societal transformation, preparing participants for practical activism and fostering community-driven solutions to social challenges.

> Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (Freire 1970:72)

Freire’s notion, emphasizing that knowledge constantly grows and changes through active participation and questioning, is key to how FT operates. In FT, people create and change real-life scenarios, making learning always relevant and evolving.

The process involves deep questioning and challenging usual ways of thinking, just as Freire emphasized. This keeps participants actively engaged in learning and rethinking ideas. FT is also about working together and sharing experiences, which aligns with Freire’s belief in learning as a shared, hopeful journey. This collaborative learning helps everyone understand issues better and feel part of a community.

Overall, FT is a practical example of Freire’s teaching philosophy, combining theory with action. It’s a way to learn dynamically and actively work towards social change, reflecting Freire’s idea of education as a powerful tool for making a difference.

2.1 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have delved into the complex relationship between Forum Theatre (FT) and the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement, underscoring FT’s capacity as a catalyst for social change. Drawing inspiration from Steve Biko’s legacy and guided by Augusto Boal’s methodologies, I argue for the necessity of novel forms of activism that engage today’s generation. FT stands out as a potent tool for empowerment, fostering dialogue, and enacting societal transformation, challenging conventional protest tactics, and deepening involvement with pressing social matters. Through this exploration, I aim to broaden the discourse on the role of performative arts in activism, presenting new avenues for collective empowerment and action in the ongoing struggle for justice and equity.

Chapter Three

Research Method

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to delve deeply into the methodology that underpins this study, specifically focusing on Practice as Research (PaR) as the foundational research design. PaR, a methodological approach that integrates practical theatre-making processes with academic inquiry, serves as the cornerstone of this investigation. Unlike traditional research paradigms that prioritize theoretical analysis, PaR emphasizes the generation of knowledge through the act of creation itself, situating the

artistic practice as both the method of investigation and the medium through which findings are communicated.

In the context of this research, PaR has been instrumental in exploring the dynamics of protest through the lens of the FMF movement in South Africa, utilizing FT as a primary mode of engagement. This approach not only facilitated a rich, participatory exploration of the themes central to FMF but also allowed for the embodiment and enactment of these themes, thereby deepening the understanding of protest and its impact on individual and collective identities.

By leveraging the principles of PaR, this study has embraced a holistic approach to research, one that acknowledges the complexity and nuance of social movements by engaging directly with the experiences and perceptions of those involved. This chapter will outline the specific ways in which PaR has been employed as a research design, detailing the processes of conception, contextualization, mapping, and realization within the project. It will also reflect on the personal journey of conducting research through PaR, highlighting the challenges and insights gained from merging the roles of researcher, practitioner, and participant within the context of the FMF movement. Through this, the chapter aims to not only provide a technical explanation of PaR but also offer a personal account of how this methodological approach has shaped and enriched the research process.

This chapter outlines the Practice as Research (PaR) methodology, chosen for its integrative approach that combines theoretical depth with practical engagement. PaR is particularly apt for exploring dynamic social movements like 'Fees Must Fall' because it allows for direct engagement with the phenomena under study, providing insights that traditional observational methods may not capture. The following sections will detail the specific components of PaR, its application in this study, and the methodological challenges addressed.

3.2 The Methodological Underpinnings of Practice as Research

Protest lies within social, psychological, political, and theatrical forms of oppression, liberation and transformation can occur within the environment we gather. Transformation is also a line of protest action. Through this practice-based approach of using FT, I aim to find out what progress and influence it has on or alongside protests.

I aim to use PaR as my research method because it is an ideal vehicle for collecting information. I acknowledge such people like Robin Nelson. Ultimately, the FMF movement epitomizes the quest for fair education, serving as a poignant reminder of South Africa's continuous struggle to reach social, economic, and educational justice. In 2023, the FMF movement gained momentum, sparking widespread protests, and leaving many students questioning their country's difficulties. The campaign, however, became violent and it did not so much serve its purpose. It is in this light that I sought to use PaR as my method of research:

Following Robin Nelson's (2013), four stages of research practice:

i) Engagement with Artistic Practice: This phase entails direct involvement in the artistic process, acknowledging the unspoken, physical, and instinctive knowledge practitioners acquire through their creative endeavours. For FT, this would involve active participation in and facilitation of sessions to gain firsthand experience, recognizing practitioners' distinct insights derived from their artistic engagement. This stage also involves introspective analysis, delving deeply into practitioners' choices, actions, and decisions. ii) Critical Analysis: Researchers are encouraged to scrutinize assumptions, evaluate their practices' efficacy, and explore how their creative work aligns with broader theoretical frameworks. In the context of FT, this might encompass studying participant interactions, intervention outcomes, and the role of the "Joker" in guiding the process.

iii) Conceptual Contextualization: This phase involves placing the artistic practice within a wider theoretical and conceptual landscape. Researchers use existing knowledge, theories, and academic literature to enrich their understanding of their work, exploring connections between their artistic endeavours and larger socio-cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts. In the case of FT, this could involve examining intersections between theatrical performance, activism, and societal change, drawing insights from the TO field.

iv) Audience Impact: The final stage concentrates on how the artistic practice affects its intended audience or participants. It examines how the practice is perceived, interpreted, and understood by those engaged with it. For FT, audience research may involve seeing and analysing the responses, insights, and transformations of participants involved in interactive performances, underscoring the relational dimension of artistic practice and its resonance with the audience. (Nelson, 2013)

I acknowledge that Nelson's four stages of practice supply a structured approach for artists and researchers to engage in a holistic exploration of their creative work, moving from embodied knowledge to critical analysis, conceptual grounding, and a deeper understanding of audience reception. This framework encourages a dynamic and iterative process that fosters rich insights and contributes to the advancement of both artistic practice and scholarly inquiry. Using FT as an experiment would be a way to find out how FT can be used as a form of protest. I aim to show participants, even those who are merely witnessing or spect-actors, that through the process of FT, mindsets can change and hopefully the silence on issues like the FMF campaign will finally be heard by the oppressors. FT stemmed from TO, created by Augusto Boal, and protest is a sign of fighting against oppression. Not only did Augusto Boal use FT to fight against oppression but used it as a weapon for protest and activism against socio-political injustices.

In my PaR exploration centred on the FMF campaign, the performances themselves emerged as pivotal research instruments, offering profound insights into collective engagement with the campaign's issues. Staging these performances, along with observing audience responses and the solutions enacted to address presented problems, provided direct, invaluable data on how individuals collectively perceived and interacted with the themes of the movement. Particularly enlightening were the audience interventions, where spectators became active participants, suggesting alternative narratives or solutions, thus serving as unique expressions of engagement and offering a range of perspectives on addressing the challenges of the FMF campaign. These interventions, alongside the audience's verbal and non-verbal reactions during and after the performances, were meticulously observed and recorded, revealing the immediate impact and resonance of the FT process. Following the insights of (Smith, 2022), this approach underscored the performances not merely as artistic expressions but as dynamic tools for data collection, capturing nuanced understandings of social engagement and the transformative potential of FT. Through detailed analysis of these performance-based interactions, my research was able to delve deeply into the collective consciousness surrounding the FMF issues, illustrating the capacity of FT to foster meaningful dialogue, reflection, and potential pathways to social change that seek to navigate and bridge the epistemological gaps between practice and theory. (Nelson, 2013) Here is a list of the Methodological underpinnings of PaR.

1. Integration of Practice and Theory: PaR methodology blurs the traditional boundaries between doing (practice) and thinking (theory), advocating for a symbiotic relationship where each informs and enriches the other. (Barrett & Bolt, 2010)

2. Embodied Knowledge: It emphasizes the generation of knowledge that is embodied within the artistic process and product, recognizing the body as a site of inquiry and a source of data. (Coessens Crispin & Douglas, 2009)

3. Documentation and Reflexivity: The methodological approach requires rigorous documentation of the artistic process, including reflections, which are critical for articulating the research journey and findings. (Nelson, 2013)

4. Multi-modal Research Outputs: PaR acknowledges diverse outputs including performances, installations, and visual art, alongside traditional academic texts, as legitimate forms of knowledge dissemination. (Borgdorff, 2012)

5. Collaboration and Co-creation: This approach often involves collaborative and participatory methods, where knowledge is co-created with participants, challenging the conventional researcher-subject hierarchy. (Frayling, 1993) Epistemological Challenges:

1. Validity and Rigor: Establishing the validity and rigor of knowledge generated through artistic practices poses a challenge, given the subjective and often intangible nature of artistic outcomes. (Biggs& Karlsson, 2011)

2. Standardization and Replicability: The unique, context-dependent nature of artistic research raises questions about the standardization of methods and the replicability of findings, which are central to traditional research paradigms. (Schwab & Borgdorff, 2014)

3. Interpretation and Ambiguity: The interpretation of artistic outputs as research findings can be highly subjective, leading to challenges in ensuring a shared understanding of the knowledge produced. (Barrett & Bolt, 2010)

4. Interpretation Assessment: Developing criteria for evaluating the quality and impact of research conducted through artistic practice requires a rethinking of traditional academic metrics. (Sullivan, 2009)

5. Ethical Considerations: Navigating the ethical implications of research that deeply involves human experience, emotion, and often personal narratives, especially in participatory projects, presents complex challenges. (Candy & Edmonds, 2011)

Central to the understanding and development of PaR is the work of Robin Nelson, whose seminal text “Practice as Research in the Arts” (2013) provides a comprehensive guide for navigating the complexities of integrating practical artmaking with scholarly research. Nelson advocates for a “multi-mode” approach to research, which harmonizes the practical, the theoretical, and the documentation processes, allowing for a holistic production of knowledge that is both embodied in the art and articulated through critical reflection. (Nelson 2013)

Similarly, Brad Haseman’s (2006) concept of “performative research” plays a pivotal role in expanding the scope of PaR by emphasizing the performative aspects of research outputs. Haseman challenges the conventional primacy of textual documentation in academia, arguing for the inclusion and recognition of non-textual forms of knowledge expression and dissemination within research paradigms. This argument aligns with the broader aims of PaR to validate and elevate the epistemological contributions of artistic practice within academic contexts.

The contributions of Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (2007) further enrich the discourse on PaR, they postulate that the methodological underpinnings and epistemological challenges of conducting research through artistic practice. Barrett and Bolt argue for the legitimacy and rigor of knowledge

produced through creative processes, highlighting the capacity of artistic inquiry to engage with complex, nuanced questions in ways that traditional research methodologies may not.

