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THE ROLE OF 'RAPID COGNITION' IN THE FACILITATION OF THEATRE-MAKING: A CASE OF THE 2008 WINTER/SUMMER INSTITUTE IN THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

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A Research Report submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Dramatic Art.

Johannesburg, 2009

Abstract

The Winter Summer Institute in Theatre for Development (WSI) is a biennial inter university programme that integrates a number of already established methods and ideas charted by other theorists in drama and theatre. As a pedagogical approach, its generative process relies on employing techniques such as improvisation and spontaneity. This study endeavours to unpack the principles and strategies that inform the generative process of theatre - making in the WSI. It emerged from the perception that the notion of 'theatre without script' (Fox 1994) underpins the work of the WSI, as it offers experiential and experimentational theatre-making. 'Rapid cognition,' a theory concerned with the ability to think instinctively, circumventing time and logic was used as the theoretical framework. Gladwell (2005) maintains that the life experience that individuals possess has enough power to intuitively and rapidly guide them to correct understanding, without necessarily complying with the formal procedures of time and logic. Qualitative research was used, particularly phenomenology, as a research methodology involving a choice of complementary methods. Findings reveal that for 'rapid cognition' to manifest itself, the environment, time pressure and planning are crucial. Although 'rapid cognition' falls within the mode of the "right hemisphere" of the brain, evidence in the study suggests that it can be trained. The benefits of which would include a heightened awareness in decision making, thus increased appropriateness in the choices of content and form in the WSI theatre-making. The study goes further in making theorized demonstration of 'rapid cognition', in many ways; it offers an affirmation of the power of theatre beyond mundane entertainment.

Key words: facilitation, rapid cognition, theatre – making, applied drama and theatre.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Arts in Dramatic Art (MADA) to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other university.

Selloane Mokuku

_____ day of _____ 2009

Dedication

To all who didn’t know that they know until they know they know.

Acknowledgements

A Sesotho expression that means thank you – *kea leboha*, sprang into my mind as I sought for words to express my gratefulness towards the generosity and support rendered to me in my research journey.

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The WSI participants (especially Professor Lucy Winner and participants who shared their diaries with me). WSI supporters and community partners, I pay homage to you.
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My sincere gratitude to my friends… Nthatisi Bulane for your avid engagement.
My family who in a blink did not falter to support my dream for further studies.
My husband Tšepo and daughter Limpho … you are such an inspiration…

Kea leboha… to all of you.

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List of acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Imuno Deficiency Syndrome
CPW	Child Protection and Welfare (Bill)
DIE	Drama in Education
DFL	Drama For Life
FG	Focus Group
GTZ/GmbH	Deutshe Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit/German Development Cooperation
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IAT	Implicit Association Test
MADA	Masters in Dramatic Arts
MOACUFE	Morija Arts and Cultural Festival
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontièrs/Doctors without Boarders
MTT	Marotholi Traveling Theatre
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NUL	National University of Lesotho
RPCI	Resewell Park Cancer Institute
PRA	Participatory Appraisal
SADC	Southern African Development Corporation
SUNY	State University of New York
TFD	Theatre for Development
TIE	Theatre in Education
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS
WITS	University of Witwatersrand
WSI	Winter Summer Institute
WSOA	Wits School of Arts
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Chapter one – Introduction

Ea bohlale o ithuta kamehla[1]

"It's a lie!" protested a girl from her seat in the middle row of a university lecture hall we were using as our theatre space. A group of boys, seated far right parallel to the girl, laugh at the girl's interjection. She continues. "It is a lie that women attract men to rape them by the way they dress"[2]. The girl's fiery response came during the post-performance dialogue facilitation of the play *Dance Me to The End of Love*/*Ntjeke Ho Isa Pheletsong ea Lerato*, created by the Winter/Summer Institute (WSI) in Theatre for Development (TfD)[3]. Her response had been provoked by the "rape scene" in the play[4] – a scene that took the accepted societal "truth" that women are to blame for their own exploitation. This scene was performed in an extreme manner in order to elicit dialogue, thinking and examination. The boys concurred with the scene.

In light of this and other impassioned audience responses, it is critical to ask; how does the WSI make theatre that provokes audience members to speak out and/or engender a platform for debate? Perhaps therein lies deeper questions and explanations of the type of theatre that the WSI makes.

[1] The proverb may be loosely translated to mean – the wise one learns all the time.
[2] This was a post-performance dialogue that took place in March 2007, facilitated by myself.
[3] Henceforth WSI. The residency was held from 22 June to 11 July 2006.
[4] The play had however been adapted with a new cast of students from the National University of Lesotho.

1.0 Rationale

The work of the WSI clearly had an impact, not only on audience members (like the girl who protested) but also on students and facilitators. My own life was profoundly affected by my involvement with the residency of 2006. My ability to intellectually engage with topical issues was enlarged, as we interrogated and experimented with varied approaches and attitudes towards dealing with the issue of the persistence of HIV/Aids in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. In addition, the dire psychological, sexual, moral and social consequences of the pandemic were brought forward for consideration.

In his research documented in *When People Play People – Development Communication Through Theatre,* Zakes Mda, focused on audience reception of theatre performances and succeeded in creating awareness of a need for community dialogue in Lesotho, a need which still exists. However, unlike Mda, my focus will be on the participants' development. Those likely to become "translators", 'taking ideas and information from a highly specialized world, and translating them into the world where the rest of us can understand' (Gladwell 2000:200). Thus become catalysts for dialoging.

In a journal article, some of the WSI pioneers, Lucy Winner and Katt Lissard, assert that one of the core values of the WSI is to 'create collaborative, issue-based, aesthetically provocative theatre' (Winner and Lissard 2007:30). and to 'empower both students and community participants with the tools and resources necessary to create similarly inspired

work in their own communities and lives' (*Ibid*). Furthermore, the focus is on deepening, enlarging and refining the improvisational "tasks" offered by the staff/faculty. Subsequently, a play is devised where students/actors play multiple roles.

In 2006, the only consistent characters were the "gossipers" who served as transitional commentators, scene announcers and translators (www.maketheatre.org). This is a role created to enable the performance similar to, but not fulfilling the same function as, the "joker"[5] in Brazilian theatre, practitioner Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre. It is a facilitatory role and facilitation is an important component of the whole process of devising within the WSI. My interest therefore lies in the evaluation of facilitation in the WSI theatre-making. From this viewpoint, I am of the conviction that 'facilitation is **not** teaching, **not** telling, **not** lecturing, **not** preaching and **not** directing' (Rooth 1995:3). One of the questions this study raises, then, is what *does* WSI facilitation do.

The study will involve unpacking the principles and strategies that inform the generative process of theatre-making in the WSI. In this regard, 'rapid cognition', a concept concerned with the ability to think instinctively and to circumvent time and logic will be used as a theoretical lens to help us understand how. From this perspective, one may suppose that a theatre-making process that is informed by this theory will help develop the necessary confidence in the student/actors for them to adapt the WSI facilitation approaches to other settings, where individual and group knowledge is the primary reference point in creating or strategizing.

[5] A character who plays a mediatory role between the audience and actors.

1.1 Research questions

In June/July 2008, the WSI reconvened under the theme **Power, Denial and HIV/Aids: Chances, Choices and Changes[6].** In engaging in the research questions outlined below, I intend to interrogate the project regarding its ability to establish effective facilitation that enables creative improvisation by students/actors. The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. How do the facilitators enable creativity and spontaneity in the theatre-making of the WSI; and how is this approach informed by the principles of 'rapid cognition'?
2. How do the educational resources used by facilitators in the WSI enable creativity and spontaneity in actors in accordance with the theory of 'rapid cognition'?

During the 2008 residency, I looked deeply into the creative and generative process of the WSI and analysed the role facilitation plays in affirming student/actors', contribution to HIV/Aids knowledge and self-care in action. My goal was to find a way to explain the theatre of the WSI, its impact on participants and on audiences. What is it, for example that enabled the girl who went to watch *Dance Me to The End of Love*/*Ntjeke Ho Isa Pheletsong ea Lerato* in 2007 to protest. The answer, I believe, lies in the experiential, educational and therapeutic role of theatre beyond entertainment.

[6] Sunderland was not represented. The Wits School Of Arts (WSOA) was represented through my participation. The residency ran from June 13 to July 3.

1.2 Research Report arrangement

While I recognize that there is a perception to 'think of storytelling as "unserious", as fictional, whereas our image of research is that it is about the "truth" and therefore it is an all together serious business' (McKenzie et.al 1997:27). In this study I will deviate from this perception and tell the story of my research through my lived experience.

The presentation is in a form of anecdotes. Each chapter starts with a Sesotho proverb and a brief writing to encapsulate the essence of the chapter. This introduces us to the cultural context of the story being told. Each chapter ends with a summary, a reminder of the salient points captured in each chapter. In the analysis, pseudonyms are used to keep confidentiality for respondents and presenters. Chapter one is introductory. It contextualises the study. The second chapter provides the literature review and points to the value that the study adds in the field. In the third chapter, the theoretical framework of the study is introduced. Chapter four captures the study methodology and methods. In chapter five the results are presented and analysed while chapter six offers a summary and recommendations of the study.

1.3 The Context

Although Lesotho was a "protectorate" and not a "colony" of Britain, after gaining political independence in 1966, she faced and continues to face post-colonial challenges such as inadequate and unequal resource allocation, social injustices and skewed power and knowledge relationships in society. Perhaps this resonates with Anthropologist Marimba Ani's (1994) observation that:

> Europe's political imperialistic success can be accredited not so much to superior military might, as to the weapon of culture…the secret Europeans discovered early in their history is that culture carries rules for thinking, and that if you could impose your culture on your victims you could limit the creativity of their vision, destroying their ability to act with will and intent and in their own interest. The truth is that we are all 'intellectual,' all potential visionaries. (1994:1)

Lesotho's inherited education system is in many ways a model that educator, Carl Rogers (1969) argues against. The system puts emphasis on "covering the syllabus" an unfortunate notion because underneath there is 'the assumption that what is taught is what is learned; what is presented is what is assimilated' (1969:104). Such an education system further domesticates a population, and Lesotho is in need of educational change in order to bring about a system that would encourage more critical and independent thinking[7]. Applied drama is considered by its practitioners to be a potent methodology for encouraging such critical and independent thinking.

Regarding the performance culture in Lesotho, it is perhaps worth highlighting that, although literature in the area is wide, scholarship on theatre as a discipline is limited. Evidence suggests that performances in Lesotho and many parts of the world have been in existence since time immemorial, and that they largely played a critical role of engagement on social, political and economical issues. Arguing against categorization of "popular theatre" and "art theatre" Mda (1993) quotes the theatre of rebirth known as *pitiki* as another example to show that art is not only confined in conventional theatre. He also provides a number of indigenous performance examples to support this view.

[7] The 2005 – 2015 education sector strategic plan recognizes the need to strategically find ways of 'transforming curriculum content and improving relevance, quality and teaching methodologies with the need of learner's focus' P22.

Most of the plays found in conventional spaces in Lesotho are scripted and audience often pays to see them. However, drawing on my experience as a practitioner for more than twenty years, I argue that theatre performance culture in Lesotho is dominated by productions aimed at raising awareness and education. These types of productions are largely commissioned by government, development partners or Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Although the impact of theatre in Lesotho is undeniable, the quality and processes of theatre-making for many productions in Lesotho remains a challenge. There is minimal evidence for the theoretical grounding for theatre-making, and the National University of Lesotho (NUL) as well as the Morija Arts and Cultural Festival (MOACUFE) play a pivotal role in opening opportunities for the use of theatre to engage in topical issues.

Monitoring and evaluation of theatre performances is weak, thus their impact remains largely unknown. Referring to the work of Marotholi Travelling Theatre (MTT), Mda agrees with this evaluation as he asserts that 'the work of Marotholi Travelling Theatre was very weak on evaluation' (1993:189). Theatre performances have also been used to inform policy and legislation review processes. Those include the 2004 Child Protection and Welfare (CPW) Bill[8] as well as the Towards Eliminating Child Labour (TECL) policy document. In these processes, evidence suggests that the views of the young people gathered though theatre were used to inform legislation and policy documents aimed at addressing the plight of children in Lesotho.

[8] The Bill is considered the best practice and going further than any other legislation in Africa in providing for children's duties and responsibilities and handing over authority as far as possible to the community level; an approach viewed by experts in the field as suitable and appropriate in the African context.

1.3.1 Contextualizing the genre

In 2006, NUL's Faculty of Humanities hosted the WSI residency. Participating institutions were NUL, the University of Witwatersrand (Republic of South Africa) [School of Education], the University of Sunderland (United Kingdom) and the Empire State College, State University of New York (United States of America). The WSI grew out of discussions between theatre practitioners, the academics and community development initiators with a shared ownership and commitment to community development. These discussions resulted in a collaborative proposal intended to enhance the capacity of students and staff in applied theatre theory and practice, and to instigate an investigation of responsive and innovative ways to engage with HIV/Aids initiatives through theatre. This initiative brought together participants, comprising students and teaching staff from the participating universities, in a three-week residency under a chosen theme.

The WSI residency structure consists of two weeks dedicated to the generation of work that culminates in a theatre piece, while the other week is spent working in collaboration with a chosen/given community. The participants were educators, facilitators and actors, all of whom can potentially become trainers. According to the initiators, the WSI is developing a way to create collaborative group performance based on a phased structure of ensemble effort. The phases are as follows:

- Gathering information and accessing material;
- Generating improvisational responses to the material; and
- Shaping work for public performance. (www.maketheatre.org)

The WSI is both experiential and experimental. As a pedagogical approach, the model relies on generating evocative material that creates a theatre piece by employing a variety of theatre techniques: semiotics, conventions, games and improvisation. Among other theatre techniques influencing this model, is German theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht's Epic Theatre which provokes the audience to critically reflect on life. In his observation of Brecht's theatre, (Boal 1985), says it shows 'the ways in which society loses equilibrium, which way society is moving, and how to hasten the transition' (1985:105).

To achieve this, Brecht proposed the *Verfremdungs-effekt*[9]. Similarly, Boal (1985) protests against the hegemony of western theatre through what he calls, *Theatre of the Oppressed.* His ideologies are inherently evidenced in the work of the WSI. He developed a theatre system that would enable people to dialogue around contentious issues and through acting out possible solutions, take charge of their desired future. In many ways, the protesting girl's reaction exemplifies Brecht's idea of transposing feelings into reasoning[10]. In disputing the "truth" about how girls get raped, she not only raised a political question, but also set a socio-political agenda around the "truth" behind rape.

Dance Me to The End of Love/*Ntjeke Ho Isa Pheletsong ea Lerato*, explored issues of gossip, silence and HIV/Aids. In the scene that sparked the protest, the actors formed a

[9] Translated as alienation effect – a system that constantly reminds audience members that they are watching a play, not something real, hence stirring them towards critical engagement with what is being portrayed, hopefully to inspire them to change their world.

[10] See previous explanation of "epic theatre".

tableau, "rape machine", which moved through a chant; "when a woman **says no**, she really **means yes**". As the scene progressed, the woman is accused of luring men to rape her because of her clothing. As applied theatre researcher Philip Taylor (2003) suggested, 'the art form became a transformative agent that placed the audience or participants in direct and immediate situations where they could witness, confront and deconstruct aspects of their own and other's actions' (2003:ix). In this moment of protesting the girl was doing all that.

1.3.2 Theories and Practices

The WSI integrates a number of already established methods and ideas charted by other theorists in applied drama and theatre. In an effort to initiate a dialogue that could speak to and with the "people", the NUL established a Theatre for Development (TfD) course in the 1980s that led to the establishment of a theatre group (later a society) called Marotholi Travelling Theatre (MTT)[11]. MTT employed theatre approaches that enabled participants to take part in examining issues that concerned them. It presented plays that had already been made by the cast, and engaged audiences on issues being raised by the play. MTT's success in bringing about change in the lives of those who witnessed the plays is not known. However, a means for enabling community dialogue on issues of concern was initiated. Many other initiatives that employ participatory or dialogic approaches have since emerged. These include the work of Liatla Productions[12].

[11] Contrary to Mda's assertion in *When People Play People* (preface). MTT still exists, and has undergone major transformations since his departure.
[12] This independent productions company uses mass media for education and entertainment.

In South Africa, an education and cultural exchange programme among and between theatre practitioners from across South Africa and beyond, namely Project Phakama, was forged. This initiative is participant centered, and endevours to acknowledge individual potential in the creative process. This study, in analyzing the methodology of the WSI, will add value to knowledge already established on the role of the facilitator in a creative process.

As indicated earlier, the WSI work is generated through improvisation tasks. This process resonates with Taylor's three elements of drama praxis which he defines as 'the manipulation of theatre forms by educational leaders to help participants act, reflect and transform' (Taylor 2000:1). Notably, the tasks emanate from individual experiences, shared research, readings, presentations and discussions that the WSI group engages in.

It is the work of educator Paulo Freire (1996) and indigenous performances which underpins the thinking of these participatory theatre and drama practitioners. Freire argues that 'liberation education consists of acts of cognition, not transferals of information' (1996:60), this in turn creates an opportunity for a dialogue on issues that concern people. The role of facilitation in enabling such liberation comes, henceforth under the spotlight. Quoted in MacDougall and Yoder's (1998) collection of essays, theatre practitioner Lucy Winner writes that 'the role of the facilitator does seem akin to that of a shaman or priest in ritual healing, where the priest not only manages liminal activity but becomes the *limen* itself, the threshold or passageway' (MacDougall and Yoder 1998:77). Thus she suggests what the facilitator should be.

In any given drama process the role of the facilitator(s) is dynamic in that they are entrusted 'to create an atmosphere of trust and synergy from which come results' (Reeds 1998:1). Consequently, facilitation can make or break a creative process. The importance of providing a structure or container within which the creative process may unfold becomes critical. To put it in other words, process drama is defined 'as a complex and dramatic encounter…it evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time, a world that depends on the consensus of those present for its existence' (O'Neill 1995:xii). This is the make-believe world, a play, and 'like all play, art operates between two polarities, the urge to explore and the urge to control – between freedom and the testing or breaking of rules' (O'Toole 1995:95). Applied drama and theatre can provide such a space.

In this regard Rooth's submission that facilitation entails 'mutual vulnerability and humanness of the facilitator and participants' (1995:3) holds. Given this situation, a need to trust the power of human knowledge accumulated through lived experience is pivotal**.** Through the skilful employment of different elements of drama, participants can be led towards a moment of insight or recognition when greater understanding is evoked. Improvisation advocates, Spolin (1963) and Johnstone (1981), write about discovering those moments through improvisation. Spolin further argues that all of us have had moments when 'the right answer "just came" or we did exactly the right thing without thinking' (Spolin 1963:3). Gladwell (2005) calls this 'rapid cognition.'

The "moments" highlighted above permeate to other disciplines. In medicine, Michael Wong of Resewell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) writes on how *Blink* helps the institute to practice medicine. He asserts that 'the ability to gather large amounts of information and rapidly synthesize it into an accurate analysis is at the heart of medical care and argues that Gladwell talks about this remarkable ability from a new perspective in *Blink*. He adds that trying to explain this experience is 'difficult to put in words,' and argues therefore that as physicians, there is a need to train 'our students to absorb and use all the available information about our patients [to help] the next generation of physicians develop their own "Blink'' a phenomenon which he argues is about 'thinking well, quickly' (www.roswellpark.org).

In a creative process, spontaneity and intuition are synonymous with 'rapid cognition.' Asserting the knowing of self and the environment differently, believing that 'through spontaneity we are re-formed into ourselves' (Spolin 1963:4), and thus have an opportunity to 'free [ourselves] from handed down frames of reference, memory choked with old facts and information and undigested theories and techniques of other people's findings' (ibid:4). In view of the complex situation of HIV/Aids, the response given by Steinberg (2008) to the character Sizwe touches on an important concept; that of fear of being "wrong". He thus sums it up, 'I tell him that this is the story I have accepted for the moment, that it comes from a reservoir of knowledge I have passively inherited rather than chosen, something that is just in the air around me, as witchcraft is in the air around him' (2008: 230). It is critical to appreciate the subtext in this conversation. Perhaps even ponder an argument that 'the fear is not of the unknown, but of knowing' (Spolin

1963:xiv). It therefore becomes essential that any participant "grows through" and not merely "goes through" any kind of creative process.

Post Colonial theorists such as Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1981) postulate that 'communication between human beings is also the basis and process of evolving culture' (1981:14). Therefore, a process that can inspire critical thinkers is welcome in today's setting. This idea resonates with the notion of continual learning, as alluded to in the proverb caption. A drama or theatre process therefore, with its approaches such as improvisation, enables a space through which in Johnstone's (1981) view; 'a student needs a guru who gives permission to allow forbidden thoughts into their consciousness' (1981:84), is confirmed. He adds that, 'a guru does not necessarily teach at all. Some remain speechless for years, others communicate very cryptically' (*Ibid*:84). An expansion, refinement and rethinking of the practice of facilitation to include 'rapid cognition' in theatre-making becomes therefore, highly indispensable and critical.

This observation is consistent with Rooth who posits being "semi-visible" as one of the basic strategies in facilitation. She stresses that, 'a facilitator should try to be as invisible as possible…and should strive to become as unnecessary as possible; as soon as possible…the facilitator must be there when really needed but must remain unobtrusive' (Rooth 1995:14). Facilitation therefore, becomes central in enabling individuals to share and shape the potential within. Creating a space for 'rapid cognition' to manifest and also to trust that 'taking the powers of rapid cognition seriously means we have to acknowledge the subtle influences that can alter or undermine or bias the products of our

unconscious' (Gladwell 2005: 252), maybe one of the ways through which this may occur.

1.3.3 Applied Drama and Applied Theatre

On many occasions these two terminologies have been used interchangeably. According to Nicholson, 'applied drama and theatre are interdisciplinary and hybrid practices' (2005:2). To this end, Nicholson posits that the 'etymology of both "drama" and "theatre" are significant to the values of applied drama/theatre' (*Ibid:*4). She clarifies that 'drama derives from the Greek word *dran* (meaning 'to make or do') and theatre from *theatron* (meaning 'viewing place') (*Ibid:*5). Accordingly, Mda (1993) offers a useful distinction when he suggests that 'drama is a literary composition, while theatre is actual performance that may or may not emanate from literary composition' (1993:45).

The term 'applied drama and theatre' suggests the application of both drama and theatre. Therefore, Mda's hybridization serves to demonstrate that the composition of drama manifests itself in the performance. It brings together those common aims that may broadly embrace the provision of education, consciousness, information, therapy and awareness. Movements that aim to use theatre as a tool for transformation and change are credited with having initiated the beginnings of applied drama and theatre. Nicholson identifies theatre of the political left, drama and theatre in education as well as community theatre whose legacy 'has subjected the negotiation between power, learning

and knowledge to critical scrutiny' (Nicholson 2005:9) as fundamental in understanding the role of applied drama and theatre in societies.

Judging from the work of theatre of the oppressed, Taylor's (2003) assertion that 'applied theatre opens up new perspectives, poses options and anticipates change' (2003:xx) holds. Similarly, in his overview notes on applied drama and theatre practice in Southern Africa, Drama Senior Lecturer Nebe,[13] observes that:

> Applied drama and theatre[14] practice has grown immeasurably in the last few decades through the international community and, although not widespread here in Southern Africa, sophisticated applied drama and theatre practices offer … methods that engage people on experiential and reflective levels, helping ensure that learning and change become sustainable.

The methods Nebe refers to are made available to teachers, trainers, theatre-makers, director-teachers and performer-facilitators. They in turn can make use of them in both the school and non school settings. An applied drama theorist, John O'Toole (1992), suggests that drama in education 'is very dependant both on the specific group of people taking part, and on external conditions over which they have little control. And so they must continually renegotiate the way in which they can manage and manifest the basic elements of dramatic form' (O'Toole 1992:4). This is applicable to other initiatives embraced by the applied drama and theatre genre.

[13] Page 1 - overview notes of Applied Drama and Theatre practices in Southern Africa – 2008; Wits School of Arts (WSOA) – division of Dramatic Art.
[14] Included here are varied practices such as Drama in Education (sometimes referred to as process drama), playback theatre, dramatherapy, theatre in education and theatre for development.

1.4 Study environment

To date, the work of the WSI centers on HIV/Aids and related cultural, social and economic issues. It adds value to the effectiveness of theatre in engaging with this subject. Shedding more light, researcher Catherine Campell (2003) says that 'a person who turned 15 in 2000 has a 74 percentage chance of becoming infected before his or her fiftieth birthday' (2003:4) in Lesotho. More disturbing is that the fundamental role of human behaviour globally in the continued spread of HIV is increasingly clear (2007, UNAIDS Expert Consultation on Behavior Change report). In the light of this, urgency to broaden perspectives and approaches to decision making on HIV/Aids by theatre practitioners and other stakeholders is imperative.

Since its emergence in the 1980s, conflicting theories regarding the origins as well as programming initiatives of HIV/Aids in Southern Africa have produced conflicting messages with regard to cure and prevention. Writer Jonny Steinberg (2008) notes that, 'where there is AIDS, there is blame' (2008:6); while psychiatrist Frances Welsing (1991) makes reference to the 'Big Lie' (1991:301) with regard to the HIV/Aids debate. Regardless of multiple perspectives, more often than not, the debates and ideologies are not always acceptable to the "target" group. On the one hand, the latter are not fully informed of the latest epistemological or empirical research. While on the other hand, the former fails to appreciate the "target" groups' existing knowledge.

Confronted with this ghastly context, I hope that 'instead of engaging in our past practices of complaining, moaning, crying, groaning, begging, clapping hands and singing' (Welsing 1991:xvii), the study can shift the debates to a different level. As a result, in his book, *Three Letter Plague* Steinberg (2008) admits that at one level, 'the book is an exploration of the place and resentment in one man's decision whether to test his blood for HIV' (2008:7), thus the intricacy of the HIV/Aids phenomenon. Theatre researcher, Kennedy Chinyowa (2005) makes us aware of a tendency in theatre 'to give more emphasis to the problems of the African experience at the expense of the theatrical means through which the experience is articulated' (2005:1-2).

I have also observed the same tendency in connection with HIV/Aids. More emphasis is put on the infected rather than those who are not infected or who are living positively with HIV/Aids. It seems to me that creativity and particularly, the spontaneous creativity found in improvisation within drama and theatre may well be a useful tool which applied drama and theatre practitioners have to offer in dealing with the HIV/Aids challenge.

In *The Tipping Point*, Gladwell (2002) explores the contagious nature of ideas and he suggests that they resemble viruses (2002:7). He maintains that conditions that affirm the value of spontaneity in learning become critical for meaningful learning to take place. Similarly, Rogers' (1969) ideas in his book *Freedom to Learn* are an invaluable nexus. He suggests that a positive learning environment where generation of ideas among learners is valued as central to education, is fundamental. His emphasis is on the facilitation of learning that opens up a dialogue through which learners experience the

freedom to ask questions, thus exploring ideas likely to bring fresh meaning on issues of concern. This ethos is seen as fundamental to the development of learners.

1.5 Study steps

Qualitative psychology has 'created an avenue for understanding how meanings are constructed and shaped discursively' (Smith 2006:2). The thinking of those psychologists interested in the concept that presumptions and beliefs are more or less instantaneous rather than derived and reasoned can be useful to theatre makers and facilitators (www.apa.org/monitor).

This study uses qualitative methods of research. Although the practice of qualitative research 'is sometimes criticized for being non-scientific and thus, invalid' (Berg 2004:2) I am interested in definitions and in an in-depth analysis. The notion that quality in research 'refers to the what, how, when and where of a thing - its essence and ambience' (*Ibid*:2-3) becomes appropriate. I will follow a phenomenological approach, which will help clarify my lived experience, as a former facilitator of learning at NUL and currently a Drama for Life[15] scholar pursuing a Masters Degree in Applied Drama and Theatre, as well as the lived experience of the participants. Research methodology will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter four.

[15] DFL being an African initiative hosted by the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), which aims to offer Honours, Masters and PhD programmes that build capacity in HIV and AIDS education through applied drama and theatre www.dramaforlife.co.za. For the first time in 2008, twenty seven students/scholars from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) were sponsored at Honours and Masters level.

Gladwell (2005) maintains that in some cases the experience that individuals possess has enough power to intuitively and rapidly guide them to correct understanding, without complying with the formal procedures of time and logic. His underlying philosophy of thinking is therefore an acknowledgement that individuals have enough knowledge to make informed decisions at any given time. This becomes significant in a creative process such as the one offered by the WSI as the theatre piece is shaped by what participants bring to the space or process. Similarly, 'scientific knowledge, like knowledge about drama, is symbolic in nature, socially negotiated and to a significant degree dependent on imagination and intuition – "Archimedes" guess' (Taylor 1996:139).

In theatre-making, this means that participants are free to explore all the various possibilities presented by the process. In other words, they are always in waiting.
In the context of the WSI, materialist feminism, with polemics of material conditions as fundamental in creating polarities among the people thus recognizing the group as 'more important than the individual' (Austin in Goodman 1998:138), will be used as a basic theoretical lens. In this regard, Gayle Austin's suggestion of using the broad ideological lens of feminism in exploring representation becomes useful.

1.6 Limitations

- As a facilitator in the residency, I was involved in planning, action, reflection, describing and re-planning, a position which although fulfilling, put me under immense pressure. I was therefore unable to have access to information from all working groups. Even though the process was videographed, it was not possible to witness all the group work without giving one of the participants an extra responsibility of taking the notes for me. A choice I deliberately avoided, lest I stifled students' spontaneity and engagement in the process.

- English is the language of communication in the WSI, and although it is an official language in Lesotho, research suggests there is limitation with regard to competency in use of second language for self-expression, writing and prompt thinking.

1.7 Summary

Anecdotal information about the impact of the WSI/NUL performance, make evident the power of applied drama and theatre in enabling dialogue on pertinent issues that affect people. The WSI efforts to draw on the already established drama and theatre techniques sparked an interest in me to learn more on the WSI theatre-making approaches.

Given the fact that their context for making theatre is in residency, there is limited time to come up with a credible and responsive theatre production, a task they have so far achieved well. Although NUL, the host university, had prior initiatives of using theatre

for dialogue and development, this research focuses on the participants and how their contribution in the theatre-making process is facilitated. ‘Rapid cognition’ has been identified as the major theoretical lens through which to evaluate the process, while material feminism is used as a supporting theory. This is appropriate as I am mainly interested in a qualitative epistemological research, and how the study can affirm theatre as an effective experiential and experimental process and its role with diverse benefits such as therapy, education, and entertainment.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Nonyana e ahela ka litšiba tsa e ngoe[16]

At the closing session of the initial Drama for Life (DFL) festival, a South African playback theatre company called Bonfire Theatre facilitated the reflection of the festival among participants. Through its Conductor and Director Paula Kingwill's questioning, it emerged that festival participants felt "inspired," "overwhelmed," "could conquer the world, but anxious" and had "grown". Highlighted responses were then given a theatrical representation and performance by Bonfire actors. "Something like that?" the Conductor would always ask, and then concluded; "What if we were to write a DFL book?" "Not new, but new" said Moabi Mogorosi, a DFL scholar from Botswana.

In this chapter I will acknowledge various initiatives in applied drama and theatre that are "not new" in theory and practice. Furthermore, I will chart what I consider to be a "new" path in the genre in relation to the work of the WSI. There are three distinctive features of the WSI that need noting for the purposes of the study. First, the WSI was conceived by academics, the majority of whom were teaching at institutions of higher learning. Second, its approach is residency based and third, it creates original theatre and does not work from a written script.

The research report will outline the first two characteristics, and proceed to focus on the last feature. In the work of the WSI, process and product are important, I will however privilege process in this study because my focus is in finding out about the best ways to

[16] This proverb may loosely be translated to mean that a bird builds its nest through the features of another bird.

facilitate an enabling environment for the manifestation of 'rapid cognition' in theatre-making.

2.0 'Not new' initiatives

2.0.1 Institutions of higher learning

In the 1980s, the African universities developed a philosophy aimed at engaging in dialogue with the "people" or the so-called "masses" on issues of concern. This approach was also instituted in theatre departments and thus a popular theatre movement developed. According to the theatre academic, Penina Mlama (1991), the aim of popular theatre is 'to empower (sic) the common man (sic) with a critical consciousness crucial to the struggles of the forces responsible for his poverty' (1991:67). However, there are numerous examples in African indigenous performances that demonstrate that the "people" have always had their own ways of engaging in their struggles. Among the Makonde people for example, in Southern Tanzania, through the kuyangala[17] process, this engagement in the life and struggles of a community is recited through popular performances.

At universities, the movement materialized as traveling theatres. At the centre of this type of theatre, research[18], participation and improvisation are critical. The University of

[17] Traditional procession performed post initiation rites.
[18] The word is consciously used loosely to refer to a process of gathering information and insight to inform the creative process.

Makerere in Uganda is recorded as the first university to venture into traveling theatre.[19]. The university initiatives however have largely been critiqued for their exogenous or top-down approach. Although participatory approaches were employed, the argument remains that universities[20] brought prepackaged productions to which communities became recipients. Other initiatives in the genre include the Laedza Batanani[21] experiment in Botswana, which also had its attachments to the university, and had an immense influence in the region; as well as the Kamiriithu community theatre in Kenya. Regarding the latter, 'three local villager-turned-intellectuals[22] who were based at the university of Nairobi' (Chinyowa 2008:9) were particularly instrumental in this regard.

2.1.2 The Residency approach

A residency is explained as the situation of living in a place. Perhaps adapted from this understanding, some of the typical features of a residency include period specification, limited time, selected participants, venue specification, and a specific focus or theme. A number of theatre initiatives have thus taken on this approach to devise productions. Some universities have also gone further to initiate summer or winter schools to extend learning outside the university academic schedule while still keeping to the spirit of academic rigour and character.

[19] Other universities include the Universities of Nigeria, Dar-es-Salam, Malawi and Lesotho.
[20] Theatre practitioner Kess P. Epskamp is quoted by Odhiambo (2004) as asserting that although the philosophy behind the traveling theatres was to take the theatre to communities, it was the initiative of 'a small group of foreign employees, attached to the English or drama departments (sometimes also called the department of "dance, music and drama" or the department of "performing arts" (2004:32). Nevertheless there was some degree of interaction between universities and the "the people."
[21] Initiated by two expatriates adult educators based at the University of Botswana, namely Ross Kidd and Martin Byram (Chinyowa 2008:10)
[22] These were Ngugi wa Thiongo, head of the literature department, Ngugi wa Mirii, a researcher in adult education, and Kimani Gecau who became a kind of "people's theatre" director (Chinyowa 2008:10)

The WSI is a case in point, and its composition of cultural inclusiveness makes it important to take into consideration debates about interculturalism. There have been debates about the appropriate balance of power when First World participants come into the Third World. In fact, one of the WSI pioneers Nigel Watson (from Britain) had a misconception once, when he reflected on the project engagement during one of its creative processes at the WSI second phase. He refers to himself and some participants as 'former colonial powers and the current dominant power' (Watson 2007:54) and continues to share his surprise that as "the powerful ones" they 'should find themselves locked up in debates about what is best for Africa' (ibid). Watson reflects an imperialistic perspective, perhaps informed by history; it is likely that the rest of the participants' perceptions were also tainted with the colonial past and tacitly expressed in the WSI process. Emerging from the discussion however, is perhaps a necessity to make more explicit and interrogate participants' power relations, race, group dynamics, superiority and inferiority complexes and perceptions within the WSI.

This is particularly critical because the WSI facilitation approaches views the representation of different cultures within the residency as a resource in the theatre-making process. Even though the medium of communication at the residency is English, there is freedom during the creative process for participants to express themselves in any language or own cultural expression. For example, Lesotho praise poems or *lifela* and Sesotho folktales *litšomo* were used in the creative process and later in the play. Moreover, the initial "task" that the participants are asked to do is to go to their respective country/university/school groups and agree on a song that they will teach others from different country/university/school. A song is chosen as an easy activity that

would not require much intellectual engagement, and begins to place all participants as equal partners. The role of "tasks" is dealt in detail in chapter five.

The manner in which issues of difference are addressed in the example given, answer Producer Daryl Chin's argument that 'the problem arises when interculturalism is cited as an excuse for work which closes options, curtails perspectives, and cuts off exploration in favour of imposing meaning, rather than allowing meaning to arise from the material' (Chin 1989:175). The study will suggest the importance of how the approaches employed in the WSI play a critical role in embracing difference through the concept of 'rapid cognition.'