"The Conflict of the Faculties: Perspectives on Artistic Research and Academia.", (Borgdorff, 2012) investigates into the profound ways in which the arts contribute to academic knowledge, pushing for a broader recognition of artistic practice as a significant, intellectual pursuit. Borgdorff's exploration is grounded in the idea of epistemological plurality, arguing for the acceptance of diverse forms of knowledge that extend beyond traditional scientific methods. He positions artistic practice as a unique form of inquiry, capable of generating tacit, embodied knowledge that is deeply embedded in the creative process. This knowledge, according to Borgdorff, is often expressed through the aesthetics of artworks, suggesting a complex interplay between aesthetic experiences and cognitive understanding. He emphasizes the critical role of reflective practice in artistic research, where creators engage in continuous self-examination and critical thinking about their work. Borgdorff also tackles the challenges related to documenting and disseminating the nuanced forms of knowledge produced through art, advocating for innovative documentation techniques that can accurately represent the multifaceted nature of artistic inquiry. Furthermore, he underlines the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, recognizing artistic research as a field that naturally bridges gaps between art, science, and the humanities. Through these philosophical and theoretical lenses, Borgdorff champions a reevaluation of how the academic world views artistic practice, urging for its acknowledgment as a rigorous, reflective, and critical endeavour that enriches the broader landscape of academic research.

PaR is about focusing on the researcher's feelings and knowledge, such as their instincts and skills, to discover new things. In PaR, researchers think a lot about what they do, try different things, and learn from them. They also think about how their work fits with other artists' work and what people think of it. They use big ideas and how people understand stuff to make their work better. The main idea of PaR is to keep finding new ideas and knowledge by mixing art and learning (Nelson, 2013).

3.2.1 How PaR is Carried out Practically.

Carrying out PaR practically involves a hands-on, iterative process that integrates artistic creation with scholarly investigation. Here's a straightforward, practical walkthrough of how I conducted my PaR project on Forum Theatre as a form of protest, focusing on the FMF campaign: a) Conceiving the Idea and Questions

Initially, I recognized my inquisitiveness regarding the capacity of FT to serve as a catalyst for societal transformation. I formulated specific questions: Could FT be an effective form of protest? How might it impact participants and audiences within the context of the FMF movement? b) Literature Review and Contextualization

I immersed myself in existing literature on FT, protest art, and the specifics of the FMF campaign. This step helped me understand the historical and theoretical background of my research area, informing my approach to the practical elements of the project.

c) Designing the Methodology

I decided on a series of FT workshops as my primary research method. This involved planning the logistics of these workshops, including participant recruitment, session structures, and methods for documentation (such as video recording and participant journals). d) Implementing Artistic Practice

The core of my PaR project was the FT workshops. Here, I facilitated the creation and performance of scenes inspired by the FMF campaign, observing, and participating in the process. This practical engagement was vital for exploring my research questions. e) Documentation and Reflection

Throughout the workshops, I documented the process meticulously recording performances, collecting participant feedback, and maintaining a personal reflective journal. This ongoing documentation was essential for capturing the experiential knowledge generated through the artistic practice.

f) Analysis and Interpretation

After completing the workshops, I analysed the collected data to draw insights related to my initial questions. This analysis involved reviewing video recordings, participant feedback, and my reflections to understand the impact of FT on participants and its efficacy as a form of protest. g) Dissemination of Findings

I prepared to share my findings with the academic community and the public. This involved writing academic papers and organizing public showcases of the FT performance. Sharing the outcomes was crucial for contributing to the broader conversation about the role of art in social movements. h) Reflecting on the Process

Finally, I reflected on the entire PaR process, evaluating what worked, what didn't, and how the project could inform future research. This reflection was an opportunity to assess the value of my findings and to consider new research directions.

Practically carrying out PaR required a blend of creativity, critical thinking, and rigorous academic practices. By engaging directly with the artistic process and reflecting on this engagement through a scholarly lens, I navigated the complexities of using FT as a form of protest, contributing new insights to the field of applied theatre and social activism.

As the researcher, I paid close attention and noted down everything I saw and heard. This way of collecting data, which Nelson (2013) As indicated, it is selected for its ability to deeply engage with the real-life experiences of participants, capturing the intricacies of their interactions, emotions, and surroundings. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the communal dynamics and the cultural backgrounds in which the participants operate. It enables the researcher to observe and document the complexities of human behaviour in a naturalistic setting, thereby providing rich, detailed insights that are often missed by more quantitative forms of research. Through this immersive method, the researcher being me, can gain a holistic view of the subject matter, facilitating the identification of underlying themes, patterns, and meanings. This method is especially beneficial in the realm of Applied Drama and Theatre, where the interactions and performances are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of the community. By engaging in this meticulous observation and documentation, being the researcher, I became a conduit through which the voices and experiences of the participants can be authentically represented and critically examined, contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the impact of theatre and drama on social issues.

3.2.2 The Role of Forum Theatre in Practice as Research

The FT's role was important in my study. Using PaR through FT, I had to take on different roles as a researcher. I ran FT sessions, as the Joker, and also looked closely at how participants acted and reacted in different situations, such as hot-seating or when they stepped into the play themselves. I watched how participants' bodies responded in FT, which told me a lot about how they felt about the protest themes in the play. This helped me understand how the space where the play happens, the

place where the protest ideas in the play come together and the environment plays a crucial role in the process.

The role of FT as a methodological approach in my research project was pivotal, serving as a bridge between theoretical exploration and practical application in understanding social protests, particularly within the context of the FMF campaign. This dynamic and interactive form of theatre, rooted in Augusto Boal's TO, offered a unique lens through which to examine, engage with, and potentially transform the social realities being studied.

Engaging and Empowering Participants

FT empowered participants by turning them into "spect-actors", actively involving them in the creation and re-creation of real-life situations related to the FMF movement. This approach democratized the research process, blurring the lines between researcher and participant, and allowing for a collective exploration of the themes at hand.

Generating Data through Interaction

The performances and workshops became live data generation sessions, where every interaction, intervention, and dialogue contributed to the pool of insights being gathered. This live, interactive method of data collection provided a depth of understanding that traditional research methods might not capture, offering nuanced perspectives on the motivations, challenges, and aspirations of those involved in the protests.

Facilitating Reflection and Dialogue

The reflective discussions that followed each FT session were integral to the methodological approach, allowing for immediate processing and analysis of the enacted scenarios. These discussions served as a platform for participants to voice their interpretations, challenge assumptions, and collectively ideate potential solutions to the issues portrayed, enriching the research findings with diverse viewpoints.

Documenting and Analysing Complex Dynamics

Systematic documentation of the FT process, including video recordings and reflective journals, captured the fluid and complex dynamics of social protest as experienced and enacted by the participants. Analysing this rich body of data enabled me to identify key themes, patterns, and insights related to the efficacy of protest movements like FMF as well as the transformative potential of FT itself as a tool for social change.

Disseminating Insights

The findings derived from the FT methodological approach were disseminated through various channels, including academic papers, conferences, and public forums, highlighting the innovative use of FT in researching social movements. This not only contributed to academic discourse but also raised awareness about the FMF campaign and the role of performance art in activism.

In essence, the role of FT as a methodological approach in my research project was multifaceted—it was a means of engaging participants, a method for data collection, a catalyst for reflection and dialogue, and a vehicle for disseminating insights. Through this approach, the research transcended traditional boundaries, offering a participatory, immersive, and reflective exploration of the FMF campaign and the broader implications of using FT as a form of protest.

The situating of FT in PaR methodology, particularly within the context of the FMF movement in South Africa, represents a significant and innovative approach to exploring and addressing social and

political issues. This movement, which calls for the decolonization of education and the elimination of tuition fees, underscores the urgent need for platforms that facilitate dialogue, critical engagement, and collective action. FT, by its very design, offers such a platform, aligning closely with the principles and objectives of PaR by embedding the research process within the lived experiences and active participation of those directly impacted by the issues at hand. Thus, presenting elements of protest.

a) Significance in Empowering Voices and Facilitating Dialogue:

FT's application in the context of the FMF movement is particularly poignant because it empowered the participants to voice their experiences, frustrations, and aspirations concerning educational equity and accessibility. This form of theatre becomes a rehearsal for reality, providing a participatory space where individuals can experiment with overcoming obstacles and addressing injustices. This not only aligns with Nelson's (2013) multi-mode approach, which emphasizes the blending of practical,

b) Reflecting Reality through Engaged Audience Participation:

The methodology's emphasis on audience engagement and problem-solving encourages a departure from passive observation to active involvement, transforming spectators into 'spect-actors' who directly influence the course of the play. This shift promote a sense of community and collective brainstorming but also ensures that the scenarios depicted on stage resonate with the real-life issues faced by the participants. Such an approach is reflective of Haseman's (2006) performative research, where the performative acts themselves become a form of inquiry and knowledge production. c) Empathy, Empowerment, and Critical Reflection:

By engaging participants in the creation and performance of plays based on their own stories and experiences, FT fosters empathy and a deeper understanding of the issues at stake. This process of collaborative creation and reflection embodies the essence of Barrett and Bolt's (2007) articulation of PaR, where the act of making (in this case, theatre) is inseparable from the process of critical inquiry and reflection. Furthermore, the dialogue and discussion that form an integral part of FT sessions extend the research beyond the performance, facilitating a deeper exploration of themes and fostering a critical reflexivity among participants.

d) Adapting to Challenges through Flexibility and Responsiveness:

The adaptive strategies employed in conducting Forum Theatre workshops—such as leveraging digital communication and accommodating participants' schedules—demonstrate a responsive and flexible approach to PaR. This adaptability is crucial for maintaining the integrity and inclusivity of the research process, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. This aspect of the methodology echoes Borgdorff's (2012) discussion on the challenges and opportunities within artistic research, highlighting the importance of responsiveness to the research context.

In summary, the use of FT as a PaR methodology in the context of the FMF movement not only provides a powerful mechanism for exploring and addressing complex social issues but also aligns with the core principles of PaR by integrating the creation, performance, and reflection within the research process. This approach not only challenges traditional research paradigms but also reaffirms the value of artistic practice as a critical form of inquiry and social engagement. Through this innovative integration of FT and PaR, researchers and participants alike are afforded a dynamic and impactful way to engage with and contribute to the discourse on educational equity and social justice in South Africa.