2.2 'Not new' theories

In line with the WSI's multidimensional approach to theatre-making, this study will focus on a phenomenon that is "not new," which Jonathan Fox, a playback theatre practitioner calls 'theatre without scripts' (Fox 1994:9). In actual fact, the WSI relies on a theme, chosen by faculty members, to create an 'issue-based, aesthetically provocative, entertaining theatre' (Lissard 2008:35). The theme is negotiated and created by participants during the two weeks residency[23]. My interest lies in how the chosen theme is translated into a theatrical reality.

[23] The whole residency takes three weeks. The first two weeks however are spent on creating a play, and the third week is spent working with a community, where ideas of the play are integrated with the new issues of the community. In the case of the 2008 residency, the WSI worked with the Malealea REFLECT group.

2.2.1 Non scripted theatre

Fox (1994) categorises non-scripted theatre into six branches. In this study, focus will be put on four only: experimental, educational, community and therapeutic theatre. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Odhiambo (2004) observes that as an apparatus, Theatre for Development 'also manifests itself in the developed world[24] under the guise of Theatre in Education, alternative theatre and experimental theatre' (2004:8). In a similar manner, the WSI approach to theatre-making embraces the principles embedded in the stated categories and in Odhiambo's observation. Moreover, the WSI explicitly identifies itself with theatre for development, but I find Fox's categorization embraces its work.

2.2.1.1 Experimental theatre

This type of theatre is concerned with challenging the "norm." Since the 1960s there has been consistent interest in experimentation within the western theatre, seen in figures such as Brecht, who indicated the political nature of theatre; Artaud, who rejected its language base and opened theatre up to eastern influences; Grotowski, who recognized the power of the human body in space as a signifier, and the importance of designing the actor-audience relationship. There is also the significant contribution of Boal, who advocated for the breaking down of the wall between the actors and the audience by creating a mediator, the "joker". All contributed to an ongoing break with the theatre of

[24] Most notably in the United Kingdom, Australia, United States of America (Odhiambo 2004:8)

the past and have encouraged an engagement with spontaneity, chance and impulse in the creation of theatre. This has also meant that the spaces in which theatre can be made have been challenged and widened. Moreover, the actor-audience relationship has also been radically altered, opening up the possibility of forms such as Forum and Playback theatre.

At a regional level, Project Phakama is one theatre approach that challenges the "norm." Its principle of the "Give and Gain Game" points to the experimental nature of theatre-making. Through this game, participants are asked to think about the skills or talents that they would wish to "give" to the group as well as to think about those things that they would like to "gain" from the initiative. Although this approach is still not quick enough to comply with the reasoning behind 'rapid cognition' it is evident that facilitators of Project Phakama take cognisance of the wealth of knowledge and experience that participants have, and thus become open to experiment, knowing the group's strengths and weaknesses, which results in the acceleration of the creative process.

2.2.1.2 Educational theatre

In this genre, both drama in education/process drama and theatre in education will be highlighted, as they are 'concerned with dramatic art and pedagogy' (O'Toole 1991:39). On the one hand, drama in education employs the use of drama and theatre elements as methods aimed at enabling learning. On the other hand, theatre in education entails performing drama as a strategy to enhance learning.

2.2.1.2a Drama in Education (DIE)

Central to the seminal thinkers in the field, is a focus on placing the participants (or learners) at the center of any learning context, interaction and collaboration. Also of importance are the concepts: process as opposed to product in learning; play; fictional role-taking by participants; improvisation; absence of audience; and the negotiation of the meaning of the experience by the participants.

DIE practitioner Gavin Bolton posits that in the 1930s improvisation as a dramatic term was 'in its infancy' (1999:82), and that educationalists hardly used it. I would argue that the case was similar in Southern Africa. Perhaps British writer Robert Newton's experience with "working-class unemployed" sheds some light on the reluctance by educators at the time to use the word. Quoted in Bolton, Newton affirms that:

> behind this particular usage of the term "improvisation" lies an image of a group that may not readily respond to the words on paper or a printed text, who may not have much tolerance for sustained rehearsals, a group who need to learn techniques of theatre within a less cumbersome form than a set play, and who need an opportunity to discover their originality and inventiveness, a group for whom "speaking learned lines", even their own lines, may kill lively acting. (1999:82-83)

Given the fragility of the experiments of the time, perhaps the "opportunity to discover their originality and inventiveness", might have posed a threat to more conventional ideas of education.

Through the various practitioners' experiments, it emerges that improvisation had 'extemporariness or spontaneity' (Bolton 1999:157) as a common thread running

through. Arguing this point further, educator Brian Way says improvisation should be understood as 'a private exploration in the double sense of unobserved and self expressive, making demands on each person's own resources without the complex necessity of interpreting an author's intention' (*Ibid*). Similarly, regarding decision making, psychologist Sigmund Freud is quoted as saying that;

> When making a decision of minor importance, I have always found it advantageous to consider all the pros and cons. In vital matters, however, such as the choice of a mate or a profession, the decision should come from the unconscious, from somewhere within ourselves. In the important decisions of personal life, we should be governed, I think, by the deep inner needs of our nature. (www.gladwell.com).

This understanding further supports child psychologist Lev Vygotsky ideas which influenced educators such as Harriet Finlay-Johnson to observe that 'human potential is theoretically limitless' (Dahms et.al 2007) [www.newfoundations.com]. Finlay-Johnson, as well as her successor Henry Caldwell Cook, who developed a notion of drama as a mode of learning and "play way" respectively, dared to tap into this limitlessness capability, by making the learning of subjects and the discovery of knowledge 'accessible and meaningful to the students' (Nebe 1991:63). In fact, Cook argued for the involvement of children in experiential learning 'because talking was a waste of time' (*Ibid*:58.)

Central to these concepts was a desire to allow children to freely explore their potential. Psychologist Donald Woods Winnicott (1971) argues that 'in playing, and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative' (1971:53). Freire views this concept as a way of acknowledging that given an enabling environment, learners can play an active

role in their own learning. This is evident through his critique of the 'banking system' where learners may be perceived as mere objects into which knowledge can be deposited.

The work of educator Peter Slade is perhaps also critical in so far as his recognition of spontaneous expression in learning is concerned. Slade is quoted by Michael O'Hara to have asserted that 'drama processes begin with the spontaneous, egocentric creations of the child in sound and movement and [develop] into the spontaneous creation of play, produced and acted by children' (O' Hara 1984:315).

Chinyowa (2005) similarly asserts that 'play allows the co-players or participants to engage in spontaneous activity thereby allowing them room to articulate their own point of view' (2005:v). In a similar vein, educator Dorothy Heathcote's praxis of 'mantle of expert' also goes a long way in demonstrating that with adequate support, children can direct their own learning. Restricted by linear thinking, Heathcote's critics said that her methods were without structure and this led her to changing her stance. Nebe rightly laments that her new drama approach 'destroys spontaneity' (1991:71) hence freedom to learn on one's own terms. In this regard, Rogers (1969) argues for the facilitation of learning where qualities such as 'trust in the human organism and its potentialities' (1969:114) would underpin education.

Making these shifts needs an understanding of certain ideologies. Cecily O'Neill's (1995) explanation of process drama is very useful in making a distinction between whether education is seen as a process or a product. As a believer in process, O'Neill suggests that 'process drama, like improvisation, proceeds without a written script but includes

important episodes' (1995:xvi). Aware of the criticisms in relation to working without a script, O'Neill identifies time span, brief exercises and scenes, and number of participants, as differences between improvisation and process drama. At the core however, like the initiatives highlighted above, is the absence of audience.

2.2.1.2b Theatre in Education (TIE)

With regard to TIE, training in the educational philosophy, underlying equipped performers with the necessary understanding to become 'actor-teachers'. Theatre in education is always issue-based and is reliant on research of the topical issues as well as an appreciation of educative principles and skill in performance. Devising is central in theatre in education, and this is normally informed by research. Devising requires one not to work from a script, but to rely on previous knowledge demonstrated in improvisation.

This supports a view that one value of the drama process lies in the fact that 'performance to an external audience is absent, but presentation to the internal audience is essential' (Bowell and Heap 2001:7). The role of learning in TIE clearly requires audiences because performances, which have educational value are made for them and sometimes with them.

2.2.1.3 Community theatre

Mlama's (1991) definition of popular theatre explained in the "institution of higher learning" section as well as indigenous African performances forms the basis of community theatre. This goes well with Boal's techniques in that the people are

encouraged through theatre, to critically engage with conversations that can improve their situation. In this paper I will focus on Theatre for Development (TfD) because it underpins the work of the WSI, and I realise that community theatre is another phase of the WSI that I am not dealing with in the study.

2.2.1.3a Theatre for Development

While I find Mlama's observation that 'the continent of Africa is subjected to oppressive and exploitative forces similar to the situation in Asia and Latin America' (1991:67) rather reductionist, it is critical to note that education and theatre's most radical thinkers, Freire and Boal respectively are from Latin America. Mlama rightly notes the role of popular theatre in enabling the people to rewrite the socio- political and economic script for their own will and intent. Although coming from different disciplines both Freire and Boal agree on how participatory dialogue can liberate people. A role that, through its interactive methods, TfD can achieve.

In Uganda an exchange programme between university students from Uganda and Norway is an example of students introduced to social work communication forms. Theatre academic Patrick Mangeni (2004) notes that these programmes were identified as Participatory Appraisal (PRA) and Theatre for Development.

TUSEME is a Kiswahili word that means "Let us speak out". It encapsulates an empowerment process for both girls and boys, to enable them to understand and

overcome problems that hinders their academic and social development (Department of Fine and Performing Arts 1995). The project provides another useful model from Tanzania as there were consequences associated with young people's assertiveness. The negative consequences of enabling children to speak out are not only peculiar to Tanzania. In Lesotho, the study that endeavoured to enable the voices of child domestic workers to be heard was met with antagonism. One of the reasons being that it dealt with children's rights, which some people believe to be a foreign concept to Basotho.

2.2.1.4 Therapeutic theatre

Psychiatrist Jacob Levy Moreno's Theater of Spontaneity gave rise to dramatherapy. A form that dramatherapist Phil Jones suggests 'refers to drama as a form of therapy' (1996:1), for he contends that 'within drama there is a powerful potential for healing' (*Ibid)*. This is perhaps due to the fact that certain techniques such as distancing are used to enable patients to reflect on themselves and their behaviour, creating space for a different perspective on their issues.

The power of theatre in this regard cannot be overemphasized, French Playwright Koffi Kwahulè argues that 'theatre doesn't heal and doesn't resolve anything. It simply offers us an opportunity to discover that we need healing' (Randy 2008:33). His argument however falls short of appreciating diverse forms through which healing can take place, in this case the discovery may be healing in its own right, and not just an opportunity for the discovery. Dramatherapy therefore guides participants towards the power within

themselves, and enables them address their own plight. Similar benefits could be attributed to Playback Theatre, which is a process drama that does include an audience, and it is in the witnessing and validation of a volunteer story that a potential and consciousness for healing may happen.

According to the flier of the Bonfire Theatre, the company uses "stories to bridge and to heal divides between and within communities in Southern Africa". As such, this is a model to reflect on. This study does not attempt to analyse or critique the techniques of Bonfire, it merely reflects on the notion of quick thinking inherent in the process both for the teller and the actors. As already argued the possibility of rationalisation in telling the story, and performing the story in the work of Bonfire, brings in an important element embedded in rapid cognition and facilitation. That is the aspect of improvisation.

According to Spolin (1963), there are seven aspects of spontaneity namely; games, approval/disapproval, group expression, audience, theatre techniques, carrying the learning process into daily life and physicalization. All of these demonstrate the usefulness of creating an enabling environment for creativity as well as the value of developing techniques to help a facilitator to be responsive. Likewise, Rooth (1995) advises that 'in order to become an effective facilitator, one needs to develop a number of qualities and strategies. Many of these are acquired through experience. The more facilitation is practiced, the easier it becomes' (1995:9). Opportunities for experimentation in processes is therefore essential.

2.3 'The New'

The ideas of Fox in Playback Theatre seem to have certain resemblances with the notion of 'rapid cognition.' In Playback Theatre, decisions to honour the stories of those who tell[25] them and to present them in a theatrical performance, as exemplified in the work of Bonfire, are spontaneous.

I would however argue that in playback, there are two strands worth noting. First is the information that is provided by the "teller" who just shares a story about an experience of his/her life. Second, is the theatrical performance provided by "actors." I argue that, although both strands may seem to embrace the principles of speed associated with 'rapid cognition,' there is in fact a degree of rationalization. Fox's analysis of repetition contained in the transcripts of his company's performances proves this. He asserts that, the conductor makes variations to "what happens in the end" formula' (1994:44). One transcript demonstrates: "tell us just a little bit. Whatever feels appropriate to you about those last hours or…at the end there" (*Ibid* 44-45). Free flow of ideas is therefore somehow restricted.

There is evidence of an example of 'rapid cognition' in the field of medicine where at one big public hospital in Chicago, a new way of diagnosing heart disease was developed. In this incident emphasis was placed on less information, to make a diagnosis. I am keen therefore to find possibilities for and the significance of the conventional wisdom that

[25] The term used is the teller, which could be synonymous to the protagonist.

"less is more" in the creative process. 'In fact, you need to know very little to find the underlying signature of a complex phenomenon' argues Gladwell (2005:136). Enabling such thinking in this information abundant age remains my interest and exploration.

Boal's argument that 'we cannot divorce reason and feeling, idea and form. They are a constant couple, even when at loggerheads, even when they come to blows' (2006:19), presents new challenges with regard to facilitation of 'rapid cognition'. A similar observation is supported by Bonfire's approach to Playback Theatre. Unlike the traditional mode of the genre, where actors just listen to the story of the teller, and then act it out or improvise, Bonfire actors take a few minutes to discuss and then make a theatrical performance. This is a technique that is called "huddling." While it may be argued that the time they take to make decisions on the portrayal of the teller's story is very short, I argue that if it is beyond the "two seconds" suggested by Gladwell, there is some analytical thought process inherent in this theatre approach. I think what happens is that, because they are a group of people, they have to ensure that their instinctive individual responses are in line with each other's – they have to perform together and off each other.

Educator Glen Thomas's observation that a 'review of the facilitation literature and the experiential education literature demonstrates the importance of both intentionality and intuitive process when facilitating' (Thomas 2008:1), is useful for the study. Evidently, he too recognises that the role of intuition or unconscious process has strong resonance

and applicability to education, and this argument advocates for the vitality of the facilitation of 'rapid cognition.'

2.4 Summary

The notion of "not new but new" attests to the fact that an array of initiatives have been taken in relation to the use of drama and theatre for education and social change. The historical roots of TfD and the residency approach were highlighted to help locate the ideology behind the WSI and its theatre-making process, thus offer an opportunity to find culturally equitable ways to manage the diverse socio, political and economic identities brought by the residency. Fox's categorization of 'non scripted' plays was important in directing our focus to those initiatives that are not new in theory and practice.

An opportunity within the theatre techniques used has been identified for the implementation of 'rapid cognition', and the processes of facilitation may be a place where it can eventually be most effectively used in the processes of facilitation. Thus demonstrating that 'rapid cognition' is supporting improvisation, spontaneity and participants' sense of well being and self worth.

Chapter Three – Theoretical Framework

Mooa khotla ha o tsekisoe[26]

The story goes that while taking a bath; Greek mathematician Archimedes discovered the 'principle of buoyancy' (www.maths.about.com) He ran naked through the streets of Syracuse shouting Eureka,[27] Eureka! As the story suggests, seeking an answer must have preoccupied Archimedes' mind and existence for some time before he suddenly knew the answer. This study is concerned with facilitation of 'rapid cognition - the power of thinking without thinking' a theory that the author of *Blink,* Malcom Gladwell (2005), argues is synonymous to the psychological term, 'thin slicing'. The chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the study.

3.0 The Meaning of 'rapid cognition'

'Rapid cognition' is concerned with the shortest form of knowing and thinking as opposed to long indecisive thinking because of a belief that one lacks enough information to make decisions. At the core of this theory are realizations that at any given time, people, due to information and experience that accrue over time, have enough information to make informed decisions and choices. That a certain type of unconscious thinking, is constant for human beings, which may then result in moments of inspiration. In *Blink* Gladwell (2005) who pioneered this theory shares an anecdote about a team at an art museum that took fourteen months to determine the authenticity of a marble statue as

[26] This proverb may loosely be translated to mean that one who asks cannot be taken to task over the polemics behind the idea – so be free to express yourself.
[27] I have found it.

opposed to two seconds "intuitive repulsion" that people with expertise about Greek sculpture had. At the time, their thoughts arose instantaneously. They just felt a "hunch", and without rationalizing their feelings they were right. This thinking is unpredictable. People just know it, without even knowing how, and they are often right. It appears to be based on experience and thoroughly internalized knowledge.

Given the unpredictability of responses or behaviors that emanate from 'rapid cognition' there is resonance with social critical theory in that the latter rejects dualism that may be caused by distinguishing theory and practice. Thus the reasoning accustomed to science or positivist thinking is shifted to some other kind of thinking that is more associated with instinct or interpretative thinking. Foucault cited in Rabinow observes that the 'system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements' (Rabinow, 1986:74) is thus fractured. Such instinctive or interpretative thinking also challenges such notions as "truth" and unsettles the power structures inherent in our acceptance of "expertise".

Regarding the gist of *Blink*; Gladwell argues that;

> You could also say that it's a book about intuition, except that I don't like that word. In fact it never appears in "Blink." Intuition strikes me as a concept we use to describe emotional reactions, gut feelings - thoughts and impressions that don't seem entirely rational. But I think that what goes on in that first two seconds is perfectly rational. (gladwell.com)

While I appreciate Gladwell's reluctance in the use of the word. I have noted that he has in fact used "intuition" in chapter four - page 107 of *Blink* to explain the phenomenon of "creating structure for spontaneity". Spontaneity is the word I used for ease of communication with the research participants, thus in this study the concept of "intuition"

will be used to explain those moments of "thinking without thinking" In *Blink,* Gladwell quotes psychologist John Gottman who, through his experience in computer analysis can predict whether a couple will divorce or not merely by looking at their behavior patterns. It turns out that central to 'thin slicing' is 'the ability of our unconscious to find patterns in situations and behavior based on very narrow slices of experience' (Gladwell 2005:23). The recognition of such patterns has a role in decision making, and their relevance in theatre making will be dealt with in chapter five.