3.3 Steps in the research process

Week One: Characterization Session

As this was our first workshops, I used theatrical meditation. I used music and embodiment to get them to explore their bodies especially the body parts that told the story of their understanding of oppression. Then they explored, in the same exercise, the theme of protest and later FMF. I used games from 'Games from Actors and Non- Actors', games such as Columbian Hypnosis, Blind man walking, Cat and Mouse, sculpting to get them to explore characterization of people involved in protest and Fees Must Fall respectively. They did a similar exercise but with Image Theatre (to explore their past, present, future). The single sessions focused on characterization further demonstrate an understanding of the importance of developing nuanced and authentic representations of individuals' experiences and identities within the theatre-making process especially around the theme of protest and Fees Must Fall. This aligns with the methodological focus on empathy and ethical representation in applied theatre (Prendergast & Saxton, 2009) and especially in on the TO.

Week 2: Contextualizing Fees Must Fall

In the second week, we dedicated ourselves to deeply contextualizing the FMF campaign, focusing on its profound impact on the participants' identities and societal roles. The week was structured around three planned steps to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the campaign's effects and implications. i) Introduced each participant in a detailed session, where we delved into personal narratives to uncover how the FMF campaign has influenced, transformed, and, in some cases, redefined their sense of self and community belonging. This introspective process not only fostered a space for individual reflection but also highlighted the campaign's broader socio-political resonance. ii) Transitioned into a debate on the various ways we, as a collective and as individuals, could contribute to and foster a deeper understanding and viability within the constraints of a capitalized society. iii) We expanded on this reflective dialogue by encouraging participants to debate their acknowledgment of the campaign's significance. This involved critically assessing their positions within the socio-political landscape and debating the various dimensions of involvement and influence. Through these steps, the week was instrumental in not only contextualizing the FMF campaign within the participants' lived experiences but also in stimulating a critical engagement with the broader implications of activism, identity, and societal change. These steps aimed to challenge participants to think critically about their agency and potential for effecting change.

Week 3: Theatrical Techniques as a Methodological Tool

In this week, we expanded on this reflective dialogue by encouraging participants to debate their acknowledgment of the campaign's significance. From the stories gathered in the previous workshop, each participant was asked to think of how the FT story would like. Then they were asked to position themselves as envisaged scenes for the FT play. Participant X-Y positioned themselves as scenes. Each one spoke back to their envisaged scene and the others joined to complete the scene until we had a workable scene development for the play. We came about these scenes from the Image Theatre session that we did that explored the life of a student in FMF movement. After the creation of the scenes, we played various games that helped the participants internalize the scenes.

Incorporating "Games for Actors and Non-Actors" and "Image Theatre" reflects a methodological focus on Boal's TO as a tool for engaging with concepts of oppression. These techniques facilitate a participatory research environment where the boundaries between researcher and participant blur, fostering co-creation of knowledge (Boal, 1995). Image Theatre allows for the embodiment of abstract concepts (oppression, the oppressed, oppressor), offering a visual and experiential mode of inquiry that challenges traditional textual analysis. This aligns with the epistemological stance of PaR, where embodied knowledge is recognized and valued (Barrett & Bolt, 2007).

Boal (2000) emphasizes the power of theatre to empower individuals and communities to challenge oppression. The transition from real, ideal, and transitional images to word association allows for a deep exploration of the concepts of oppression, thereby fostering a shared understanding and language of protest among participants.

Week 4: Script Workshop as Collaborative Knowledge Production

Here we moved into deepening the scripting of the FT play. The participants selected characters for the different scenes. These characters represented different points of view and experiences related to the campaign. They gave the characters names and dialogue which they embodied into action. The 'embodiment freedom' let everyone dive deeper into their characters, making them more real and believable. As everyone got more comfortable and creative with their characters, we started putting together scenes. These scenes showed the different sides of the FMF campaign, from the conflicts and challenges to the hopes and goals. This part of the process was all about bringing to life the complex story of the FMF campaign in a way that was engaging and meaningful to our audience. They put the script into writing, together. As the researcher, I was challenged to check deeper into the principles of FT and how they align with the elements of protest.

The workshop phase for script development is symbolic of PaR's emphasis on the creative process as a research method. This collaborative scripting not only serves as a means of narrative development but also as a form of collective analysis and reflection. It exemplified Nicholson's (2005) notion of "reflective practice,"where the act of creation is intertwined with critical thinking and reflection. This process allows for the emergence of themes and narratives that might not be accessible through conventional research methods, illustrating the generative potential of PaR

The script workshop phase signifies a move towards synthesizing the insights and experiences shared in the initial weeks into a coherent narrative. This is a critical phase in PaR, where the creative process itself becomes a site of inquiry and knowledge production (Kershaw, 2009). The participants are also submerged in a process of writing their stories of protest. The collective scripting also helped them to narrate, in written form, their understanding of protest.

Week 5: Rehearsals and the Creation of Placards

I shifted my focus towards rehearsals and a particularly symbolic aspect of protest in South African history—the creation of placards. This phase of the project was pivotal as it followed the intense periods of character development and scripting. The transition to crafting placards was not merely a change in activity but a deliberate move to deepen the participants' engagement with the themes and historical context of the Fees Must Fall movement.

The process of creating placards with the research participants was designed to bridge the gap between abstract understanding and tangible action. Placards, as a hallmark of protest in South Africa, carry with them a weight of historical significance and a form of expression that is both visual and textual. This activity served to root the participants more firmly in the tradition of protest, connecting their roles in the theatre project to the real-world actions of those who took part in the FMF protests.

By involving participants in this process, we fostered a sense of unity and collective identity among them. The act of creating placards together acted as a physical manifestation of their engagement with the issues at hand. It was an acknowledgment of the power of collective action and the importance of voice in the struggle for change. This unity was crucial for embodying the solidarity and communal spirit of the FMF movement within our project.

Moreover, the creation of placards was an educational moment, highlighting the significance of visual symbols and slogans in mobilizing and communicating the essence of social movements. Participants

were encouraged to think critically about the messages they wished to convey through their placards, considering how to effectively encapsulate complex issues in a format that is immediate and impactful. This exercise stimulated discussions on the nature of protest and the role of visual culture in activism, enriching the participants' understanding of the FMF movement and protest dynamics more broadly.

In summary, the fifth week's focus on rehearsals and placard creation was a crucial component of the project, enhancing the participants' connection to the historical and cultural context of the FMF movement. This activity not only solidified a sense of community and shared purpose among the participants but also deepened their comprehension and appreciation of the role of protest in effecting social change. Through this, the project transcended the realm of performance, embedding itself within the continuum of South African protest history, and imbuing the participants with a greater sense of their place within that history. The rehearsal process and the creation of placards represented the iterative nature of PaR, where the material developed through research is continuously refined and reevaluated. This phase highlights the performative aspect of knowledge dissemination in PaR, where the findings are not only written but also staged (Kershaw, 2009). The use of placards as a visual medium further emphasizes the activist stance inherent in FT, leveraging the aesthetics of protest to communicate messages and engage public spaces. Even though Boal did not make use of placards in FT, this became a rehearsal for a revolution (Boal, 2005). This was to test what the participants would do after a FT event in their own spaces.

Rehearsals and the creation of placards underscored the performative and protest dimensions of my research. The physical embodiment of roles and the visual representation of key themes through placards integrate the aesthetic and political and protest aspects of theatre, as highlighted by Jackson (2007). This phase also emphasized the iterative nature of PaR, where the material and performative elements are refined through ongoing practice.

Week 6: Forum Theatre and the Jokering

I took on a special role called the Joker in the FT event. This was a whole presentation of the FT with spect-actors. Our objective was to get everyone thinking and talking about protest and how FT has elements of protest.

The audience members/spect-actors were used as our springboard to further test if there were elements of protest in FT. This meant they weren't just watching; (participants that became spectactors) were stepping into the play themselves, suggesting new ideas, and helping steer the story in new directions.

The implementation of FT and the role of the Joker was central to this phase, embodying the dialogic and democratic ethos of Boal's theatre practices. FT serves as a space for enacting and re-enacting scenarios, inviting audience participation in problem-solving (Boal, 1995). The Joker, as a facilitator, ensures the process remains focused on collective inquiry and empowerment. This week exemplifies the transformative potential of FT as a research method, where the theatrical space becomes a laboratory for exploring alternatives to social and political issues (Prentki and Preston, 2009), including protest.

Week 7: Reflection

We took a step back for some deep reflection, which was a key part of our journey. After all the rehearsals and the interactive work, we did, I asked everyone to keep a journal to really think about and write down their experiences. I wanted each participant to pay attention to how their body felt during our activities, where they felt any discomfort or pain, and how each part of the process made them feel emotionally. This wasn't just about physical reactions; it was also about understanding how

these experiences connected to the bigger themes we were exploring, like protest, the FMF movement, and how using FT helped us dive into these issues on a deeper level. And particularly what they have learnt and realized would be the elements of protest in FT.

Dedicated reflection time is indicative of the reflexive nature of PaR, essential for evaluating the process and outcomes of the research. This aligns with Schön' s (1983) concept of the "reflective practitioner", where ongoing reflection is integral to professional practice and knowledge generation. In each week there would journal and body reflections on the process that contributed to finding out if FT can be a form of protest. This phase allows for the assessment of the impact of the research on participants and the broader community, as well as the efficacy of FT as a method for social change.

Wits Amphitheatre as a Rehearsal Space

Utilizing the Wits Amphitheatre as a rehearsal space for my FT project introduced a profound layer of symbolic and practical influence to my work, intertwining the iconic setting's academic and cultural history, particularly its connection to the FMF movement, with the thematic and operational dynamics of my project. The selection of this location not only underscores the significance of physical space in theatrical production but also emphasized the environment's role in shaping participatory dynamics and thematic resonance within FT.

The Amphitheatre's rich historical and cultural significance, especially in relation to student activism and the struggle for academic freedom, imbues my project with a palpable sense of resistance and social justice. This connection enriched the thematic concerns of my FT work, providing a tangible link to real-world activism and echoing the "performative turn" in cultural studies where space and performance intersect to produce new meanings and possibilities for protest.

On a practical level, the Wits Amphitheatre's open, flexible design is ideally suited to the fluid interaction central to FT's methodology. Its capacity to dissolve conventional barriers between performers and the audience fosters a shared experience and dialogue essential for participatory theatre. This spatial arrangement enhances the immediacy and impact of the performance, enabling engaged and responsive audience participation.