3.1 Criticisms of 'Rapid cognition'

Daily Telegraph journalist Sarah Sands maintains that 'rapid cognition' is 'both liberating and dangerous. You know whether your hunch was right only in hindsight. Human creativity is a wonderful thing … and it is inextricably linked to human error.' (www.telegraph.co.uk). Gladwell is aware of this possible shortfall. In this regard, two examples that may lead to the negative side of 'thin slicing' are observed. One is the phenomenon of the "Warren Harding error," where judgments may be made on mere looks. The other one is the "Implicit Association Test (IAT)[28] tool" which suggests that people make more inherent connections 'between pairs of ideas that are already related in our minds than we do between pairs of ideas that are unfamiliar to us' (Gladwell 2005:77). It could be argued that these miscalculations could be 'at the root of a good deal of prejudice and discrimination' (*Ibid*:76), which is likely to betray our choices.

[28] Gladwell took the test - www.implicit.havard.edu

Arts teacher Betty Edwards (1979) argues that of the two brain hemispheres (right and left), the right-hemisphere is a mode concerned with 'the intuitive, subjective, relational, holistic, time free mode' (1979:36), and it has largely been ignored. She asserts that even the educational system placed emphasis on the 'verbal, rational, on time left hemisphere' (Ibid*)*. To this end Gladwell argues that 'rapid cognition', which would fall within the mode of the right hemisphere, can be taught and that 'if we can control the environment in which rapid cognition takes place, then we can control rapid cognition' (Gladwell 2005:253).

Like Gladwell, I will not venture into uncovering how the brain makes unconscious decisions; rather I will concentrate on finding ways through which 'rapid cognition' might be enabled in the theatre-making process. I will try to understand what facilitation means and through the analysis of theoretical concepts and drama practices and techniques, attempt to understand how facilitation can enable 'rapid cognition'.

3.2 The Meaning of facilitation

According to international facilitators Frances and Ronal Bee (1998), facilitation is a word that;

> originates from the Latin word *facilitas* which means "easiness" and the verb to facilitate has the dictionary definition, "to make easy, promote, help forward …generally creating a smooth pathway for delegates [participants] to pursue their learning journey. (1998:1)

In this study I will move away from mere critique of ideologies, and vague concepts, but will endeavour to offer an analytical edge and practical ways through which facilitation

can enable 'rapid cognition' in theatre-making. Frances and Roland Bee (1998) believe that in a learning environment, 'learners already have a great reservoir of knowledge and skills and that their job [as facilitators] is to surface that experience; they do a lot of listening to the delegates [participants]' (1998:4). This observation correlates with Gladwell's point that the experiences that individuals possess have enough power to rapidly guide them to correct understanding. This correlation therefore leads me to ponder tenets of facilitation and 'rapid cognition' in theatre-making.

3.3 Theory relevance

It is argued that in a critical sense, pedagogy 'illuminates the relationship among knowledge, authority and power' (Giroux 1994:30).

> Hence, in an effort to challenge the privileging of reason as the ultimate sphere upon which knowledge is constructed, feminists have passionately argued for the inclusion of personal biography, narratives and the explicit engagement with the historical and political location of the knowing subject (*Ibid*:16).

From this point of view the creation of space to encourage students 'to engage the world within its complexity and fullness, in order to reveal the possibilities of new ways of constructing thought and action beyond how it currently exists' (*Ibid*:12) is critical.

Paulo Freire postulates in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that some knowledge can be subjugated by dominant ideologies, and as such, people lose their inherent dignity of being, to a point where they almost never realize that they too "know things" and that they have learned with the world and with their peers (Freire 1996:45). In highlighting

this possible ideological dominance, Freire helps us understand the contradictions inherent in this thinking, where individuals may deem themselves as those without knowledge and thus relegate their power to others. As a result, a need for critical consciousness and individual psychological enrichment becomes essential.

Furthermore, feminist, Gayle Austin's observation that a feminist approach 'means taking nothing for granted because the things we take for granted are usually those that were constructed from the most powerful point of view in the culture and that is not from the point of view of women' (Goodman 1998:136) becomes helpful in enabling us to confront those few seconds that may influence our decisions and thus perpetuate the imbalances created by certain dominant ideologies.

In acknowledging individual experiences, perhaps Gladwell, Freire and Austin seek alternatives for affirmation of innate 'lived' knowledge and the creation of opportunities to think differently, that may lead to a microcosm of critical thinkers. In fact, the appreciative inquiry theory argues for building on people's strengths, rather than their weaknesses. In addition, Rooth suggests that 'it is not possible to facilitate according to a formula when you are working with people, who are fragile but intelligent, and searching for authenticity in their relationships and dealings with others' (Rooth 1995:18). Creating that enabling space is therefore crucial.

As stated already, in its theatre-making process, the WSI opts for a residency, and do not have any pre-planned script or product. The strength of this approach is that, through, living, improvising and creating together, unexpected understandings can emerge and the

work is grounded in authenticity and immediacy. Gladwell explains that his theory is 'concerned with the smallest components of our everyday lives - with the content and origin of those instantaneous impressions and conclusions that bubble up whenever we meet a new person, or confront a complex situation, or have to make a decision under conditions of stress' (www.gladwell.com). An array of triggers therefore, awaits us, challenging us to trust the authenticity of those first two seconds of thought. Operating under great duress, but relying on the awareness of the moment, Archimedes offered lessons which revolutionised science. In the practice of WSI, the "first two seconds" are happening over and over again.

It is the facilitator's job to ensure that participants feel free to respond to such triggers as they arise. This is in keeping with the facilitator's neutral position and the encouragement of spontaneity and the acceptance of ideas offered, which is a basic tenet of dramatic facilitation. For participants who come from a rigid framework of 'right and wrong' in relation to ideas such spontaneity and acceptance may be difficult, but as Gladwell also maintains such 'lateral' thinking is to be encouraged in trying to achieve new insights in a creative approach.

The theatre-making process that is informed by theory that places individual experiential knowledge as key in creativity is important in applied drama and theatre. Lev Vygotsky argues through his concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) that 'human potential is limitless. Dahms et.al 2007 (www.newfoundations.com). Perhaps 'allowing people to operate without having to explain themselves, constantly turns out to be like the rule of agreement in improvisation. It enables rapid cognition' (Gladwell 2005:119).

Equally, Moreno is quoted by his partner Zerka Moreno as saying that 'psychodrama is the exploration of the subjective truth of the protagonist by methods of spontaneous dramatic improvisations' (Holmes et al 1994:xii). Moreover, education thinker John Dewey quoted in Clandinin and Connelly asserts that 'experience is both personal and social. Both the personal and the social are always present' (Clandinin and Connelly 2002:2). Thus bringing diversity to the WSI theatre-making process. This perhaps illuminates the trajectory of collective and creative learning embedded in the WSI theatre-making process, which moves from an ambiguous terrain of trusting one's hunches. In this regard, skill in facilitation is as crucial as are the 'tenaciously effective questioners, using open and probing questions to explore issues' (Bee 1998:7). Moreover in engaging in 'rapid cognition' Gladwell suggests that there should be endeavours to make a distinction between good and bad 'rapid cognition'.

In her article, Sands, observed that 'intuition is a leap of faith in the dark' (www.telegraph.co.uk). and perhaps this uncertainty may bring discomfort to those who are used to a systematic way through which things should be done. Anarchy is associated with play and has much to teach us about the power of allowing one's self to be free to explore without inhibitions. This may lead to liberation in the belief that order may come out of chaos. Thus 'taking our powers of rapid cognition seriously means we have to acknowledge the subtle influences that can alter or undermine or bias the products of our unconscious' (Gladwell 2005: 252).

Making an informed choice about when to use 'rapid cognition' or logical analysis therefore becomes important. One would argue that given the enormity of issues such as cultural and ideological differences that the WSI productions face, 'rapid cognition' is appropriate in devising and developing a play. In a Q & A on Malcolm (Malcolm.com), when asked what *Blink* is about, Gladwell says 'I think that what goes on in those first two seconds is perfectly rational. It's *thinking*--its just thinking that moves a little faster and operates a little more mysteriously than the kind of deliberate, conscious decision-making that we usually associate with "thinking." (www.gladwell.com). As indicated earlier on, the influence of the environment and one's experiences are at the core of 'rapid cognition.'

Tapping into the power of 'rapid cognition' therefore is to endeavour to reach the majority where people can make use of the theatre space to envision their desired future. Fanon and Boal's notions of "psychological oppression" and "cop in the head" respectively, add value in contextualising a need for opting for facilitation of 'rapid cognition' within environments of oppression. The people on the margins, who 'know very well that the ideas which are likely to be introduced by these influences coming from the towns call in question the very nature of unchanging, everlasting feudalism' (Fanon 1963:89-90), alternatives for voicing concerns is needed. Seen from this perspective, there is definitely a pressing need for alternative means of voicing concerns.

Additionally, in the education sector, teachers are still largely regarded as reservoirs of knowledge, hence their yearly venture to cover the syllabus. Given the fact that participants in the WSI are from institutions of higher learning, power relations between

the staff and students are likely to be unbalanced. This therefore calls for a search for ways to facilitate equity, a central concept in this study. It is suggested that 'rapid cognition' may be a way of implementing this. As a concept, 'rapid cognition' takes into consideration the issue of individuals having a lot of prior knowledge and are in need of a conducive opportunity and/or environment to put to good use be allowed. Rogers' (1969) notion of 'free curiosity; to permit individuals to go charging off in new directions dictated by their own interest; to unleash the sense of inquiry; to open everything to questioning and exploration; to recognize that everything is in process of change' (1969:105) is useful in bringing about the desired understanding of the WSI theatre-making process.

For psychologist Kendal Hopwood, as *Blink* demonstrates, there are times—particularly when under stress or pressure—when split-second thinking has more to offer than it is given credit for. Perhaps as the story of Archimedes suggests, our preoccupation with an issue will manifest itself sometimes in the most unexpected situations. Gladwell suggests that 'if you combine all those little changes together you end up with a different and happier world' (Gladwell.com).

Change therefore is another important aspect that comes into play if we are to embrace the theory proposed by Gladwell. To this end being aware of feelings, thoughts and behavior as suggested by the cycle of change series model (www.changecyle.com) is useful in challenging our prejudiced decision making. According to this model, there are six stages of change: loss, doubt, discomfort, discovery, understanding and integration. The varied feelings, thoughts and behavior experienced in each of the stages compel us to

ask one of the most difficult questions, which is, why we choose to respond the way we respond when situations present themselves. This may not be an easy question to answer, and it would be interesting therefore, to observe how individuals and the group in the WSI embrace change in the theatre-making process as they are being enabled to speak.

Gladwell's interest in the first two seconds of decision making brings in another dimension worth noting - prejudice and discrimination. These two elements play a fundamental role in our decision making. Saved by the audition conventions of the day, Abbie Conant's acceptance to play in the Munich Philharmonic orchestra, despite being a woman, is testimony that:

> We don't know where our first impressions come from or precisely what they mean, so we don't always appreciate their fragility. Taking our powers of rapid cognition seriously means we have to acknowledge the subtle influences that can alter or undermine or bias the products of our subconscious. (Gladwell, 2005:252)

Munich Philharmonic music director, Sergiu Celibidache cried, *"That's who we want!"* when he heard Conant play but was unaware of her gender, only to revert to prejudice when his choice challenged his world construct. Reflection on this possible bias becomes helpful in enabling us to confront those few seconds which may influence our decisions, thus perpetuating the imbalances created by certain dominant ideologies.

As an approach to facilitating knowledge, this study finds relevance in Austin's summaries of different forms of feminism. She suggests that, unlike liberal and radical or cultural feminism, materialist feminism has the following points worth noting:

- Minimizes biological differences between men and women
- Stresses material conditions of production such as history, race, class, gender
- Group more important than the individual. (Goodman 1998:138).

This realization opens up opportunities for facilitation to be a catalyst for creativity.

3.4 Summary

'Rapid cognition' is concerned with taking action. Taking action is basic to theatre-making, which is not only inclusive of the spoken word, but also of silent action, multi-leveled dialogue. Taking action is also an important aspect of group dynamics and the facilitatory process. The belief in the value of 'rapid cognition' is supported by a view that over time, individuals amass enough information to help make decisions. It is observed that the right hemisphere of the brain, within which 'rapid cognition' falls, remains largely untrained and perhaps underused. However, it can be trained. Given the fact that what is shared on the spur of the moment is unpredictable, it can also be seen as a "truth" that may add value to a discourse. In this regard, facilitation plays a critical part in ensuring that 'rapid cognition' manifests itself.

Chapter four - Methodology

Ha ho tjaka tlhoka koli[29]

In his poem "To An English Friend in Africa" (1991), Ben Okri writes that 'the darkness is gentler than you think'. Finding my way through twists and turns of available research methodologies that could help me answer the research questions highlighted in chapter one, I finally landed solidly in qualitative research. This is a methodology that 'seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit those settings' (Berg 2004:7). Given that the WSI residency structure, places participants from various cultures in a particular setting, to achieve the creation of a theatre piece within a short time, this methodology proved appropriate.

I also had to embrace and agree with Phenomenology originator Edmund Husserl cited in Blaike that 'understanding is a mode of being rather than a mode of knowledge, an ontological problem rather than an epistemological problem' (Blaike 1993:34). As such, throughout my research journey, Okri's words 'so fear not my friend' were brought to fruition. In my darkness, I found myself particularly drawn to phenomenology; a research methodology that 'attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday lives' (Taylor 1996:91). This methodology will be explained later in the chapter, for now a highlight of the WSI process is shared.

[29] This proverb may loosely be translated to mean that no one is free from making errors.

4.0 WSI process

The WSI process requires all participants to prepare for all activities. Faculty members first meet to engage and agree on "tasks". Those who will facilitate the "tasks" volunteer and practice the activities before they can be presented to the students as "tasks". Tasks are informed by residency content and materials. For example during the opening of the WSI, senior management of NUL and development partners attend, and as reference is made about the participants' diverse backgrounds during the welcoming remarks, facilitators quickly think of activities that can be done to demonstrate the point, one being the introductory task alluded to in chapter two. In a similar manner books and videos are used to generate "tasks". Below is an example:

Task # 1
Create a 5 minute scene using:
1 line from the Three Letter Plaque[30]
1 line from line faculty[31]
2 images
1 song

Outcomes of the "tasks" are collected, and elements are picked and chosen to form the outline of the play. This will be covered comprehensively in the following chapter.

[30] Students had been asked to pick lines from one of the prescribed books; *Three Letter Plaque*. They each wrote them on a piece of paper. All pieces were collected and mixed for students to choose randomly.

[31] Faculty members had gone through a similar exercise, and their lines served as additional resource for the "task".

4.1 Qualitative Research

Both qualitative and quantitative research are acknowledged as valuable epistemological and empirical methodologies in shedding light on various challenges that need systematic studying. The tendency to polarize the two is therefore avoided in this study. For example:

> because qualitative research tends to assess the quality of things using words, images, and descriptions whereas most of quantitative research relies chiefly on numbers, many people erroneously regard quantitative strategies as more scientific than those employed in qualitative research. (Berg 2004:2)

The aim of the choice of the methodology in the study is thus to 'demonstrate the fruitfulness and often greater depth of understanding we can derive from qualitative procedures' (*Ibid*:2). I have thus chosen qualitative research because of my interest in the nature of things; for example, how participants view their role in the creative process within the WSI. In this regard, relying on quantitative research would not have been beneficial as I am not seeking any information relating to the amount of things.

4.1.1 Phenomenology

Writings on phenomenology originally developed in Germany. Theatre phenomenologist Stanton Garner (1994) asserts that it is:

> not concerned with the abstracting, 'scientific' gaze (the objective world) but with the world as it appears or discloses itself to the perceiving subject (phenomenal world); to pursue the thing as it is given to consciousness in

> direct experience; to return perception to the fullness of its encounter with its environment. (1994:2)

This methodology is concerned with the question of 'what are the lived experiences of particular people' Taylor (1996:90). In this instance, the focus is among and between the WSI participants (both faculty members and students). Mark Fortier (2002) notes the similarity to Judith Butler's use of phenomenology in a 'feminist context by tracing French feminist Simone de Beavoir's assertion that one is not born, but becomes a woman' (2002:45), the WSI process provides an enabling environment for participants to embrace creativity and thus become catalysts. I believe that understanding their lived experience might guide me in answering the research questions. Myron Orleans explains that in phenomenology,

> each actor assumes that every other actor knows what he or she knows of this world: All believe that they share common sense. However, each person's biography is unique, and each develops a relatively distinct stock of typifications and recipes. Therefore, interpretations may diverge. (http://hss.fullerton./edu/sociology/orleans/phenomenology.htm).

This explanation resonates well with social critical theory that recognizes the multiple truths that individuals perceive about issues. It is therefore interesting to learn how meaning was negotiated in constructing a theatre piece on HIV/Aids among participants of varying age, economic, political, social and cultural backgrounds. I believe a phenomenological approach will help me achieve this. Particularly because phenomenology is not concerned with the world as it exists in itself but how the world appears (as phenomena) to the humans who encounter it. (Fortier 2002:38).

The theatre-making process of the WSI in many ways ventures to critique society and its norms, thus addressing some of Fortier's questions relating to whether experiences suggest a fuller and more satisfactory human experience and its associated possibilities.

> The task of phenomenology, then, is to make manifest the incessant tangle or reflexivity of action, situation, and reality in the various modes of being in the world. (*hss.fullerton.edu/sociology/orleans/**phenomenology**.htm)*

In an effort to analyse the structure, including the enabling conditions in the WSI theatre-making process, phenomenology was favoured. Moreover, there is full recognition that although phenomenology is concerned with the subjective truth of individuals, 'it is not naively rosy about such a relation coming about – the world is as often concealed as unconcealed, or unconcealed in counterproductive ways' (Fortier 2002:43). In this way the experimental and experiential nature of the WSI to provide reflection, questioning and creativity offers an opportunity to learn more about the way the WSI make theatre.

4.2 Research methodology

Methods which seemed appropriate for this study were focus group discussions, keeping of journals and participant observations as techniques to help me answer the research question highlighted here. 'In these combined uses of qualitative methods, the goal is to use each method so that it contributes something unique to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon' (Morgan 1997:3).