The Amphitheatre's historical resonance amplifies the thematic relevance of my work, grounding abstract concepts in concrete, lived experiences. Its architectural qualities promote a participatory ethos crucial for FT, making the space itself an active participant in the dialogic process. The inclusion of a well-known, accessible public space like the Wits Amphitheatre potentially broadens my project's reach, inviting diverse community engagement. Additionally, the Amphitheatre's aesthetic properties enhance the theatrical experience, creating a more immersive environment for participants and audience members alike during our rehearsal process.

In essence, the Wits Amphitheatre's symbolic weight, combined with its practical affordances, significantly influences the development, execution, and reception of your FT project. This choice of location enriches the participatory dynamics, thematic depth, and community engagement of my research, showcasing the powerful interplay between place and performance in creating meaningful, transformative theatre.

Research Instruments that were used to Collect Data

In PaR, especially within participatory theatre settings, research instruments extend beyond conventional tools to incorporate the creative and reflective processes inherent in the artistic practice.

Participant Observations: As a foundational tool in ethnographic research, participant observation in my rehearsals and performances allowed me to gather data on the behaviours, interactions, and reactions of participants and audience members. This involved both active engagement and detached

observation to document the lived experiences within the FT process. Goldstein (2012) argues, participant observations within theatrical settings reveal the intricate dynamics of social movements and participant engagement, underscoring the method's effectiveness in capturing the lived experiences of those involved in participatory theatre.

Incorporating an in-depth analysis of participants' body language, gestures, and facial expressions into the participant observation methodology significantly enriched the data collected during my FT research. This focus on non-verbal communication offered profound insights into the emotional and psychological states of participants and audience members, beyond what was verbally expressed. Here's how I delved into these aspects:

Body Language and Gestures

Observing participants' body language and gestures during rehearsals and performances revealed a spectrum of engagement and emotional responses to the content and process of FT. For instance, open body postures and leaning forward often indicated active engagement and empathy, while crossed arms and physical withdrawal suggested resistance or discomfort. During moments of conflict or tension within the performance, I noted changes in participants' stances and movements—quick, sharp gestures might denote frustration or anger, whereas slow, deliberate movements often reflected contemplation or sadness. These observations provided a window into the unspoken feelings and attitudes of participants, complementing their verbal contributions.

Facial Expressions

Facial expressions were particularly telling, offering immediate, often involuntary, insights into participants' reactions to the unfolding drama. Smiles, frowns, and furrowed brows conveyed a range of emotions, from joy and agreement to confusion and disagreement. In moments where the performance directly addressed contentious issues related to the FMF campaign, I paid close attention to the micro-expressions of participants and audience members, noting how quickly fleeting expressions of surprise, scepticism, or realization crossed their faces. These subtle cues were invaluable in understanding participants' immediate, unguarded responses to the material.

Eye Contact and Engagement

The dynamics of eye contact also played a crucial role in gauging participant engagement and connection. Instances where participants maintained or avoided eye contact during discussions or performances provided clues about their comfort levels, confidence, and willingness to engage with others. Increased eye contact during interactive segments often signalled a readiness to participate and connect, while averted gazes might indicate introspection, discomfort, or disengagement.

Analysing Non-verbal Data

Analysing this non-verbal data required careful consideration of the context and dynamics of each interaction. Combining these observations with verbal feedback and reflections allowed me to construct a more holistic understanding of the FT process's impact on participants. It became evident that non-verbal cues often communicated emotions and thoughts not easily articulated in words, enriching the narrative data with layers of emotional and psychological depth.

By focusing on body language, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, I was able to capture a fuller picture of the lived experiences within the FT process. This in-depth analysis not only underscored the complexity of participant engagement but also highlighted the transformative potential of FT as a space for emotional expression, social reflection, and collective dialogue.

Workshops and Rehearsal Sessions: The workshops and rehearsal sessions themselves served as research instruments. Through these, I engaged participants in the creation and exploration of scenarios, facilitating discussions that prompted reflection on the FMF movement. These sessions provided insights into collective problem-solving strategies, emotional responses, and the development of empathy and empowerment among participants. Nicholson (2005) emphasizes the critical role of workshops and rehearsal sessions as spaces for exploration and reflection, essential for engaging with complex social issues through the medium of theatre.

Video and Audio Recordings: Recording rehearsals, workshops, and performances provided a vital means of capturing the fluid and ephemeral nature of theatre. These recordings allowed for post-hoc analysis of non-verbal communication, audience participation, and the evolution of the performance, offering a rich, multi-layered data set. According to Saldaña (2011), video and audio recordings serve as crucial tools for documenting the ephemeral nature of performance, allowing for detailed analysis of non-verbal communication and audience engagement in theatre.

In my research utilizing FT as a methodological approach, I employed video and audio recordings extensively to capture the dynamic and transient aspects of the theatre-making process. This approach was pivotal in documenting rehearsals, workshops, and performances, ensuring that no detail, no matter how minute, was lost. Here's an overview of how I carried out the recording process:

Video Recordings

I strategically placed video cameras around the rehearsal and performance spaces to capture a wide range of angles, ensuring that both the participants' and audience members' interactions and movements were comprehensively recorded. This setup allowed me to observe the spatial dynamics of the performances, the physical responses of the participants, and the subtle nuances of non-verbal communication that unfolded during the sessions. For workshops and smaller group interactions, I opted for a more mobile recording setup, using handheld devices to capture the immediacy and intimacy of the creative process. These video recordings provided a visual and auditory archive of the ephemeral nature of FT, offering a detailed canvas for later analysis.

Audio Recordings

In addition to video, I utilized audio recording devices to ensure that every spoken word, whether part of a performance or a discussion, was captured clearly. This was particularly important for documenting the verbal feedback, reflections, and dialogues that occurred during and after the performances. By placing microphones strategically throughout the space, I was able to record the richness of the group discussions, capturing the tone, inflections, and nuances of the participants' voices that video alone might not fully convey.

Ethical Considerations and Permissions

Before recording, I obtained consent from all participants and audience members, ensuring they were aware of how the recordings would be used for research purposes. I emphasized the confidentiality of the process and the option for participants to withdraw their consent at any time. This ethical consideration was crucial for building trust and maintaining the integrity of the research process.

Post-hoc Analysis

Following Saldaña's (2011) guidance on the importance of video and audio recordings in documenting performance, I meticulously reviewed the recordings during the analysis phase. This allowed me to dissect the layers of non-verbal communication, audience participation, and the iterative evolution of the performances. I paid close attention to moments of significant audience reaction, shifts in participant engagement, and the emergence of key themes within the performances.

The recordings served as a vital tool for revisiting and analysing the lived experiences of the FT process, enabling a detailed examination of the complex interactions and communications that characterized the workshops and performances.

The use of video and audio recordings in my research not only preserved the fleeting moments of FT but also provided a rich, multi-layered dataset for analysis. This approach enabled a comprehensive exploration of the intricate dynamics of participant engagement, audience response, and the performative exploration of social issues, underscoring the value of recording as a methodological tool in theatre research.

Reflective Journals and Diaries: Encouraging the participants to keep reflective journals or diaries offered a window into their personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings throughout the project. As a research instrument, these written reflections provided first-person accounts of the impact of the FT process on individuals, revealing shifts in perception, understanding and attitudes. Finley (2005) highlights the value of reflective journals and diaries in providing personal insights into the transformative experiences of participants, underscoring their importance in the reflective process within FT.

Performance as Data: Central to PaR, the performances themselves, including audience interventions and outcomes, served as primary research instruments. The staging, audience responses, and enacted solutions to depicted problems provided direct insights into the collective engagement with and understanding of the FMF issues. Smith, J. (2022)

In my PaR exploration cantered on the FMF campaign, the performance emerged as pivotal research instruments, offering profound insights into collective engagement with the campaign's issues. Staging this performance, along with observing audience responses and the solutions enacted to address presented problems, provided direct, invaluable data on how individuals collectively perceived and interacted with the themes of the movement. Particularly enlightening were the audience interventions, where spectators became active participants, suggesting alternative narratives or solutions, thus serving as unique expressions of engagement and offering a range of perspectives on addressing the challenges of the FMF campaign. These interventions, alongside the audience's verbal and non-verbal reactions during and after the performances, were meticulously observed and recorded, revealing the immediate impact and resonance of the FT process. Following the insights of Smith, J. (2022), this approach underscored the performance not merely as artistic expressions but as dynamic tools for data collection, capturing nuanced understandings of social engagement and the transformative potential of FT. Through detailed analysis of these performance-based interactions, my research was able to delve deeply into the collective consciousness surrounding the FMF issues, illustrating the capacity of FT to foster meaningful dialogue, reflection, and potential pathways to social change.

Each of these instruments contributed to a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics at play within the FMF movement and the role of FT in facilitating dialogue, reflection, and potential analysis of elements of protest in FT.

5.0 Conclusion

The integration of FT into the PaR paradigm has proven to be a profoundly effective methodology for exploring the FMF movement. This approach not only facilitated a deep engagement with the subject matter but also fostered a participatory and empowering research environment that brought forth a multitude of voices and experiences. The adaptability, inclusivity, and depth of insight garnered through this methodology underscore its significance in navigating complex social issues. Furthermore, it has highlighted the transformative potential of combining artistic practice with

scholarly inquiry, showcasing the power of theatre to not only reflect but actively engage with and influence the social world.

In essence, this research methodology has not just contributed to academic knowledge; it has also participated in the broader dialogues of social change, embodying the very principles of empowerment, equity, and engagement that lie at the heart of the FMF movement. The success of this approach reaffirms the value of creative, participatory methods in social research, setting a precedent for future studies and underscoring the indelible link between art, activism, and academia. As we close this chapter, we are reminded of the potency of PaR within FT as a method not only for understanding the world but for envisioning and enacting the pathways towards its transformation.

Chapter Four

The Spect-acting Protester

4.0 Introduction

This chapter and the following chapter focus on the analysis of the data and research findings. Chapter 4 investigates how the research participants became spect-actors in the FT event. It explores how an audience member can watch a play on protest and become part of the action and protest thereof. This chapter looks at how spect-acting, turns regular audience members into active participants who can change the play's direction by stepping into the performance. I start by looking at the concept of spect-acting as, inspired by Augusto Boal's TO work. I pay close attention to how these spect-acting protesters engage with the performance, making choices that reflect their views and solutions to the problems presented. This chapter also shows how spect-acting enables the spectators to start conversations, build understanding, and encourages audience members to act together. The chapter also discusses the challenges and limits of making real-world protest through spect-acting. The chapter concludes by outlining lessons learnt about using spect-acting as an element of protest and suggest ways on how it can be used as a tool for protest. Overall, this chapter shows how combining theatre and activism through spect-acting offers a creative way for people to protest. 4.1 Unpacking Spect-Acting.

In my study of Boal's TO, I encountered the transformative concept of "spect-acting." This practice redefines the audience's traditional role in theatre, as outlined by Boal (1979:142). In the conventional setup, where the audience passively watches a story unfold, spect-acting dissolves the clear divide between performers and viewers, enabling the latter to become active contributors to the narrative.

This innovative approach coalesces the identities of spectators and actors into "spect-actors," Boal (1979:142) who are empowered to step forward and reshape the drama's direction. Bhebhe (2013:50) states that "Spect-acting involves active participation so that audience members may find a way of engaging in dialogue."

In the FT sessions, the participants actively contributed insights and solutions, guided by the "Joker" or facilitator, who ensured productive dialogue and reflection on the themes. As the Joker, I managed the performance flow and facilitated interaction between actors and spect-actors. "In the Freirean language of conscientization, spect-acting can be understood to mean finding a language of analysis so that they engage in their struggle for liberation." (Bhebhe, 2013:50)

After the performance, the audience is given a chance to step onto the stage and suggest practical changes to address the conflict shown. In my Week 4 integration of spect-acting, I employed a strategic approach to involve participants who were initially not part of the scene, specifically focusing on Participant X and Participant Y, to become spect-actors. This methodological choice was aimed at deepening the engagement with the thematic content of the performance and exploring the dynamics of protest from multiple perspectives.

In Week 4 of our FT focused on the FMF movement, Participant X and Participant Y transitioned from observers to active spect-actors, each offering unique perspectives on protest strategies. Participant X suggested using empathy and dialogue instead of confrontation, enriching the narrative with a fresh approach to resolving disputes. Meanwhile, Participant Y highlighted systemic issues contributing to the FMF movement, proposing solutions such as increasing government funding for education, implementing a sliding scale tuition system based on income, creating debt forgiveness programs, reforming financial aid systems to be more accessible, encouraging community and corporate sponsorships' scholarships, advocating for educational policy reforms, and increasing student representation in university governance. These proposals aim to make higher education more accessible and equitable. To tackle underlying problems of oppression. The shifts involve moving from passive viewing to active participation. In FT, highlighting diverse perspectives, and using theatre to foster empathy and understanding. These changes aim to address issues like those in the FMF movement, demonstrating theatre's role in promoting accessible and equitable education by tackling oppression not only brought diverse viewpoints to the forefront but also emphasized the power of theatre in fostering understanding and empathy.

Their involvement demonstrated the importance of diverse perspectives in addressing the complexities of the FMF movement, highlighting the need for strategies that consider both individual and systemic factors related to the FMF movement, which calls for more accessible and equitable higher education in South Africa, include:

1. Economic Inequality: Disparities in wealth and income that affect students' ability to afford higher education.
2. Historical Disadvantages: The lingering effects of apartheid and colonialism that have resulted in unequal access to quality education for different racial and socio-economic groups.
3. Government Funding Policies: The allocation of government funds to higher education institutions, which can impact tuition fees and the availability of financial ai
4. Educational Infrastructure: The availability and condition of educational facilities and resources, which can affect the quality of education.
5. Loan Systems: The structure of student loan systems, including interest rates and repayment terms, which can burden students with debt.
6. Administrative Transparency: The decision-making processes within educational institutions and how they impact tuition and fees.
7. Labor Conditions: The working conditions and wages of university staff and faculty, which can influence the overall educational environment.

Addressing the FMF movement's concerns requires strategies that consider these systemic factors alongside individual experiences, emphasizing comprehensive reforms to create a more equitable and accessible higher education system. It underscored the empowerment and agency of the participants in effecting change and reinforced the notion that everyone has the potential to influence outcomes in the protest. This active engagement deepened the connection with the issues at hand, showcasing the potential of FT as a medium for social protest and change. Reflecting on this, I observed a significant departure from traditional notions of catharsis, moving towards a model that encourages active participation and advocacy, aligning with Boal's vision of theatre as a rehearsal for real-life action. This approach marks a departure from Aristotle's view (c.335 BCE) which associates catharsis in theatre with the passive experience of the audience as they vicariously experience the problems depicted on stage. In contrast, the method used in FT seeks to achieve catharsis by encouraging the audience to act. (Meisiek, 2004).

It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment to critically reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection. (Friere, 1970). This idea for me, really matched what I saw in the FMF movement, which is all about fighting for fair education for everyone, no matter the race or class, FT enabled collaboration which allowed the participants to dig deeper into the issues of the FMF oppression by acting them out and trying to solve them at that moment. This wasn't just about getting their thoughts out and using those thoughts to act against the oppression.

Furthermore, my engagement in this practice-based approach underscored its educational and transformative potential. It was enlightening, equipping participants with a deeper understanding of systemic injustices while simultaneously offering a platform for emotional and cognitive catharsis.

This dual impact, observed through the lens of my own experiences, highlighted the unique capacity of FT to not only navigate the emotional landscape of social movements like FMF but also to inspire a collective drive towards meaningful social transformation.

In Week 3, Image Theatre significantly aided in delving into the Fees Must Fall movement's narratives and emotions, offering catharsis for participants A, B, X, and Y. Developed by Augusto Boal, this technique involves creating physical tableaux to represent concepts or emotions, enabling participants to express complex ideas non-verbally, enhancing understanding and emotional processing. We deeply explored the FMF movement, allowing participants A, B, X, and Y to express and process their emotions and thoughts through physical actions. This method helped them move from mere observers to active participants, deeply involved in the narrative of protest and change. In the context of Week 3's exploration of the FMF movement through Image Theatre, the spect-actor role is embodied in the active participation of individuals A, B, X, and Y. Unlike traditional theatre spectators who passively observe the unfolding narrative, these participants actively engaged with the content through the creation of physical tableaux. This engagement represents the essence of spectacting, where audience members are not just onlookers but contribute to the narrative and emotional landscape of the performance.

Participant A used their body to show the weight and strength of activism, finding a powerful way to release emotions and embody the resilience needed for the movement. A demonstrated spect-acting by using their body to physically manifest the emotional and physical burdens of activism, thus contributing to the narrative in a way that goes beyond passive observation. Their embodiment of resilience and the act of releasing emotions through physical expression allowed them to actively participate in shaping the performance's message and emotional impact.

Participant B depicted their journey from feeling alone to finding a sense of community, using expressive movements to show their internal struggle and eventual connection with others. B transitioned from a passive observer to an active participant by using expressive movements to narrate their personal journey towards finding community. This act of depicting their internal struggle and eventual connection with others enriched the collective narrative with a personal story of transformation and solidarity, embodying the spect-actor's role in co-creating the performance's content.

Participant X experienced a shift in perspective by stepping into the roles of others, opening their understanding and empathy through physical engagement. X engaged in spect-acting by adopting the perspectives of different characters within the movement, thereby actively contributing to the exploration of diverse viewpoints. Their shift in perspective, facilitated by physical engagement, allowed for a deeper understanding and empathy among all participants, enhancing the performance's complexity and depth.

Participant Y explored their hopes and fears for the movement's future, using their movements to reflect on personal and collective aspirations. Y acted as a spect-actor by using movement to explore and communicate their hopes and fears regarding the movement's future. This exploration of personal and collective aspirations through physical expression contributed to the dialogue and narrative exploration within the performance, embodying the proactive and participatory essence of spectacting.

This collective use of Image Theatre not only allowed for personal emotional release but also created a shared space where empathy and solidarity were strengthened among us. It highlighted the power of physical expression in understanding and navigating the complexities of social movements like FMF demonstrating how embodied experiences can lead to deeper engagement and a sense of empowerment in the face of protest. In the context of Image Theatre for the FMF movement, spectactors actively shape and engage with the narrative through physical expression, facilitating a collective emotional release and building empathy and solidarity. This participatory approach deepens understanding of FMF's complexities, empowering participants with a sense of agency in protest. Spect-actors' involvement exemplifies the transformative power of FT, highlighting its role in fostering engagement, empathy, and a nuanced exploration of social issues.

In this study, I learnt that spect-acting transforms theatre into a space for exploring and addressing societal issues, allowing participants to collectively examine and experiment with solutions in a safe environment. It democratizes theatre, fosters empathy through role embodiment, and stimulates critical dialogue. This participatory method turns theatre into a rehearsal for real-world action, inspiring participants to apply onstage insights to effect change.

At its core, spect-acting is an innovative and powerful tool for social exploration and change, offering a dynamic way to engage with and reflect on the world. It underscores the belief that everyone has the potential to contribute to the narrative of society, challenging traditional notions of passivity and spectatorship in the process. (Boal, 1979)

"the theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society" (Boal, 1979). In Week 6, our FT event on the FMF movement brought Augusto Boal's concept of spectacting to life. This approach transformed our understanding of protest, allowing participants A, B, X, and Y to actively engage with and challenge the movement's dynamics.

- Participant A discovered the power of their voice as a protest leader, embodying the movement's resilience.
- Participant B transitioned from a reserved presence to an active force, their body language expressing solidarity and struggle.
- Participant X offered analytical insights, prompting deep reflection on the complexity of our fight.
- Participant Y connected emotionally with the audience, highlighting the tension and hope within the protest.

As the Joker, I balanced guiding the narrative with fostering audience participation, encouraging alternative perspectives on the movement. Our collective physical engagement and the audience's interventions created a space for deep exploration and understanding, embodying Boal's vision of theatre as a tool for social transformation.

The rehearsal sessions were not just about getting the FT right; it was a profound exercise in democracy, empathy, and collective problem-solving necessary for protest. Through spect-acting, we didn't just tell a story of protest; we lived it, breathed it, and, in the process, envisioned ways to use it to change the problems in the FMF movement. The feedback from participants A, B, X, and Y, coupled with the audience's reactions, underscored the transformative power of FT. It was a reminder

that each of us, regardless of our role, has the potential to contribute to the narrative of FMF, challenging and reshaping it for the better. " The spect-actor takes on a dual role of observer and participant, actively shaping the narrative and exploring solutions, embodying the belief that 'everyone can act in the theatre and in society." (Boal, 2008).