Below, is the adapted Crabtree and Miller's (1999:7) table 1.0 that captures my journey within the context of the WSI:

Table 1 Summary of research methodology

Explanation	Analysis Objectives	Research question	Research style
Explanation	Interpretative	What is happening here? What patterns exist? How do phenomena differ and relate to each other? How does it work? How did something occur/happen?	Field

4.2.1 Research Methods

Focus group discussions were preferred as a means to collect information about the members' opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards the research question. Berg posits that 'focus group discussion may be defined as an interview style designed for smaller groups' (Berg 2004:123). Focus group discussion will play a significant role in this study as it endeavours to find the 'conscious, semi conscious and unconscious psychological and socio-cultural characteristics among various groups' (*Ibid)*. Although the WSI participants converge to make one group, for the purposes of collecting data, the group is usually broken down into the different universities which the participants come from. A similar stance applies to faculty or staff members. They too are treated as one group of facilitators. Focus groups on the other hand, are normally a sizable number, thus, the role

of the researcher ‘to draw out information from the participants regarding topics of importance to a given research investigation’ (*Ibid)* are enabled.

I kept diaries where I recorded my observations with detail and care. These observations will be embedded in my otherwise subjective experience, and help balance subjectivity. I further requested three of the students and two staff members to share their diaries with me for triangulation purposes.

For the 2008 residency, it had been decided by the faculty that students would be encouraged to keep journals as a form of auto-ethnography. The residency approach in the WSI implies that participants are away from their homes, their comfort zones or their everyday environment. This may, in many ways call for self-reflection in more ways than one in compliance with one’s new and different experiences as well as other daily encounters. Ethnographer Christiane Alsop tells us that ‘the concept and method called auto-ethnography is an attempt at practicing this self reflexivity by having a closer look at one’s own longings and belongings’ (Alsop (2002:1) (www.qualitative.org/research).

. The residency is a very intense learning experience and participants who are not used to undertaking daily reflection may not be consistent in documenting those experiences. Participants were therefore introduced to the value of journalizing, to document their daily reflections. I was allocated time to hold focus group discussions that also to some extent served as a reflection and review of the process.

4.2.1.1 Focus group discussions

The beginnings of focus groups is traced back to the time when 'the accuracy of traditional individual interviews that used a predetermined questionnaire with close – ended response choices' (Kruger and Casey 2000:5) was questioned. As a form of qualitative research, 'focus groups are basically group interviews, although not in the sense of an alternation between a researcher's questions and the research participants' response' (Morgan 1997:2). In this manner the role of a researcher as holding the power to conversations was challenged. The researcher assumed a new role; that of a moderator or a facilitator. In this regard Montell's argument that 'some feminist researchers see focus group interviews as a means for reducing the imbalance of power traditionally created by the interviewer/interviewee' (Berg 2004:126) is of major significance. This view is consistent with the theoretical framework which informs the study in that it provides a strong agency to enable the "subaltern" to share their opinions, perceptions and attitudes on the subject matter.

In the study, the focus group discussion method is preferred because it utilizes 'open-ended questions and allows individuals to respond without setting boundaries or providing clues for potential response categories' (Kruger and Casey 2000:6). It is observed that the role of the moderator/facilitator is very crucial in focus groups. The role of the moderator is thus 'to ask questions, listen, keep the conversation on track and make sure that everyone has a chance to share' (*Ibid*:9). For example, in the focus group this scenario prevails:

Moderator: Is there anything else that you would like to say?
Response: I am just listening and agreeing.

The environment plays another critical role in ensuring that people can respond freely to the question. 'The informal group discussion atmosphere of the focus group discussion structure is intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about behaviors, attitudes and opinions they possess' (*Ibid*). During the focus group discussions, laughter, "oh yeah!", "yes, you are right", "no, I don't think so", "thanks for bringing that up" was common. The right environment further acknowledges the knowledge that individuals have. In the case of the WSI, participants have a lived experience of the residency, which could potentially be shared to shed light on the research goal. In a way, 'participants are influencing and influenced by others – just as they are in life' (Kruger and Casey 2000:11). This leads to their growth, which can be evidenced in discussions.

Traditionally, people who participated in the focus group interviews or discussions did not know one another. This has however been challenged, although there is also caution over 'grouping people who regularly interact, either socially or at work, [because this] may inhibit disclosure on certain topics' (*Ibid)*. This caution did not apply to the WSI groups because through the generative process of devising a play, students had already shared deeply around certain issues of their lives or environment, under the eye of a faculty member:

> People recognized …um.. how… um … how deeply connected people were in their lived experiences to … to the things they were talking about. **2008 WSI/FG**

The same could be argued about me, as a moderator. I was known to the group. However, my role as a researcher was clearly differentiated from my role as a facilitator of the WSI. One member even commented "we are not used to not having Selloane's input in these questions." It was strange for me too, but I had to remember my role at that particular time.

Although the WSI participants converge to make one group, for the purposes of data, the group was broken down into the different universities (or schools) from which the participants came. The grouping of at least three groups also served as a useful basis for me to compare and contrast views shared. Yet, a different method was applied to faculty members. I decided to treat them as one group of facilitators, even though they came from different countries because of the central role of "facilitation" they played in the residency. Times were arranged and agreed upon for different schools to meet with me and to answer the research questions.

All focus group discussions (except those of the faculty) were done twice as the data got lost, due to failure of sophisticated technology. However care was taken to ensure that the number of participants met the guidelines of the method, namely that 'the group must be small enough for everyone to have an opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to have an opportunity to provide diversity of perceptions' (Kruger and Casey 2000:10).

Table 2.0 below shows the retake implications in different schools.

Table 2 Table showing discussion groups

School	First focus group discussion	Second focus group discussion
NUL	10	10
SUNY	6 (including video documentarian	5 (excluding video documentarian)
WITS	6	4

4.2.1.2 Participant observations

How is it possible to stand back and observe that of which you are also an integral part? (Crabtree and Miller 1999:47). Ellen's assertion that participant observation is an oxymoron. On the other hand, since this study is interested in 'how activities and interactions of a setting give meaning to certain behaviors or belief' (*Ibid* :47), participant observation is deemed as one of the appropriate methods. Cognisant of the fact that I might cause people unnecessary discomfort, I had pre-planned what to look for and how to record the findings (Grix 2004:130). I only noted those moments when ideas just presented themselves without any kind of pre-planned thinking.

The view that in participant observation 'questions can be formed in the language of the inhabitants…can be constructed using terms and colloquialisms characteristic of the people you are studying' (Crabtree and Miller 1999:49) was relevant, hence the use of the words "spontaneous and intuitive" in the research questions. For example, I observed the NUL students' freer engagement while expressing themselves in Sesotho.

Researchers Crabtree and Miller posit that using elements of telling a story (who, what, when, where, why and how) in participant observations may be useful. Noting of course that as researchers 'we also unconsciously apply our own biases and interpretations, to these scenes often without giving them any additional thought' (*Ibid*:55). This behaviour is consistent with 'rapid cognition'. As pointed out above, being free to use Sesotho played a positive role in creativity. They also sang quite a lot.

There was a tendency sometimes in improvisation to present literal reality, and not push the boundaries of fiction. I noted that every time when the simulation of the traditional healers was made, there was a tendency to reproduce the stereotypical doctors who are charlatans, and I wondered why. Subsequently, I had an informal conversation with one of the participants who said it his first time to share a story about traditional healers that affected him personally. He even admitted that the power of the traditional healers had actually left him bewildered. These observations will form part of my data analysis. I chose participant observations to ensure that I capture 'those times when several parties in the field came together to spontaneously hold conversations, discussions or arguments' (Berg 2004:129). The method seemed to me to certainly sustain and substantiate the spirit of rapid cognition as it seeks the preservation of the present moment. All that transpires from the discussions lacks prior rationale. It is about now, and what goes through the mind in the present moment.

Such an experience occurred when Mary, a local village woman presented her story to us. "Last year I was dying of AIDS" she said, "but now I am living with AIDS". Mary was very open in sharing about her situation, how it has affected her relationship with her

community and family. When she made her presentation, she brought her 12 year old daughter along. I felt uneasy when the questions shifted to the young girl, and I observed with awe when Mary's daughter told us about the hate speech that some of the teachers still perpetuate towards HIV positive people. "We were told at school not to eat food prepared by HIV positive people, but I eat my mother's food. We were told not to touch people who are HIV positive, but I touch my mother." These lines ended up being in the final production of the play. Although they came simply and spontaneously from the child's mouth, they had a profound impact on the participants. One of the participants notes in his dairy:

> Inspired by the courage of Mary and her daughter to expose themselves during the telling of their story I decided I needed to say something personal about who I was. When my turn came I knew the story I wanted to tell and it was a story involving the person who has had the greatest imprint on me, my father. **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 2**

It is these spontaneous moments of sharing stories that, I observed, enriched the theatre making process in the WSI. One of the observations concerned the people's physical reactions when material was presented. I remember noting palpable tension in people's bodies and faces when one of the scenes that was later called "uncle's scene" was presented. Here an "uncle" raped an orphaned girl. The participant observer is thus alert to all manner of signals which may add to her understanding of and her ability to interpret the environment within which the research is taking place.

4.2.2.3 Journal/diaries

There is lack of clarity between a log, journal or diary in terms of collecting information. However, following the lesson that one of the faculty members Lucy Winner gave about recording, she made reference to auto-ethnography. This is a method that was pioneered by anthropologists to record data. Most of the time, ethnographers study the 'other.' However, in the case of journaling, participants reflect on their own experience(s). This method is particularly important in the WSI setting as participants are placed in an environment that is new and will therefore be reflecting on their engagement with 'difference'.

An invitation was extended to both students and faculty members to select specific diary entries in relation to the given questions. A request was originally made of three participants, but the number was increased to allow possible default from members. This was the case where some members were unable to return the diaries as requested.

For the 2008 residency, it was decided that students would be encouraged to keep journals as a form of auto-ethnography. One of the faculty members, Lucy Winner, led a session on the value of keeping journals and ways of keeping it. Members were even given a moment to practice making a journal entry. Winner encouraged participants to make their day's events record a daily practice. She said participants should find about half an hour when they could just be on their own reflecting on the day. She further stated that one of the benefits of keeping a diary was that it would help participants to consolidate what they had learned throughout the residency. She made reference to

concepts explored in the residency such as body and image work, group dynamics, as well as solidifying the knowledge that may have accumulated during the day, a knowledge that may be new or not new.

Some of the students (from Lesotho) expressed difficulty in journaling. A difficulty stemming from their oral culture. Winner therefore suggested two ways through which the journal entries could be made. One was to write on critical moments in the creative process, what she called "aha!" moments. The other was to track the day. They were encouraged to write date and time. She emphasized that the writing was not, and needed not to be academic, but to be a purely self- reflexive activity.

The residency is a very intense learning experience. In this regard some participants reported that they were not consistent in undertaking their daily reflection. This shortcoming does not however affect the study because participants had to be selective about what they shared with me.

4.3 Ethical issues

'The ethical codes governing research involving human subjects, all require that the participation of individuals be completely voluntary' (Bennett et.al 1994: 93). This applies to the University of Witwatersrand standards (see appendix 1 and 2). I complied with all the requirements of the "application to the Human Research Ethics Committee

(Non - Medical) for clearance of research involving human subjects". (also available at http://www.wits.ac.za/research/humanethics.doc.).

4.4 Data analysis

Of the numerous procedures used in qualitative research, I chose the interpretative approach. This is because phenomenology as a methodology strives to 'uncover or capture the *telos* (essence) of an account' (Berg.2004: 266). At the same time my chosen interpretative orientation made me organise data to help me uncover patterns of meaning in relation to the research questions. Data was first transcribed and patterns were then reduced to three main themes and results were triangulated with different research methods. Following questionnaire (see appendix 3)[32] that were given, quotes from the participants are reference through the following manner:

- Year/WSI/FG – to refer to student focus group discussions;
- Year/WSI/university/participant number – to refer to diary entries from students;
- Year/WSI/faculty number – to refer to diary entries from faculty;
- Year/WSI/ faculty/FG – to refer to faculty focus group; and
- My personal observations/entries.

[32] The same questionnaire applied to both the focus group discussion and the diary entry.

4.5 Summary

Qualitative research was employed as the principal research methodology in this study. Phenomenology became an appropriate choice given that the research is concerned with learning about the lived experience of the participants (researcher included). Methods such as focus group discussion, participant observation and journals/diaries were used to help elicit information appropriately. A process of observing ethical requirements was observed and data was analysed by finding themes which were later triangulated to establish emerging patterns, using different data collection methods.

Chapter five – Findings and Analysis

Hlahahlela le lla ka le leng[33]

On 20 June of 2008 'Mampho, a participant in the WSI wrote in her diary;

> *Walls of Dialogue, walls of ideas – Oh, these walls CAN talk*
> *Safe walls.*
> *I enter this space for a ritual, as some might enter a mosque, or a church, or a temple*
> *I enter.* **2008/WSI/Faculty # 1**

These were the walls of a venue during the residency which was transformed into an explorative and experimental space for and of learning, as well as for devising a play; *It's Just You and Me, My Wife and Your Boyfriend/Ke 'Na, Le Uena Le Mohlankana Oa Hau Feela.* The venue was a small conference room at the local guest lodge housing the WSI. Its walls plastered with papers coloured from the assorted khoki pens and torn from the thick flip chart, full of ideas generated in the theatre-making process.

This chapter analyses the results of the study. It examines the context that enabled the manifestation of 'rapid cognition' within the facilitation at the WSI 2008, Data referred to in this chapter was generated from focus group discussions, selected diaries and my own observations. First a link with the protesting girl's story in chapter one, and a highlight of the WSI model.

After the *Dance Me to The End of Love*/*Ntjeke Ho Isa Pheletsong ea Lerato*, play had ended, a commotion at the other entrance of the lecture theatre called for

[33] This proverb may be loosely translated to mean that people help one another.

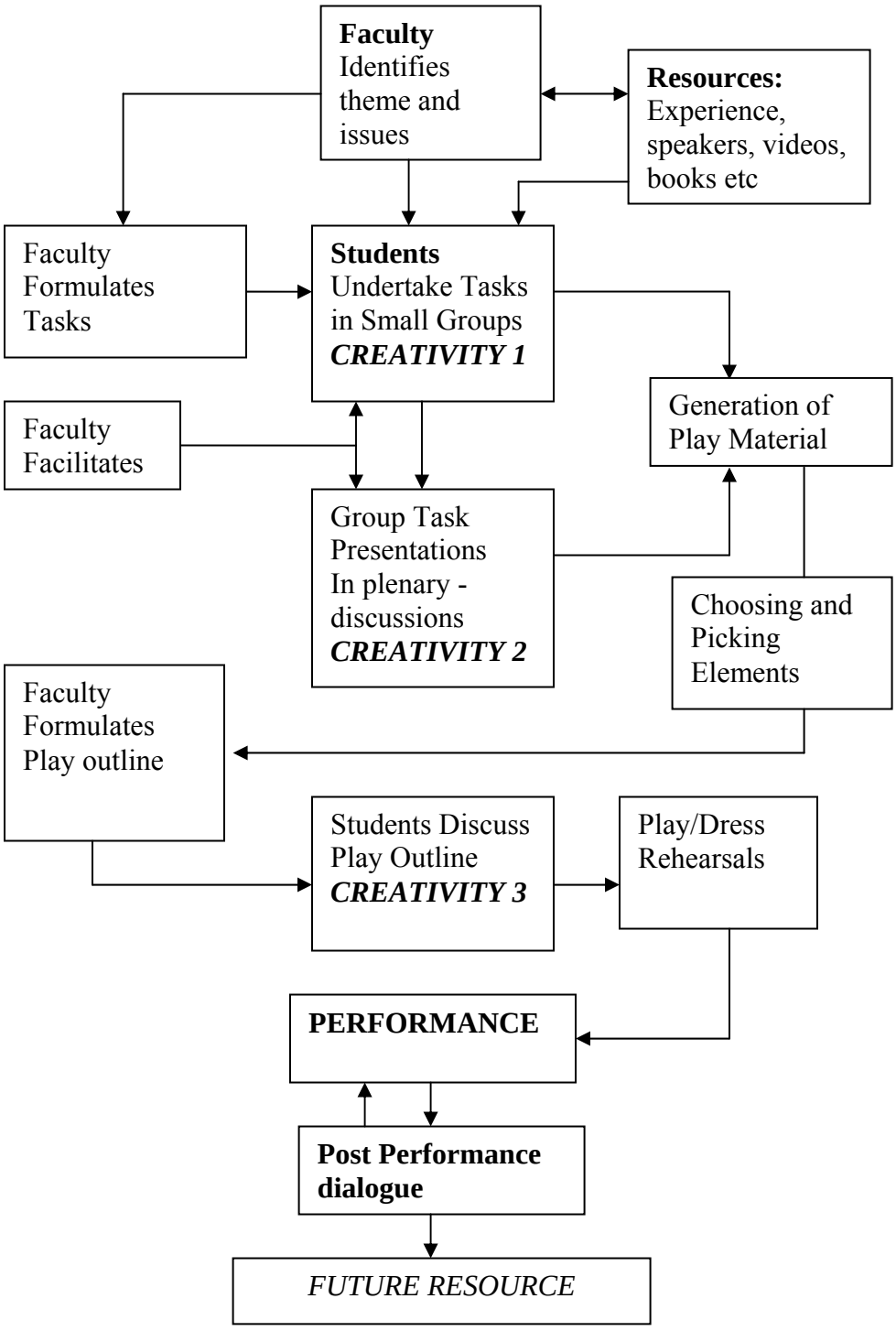
attention. The protesting girl had collapsed. "She muttered *nxa*![34] After she had made a comment", said another girl, to every one's shock. This experience raises important ethical[35] issues associated with applied drama and theatre and its powerful effect on audiences. However, from my perspective, 'such a liberation of the act of questioning seemed to me to have played a positive role' (Rabinow 1986:386) in demonstrating the power of applied theatre in enabling dialogue on pertinent issues that affect people. Theatre practitioner Helen Nicholson's (2005) explanation of the meaning of the word "applied," illuminates the discourse in that she questions 'to what or to whom drama and theatre might be applied, and for what reasons, and whose values the application of theatre-making serves and represents' (2005:5). Perhaps the 2008 residency will illuminate.

5.0 The WSI working model

As highlighted in chapter four, the WSI process entails preparation by all participants. Preparations can be divided into phases. The first phase involves faculty only, and will be explained later in the chapter. The second phase involves all the participants as it pertains to the play generation process. The figure that follows will demonstrate.

[34] A Sesotho exclamation of disgust.
[35] In view of the fact that there is no ethical code for practitioners in Africa, the Drama For Life Programme is facilitating a process of implementing a proposed charter of ethics for applied drama and theatre practitioners – www.dramaforlife.co.za – accessed 1 December 2008.