Week 6 marked a transformative phase in the FMF FT project, vividly embodying Boal's spect-acting concept as participants actively engaged with and shaped the protest narrative.

- Participant A stepped into a leadership role, using their voice and presence to drive collective action, feeling their impact extend beyond the theatre into societal activism.
- Participant B found confidence, moving from silence to active participation, their gestures shaping the narrative towards inclusivity and change.
- Participant X provided analytical depth, encouraging a reflective look at the movement's complexities, bridging the gap between external observation and internal engagement.
- Participant Y connected emotionally with the audience, highlighting the power of empathy in driving change, their expressiveness drawing others into a shared journey of hope and frustration.

As the facilitator, witnessing participants' transformation through spect-acting highlighted FT's power as a force for social change. Week 6 showcased theatre as a space where individuals can drive change, reflecting the protest and activism themes of the FMF movement.

Reflecting on Boal's insights, Week 6 of my rehearsals vividly brought the concept of the spect-actor to life, embodying Boal's vision of theatre as a rehearsal for real-life action and empowering participants to enact change.

In Week 6, our FT project on FMF vividly showcased the power of spect-acting, transforming participants A, B, X, and Y from mere viewers into active agents of change. This shift highlighted the essence of their roles:

- Participant A embraced leadership, realizing their capacity to inspire real societal change, embodying the movement's resilience.
- Participant B found their voice, moving from introspection to active engagement, reflecting on their role in the collective struggle.
- Participant X applied a critical lens, recognizing the broader implications of their actions, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful participation.
- Participant Y connected deeply with the emotional core of the narrative, demonstrating how empathy can be a catalyst for change.

This experience underscored the transformative potential of Spect-acting, emphasizing active participation, critical reflection, and empathy as key to driving social change. It affirmed the power of theatre to not only reflect societal issues like FMF but also to actively engage and transform them, aligning with Boal's vision of theatre as a rehearsal for real-world action.

Asserting that FT, part of Augusto Boal's TO, the spect-actor transforms traditional theatre dynamics by merging the roles of spectator and actor. This concept empowers audience members to actively engage in the performance, central to FT's transformative impact. Notably Spect-actors in FT play a revolutionary role by actively intervening in performances to explore alternative solutions, embodying empowerment and agency. This process encourages critical reflection on societal issues, enhances collective problem-solving through dialogue, and fosters empathy by experiencing diverse perspectives. Spect-acting serves as a rehearsal space for real life, prompting participants to apply

insights to real-world challenges. Spect-actors transform traditional theatre from passive consumption to a dynamic tool for social change, engaging with and potentially transforming their realities.

4.1.1 How does the FT spectator become a protester?

The transformation of spectators into protesters was a deliberate and dynamic process, integral to the event's structure and objectives. Through this carefully crafted participatory theatre experience, we aimed to engage individuals not just as audience members but as active agents of social critique and change. Here's how this transformation unfolded during the event:

4.1.2 Engagement with the FMF Campaign

The event kicked off by immersing spectators in the themes and dilemmas of the FMF movement. The performance presented scenarios that mirrored the real struggles, debates, and aspirations of the campaign, resonating deeply with the audience's sense of justice and social responsibility. This initial engagement was crucial for setting the stage for spectators' active participation.

4.1.3 Engagement with FMF and Introduction of Placards

Introducing placards was a game-changer, turning participants into active protestors. These placards, bearing campaign slogans, visually and symbolically deepened the protest narrative, making the audience's transition into protestors more tangible.

- Participant C transformed from a passive observer to an active protestor, using a placard to embody the movement's call physically and vocally for action. This act of holding and chanting from the placard marked a significant shift in C's role, from acting to advocating, highlighting the empowering impact of engaging directly with the protest's messages.
- Participant D's enthusiasm was amplified by a placard stating, "We Will Not Be Silenced," which they used to embody the protest's defiance. D's interaction with the audience, encouraging them to join the cause, showcased the shift from spectator to participant, making the placard a rallying cry for action.

The introduction of placards blurred the lines between performance and activism, illustrating the power of FT to not just represent but actively engage with real-world issues. This approach demonstrated how theatrical tools can serve as catalysts for change, encouraging participants to embody their roles as protestors and advocates, thus reinforcing the impact of art in mobilizing for social causes like FMF.

4.1.4 Invitation to Intervene

Inviting audience intervention during our FMF FT event transformed spectators into engaged participants. As the Joker, I facilitated this shift, encouraging them to actively contribute to the narrative and dialogue. This approach energized the performance, leading to richer audience contributions and new perspectives that deepened the discussion on the movement. Reflecting on the experience, I saw the importance of guiding yet allowing freedom for exploration, underscoring spectacting as a powerful tool for social exploration and real-life action rehearsal.

4.1.5 Active Participation and Exploration of Solutions

As the spect-actors stepped forward to intervene, they took on the role of protesters within the safe space of the theatre. Each intervention was a form of protest the depicted injustices, allowing spectactors to experiment with strategies for change. This active engagement not only empowered participants to think critically about the issues but also to visualize and enact their ideas for a more just resolution.

4.1.6 The Symbolic March' down Wits Corner Stairs

The march from the Wits Corner Stairs to the Wits Arts Museum during the FT event marked a pivotal shift from theatrical engagement to active protest. Participants, carrying placards with messages of hope and defiance, moved from being mere spectators to embodying the roles of activists. This is something that they learnt from spect-acting in the FT. This transition highlighted the seamless blend of performance and activism, underscoring the collective power of public demonstration and the significant role of art in driving social change. This act demonstrated FT's potential to inspire real activism.

4.1.7 Collective Dialogue and Empowerment

After interventions, facilitated discussions helped participants explore proposed solutions and their social implications, deepening understanding of the FMF campaign. These dialogues were key in turning spectators into protesters, fostering shared commitment and solidarity.

4.1.8 Mobilization Beyond the Performance

The FT event on FMF inspired attendees to transition from passive viewers to active social justice participants, sparking a commitment to real-world activism. This transformation was facilitated by engaging methods like placard use, symbolic marching, and staging a protest, effectively bridging the gap between theoretical discussion and practical action. The event highlighted FT's capacity to drive societal change, motivating participants to carry forward their newfound insights into tangible advocacy and protest efforts.

4.1.9 The Victory of the Spect-actor

The victory of the spect-actor in FT particularly within the context of movements like FMF represents a profound and multifaceted triumph that goes beyond traditional theatrical outcomes. This victory manifests as a newfound sense of empowerment and agency, as individuals move from passive observers to active participants who can influence the narrative and outcomes of a performance. Through this transformative process, spect-actors gain an enhanced capacity for empathy and understanding, as they engage with perspectives different from their own, fostering a deeper sense of shared humanity. Additionally, this participatory approach cultivates collective solidarity and inspires action, drawing participants together to address shared issues and motivating them to extend their activism beyond the theatre. The interactive nature of FT also promotes critical reflection and dialogue, encouraging a culture of questioning and open discussion that can lead to more nuanced approaches to social challenges. Ultimately, the most significant victory for spect-actors lies in their inspiration and preparedness for real-world change, with the experiences and strategies gained serving as a rehearsal for reality.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the transformative role of spect-actors and spect-acting in FT, especially within the FMF movement. It showcases how spectators evolve into active change agents, embracing empowerment, empathy, and collective action. This transformation is a deep change in perspective, emphasizing everyone's role in societal dialogue and solutions.

I believe that the impact of spect-actors extends beyond personal growth to foster solidarity and stimulate critical discussions, proving FT's effectiveness in social activism. These outcomes influence broader societal engagement, encouraging participants to apply their insights in real-world contexts.

Arguably, spect-actors' experiences underscore theatre's potential as a rehearsal space for real-life activism, preparing individuals for participation in social movements. This chapter affirms the arts'

crucial role in social justice, highlighting FT as a platform for amplifying voices, reimagining narratives, and enacting change. It celebrates the achievements of spect-acting and advocates for continued use of the arts in driving social engagement and transformation.

Chapter Five

Engaging in Protest through Forum Theatre

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the intricate relationship between FT and protest dynamics and the elements that drive the argument that FT can be a form of protest. It examines how this interactive theatre form reflects and energizes protest, amplifying social movement voices. In the FMF context, FT emerged as a medium for students to voice grievances, provoke protest action, and drive collective action. The term "element"in this discussion refers to the foundational aspects and principles of FT and its application within the FMF movement.

I begin by outlining the foundational principles of FT, emphasizing its role in facilitating dialogue, reflection, and empowerment among participants. This chapter further investigates how FT, through the lens of FMF, serves as a rehearsal for reality, where the blurred lines between performers and audience—spect-actors enable a dynamic form of protest that is both reflective and action-oriented.

Through the FMF movement, I examine specific elements of protest within FT, such as the role of the spect-actor in navigating and challenging the complexities of higher education accessibility and equity. The use of techniques like Image Theatre are analyzed for their capacity to embody the emotional and ideological struggles inherent in the movement, providing a platform for expressing dissent and envisioning change.

Additionally, this chapter considers how FT fosters a deeper understanding of systemic issues, cultivates empathy among participants, and inspires actionable strategies for addressing social inequities. By engaging directly with the narratives, emotions, and aspirations of those involved in the FMF movement, FT exemplifies the transformative potential of performance art in the service of social justice.

This chapter aims to illuminate the multifaceted ways in which FT intersects with and enhances the protest landscape. Through a critical examination of its methodologies and impacts, we seek to underscore the significance of FT as both a mirror to and a catalyst for protest, offering valuable perspectives for the participants on leveraging the arts as a means of social critique and action.

5.1 A Revisit on the Elements of Protest

Tarrow (2012) outlines how protest, through a variety of strategies and principles, serves as a powerful means to voice opposition and drive social or political change. Key aspects include highlighting causes, mobilizing support, public demonstrations, using symbols to convey messages, adopting nonviolent resistance, taking direct action, engaging with media, building solidarity, persisting, and adapting efforts, and aiming for impactful outcomes. The integration of protest within FT, particularly during the FMF movement, exemplifies how art can mirror real-life struggles, empower participants, and foster dialogue on critical issues like educational equity. By incorporating protest elements into theatrical practices, the FMF FT events not only provided a platform for expressing grievances and catalysing change but also served as a rehearsal space for activism, enhancing participants' understanding and readiness for social engagement. This approach underscores the significance of strategic, united, and adaptable protest actions in effecting meaningful social change.

5.2 Outcomes and Impacts of Forum Theatre on Protest

The outcomes and impacts of FT on social movements (FMF) are multifaceted, reflecting its unique approach that engaged the participants in dialogue, reflection, and action. Here are some key outcomes and impacts:

Empowerment and Agency

Empowered Participants: FT is commended for turning passive spectators into active "spect-actors," empowering individuals to explore and enact solutions to social injustices (Boal, 1979). FT empowered the participants by providing them with a platform to voice their concerns, share their experiences, and explore solutions to the FMF issues. This empowerment fostered a sense of agency, encouraging the participants to believe in their capacity to effect change. By rehearsing real-life actions in a theatrical setting, the participants gained confidence and skills that can be transferred to their involvement in social movements and enhanced their effectiveness as activists.

FT empowered individuals like Participant A, who stated, "This experience empowered me to take a stand," by providing a platform to voice FMF concerns and seek solutions. A, expressed feeling emboldened to take action. This empowerment was visible in their assertive posture and confident voice, reflecting a newfound belief in their ability to contribute to the FMF movement.

Confidence and Skills for Activism: Participant B felt more prepared for activism, noting, "FT has equipped me with the confidence to lead in real protests," highlighting the transfer of skills from theatre to activism. Participant A led a scene challenging university policy, directly engaging with the audience to brainstorm actionable changes, embodying empowerment, and leadership. Participant B facilitated a workshop using FT techniques to empower fellow students, teaching them how to articulate their grievances and envision solutions. Participant B used expressive gestures such as open hand movements to invite dialogue, firm nods to affirm contributions, and pointed fingers to emphasize key points. These gestures, combined with direct eye contact and a confident stance, effectively communicated their message, and mobilized the audience towards actionable solutions.

5.2.1 Awareness and Education

Raised Awareness: Through the portrayal and examination of social issues, FT raised awareness among the participants and audiences about the complexities of these issues, often illuminating aspects that are overlooked or misunderstood. By exploring FMF issues, FT broadened understanding among participants and audiences. Participant X remarked, "I gained a deeper insight into our struggles through FT." Participant X performed a monologue that shed light on the financial struggles faced by students, raising awareness among the audience about the depth of the FMF issues. Asserting that performing a monologue can be part of Forum Theatre, serving to share personal stories or issues and engage the audience in interactive problem-solving.

Participant Y created an interactive performance that educated participants on the historical context of the FMF movement, enhancing their understanding of its roots and goals.

- Educational Impact: FT served as an educational tool, providing the participants and audiences with new knowledge and perspectives on the issue, which led to a more informed and engaged public. Participant Y reflected, "I learned so much about our movement and its challenges." Participant Y created an interactive performance that educated participants on the historical context of the FMF movement, enhancing their understanding of its roots and goals. In Participant Y's performance, they depicted the FMF movement through a dynamic blend of monologue, role-play, and audience interaction, focusing on the struggle for educational equity. Using multimedia elements to add depth, Y shifted between characters to highlight

different perspectives within the movement. The session concluded with an interactive discussion, encouraging audience reflection on the movement's goals and challenges, effectively deepening understanding, and engagement with the FMF campaign.

5.2.2 Dialogue and Reflection

- Stimulated Dialogue: FT stimulated dialogue among the participants, between the participants and spect-actors. This fostered a culture of open discussion and critical thinking. FT fostered critical discussions, with Participant A observing, "The dialogues gave me the voice to articulate issues of the FMF protest to an extent my thinking has been elevated to see the world as a changeable place.
- Critical Reflection: The process encouraged the participants to critically reflect on their own beliefs, values, and behaviours in relation to the issue of FMF. Thus, it promoted greater social consciousness of protest and encouraging deep reflection. Participant B mentioned, "FT made me question my role and contribution to FMF."

5.2.3 Solidarity and Community Building

- Fostering Solidarity: FT fostered solidarity among the participants, strengthening the social fabric and supported their networking as students with a common cause for the addressing of the fees issue in the university institutions. FT strengthened solidarity among participants, as Participant X shared, "We've become a united front through these sessions." X organized a collaborative FT session that brought together students from different faculties, fostering solidarity and a sense of community among them.
- Community Building: FT helped build and strengthen some members of the student communities, communities of activists and concerned citizens, creating a sense of belonging and mutual support that hopefully will be sustained for a long-term engagement in social movements like the FMF campaign. Creating a supportive community, Participant Y felt, "FT has connected me with like-minded individuals, strengthening our collective resolve." Y said FT can be used to highlight common goals among FMF activists, strengthening ties and encouraging mutual support within the movement.

5.2.4 Social Change

- Peaceful Catalyst for Social Change: FT acted as a catalyst for social change by inspiring the participants to take concrete actions in their communities, to organizing campaigns to influence policy change. Participant A were motivated to take concrete actions, "FT has spurred us to organize a campaign for change." A, proposed a new approach to protest tactics during an FT session, inspiring participants to organize a peaceful demonstration based on the strategies discussed.
- Innovation in Activism: The creative and participatory nature of FT led to innovative strategies and tactics in activism, enriching the repertoire of actions available to social movements. With further continuation of the FT FMF event, I believe that this innovation in activism can be achieved. The creative approach led to new strategies, with Participant B stating, "We're now exploring innovative ways to advance our cause." B, developed a performance that showcased innovative methods of advocacy, leading to the formation of a student-led initiative to address tuition fee policies.

5.2.5 Empathy and Healing

Foster Empathy and Understanding: By engaging in role reversal and embodying different perspectives, participants gain a deeper empathy for others' experiences, fostering a more inclusive approach to social activism (Jackson, 2007).

- Catharsis: The participants often experienced catharsis through their engagement in FT, finding emotional release in the expression and exploration of challenging issues. Participants found emotional relief in FT, with Participant X saying, "Sharing our stories through FT was a profound emotional release."X portrayed the emotional toll of student debt in a powerful scene, offering both themselves and the audience a cathartic release.

The outcomes and impacts of FT on social movements such as FMF, extend beyond the immediate theatrical experience, influencing the participants' perceptions, behaviours, and actions. It can then be argued that FT contributed to the strengthening of protest and the broader pursuit of social justice and change.

Finding: Participants felt that Forum Theatre provided a safe space for expressing their frustrations about the Fees Must Fall movement.

Discussion: This aligns with Boal's (2000) theory of theatre as a 'rehearsal for reality,' where participants engage in symbolic action that reflects and potentially transforms their social conditions. Similar findings have been noted in studies by Smith (2018) and Jones (2020), who observed that Forum Theatre fosters a sense of collective empowerment among marginalized groups. However, unlike previous research which focused on smaller community settings, this study highlights the application of Forum Theatre in a large-scale, politically charged student movement, thereby expanding the scope of its utility in activism.

5.3 The Impact of Forum Theatre on the FMF Movement: A Critical Perspective

The integration of Forum Theatre (FT) into the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement showcases a pivotal evolution in South African theatre from traditional performance to a tool for social activism. Historical progressions since the mid-20th century have transformed theatre into a medium for political engagement and education, leading to its role in post-apartheid reconciliation. (Hauptfleish, 2010) FT's use in FMF highlights its capacity to challenge societal norms, mobilize change, and contribute to a more equitable society.

Finding: The use of Forum Theatre in the Fees Must Fall movement helped participants to reflect on their roles in the protest.

Discussion: This finding is consistent with Freire's (1970) concept of conscientization, where reflection leads to a deeper understanding of one's social reality. By engaging in the Forum Theatre process, participants not only rehearsed potential actions but also critically examined their positionality within the movement. This reflection aligns with existing research on the educational benefits of participatory theatre but extends its application to the realm of political activism, demonstrating how Forum Theatre can serve as both a reflective and a mobilizing tool in protests.

5.4 Intersecting Elements: Forum Theatre and the Dynamics of Protest

Participatory Engagement: I believe that both FT and protest movements thrive on the active participation of individuals. In FT, this is embodied through the role of the spect-actor, who engages directly with the performance to explore and propose solutions to societal issues. Similarly, protests rely on the collective action and participation of individuals to voice grievances and demand change.

During FMF rehearsals, we simulated a scene addressing tuition fee hikes, a core FMF issue. The participants, transitioning from audience to spect-actors, proposed solutions like negotiating equitable fees. This led to a collective action simulation, embodying protest tactics. Reflecting afterward, participants felt empowered, ready to apply these insights to real protests, demonstrating the seamless blend of participatory engagement in both Forum Theatre and activism.

Empowerment and Agency: FT empowered the participants by providing them with the agency to influence the narrative and outcome of the performance. This mirrors the empowerment found in protest movements, where individuals and communities are motivated to take action, assert their rights, and influence societal change.

"Black theatre ranges from escapist fantasies in song-and-dance form to committed radical expression of social protest from ritualistic expressionism to social realism" (Hauptfleish, T., 1983:140).

Temple highlights how Forum Theatre, like black theatre, spans a spectrum from representation to active engagement with social issues, making it a potent medium for exploring and addressing the complexities of movements like FMF.

Dialogue and Collective Problem-Solving:

In the FMF event, the participants role-playing as students tackled scenarios of unfair tuition hikes by proposing solutions like peaceful marches or dialogues with authorities. This process empowered them, reflecting the agency common in protests and leaving them motivated for real-world advocacy, showcasing the empowerment core to both FT and protest movements.

Stimulate Dialogue and Critical Reflection: FT encourages open dialogue and critical reflection on societal issues, promoting a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding social movements (Prentki & Preston, 2009). Both FT and protests serve as platforms for dialogue, allowing for the exchange of ideas and collective problem-solving. FT facilitates this through the interactive nature of its performances, while protests do so by bringing together diverse groups to discuss and address common issues.

Critical Reflection: FT encouraged participants to critically reflect on the issues presented, fostering a deeper understanding of their causes and effects. Protests similarly prompt participants and observers to reflect on societal issues, often leading to a heightened awareness and understanding of the complexities surrounding a cause. Critiques and Counterarguments

Finding: Contrary to expectations, some participants felt disempowered by the Forum Theatre process.

Discussion: This finding challenges Boal's (2000) assertion that Forum Theatre inherently empowers participants. Possible explanations for this disempowerment include the hierarchical structures within the movement itself or the participants' pre-existing frustrations with the limitations of symbolic action. This highlights the need for a nuanced application of Forum Theatre in contexts where power dynamics are complex and contested, as also noted by scholars such as Jackson (2007) and Luckett (2016).