Figure 1. WSI Play Generation Process



5.0.1 Preparation

This is mainly undertaken by the faculty members. It takes place at two different levels. One is prior to the residency, and the other is during the residency. Based on the plans of the faculty, students also engage in some preparations.

5.0.1a. Faculty prior residency preparation

Two different ways manifested themselves in this regard. In 2006, a theme on gossip and silence in relation to HIV/Aids was suggested following the preliminary work that some of the faculty members had been involved in at NUL. An invitation was then made to all participating schools to deliberate on ways through which the theme could be theatrically presented. Email exchanges included sharing of expertise and areas where members would want to share or enhance their skills. Faculty members met for the first time at Roma where the residency was to take place. Together they envisioned the process.

There were however, tensions regarding work approaches. This was mainly due to members' orientations towards theatre-making. For example, there were debates around having one person to script the play or allowing the play to be improvised, and trusting that the process will yield an appropriate product. Resources for students to read and write about, prior to the residency were also suggested. Those included viewing of the Anant Singh's film *Yesterday* and Catherine Campbell's book *Letting Them Die*. Outside speakers (colleagues, HIV/Aids health workers, etc.) who would present information during the residency were also discussed and selected.

During the second residency (2008) faculty members engaged in discussions about the possible theme of the residency through emails. They then met to plan for the residency in January 2008 in Lesotho. Although I am no longer facilitating learning at NUL, I was invited to the planning meeting as one of the founding members. During this meeting, there were reflections on the 2006 residency which led to the introduction of the WSI residency agreement, as well as the sharing of information regarding the selection process, choice of resources, possible presentations, funding and a general exchange of ideas on how to improve the 2008 residency. The number of participants each of the universities/schools could bring, as well as the date for the residency was also agreed upon. It was also agreed that there should be one main co-ordinator of the WSI, and that she/he should arrive a week before the residency starts to finalise all residency requirements.

5.0.1b. During residency preparation

Faculty members meet regularly during the residency to plan, think and rethink activities that can enhance the generation of material for the production of a play (see figure 1.0). Members normally share their experiences and if found relevant, agree to use them as generative strategies. Members also rehearse some of the activities and remind one another of the principles of facilitation; the main working principle is to view facilitators as catalysts that inspire creativity, and that as facilitators, we do not impose our ideas on the participants. We however, stay on the look out for other participants who may dominate discussions and find ways to discourage them from dominating. We also agree

on different roles that members will play, for example, in leading the tasks, reflection or facilitating discussions during presentations etc.

5.0.1c. Students' prior residency preparation

The main reason for students' prior residency preparations is to equip them with adequate information to enable easier meeting with students and staff from other cultures. It has emerged that different universities prepare differently for the residency. For example students from SUNY and WITS shared during the focus group discussions that they were involved in a number of preparatory activities including fundraising. At WITS it is reported that participants go through a process that includes applying to attend a residency. A process that participants felt instilled a strong commitment towards the work of the WSI.

> The panel, like the whole process of getting into the WSI, the interview and everything, I think if there was no interview you feel like you have a space to be a diva, like they need me you know… to really take it seriously, and I think it was quite important also to chose specific people.
>
> **2008/WSI//FG**

Pulane notes in her diary:

> In preparation for the WSI project, we had several (maybe a dozen?) group meetings that were of two hours duration each. During these meetings we did theatre image work (such as that of Augusto Boal), conducted writing exercises, discussed travel logistics, practiced Sesotho language and songs, and planned and processed our fundraising efforts. As a group we attended a panel presentation given by authors Steinberg and Epstein in New York City. (This was, incidentally how we were introduced to Helen Epstein who then subsequently came to our school to give a slide presentation on her concurrency network theory.)
>
> **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 2**

Compared to the above preparations, at NUL the situation was different.

> for the Lesotho students we didn't have any workshops or whatever, but for the content we gave them books – the two books and then I asked them to read newspaper and articles, listen to the news anything about AIDS they should come and share in the group … but that never happened.
>
> **2008/WSI/Faculty/FG**

5.0.2 Introductions

On the set date, all participants from the various universities/schools arrive. Rooms are allocated in advance, and an effort is made to mix participants randomly. Females and males are separated. Participants also receive orientation on the ethos of the WSI including the WSI agreement/contract that all participants have to sign prior to the residency (see appendix 4). They are further informed of the highlight of the next day's proceedings. They are also informed that although the schedule has been provided, it is preliminary and can change. In this way, participants are already introduced to the flexibility of the working structure at the WSI. There is normally a welcoming/opening ceremony graced by the university's highest administration personnel as well as the WSI support partners. Games and theatre exercises play a major role during the introductory stage.

5.0.3 Educational Resources

Presentations are meant to provide up-to-date information around issues relevant to the chosen theme - **Power, Denial and HIV/Aids: Chances, Choices and Changes**. Presenters covered issues relating to the theme of the residency. For example one of the local medical doctors Dr Khosi made a presentation on the Lesotho government's

response to HIV/Aids, while a representative of Médecins Sans Frontièrs (MSF)/Doctors spoke about the experience on the ground of working for and with HIV/Aids people. A person living positively with AIDS also shared, with us, her experience of living with AIDS. I was also invited to explain the study I was undertaking. I took the opportunity to inform everybody about my intention and to notify them that I would request to facilitate focus-group discussions relating to the topic of my study. I did not at that time divulge details of what I proposed to undertake.

For the 2008 residency, a title of the play was even inspired by what one of the presenters said in terms of Basotho's indifference towards the spread of HIV. Films were also watched and later critiqued and analysed. All these were done to enhance participant's knowledge on the chosen theme. Moreover, the preparations are done in order to create a pool of knowledge that grows collectively inside the minds of the participants – so that when the tasks (which are drawn directly from the presentations/screenings/readings) are devised, participants can draw from a common pool of influences: everyone draws from the same common denominators, references and ethos. Nevertheless, within the shared platform we've built, individuals' lives and psyches and experiences also play a role.

5.0.4 Tasks

The term "tasks" was used to refer to activities carefully chosen to guide students in the process of devising a play. Faculty members meet and agree on the tasks to be given to students. Tasks are drawn directly out of the presentations, films, readings and discussions (as highlighted above). They have limited time duration, but depending on

the task/s, the time given can vary from 15 minutes to two hours. Tasks are normally given to a bigger group, and two faculty members are assigned or attached to each group. At the beginning, there is an attempt to keep rotating members of the group, and after about four tasks, the rotation is stopped and students begin to work in the same groups. The tasks are directly drawn from presentations, films, readings etc. This preparation is done in order to further develop the pool of knowledge that is growing collectively inside the minds of the participants. When the tasks are devised therefore, everyone is drawing from, the common influences, and references, and have some common ground. As stated earlier this does not prevent individual lives, psyches and experiences from also playing a role. For example one of the tasks is described below:

Task # 4 (morning)[36]
Build a concurrent network **in silence**
Using 3 coloured scarves
Once you've created the concurrent network **in silence** with beginning/middle and end
Add bits of dialogue in vernacular and all languages
And then – give the scene a title or headline

Students would then work in groups around a task given. A lot of creativity was evident.

> What was enabled by creativity was looking beyond the obvious. A dance for me turned into symbolism. It symbolized danger veiled in beauty.
>
> **2008/WSI/NUL participant # 2**

5.0.5 Presentation of Tasks

Following the small group engagement with the tasks, participants all convene to watch each other's presentations on how they responded to the task. Groups are given a limited time to do their presentations and these are followed by discussions.

[36] Information retrieved from my personal notes and observations, the emphasis on silence was given by the facilitators.

In one focus group, the importance of the presentations was valued.

> It always helps me when I have an audience. There is this thing about an audience energy…even if it's just fellow students, just having an audience. **2008/WSI/FG**

In many ways, the creative process begins to be nurtured. Confidence – 'the secret to man's success' (Obama 2008:8) is built. Participants begin to learn from one another, and faculty begins to make note of presentations that might work theatrically if a play were to be devised. In a way, the presentation of tasks starts a bank of ideas to pick and choose from for the creative tasks and play construction.

5.0.6 Reflections

The reflection follows the presentation of tasks. During this time, everyone is encouraged to give comments on presentations. Later group members are encouraged to share their working process and to respond to some of the issues raised by other participants. This reflection normally involves a robust engagement where participant's preconceived ideas may be challenged, and new insights are uncovered. In one group it was observed.

> I can just say that I was surprised at how intense and wonderful the younger students were…I don't know what I was expecting but for some reason, they were accomplished, they were very accomplished and that was really nice…I guess maybe assuming that they are younger, they are still in school, like right out of high school or that they would not have as much experience and that they would be learning more but it feels like I think I learned more from them. **2008/WSI/FG**

5.0.7 Breaks

Throughout the residency, the WSI programme is interfaced with breaks for tea, lunch, supper as well as excursions. There are special nights that are also designated formally for socialization. These serve as breathers since the residency can be very intense. Moreover, participants get an opportunity to extend the discussions on issues, emanating from the theatre-making process, informally. Experience has shown that sometimes issues raised in such informal discussions end up being in the play. Moreover, Tankiso notes in his diary;

> Healthy food as well as "day offs" gave a mind a free space for creativity. Simply because all work and no play makes it boring and blind each day.
>
> **2008/WSI/NUL participant # 2**

5.1 Research results and analysis

International facilitator Fran Rees (1998) observes that:

> The art of facilitation is not artificial, but natural. It occurs when the act of guiding the group is not forced but flows from the needs of the group. The outcome of natural facilitation is that members are caught up in the group's progress and its forward movement; the process is both logical and iterative, but not strained. (1998:327-328)

Facilitation is therefore a critical factor in the WSI theatre-making process, as shared ideas may need to be negotiated. Ideally, this should not be done in an imposing but inspirational manner. In this regard, three themes emerged as fundamental in the effective facilitation of the WSI; namely, the environment, time pressure and planning.

5.1.1 The environment

For the purposes of this study, the environment refers to a place (anywhere) where facilitation of the generative material for the WSI took place. The term goes beyond the idea of a concrete space to include the atmosphere of spontaneity and creativity built within it. Spolin (1999) notes that 'if the environment permits it, anyone can learn whatever he or she chooses to learn; and if the individual permits it, the environment will teach everything it has to teach. "Talent" or "lack of talent" have little to do with it' (1999:3). This observation was echoed by all participants at the WSI. In trying to explain this kind of environment, students from SUNY made reference to the "safe space … supportive environment." They reported on the value of freedom in just doing things by themselves, which in turn nurtured their ownership of the process.

> It feels like when there wasn't that external uh… ok, run this scene, ok stop. Run this scene, no, no, no stop. Ok, wait. Change this… change this, and when that did not happen and we were just sort of just allowed to go through, and after we've gone through the fire and looked back and reflected on it then it felt like we owned it somehow and then we could go back and click, click, click, then we could see the shifts. **2008/WSI/FG**

While agreeing that there are risks associated with giving people the liberty to run processes themselves, Gladwell argues that 'allowing people to operate without having to explain themselves constantly turns out to be like the rule of agreement in improvisation. It enables rapid cognition' (Gladwell 2005:119). This view contrasts with the defeatist and elitist outlook projected by other researchers who may project that there are only exceptional people who can break out of the complacency mode of not questioning, not asking.

Students from WITS shared that;

> We were in a solace place far away from our homes, we were in groups, where we were made to feel safe, it was a safe place, the environment – em … I think it was like external variables came together to lay a platform to produce something quickly and something that was meaningful and something that could be adapted and changed, like quickly. **2008WSI/FG**

This resonates with Freire and Gladwell's focus on the importance of recognising people's knowledge and experience. 'We have some experiences. We think them through. We develop a theory. And then finally we put two and two together. That's the way learning works' (Gladwell 2005:9). In facilitation, this acknowledgement is core. One participant, Sello, notes in his diary that facilitators;

> created an atmosphere for everyone to be free and be willing to contribute in the play. The facilitators would not tell us what to do when we were making the scenes but they would ask questions that will lead us to the write (sic) things or lead us to thinking and stretch our minds further getting deeper to the underlying issues. **2008/WSI/WITS participant # 1**

Frances and Roland Bee (2003) assert that in facilitation those involved 'already have a great reservoir of knowledge and skills and that their job is to surface that experience; they do a lot of listening to the delegates [participants]' (2003:4). While WITS students share the sentiments expressed above, they suggested that having a common agenda made many things simpler and safer to explore.

> We were there for one purpose, one course and being safer being able to know that what you say everyone is listening with value behind it, meaning behind it, its not falling on flat ears, that made it a lot easier. **2008/ WSI/FG**

It appears that being listened to is critical in the creative process. This is particularly important to note because what is said during the WSI theatre-making process may just occur on the spur of the moment. A person might be confronting their ignorance, thus

knowing that there will not be any judgment of value attached to such thoughts adds to the freedom to just be, spontaneous and creative. To this end, Marcia Karp argues that 'Creativity does not live unless spontaneity feeds it raw material' (Holmes 1994:53).

Students shared different moments of experiencing freedom, which they associated with 'rapid cognition.' The applied drama and theatre genre teaches us that such moments have a potential to deepen one's learning, understanding, recognition and provide catharsis and healing. From SUNY, this view was shared.

> It occurred to me that when you are laughing, it may be the rapid cognition, because you do not plan to laugh, you don't, you don't get anxious about will I laugh or will I not laugh, it's always an immediate unplanned response to a moment or an interaction. **2008/WSI/FG**

Facilitation, which creates a spirit of equality, which places the emphasis on a shared discovery, appears to have a releasing or freeing effect. Students from NUL noted that the experience:

> Gave us some sort of…I won't say power… because with power it is like I say it's mine, I hold it up there … power has some dominating thing…so it was not about dominating, it was about me in a group of people, doing my creative work, him doing his work but in the end we have this powerful thing, maybe that one thing is what is dominant, so if I say it is my power or his power it's like I am dominating the whole group, but that strength to go beyond me, to do whatever we think is good. **2008/WSI/FG**

In a similar vein, SUNY participant number 3 expressed that ideas just flowed when she;

> was not generally thinking about the play as such, but rather I was focused on filming it. So my idea was very spontaneous and came out of a part of my brain that I wasn't really engaged with. I suppose that some unconscious part of me was actually focused on the creative work in the play even as I was also looking at it from the outside. **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 3**

Faculty members commented on the environment as a "theatrical bath;"

> in which one is immersed and this bath nourishes and nurtures the artistic or the creative instinct of the group. **2008/WSI/Faculty/FG**

It appears that the immersion did in many ways enable students and faculty members to be more explorative to try new things, and trust their instinct. This exploration is characteristic of applied drama and theatre. Thus an enabling environment is fundamental to a theatre-making or creative process.

Perhaps due to the safety of the space, all participants, at various levels made reference to three distinct scenes which in their opinion, would not have happened if significant trust had not been established amongst the group. This trust was created through the sharing of personal stories, listening and being listened to as well as the exploration of how certain situations depicted could be deepened. In this regard, psychodrama practitioners remind us that 'when emotional content unites people, encounter is made on a profound and unforgettable level' (Holmes et al 1994:43).

One of those personal stories was entitled "close the curtains" - a group member shared that she was at home, and her boyfriend asked her to close the curtains, and suddenly slapped her hard. She did not respond or do anything at the time, and it was only after a while that she asked him what that was all about. The participant had not been pressured to tell the story, but an enabling environment had been created for sharing or opening up. It happened during a "moment of silence," asserted one participant, indicating the importance in facilitation of allowing space for private thought and connection. And later

in the creative process, the story was selected to form the scene entitled "Close the Curtain."

Through this experience, another participant observed that he was able to confront his own prejudice about one of the fundamental causes for the rapid spread of HIV in Africa. This prejudice is explained by writer Helen Epstein as "concurrency". A practice where one partner or both (mostly unknowingly to the other) can be involved with more than one partner at the same time. Epstein notes that 'this pattern differs from the serial monogamy more common in Western cultures, or the onetime casual and commercial encounters that occur everywhere' (Epstein 2007:55). She further notes that 'this behavior is normative in many African societies, especially for men, and is practiced by large numbers of people who are neither prostitutes nor especially promiscuous (*Ibid).* However, this behavior 'links people up in a giant web of sexual relationships that creates ideal conditions for the rapid spread of HIV' (Ibid*).*

> I remember that was the day I had been telling myself that concurrency was like so alien to me, that it was even weird to be thinking about it, and I …I mean … the most obvious thing in the world became clear to me, that actually I had been in a concurrent relationship. I just like forgotten, just like conveniently. It's not even something that I talk about with my friends and people because it happened a long time ago, but I loved two women and I was in relationship with both of them… I remember sharing that in that group, and everyone was sharing so deeply… you know without any kind of request… and that was the day we came up with that "close the curtain" story.
>
> **2008/WSI/FG**

This realisation was also observed by another participant who was in the same group.

> I realised Moraba noticed that he would…was actually involved in a parallel relationship and he hadn't noticed that, he only realised as he was telling us the story. **2008/WSI/FG**

The student who told the "close the curtain story" acted out her own part. In noting the levels of storytelling in playback theatre, this could be equated with the moment where a teller's story is interpreted theatrically. In this case however, no one prompted the teller into telling her story. She voluntarily shared it and later took an active role in interpreting the story with her peers. Although the impact of this experience on the teller is not known, one would argue that the experience itself served dramatherapy's role 'to grow and develop, particularly where human beings need assistance to transform their painful and destructive experiences into lives that contain hope and purpose' (Jennings 1992:1).

In a theatrical representation of the story, metaphors were used. Two actors became a door. Inside, other actors symbolised open curtains, a fridge and a kettle. The woman sat on a chair by herself, knitting and facing the window. The boyfriend walked in, made himself coffee, and ordered her to close the curtains. She put what she was knitting on the chair and went to close the curtains. She then went back to sit on her chair. Almost instinctively, the man slapped her hard, and left. She sobbed. Another man comes in, repeats the chores of the previous man and then kisses her. A love song *Jooe kea mo rata, le ha ba bang ba sa mo rate* (oh I love her, even though others do not love her) interjects. This is the song that one student observed emerging spontaneously outside the confines of the conference room. According to the student, Lesotho students were playing a game outside during break time, and they sang this song;

> and we all came in, in couples and it was so beautiful and although it happened informally, it became hugely integral in the play.
>
> **2008/WSI/FG**

In this case a song that was spontaneously sung creatively enriched the play by emphasising the theme of the scene. After the first man had slapped the woman, the second man kissed her, and the song brought the irony, "I love her even though others do not love her"; thus the song illuminated the complexity of relationships.

Dramatherapist, Murray Cox's view that 'a metaphor "mutates"; in other words, it can facilitate change' (Jennings 1992:26), is of value in understanding the importance of creating an enabling environment, where participants are free to express their thoughts and then shape them through metaphorical language such as that of theatre. One would argue that possibilities for speeding change and healing in this environment are opened. Management thinker Lynda Cratton (2007) refers to such environments as "hot spots" which are 'places and times where co-operation flourishes creating great, energy, innovation, productivity and excitement' (2007:xi).

Students noted that in this environment, there were lots of exercises and games that were used to generate material for the play. There was freedom to express one's self spontaneously and this was observed by students:

> The exercises were like helping us in a way that is like when we do them we got to laugh and share something like showing who you really are.
>
> **2008/WSI/FG**

Perhaps the notion of showing who one really was is indicative of the sense of trust and freedom from worry that existed in the WSI. This implies that participants were not too concerned with the possible implications of what they did or said in the spur of the

moment. An unconscious state which may have brought anxieties. Karp warns that 'when anxiety is high, spontaneity is low and when spontaneity is high anxiety is low' (Holmes et al 1994:52). It would seem therefore that a permissive environment, which allows you to "show who you really are" reduces anxieties and increases creativity.

Reflecting on the importance of the games Moeketsi notes in his diary:

> the introductory games such titled here as, "Under My Underwear," and "A Baby Seeks its Mommy." These would accomplish the beginning tasks of the acquiring of information important to our subject of HIV/AIDS as well as helping us to creatively shed our artist's inhibitions.
>
> **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 1**

In "Under My Underwear" participants are asked to say their favourite line from an advert. Everyone shares their line. And the next step is to say the same advert line, but adding the words "under my underwear". For example some of the lines included "imagine" and "hm! … it's finger lick'n[37] good". They in turn became "under my underwear, imagine" as well as "under my underwear hm!... it's finger lick'n good". The exercise brought a lot of laughter. On reflection, people acknowledged the fact that at first they just said the words without thinking, and when the second round came, there were a lot of associations that they made. It is those few seconds that cloud our thoughts and preconceptions that Gladwell challenges us to ponder on. It could however be argued that if the context was different, the game could not have elicited such spontaneity and freedom of expression and exploration. In this regard, Spolin asserts that 'games and story bring out self rather than ego' (1999: xv).

[37] This is how the advertisers write it, correct spelling is "licking"

It is important to choose games, carefully. A critique of the games is however important as indoctrination may happen in a subtle way, and gets to be passed on "unknowingly." As Epstein noted in a young group called Ground Breakers in South Africa, one of their "Icebreakers'" lyrics which was accompanied by a dance went as follows:

Pizza Hut
Pizza Hut
Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut
McDonald's
McDonalds's
Kentucky Fried Chicken and a Pizza Hut. (Epstein 2007:137)

This led Epstein to rightfully wonder about 'the techniques of marketing which attempts to impose scientific principles on human choices' (*Ibid).* This is because embedded in the song are the brands of these particular franchises, which are imported to the local communities, and made available for consumption. Due to the diversity of participants in the WSI, games or "icebreakers" such as this one would surely be critiqued, even if they were offered on the spur of the moment. This is therefore, an important dimension of facilitating 'rapid cognition,' the fact that multiple truths are allowed to be shared as social critical theory encourages.

During the residency, numerous "tasks" were also given. These helped students working in smaller groups to engage energetically in the process of theatre-making. In these instances also, participants were free to negotiate and agree on presentations aimed at meeting the objectives of the residency. One participant recalled:

> I was the man who was supposed to go, like go from this home … from this woman, to this woman and then in between that is when I stopped and said… ai! No! I think it will be good to have the man for the other house, me meeting the man in the way like while I am going there so that we can have some conversation. **2008/WSI/FG**

This led to a scene that was called “Be a Man.” It becomes evident in this testimony that the participant’s spur to change his mind and negotiate a new course for the scene, enriched the generative material for the play. It turned out that in one home, the husband had been retrenched from the mines. He had no money and his wife had a lover who had a lot of money. Through scheming, the wife sent the husband to “fetch” the steel wool from the shop. On the way, the husband met the wife’s lover who he would tell that he was sent to fetch something. The lover teased the husband and then gave him a lot of money so he could “be a man” and to ensure that the husband would stay away a long time and the lover could have freedom to be with the wife for a length of time. Upon his return, the husband was drunk and violent.

Through the praise poem that followed, it becomes evident that the scene made a commentary about the harsh reality of unemployment and “concurrency” that the majority of Basotho face. Given that praise poetry is a performance genre that emerges spontaneously, Fox (1994) argues for the importance of knowing units he calls “themes” or “formulas” within the history of the people, which aid in narrating stories or poems. When I asked the praise poet about how he came up with such a deep commentary he just laughed and said “it just came!” With high percentages of unemployment and HIV/Aids, it would sound reasonable that these are the themes we live with and which we need to confront, lest we ignore them at our own peril.

During the theatre-making process, things can also happen fast:

> Ok, let's do it, let's try it, yes it works, ok, let's keep it… no that doesn't work let's not keep it… one idea gave birth to another idea.
>
> **Personal observation June 2008**

"It's like popcorn" asserted a faculty member. In one scene which came to be known as "Uncle's Game", participants agreed that not attaching one's self to the issues made it easier for them to just do the scenes, even if they presented very challenging realities. As Spolin argues, people should 'shut off the mind. When the rational mind is shut off, we have the possibility of intuition' (2000:xiv). Facilitators had noted that performances were largely happening at an artificial conscious level. They then gave a task that participants were to take the characters home and imagine what would happen once they got home and beyond. One group member recalls:

> In fact, it is out of that task that we came up with a scene with my group of the child at the graveyard. We wanted to find out what happens um… when a child is abused by the people he or she trusts so much, for example an uncle and uh…it was not easy coming up with that scene because none of us in our group had been exposed or had been affected by that challenge.
>
> **2008/ WSI/FG**

Stanislavsky's psycho-technique is the source for this exercise, using the "magic if" to heighten the actor's belief in the character and the circumstances and so create a complex and believable character. The participant said she remembers that she found imagining the possibilities of such a situation very hard, but once she relaxed, it became easier, and she found herself "being very creative" Another group member recounts from his diary:

> As I lay on the floor of the meeting room mimicking a grave stone while Montšeng rested her head on my chest and spoke to her deceased father I was for the first time since coming to Lesotho, entirely relaxed and in the present moment. Somehow in that day's work I had come to believe in the power of listening, the collaborative worth of every individual and the offers they presented. I had arrived at my second creative epiphany.

. **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 1**

Theatre practitioner Hazel Barnes argues that such exercises focus on 'creating complex and believable characters, capable of change and growth, which might be revealed gradually as contradictory and surprising rather than banal or expected.' (Barnes 2004:247). It is the engagement with the imagination which allows for unexpected creative insights to occur. It is expected that participants should take care of themselves regarding things that they may feel appropriate to share in group work, although as one participant said:

> Yoh! … we… ok… I was quite shocked that people were so relaxed, but felt safe to talk like that because I wasn't … I don't know… at times I wouldn't share at that kind of detail you know. **2008/WSI/FG**

It has however been demonstrated that largely, whatever is shared during the residency is never really planned, but emerges spontaneously in response to the stimulus found in discussion and improvisation and the exposure to new ideas. Students said in situations of vulnerability, the facilitators made things easier for them, and in many ways boosted their morale. Below are some experiences:

> Once when I told something very very…. Mookho [facilitator] said that's really hectic, if you would like to talk about it later, privately, you can talk to me. **2008/WSI/FG**

The facilitators had also been aware of the multiple roles that they play during the residency because;

> The fact of being in this kind of compressed intense environment with really so many people um… its really kind of a limenal moment … being here, because many people are really out of their context, even the people who are living here are not living with their family. **2008/WSI/Faculty/FG**

This realization therefore suggests that there can never be a facilitation formula. 'Facilitation is an art, an improvisation, an act of thinking on your feet.' (Rees 1998:309). Perhaps for facilitators to grow and develop, they need to understand this art and be astute in responding appropriately when a need arises. It has been clearly shown that the creativity shown in devising and the ideas generated in discussion during the WSI were never planned, but grew out of the experiences, which triggered spontaneous, immediate responses.

5.1.2 Time pressure

Students were given tasks, coupled with time limits to work on in groups and then would re-assemble for presentations, reflection and critique. The quality of presentations was often very good. The yardstick for "good" being that the presentation would entail most of the theatre elements such as tension, metaphor, mood, structure, symbols, song and dialogue. The subject matter was handled in an effective way that enabled participants to be more explorative. Although they could not always pin down where things started, as Moeketsi notes in his diary:

> Perhaps it took root during Dr. Khosi's presentation early in our stay here or maybe it resided in the memories of our readings of *Sizwe's Test* also known as *Three Letter Plague* which the American participants had started reading back in March of this year. Or in the discussions we had had with Helen Epstein on the campus of Empire State College in May. I can't place its arrival but I know the subject is filled with contradictions about violence, power and desire and that it begged to be explored.
>
> **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 1**

In a focus group discussion with NUL students there was a consensus;

> Uh … they [facilitators] gave us a time limit you know… we had to work within a certain time limit so that put a lot of pressure, so we had to come up with something. **2008/WSI/FG**

All the groups saw this time pressure in a positive light.

> The facilitators would say…ok…can't talk…one, two, three…go into groups… you have 15 minutes to come up with something. **2008/WSI/FG**

Observed participants from SUNY. Although in agreement, WITS students observed that within the time pressure, there was a subtle competitive spirit that was present, and as such, people would work quickly enough to finish before the other groups did. I also noted the competitive spirit, and some of the responses during the focus group discussions confirmed this. There was a sense of "**our** group did this", and a participant from WITS captures it well.

> Although we chose not to frankly admit it, but there was a competitive spirit, like we were going to make **our** [participant's emphasis] group the better. **2008/WSI/FG**

Gratton suggests the value of a "co-operative mindset" if people are to achieve optimal productivity. Although her emphasis is on the work place, it is interesting to note that she asserts that "hot spots" can happen at 'any place or times when people are working together in exceptionally creative and collaborative ways' (Gratton 2007:xi). A similar experience was evident at the WSI. Moreover, during the occasion of the opening of the 2008 WSI on June 14, one of the WSI pioneers, Professor Chris Dunton, posed a question directed to the participants as he directed the proceedings of the day. "I wonder if you

have any idea as to how much fun you are going to have during the WSI and how hard you are going to work?"[38] Thus the WSI offers a mixture of work and play.

Students also reported that at times, they really only worked on their tasks at the last minute. "I can't believe that the group made such a brilliant presentation. When I went to give them a five minute time warning they still hadn't put anything together. Why do the best ideas come within a very short space of time" I noted in my diary. 'When you remove time…you are subject to the lowest-quality intuitive reaction' (Gladwell 2005:231) observes author of *The Gift of Fear* Gavin de Becker quoted in *Blink*.

Most of the students reported during the feedback sessions that actually what they presented was something that just happened on the stage. Perhaps things did not just happen, because there is reporting of intense discussions that went on in the small groups.

> for me there was like a time in my group…it's like we would spend time just come up with ideas, find that we kinda like stop and not having ideas, go sit down and do other things, but then when it's like five minutes before the facilitators came, we would like have something. **2008/WSI/FG**

It was observed from other focus group discussions that groups struggled to find balance between participants who talked too much, and those who did not.. In this regard, the role of the facilitators was acknowledged to be pivotal.

> There are loud people, who like to talk, and quiet people who don't, loud people don't give the quiet people a chance. **2008/WSI/FG**

Facilitators are reported to have repeatedly said this, and students were able to censor themselves without being pushed. Perhaps Rees' observation that "facilitation is a form of leading and communicating. with the intent of achieving maximum creativity

[38] Quoted in the WSI press release issued on 14 June 2008 Roma.

involvement and commitment to the task" (1998:15) is justified. Students expressed that they felt safer in being told to give other students a chance to speak and not being told to "shut up." Given the limitation of time, the manner in which things were communicated to and among the students was very critical.

One of the most important words in improvisation is "offers." The word is packed with a principle of accepting anything that is said to you, so that you do not "block". The underlying assumption is to let ideas flow. In fact, Spolin asserts that 'the improviser is in waiting, not waiting for' (1999:xiv). Time for thinking is therefore minimal, like 'rapid cognition' or facilitation. The ideas need to be allowed to just flow. One of the fundamental principles in 'rapid cognition' is the fact that people have a "bank of knowledge" which they have accumulated through their experiences. Thus it need not take long to figure out certain things.

5.1.3 Planning

In facilitation, the planning or organizing process is crucial. Rooth warns that 'some facilitators find it difficult to reconcile good organisation with freedom and creativity' (1995:16). Pulane confirms the importance of Rooth's analysis in her diary:

> I think there are a few reasons why we felt so free to act out the scene spontaneously. First of all, we were just "playing" with some ideas and there was no "right or wrong" answer. Secondly, we felt supported and accepted by the other students in our group. And thirdly, because we were given clear instructions and expectations from the faculty, we could set our intention.
>
> **2008/WSI/SUNY participant #2**

A strong recognition of the need to strike this balance is demonstrated in the WSI planning and process. As mentioned, preparations for the residency take place at different levels. During the residency there are daily meetings for reflection and planning conducted by faculty members, one of whom noted:

> I think that our process of giving the students defined tasks with set time enabled them to find their creativity and keep it focused. It's like the more rules there were the harder they had to dig. **2008/WSI/Faculty # 1**

This is an approach which confirms that 'facilitation is both a *science and an art*. 'A facilitator applies a specific set of skills and methods, "group technologies" along with a sharp attention and sensitivity to people, to lead a group to peak performance' (Rees 1998:1). Without this preparation, it can be difficult to give direction to the process. In DIE, planning is also regarded as crucial, 'participants in process drama will not normally be involved with learning and presenting lines from a pre-written dramatic text – a play – but will be "writing" their own play as the narrative and tensions of their drama unfold in time and space and through action, reaction and interaction' (Bowell and Heap 2001:7)

I noted the willingness to learn new skills amongst faculty members. For example I introduced the "under my underwear" exercise, and as I facilitated the exercise, I forgot a stage, and one of my co-facilitators stepped in and supplied it, and the exercise went smoothly and appears to have set an enabling space where participants began to open up to the creative process. Pulane recalls in her diary the;

> "Under My Underwear" exercise. This exercise encouraged us – the students/actors – to let go of our desire to control outcome. I felt "safe" while doing this exercise because I knew that whatever I said would be okay – that there was no "right or wrong answer." We had no idea at the beginning of this exercise that the result would be so humorous. Also, it is interesting that we, as humans, find "taboo" subjects such as sex, as being funny! Laughter is a

> common stress-relief reaction that one can have when a subject at hand is awkward or sensitive. **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 2**

Without this stage, the exercise's element of surprise may have been destroyed, and hence the freedom to try out things naturally, compromised. Rooth notes the importance of games or icebreakers in the facilitation process when she asserts that 'games and ice-breakers get the participants to relax, laugh, connect with the inherent child in themselves, and learn while enjoying themselves' (Rooth 1995:11). Her observation validates Nachmanovitch's (1990) analysis that 'full-blown artistic creativity takes place when a trained and skilled grown-up is able to tap the source of clear, unbroken play-consciousness of the small child within' (1990:48).

Through careful planning and choice of games or ice-breakers this was achieved. Another participant, Sello notes in his diary;

> What amazes me is the ability of what the mind can do without paying too much attention about it and when you are careless about it.
> **2008/WSI/WITS participant # 1**

Echoing the sentiments of Sello above, Gladwell argues that sometimes we are better of that way. Following those spontaneous moments where participants felt particularly creative, one participant observed frustrations that sometimes arise:

> Afterwards, when we were asked to recount specific wording of the dialogue, we could not – we could only generalize what we had been feeling at the time and what our motivations were. We knew how the scene had to end up, so we had set our intentions. We met our goal but had not planned how we would get there. **2008/WSI/SUNY participant # 2**

As mentioned earlier, there were a number of formal information giving sessions which were pre-planned. Apart from inspiring the play title – *It's Just You and Me, My Wife and*

Your Boyfriend/*Ke 'Na Le Uena, Le Mohlankana Oa Hau Feela***.** Students noted that these sessions inspired them in their creative process:

> The issue was raised by Dr Khosi, that in Lesotho people eh…quarrel upon (sic) soil after death. I think, yes…I think it was easier to come up with the image at the funeral and people were arguing upon the soil so the information that we learned from the presentation, it was easier to make use of. **2008**/**WSI/FG**

Other participants expressed shock at reconciling what they had learned for example through the book "*Siswe's Test*"[39]. Participants acknowledged the fact that they realized that the book is not about Lesotho, but they thought the reason why they were given the book to read was because to the similarities between issues raised in the book and the situation in Lesotho.

> It made it sound very rural, shall I say like it was, like when I got there it wasn't bad, you know, it wasn't that bad, it was like, there was a level of agriculture yah…but it wasn't bad as I thought it would. **2008**/**WSI/FG**

In noting this participant's ideas about Lesotho, I wonder how much his preconceived ideas might have influenced his thinking in the creative process, as was the experience with Julie Landsman previously mentioned who through auditioning behind the screen won her audition for the orchestra 'when the screen created a pure *Blink* moment, a small miracle happened, the kind of small miracle that is always possible when we take charge of the first two seconds: they saw her for who she truly was' (Gladwell 2005:254). I wonder how much the WSI facilitation enabled those preconceived ideas to be challenged as raised in chapter two, by allowing students to draw only from a reservoir of their own preparation and experience. Other participants noted that the knowledge which they

[39] Published in South Africa as *Three Letter Plague.*

gained through the resources and information giving sessions enabled them to be freer, to be more creative.

> You knew everything, and that allowed a lot of space for creativity. You knew the important things, you knew how HIV worked or we did after the doctors had been with us, and that's sort of in your head. You don't have to constantly think about it, you incorporate it because it is there it's there, you know it, you incorporate it without having to try. **2008/WSI/FG**

The spontaneous ideas which are appropriate and usable come from a wealth of experience or extensive research which has happened beforehand at some time in the person's life which is then unconsciously drawn on when the 'rapid cognition' occurs.