Despite its potential, FT faces criticism regarding its efficacy and scope:

Questioning Impact: Critics question the long-term impact of FT on actual policy change and social reform. They argue that while FT may raise awareness and foster dialogue, its ability to effect tangible change is limited without strategic integration into broader activist strategies (Nicholson, 2005).

During the FMF event, a moment of critical reflection was sparked when Participant X, portraying a student who had been passively accepting the status quo and inadvertently contributing to the oppression of fellow students, was confronted. This confrontation was not aggressive but rather a moment for deep reflection, initiated by another participant who gently questioned Participant X's silence and passive complicity in the face of injustice.

"Why do you stay silent when you see your peers struggling?" the participant asked, prompting a pause in the performance. This question led to a powerful scene where Participant X, along with the audience, was encouraged to reflect on the impact of their inaction on the broader movement.

This interaction highlighted the importance of self-awareness and the role of everyone within a social movement. It served as a reminder that silence and passivity can serve as forms of oppression, contributing to the maintenance of the status quo. The facilitated discussion that followed this intervention allowed all the participants to delve deeper into the complexities of activism, the responsibilities of individuals within a movement, and the potential for change that lies in every action, no matter how small.

The FMF event illustrated how FT served as a catalyst for critical reflection, mirroring the reflective processes inherent in protest movements. It demonstrates the power of theatre to not only entertain but also to educate and provoke thought, encouraging participants to consider their role in social issues and the impact of their actions or inactions.

Empathy and Perspective-Taking: By stepping into the roles of others, the FT participants engage in an empathetic process, gaining insights into experiences and viewpoints different from their own. Protests, especially those that involve storytelling or the sharing of personal experiences, can also foster empathy among participants and observers, bridging gaps in understanding and solidarity.

Rehearsal for Reality: Augusto Boal described FT as a "rehearsal for reality," (1970) a concept that aligns closely with the idea of protests as rehearsals for social change. Both FT and protests provided the participants with the opportunity to practice actions and interventions that can be applied in realworld contexts to effect change. The FT event can provoke spect-actors to take part in real protest after the intervention.

Visibility and Voice: Asserting that FT gives visibility and voice to marginalized or underrepresented issues and groups, a goal shared by many protest movements. Both platforms allowed for the expression of silenced or ignored narratives, drawing public attention to them.

Accessibility and Representation: Concerns are raised about the accessibility of FT to the very communities it seeks to empower. Critics argue that FT, often conducted in academic or semi-formal settings, may not fully reach or represent the marginalized populations most affected by the issues it addresses (Cohen-Cruz, 2010).

These intersecting elements highlighted the complementary nature of FT and protest movements, showcasing how theatrical methods can be applied to the practice of activism and vice versa, enriching both fields with tools for engagement, empowerment, and transformation.

Simplification of Complex Issues: Some scholars critique FT for potentially oversimplifying complex social issues. They argue that the format of FT, while engaging, might reduce intricate social dynamics to binary conflicts, overlooking the nuanced realities of systemic oppression (Denzin, 2003).

Navigating the Debate

In navigating these debates, it is essential to recognize the context-dependent nature of FT's efficacy. The impact of FT in protest movements like FMF cannot be universally quantified but must be

evaluated based on specific objectives, participant engagement, and the broader socio-political landscape. Scholars like Mady Schutzman (2006) suggest that the success of FT should not solely be measured by its immediate impact on policy but also by its ability to foster a sustained engagement with social issues, cultivate a sense of agency among participants, and integrate with other forms of activism for a holistic approach to social change.

This debate on the efficacy of FT in protest movements underscores the complexity of using theatre as a tool for social activism. By situating FT within a broader strategy of activism and continuously reflecting on its practice and outcomes, we can navigate these debates and harness the transformative potential of FT in the pursuit of social justice.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed FT's power to mirror and actively engage in social movements, offering a platform for the participants to voice grievances, fostering dialogue, and mobilizing action. The participatory nature of Forum Theatre, especially through the spect-actor role, parallels the active involvement seen in protests, emphasizing dialogue, empowerment, critical reflection, and collective problem-solving.

The integration of the FMF movement in FT underscores its effectiveness in amplifying student voices and advocating for systemic change, showcasing the potential of combining artistic expression with social activism. This chapter contributes to understanding the arts' role in social movements, suggesting that creative expression and participatory theatre can enrich protest tactics and empower communities towards societal transformation. The blend of FT and protest movements such as FMF exemplifies a dynamic approach to activism, affirming the arts significant potential to inspire new and emergent ways of protest.

In summary, this study contributes to the understanding of Forum Theatre as a tool for protest by highlighting its strengths and limitations within the context of the Fees Must Fall movement. While confirming the potential of Forum Theatre to foster reflection and collective empowerment, the findings also suggest that its effectiveness is contingent upon the specific socio-political environment in which it is employed. These insights provide a foundation for future research to explore the adaptability of Forum Theatre in various forms of social activism.

Chapter Six

1. General Conclusion:

This research has demonstrated the transformative potential of Forum Theatre (FT) as a medium for protest, particularly within the context of the Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement. Through the lens of FT, participants were not only able to reflect on and engage with the issues at hand but were also empowered to rehearse protest in real life. The participatory nature of FT, which blurs the lines between audience and actor, has proven to be a potential tool in mobilizing collective action and fostering a deeper understanding of social justice issues.

2. Summary of Findings.

This study has explored the role of Forum Theatre in the Fees Must Fall movement, highlighting its potential as a tool for both reflection and activism. The findings suggest that Forum Theatre not only provided a space for participants to express their frustrations but also facilitated a deeper understanding of their roles within the movement. These insights contribute to the broader discourse on the use of performance arts in social movements, demonstrating its capacity to empower and mobilize participants. The first chapter is an introduction to the theoretical underpinnings and

background of FT and protest as two mediums that can be used simultaneously or the other as an alternative to the other. Chapter 1 also gave background to the FMF movement that would be used as a backdrop to the study. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the FMF movement, setting the stage for the research by situating the movement as a focal point for examining the intersection of FT and protest. Chapter 1 set the stage by introducing FT and protest within the backdrop of the FMF movement, highlighting the theoretical foundations laid by (Boal,1979) and (Freire,1970) on the participatory and dialogic nature of FT. Chapter 2 focused on the literature pertinent to this study. Chapter 2 focused on the literature review, examining foundational texts and theories pivotal to understanding FT and its role within the broader landscape of social movements and protests. Chapter 3 delineated a Practice as Research (PaR) methodology, strategically employing FT workshops themed around the FMF movement to delve into the nuanced impact of FT on fostering activism. This qualitative approach was deeply anchored in the principles of experiential learning and reflective dialogue, hallmarks of FT's pedagogical foundation (Nelson, 2013).

Chapter 4 delves into the transformative journey of the participants within the FT workshops. This chapter examines the pivotal shift from passive audience members to engaged spect-actors, a process that not only empowers individuals but also redefines the act of protest. Chapter 5 delves into the nuanced ways in which FT embodies and amplifies the principles of protest, particularly within the context of the FMF movement. This chapter methodically unpacks how FT transcends traditional theatre boundaries to become a potent rehearsal space for activism, where participants actively engage with and reflect on the mechanisms of social change.

The findings from Chapters 4 and 5 articulate the significant potential of FT as a form of protest. By engaging participants in a creative and interactive process, FT not only raises awareness and stimulates dialogue on pressing social issues but also empowers individuals to take concrete actions toward social change. The research concludes that FT, with its emphasis on participation, empathy, and innovation, presents a distinctive and potent method for social activism. It is adept at engaging individuals and communities in a collective dialogue and action, encouraging a deeper understanding of social issues, and fostering a sense of agency among participants. Through the exploration of the FMF movement, this study has demonstrated how FT serves as a dynamic platform for expressing grievances, exploring solutions, and stimulating critical reflection and dialogue. The findings reveal that by transforming spectators into active spect-actors, FT empowers participants to not only envision but also articulate potential solutions to the challenges faced by the movement. This participatory approach enhances the capacity for collective problem-solving and promotes a culture of active citizenship, contributing to a broader engagement with and impact on social activism. 3. Limitations:

While this study provides valuable insights into the use of FT as a form of protest, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The research focused primarily on the FMF movement within a specific cultural and geographical context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other social movements or contexts. The study also focused on various rehearsals that led to the FT theatre events with the participants and only had one full experience of spect-actors from outside. This could have limited the scope of the study to only a few numbers of participants and missed out on the full experience of outside spect-actors. The impact of FT on actual policy change and long-term social action was beyond the scope of this study, pointing to the need for further longitudinal research to assess its sustained effects. Future research should explore the application of Forum Theatre in different socio-political contexts to determine its effectiveness across various cultural settings. Additionally, studies employing longitudinal designs could provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of Forum Theatre on participants' social and political engagement, the sustainability of the changes it fosters, and its potential to influence policy and social norms over time. 4. Implications and Recommendations

Implications and Recommendations:“The implications of this research are significant for both practitioners and scholars in the fields of applied theatre and social activism. The study expands on existing theories by illustrating how Forum Theatre can be adapted for large-scale political movements. Future research should further explore this application across different socio-political contexts to determine the generalizability of these findings. Additionally, addressing the limitations related to participant diversity and methodological constraints could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of Forum Theatre in various settings.” To harness the full potential of FT as a transformative tool for social change, several strategic recommendations emerge from this study. Firstly, educational institutions are encouraged to integrate FT into their curricula, leveraging its power to teach social justice, critical thinking, and active citizenship. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares students to engage critically with social issues. Additionally, there is a clear need for the expansion of FT workshops by NGOs, community organizations, and activists, aiming to address a broader spectrum of social issues through participatory and reflective practices. Further research and documentation are essential to understand the long-term impacts of FT on the participants’ engagement in social activism, providing valuable insights for both Applied Drama and Theatre practitioners and scholars. Collaboration between FT practitioners and social movements is recommended to amplify the impact of social action initiatives, fostering a more cohesive and effective approach to activism. Advocates and activists should utilize the insights gained from FT experiences to inform policy advocacy efforts, ensuring that the voices and perspectives illuminated through FT are considered in policy-making processes. These recommendations aim to strengthen the role of FT in social activism, promoting a more informed, engaged, and equitable society.

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