5.2 Summary

Three broad categories were identified as significant within the WSI methodology. These are the environment, time pressure and planning. It has emerged that the spontaneous idea which is appropriate and usable comes from a wealth of experience or extensive research which has happened beforehand at some time in the person's life which is then unconsciously drawn on when the 'rapid cognition' occurs. Moreover, safety, support, trust, immersion, and clear structuring are all critical in enabling 'rapid cognition' to manifest itself through facilitation.

In its nature, a residency has time limitations because participants meet for a certain period to achieve a certain task and then leave. This in itself exerts pressure for tangible results. Participants noted that they realised that some of their best ideas came up when they had a few minutes to reflect before their presentations.

Prior planning and on the spur of the moment thinking seem to play a crucial part in the WSI as participants tend to feel free to be explorative, and yet are conscious of working within certain boundaries. Sometimes participants raise issues that are difficult to articulate, they may make meaning for themselves, and hopefully for many of us, through the theatre-making process, which is inherently about finding and expressing understanding. Regarding the theatre-making process, 'Mampho writes:

> I know it sounds a bit over the top but it is what I believe in, it is my church, where I go to "worship" humanity, to be grateful, to learn patience, understanding, love, and commitment. **2008/WSI/Faculty # 1**

Chapter Six – Summary and Conclusion

Ho kha moroho hase ho tlatsa boleke[40]

> It never clicked until about a week after we got home that that play was us; it was nothing else, it was not scripted, written, it was what we had experienced, what we knew and I thought it was absolutely brilliant. **2008/WSI/FG**

As the quotation illustrates, people may not necessarily understand what they are creating at the time, but it is the spontaneity and responsiveness to the moment that makes the WSI "brilliant." Gladwell posits that sometimes 'we need to respect the fact that it is possible to know without knowing why we know and accept that – sometimes – we're better off that way' (2005:52). This chapter summarises the findings of the study and offers some recommendations.

6.0 Emerging Picture

1. ***How do the facilitators enable creativity and spontaneity in the theatre-making of the WSI; and how is this approach informed by the principles of 'rapid cognition'?***

It has emerged from the study that facilitators create an environment that ensures safety and freedom for the participants to explore and experiment. Respondents referred to this kind of experience as "non judgmental," "safe" where they knew that there were no "wrong or right" answers. A space for the manifestation of multiple "truths" was thus created, and appears to bring confidence to participants, who in turn, share about their

[40] This proverb may be loosely translated to mean that gathering vegetable does not necessarily mean to fill the whole container.

lived experiences. The sensitivity to the participant's background, through exercises such as the one of getting into country/school groups to teach one another songs, as the very initial "task" to the process is a step that attempts to create a shared vision, unclouded by socio, economic and political backgrounds. As indicated, although the medium of instruction is English at the WSI, there is freedom for participants to express themselves in the vernacular. Lioli reports that;

> 'Me Sebolelo one day said to me Lioli, I am expecting to hear your praise poem, so by saying that she actually forced me to do something and then I made a poem.
>
> **2008/WSI/NUL participant # 4**

Lioli said this opportunity enhanced his confidence. Later the praise poem was incorporated in the final play. Although this experience cannot be generic in theatre-making, it does open debates for the usefulness of context in the creative process.

If the play can be "about us" as part of humanity we are able to share similar and dissimilar experiences, and feel our connectedness. Hence the tasks that are given in the WSI enable participants to cross the any boundaries likely to be created. Participants are enabled to connect with one another at the level of humanness, and to grow from such an interaction, without thinking. The discussions and reflections inbuilt in the process ensure that the group does not settle for mundane everyday activities. They are encouraged to engage intellectually, to question, they are also questioned but not in an imposing manner, everything is negotiated. Facilitators are reported to have always probed instead of giving direction on how things have to be done. "What if…?" "How about…?" was

the language facilitators used as opposed to “This should be done this way.” or “No, you are wrong!”

This approach has made students more daring and free to try things out. Some students reported that they ended up doing things that they would not normally do, and this was credited to the spirit of sharing of ideas, thoughts and feelings that had been created at the WSI. When groups were given tasks to do, some participants expressed subtle “competitiveness” evidenced among the participants, it appears however, that it was competitiveness coming from good intentions and faith that what was presented was for the betterment of the play.

Time limits given to students had a positive effect on students because however short the time they had, knowing that they have to present something to other group members propelled them to come up with something worth while. It was during these intense moments that members had some excellent performances to share with the group. There was a realisation that sometimes time was spent in arguments, but that when the moment for presentations came, devising a play was created on the spot, and the results were often very powerful. Some members commented about the importance of performing before an audience as a motivating factor. The structure of giving a task, allowing students to work on their own, making presentations and giving time for reflection is useful to validate human experiences shared within groups.

This structure is also the result of the planning that the WSI faculty engages with prior and during the residency. As facilitators they are tuned to the overall structure meant to

elicit responsive material to the theme of the residency. Being sensitive to the fact that the residency itself has taken people out of their comfort zone is also important and can be seen as a catalyst which enhances the nurturing of a shared vision.

> Improvisation is intuition in action, a way to discover the muse and learn to respond to her call… we begin by that always surprising process of free invention in which we have nothing to gain and nothing to lose. The outpourings of intuition consist of a continuous, rapid flow of choice, choice, choice, choices. (Nachmanovich 1990: 41)

The theme for the WSI 2008 called for choices, chances and change. Perhaps it is in appreciating that 'when we improvise with the whole heart, riding this flow, the choices and images open into each other so rapidly that we have no time to get scared and retreat from what intuition is telling us.' (*Ibid*).

2. ***How do the educational resources used by facilitators in the WSI enable creativity and spontaneity in actors in accordance with the theory of 'rapid cognition'?***

During the preparations of the WSI, there are selected materials such as books, videos and articles that are made accessible to the group. Presenters are also invited and they too play a significant role in enriching the content of the discussions. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of participants, they too regarded themselves as resources. For example, some people made use of their experience as counselors to engage in content shaping the play. Some people reported that prior to coming to the residency, they engaged in a number of activities that would inform their participation at the WSI. Some

registered for improvisation classes, learned Sesotho, learned about Lesotho and HIV/Aids.

It emerged that resources may also be prejudiced, and so an opportunity to criticise them added value to the material that went into the creative process. Apart from deriving the name of the play from one of the presentations, participants also reported on how they were inspired in the devising process by the information they gained from the presenters, books or videos. Noting that we can learn from both good and bad examples, Thom Fitzgerald's film *Three Needles*, shown early in the residency, served as a good "bad" example by its questionable artistic choices in portraying the handling of HIV/Aids.

As has been argued earlier, the information and resources provided a body of knowledge and experience from which spontaneous decisions could be taken in the manner suggested by 'rapid cognition'.

6.1 Recommendations

Acknowledging that individuality and diversity is pertinent in today's society, the WSI might consider daring to use more languages, other than English, in the creative process. This is something that the facilitators would have to prepare for if students were to make such a request.

There seemed to be a lot of care rendered to students. It did not emerge from the study how faculty members deal with the intense experience that takes place at the WSI.

Perhaps faculty members need to find ways through which they too can take care of themselves and each other to help them sustain the creative energy in the group. This will be significant in that it can enhance efficiency in facilitation among faculty members and creativity.

Although participants reported that they had tackled intense and difficult issues, there does not seem to be a plan in place to help participants to derole from the multiple roles they take on through the set tasks. I was surprised to learn of the impact of my own facilitation (that some participants called "a catharsis") after we had dealt with intense material, such as incest. At the end of one of the focus group discussions, a student asked: "How did you make us cry?" I did not know, perhaps the environment enabled me to manifest my own 'rapid cognition' and with hindsight I am glad I embraced the moment. There is a need however, to clearly put in place a mechanism for helping students to move out of the fictional world, and step back into reality, the real world on a daily basis.

Interaction with the local community where the residency takes place might be useful in enhancing students' experience about pertinent issues that people face. This will help students to reconcile what they have read and heard about with the experiences of the communities thus enriching their knowledge.

6.2 Conclusion

It emerged that 'rapid cognition' requires thinking on one's feet. Although such spontaneity is clearly important in problem solving and in responding flexibly to immediate input, this notion might be problematic if the group is not linguistically homogenous.

From a theoretical perspective, the phenomenon of 'rapid cognition' is complex. Its manifestation requires individual knowledge, understanding and experiences to engage responsively in any given context. However, the HIV/Aids milieu throws up diverse dynamics which the WSI is sensitive to. Some of those include an appreciation of critical issues relating to health belief models, the complexity of power in relation to gender in poverty, protocols in testing for and treating HIV/Aids as well as participants/facilitators' world orientation. These are critical to appreciate lest the proposed theory is viewed as anti-intellectual, idealistic and simplistic. A situation which would be parochial in terms of what constitutes knowledge base and creativity in the WSI theatre-making.

English is the medium of instruction at the WSI. However, some students reported that they understood tasks' instructions better when they were in smaller groups. Here the intimacy of peer education in translation and explanation was evident. This could also be termed, work-play, because, while the students were playing among each other, they were working towards creating a piece of a play.

Prior knowledge that participants bring to the residency is rich enough to enable them to create credible work that will probably have a long-lasting impact on them. In my opinion, this is because within a certain structure, participants are allowed to be experimental and explorative. Time pressure provided at the WSI does not allow for procrastination, and the fear of participants that they do not have enough knowledge. It affirms the idea that at any given time, people have enough information and are apt to make informed decisions based on their interactions and experiences gained over their lifetime.

Controlling the creative space lies at the core of enabling 'rapid cognition.' As evidenced in the study, the notion of controlling the environment opens up boundless opportunities for conversations about topical issues. This corroborates with Mda's undeniable assertion that;

> The skills of acting can be learned though improvisation. Indeed the narrative itself can be structured though improvisations. People need to learn the skills in order to create theatre on their own in their continuous community through dialogue, but the path to this goal is not through scripted plays. (1993:23),

In this regard, Gladwell notes that 'it doesn't seem like we have much control over whatever bubbles to the surface from our unconscious. But we do, and if we can control the environment in which rapid cognition takes place, then we can control rapid cognition' (2005:252-253). I believe that this recognition is in keeping with what Boal calls the *rehearsal for revolution* (1985:141); an important sign of HOPE.

6.3 Summary

The study has demonstrated that 'there is an alternative to the stalwart certainty of intellectual thought and that alternative lay in unpredictable spontaneity of the impulsive act…' (Gladwell 2005:143). The intensive study that goes on prior and during the residency, creates an opportunity for a pool of knowledge which collectively participants can draw from to enable them to make informed choices in the play construction. In the WSI deciding on methods is embedded with cultural sensitivity and value judgment about time. With these two in mind, an informed 'rapid cognition' would be appropriate, and given the time of the residency, the study has in many ways demonstrated the value of 'rapid cognition.' Thus, a critical part of making good decisions is knowing what tool to employ and when to employ it – 'rapid cognition' being one. The words below capture the journey:

It's a lie. Really?
It's not new, but new.
Eureka! Eureka! It maybe a fragmentation
A need for threading
A journey… harsh and gentle
A communal transverse
Maybe never clicking
Only on hindsight
Pondering if it matters
Knowing that I am becoming
Always knowledgeable.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 ***Introduction letter to participants/consent forms***

Appendix 2 ***Agreement letter with the WSI***

Appendix 3 ***Study questionnaire***

Appendix 4 ***WSI agreement/contract***

Appendix 1



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My name is _____, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters in Dramatic Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is in theatre and how it could be used to enable participants to reflect and take action aimed at improving their situation. I am particularly interested in how 'rapid cognition', a notion that encourages people to trust their instinct and spontaneity could be harmonised with reasoning so that those who take part can make informed decisions. We live in a society where, among other things, our education system may limit our creativity in trusting the power of reasoning that we all posses because each individual has a history that can enrich discussions and understanding of others. Part of the research aims to explore how 'rapid cognition' impacts on work that is being generated in a multicultural, international collaborative setting. This is a unique opportunity provided by the Winter/Summer Institute in Theatre for Development and I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and place that is convenient for you, but this can only take place between 15th June and 3rd July 2008. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by myself. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you choose to participate in the study please fill in your details on the form below and place it in the sealed box provided. I will empty the box at regular intervals, and will contact you within the residency period in order to discuss your participation. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge of theatre, as well as to the WSI.

Kind Regards.

This applied to Focus Group Discussions

Appendix 1a: Consent Form (Interview/focus group discussion)

I _____ consent to being interviewed by _____ for his/her study on _____.
I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed _____

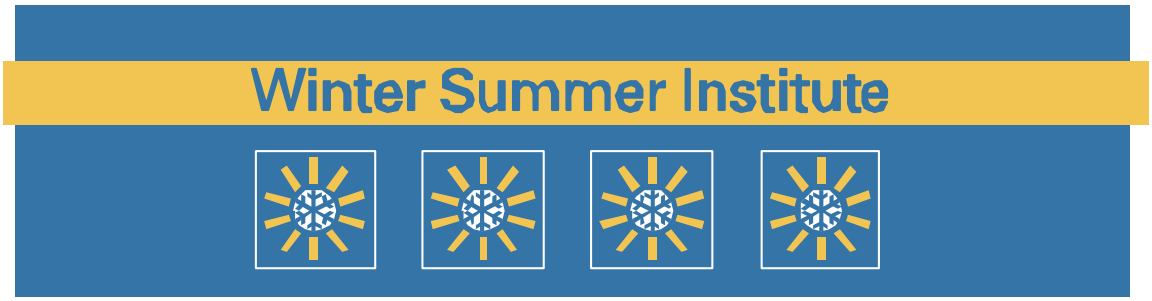
Appendix 1b: Consent Form (Recording)

I _____ consent to my interview with _____ for his/her study on _____ being tape-recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed _____

Appendix 2



2 May, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Winter/Summer Institute in Theatre for Development, I'm writing to acknowledge the participation and research of Ms. Selloane Mokuku in the Institute's upcoming residency in June and July 2008, which will take place in Roma, Maseru and the Malealea Valley of Lesotho.

Ms. Mokuku has been an integral part of the Winter/Summer Institute from the beginning. She served as part of the Institute's teaching staff when the Institute was launched in 2006, and we have enthusiastically asked her to participate again this year.

The Winter/Summer Institute is both aware of and looking forward to Ms. Mokuku's examination of the Institute's theory, methodology and practice and we welcome the fact that she will be pursuing this research with us this winter. We will assist her to every degree possible.

If you have any questions about Ms. Mokuku's involvement and participation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Katt Lissard

Artistic Director
Winter/Summer Institute
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Appendix 3

The role of rapid cognition in the facilitation of theatre-making: A case of the 2008 Winter/Summer Institute in Theatre for Development

Focus group discussions: Students/actors

1. Can you recall any moment where you became particularly creative in the theatre making process?

2. Can you describe some of those moments – that is striking moments (as above)?

3. What do you think enabled those moments of creativity?

4. Is there anything in particular that you think was done by the facilitator to enable those moments?

5. Were there any of the resources given prior to the residency that you think particularly contributed to your creativity?

6. Are there any moments when you became spontaneous and how did this contribute to your creativity?

7. Is there anything that amazed you about spontaneity and creativity in the theatre-making process or your involvement in the process?

Appendix 3

Focus group discussions: Staff/faculty

1. Can you recall any moment(s) where actors became particularly creative in the theatre making process?

2. Can you describe some of those moments – that is striking moments (as above)?

3. What do you think enabled those moments of creativity?

4. Is there anything in particular that you did that you think enabled those moments?

5. Were there any of the resources given prior to the residency that you think might have aided participant's creativity or your own?

6. Are there any moments when you became spontaneous and how did this contribute to your creativity?

7. Is there anything that amazed you about spontaneity and creativity in the theatre-making process or your involvement in the process?

8. Anything that you would like to say in relation to spontaneity in theatre making process? Or any surprises in the process that you would like to share?

9. Is there anything that you would change about the facilitator's role in this creative process?

Appendix 3

For the diary – please look for sections that resonate with questions above.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR TIME – DEADLEINE IS 25 JULY. Please remember to insert date (maybe time, depending on your style), and remember my focus is on the work that happened at the trading post and not so much in Malelealea.

Appendix 4

Agreement between Winter Summer Institute in Theatre for Development 2008 that is to take place in Roma and Malealea and its participants.

(to be signed by the Faculty and the students)

I, ABC, recognize that being selected for the WSI 2008 is both an opportunity and a responsibility, I therefore acknowledge the following:

1.0 Cultural differences

I realize that WSI is an inter-varsity institute that brings together four universities from three continents namely; The National University of Lesotho (Lesotho) and Witwatersrand University (South Africa) from Africa, University of Sunderland (United Kingdom) and Empire State College, State university of New York (United States of America). I therefore understand that I will be embracing different cultures and I will be respectful to the cultural differences during group discussions and during my residency in Roma and in Malealea.

2.0 Readings

I realize that WSI is a result of an academic initiative, I will therefore study all prescribed readings prior to the institution's take off because the full participation in this project involves reading, research and preparation before we come together, as well as creative and thoughtful participation whilst together. This is in recognition of the fact that despite the academic roots and content of the work these readings and preparations help us to all begin with some common understandings and information on which to begin to build work and also work as a team.

3.0 Residency

I realize that the work carried out by WSI will be intensive, therefore I need to be present and punctual in all times, during the discussions and the creative process of the project. I also realise that because we're all here focused on the work we are doing, all of which takes place in the three different environments it is my responsibility to acknowledge the sleeping times and the no noise hours.

4.0 Liquor , Smoking and Sex

I realize that in order to participate fully in all aspects of the creative work at the WSI residency, I will need to be completely present – both physically and mentally. To that end, I understand that alcohol consumption during WSI will be limited to designated celebration nights. Since my primary responsibilities are to the creative work and to the communities in Lesotho affected by that work, I will not contribute to ongoing issues of alcohol abuse by purchasing drinks for community members in either Roma or Malealea. By extension I also realise that smoking is permitted only in designated areas.

I also realize that in order to maintain a safe and healthy learning and working environment, the WSI staff and students need to interact with each other in a professional manner. Romantic or sexual relationships between students or between students and staff may negatively affect the environment with problematic consequences such as affecting the participation, morale, conflict of interest and favouritism. It is therefore my contractual obligation as a participant to make responsible choices and decisions.

5.0 Serving as a role model

I realize that the WSI will be dealing with social issues or challenges that people are confronted with on a daily basis and these issues will be reflected in the play that will be created, which will serve as a means for spec-actors to reflect on. I therefore realize that the seriousness of my work needs to be projected in the way that I behave or carry myself.

Date : Signature: