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The Threshold of 'Normality': transformation in theatre for adults
with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness.

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
At the University of Northampton

2008

Rebecca Higgins
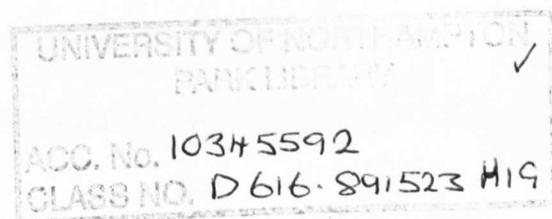
Abstract

This thesis explores the change that occurs through the experience of Applied Theatre and participatory drama with specific participant groups: adults with learning disabilities, and those recovering from mental illness. Termed 'transformation' through an anthropological perspective of theatre and subsequent links with ritual theory, the thesis asks how and why this change (and the potential for it) can be identified through the fictive situation offered by participation in drama or theatre. This analysis occurs through the application of a particular theory: Turner's liminality (1969). Turner's (1969) theory of ritual, following Van Gennep (1977) is applied to discussion of practical field work with seven different groups to unravel the relationships between individual and group, the pretence and the real, and the self within the pretence and the real. Methodological and ethical issues arising from this are discussed.

Turner's theory of the 'liminal zone': the space 'in between' one state in ritual and the next, is applied to the space of the 'theatre event' in both making (the process) and performing (the product) drama and theatre. Turner's 'communitas' is outlined as a description of the human group connection that occurs during this making and performing. The conceptual relationship between the social form of reality and the aesthetic form of pretence is discussed with reference to the work of Schechner (1988).

The potential of a different objective self is of particular relevance for these participant groups because the fiction challenges the social categorisation of these groups imposed by contemporary British society. One outcome of the research is the recognition of this correlation between the fiction and reality. The participants recognise their ability as objective selves (within the pretence) and this contributes

to a changed perception of their subjective selves (beyond the pretence). This is affirmed by the witnessing of the changes effected by the pretence and underlines the importance of the group within the theatre event. This transformation is outlined as a reflexive cycle, drawing on research in Health and Social Care, and in disability politics, in situating the participants as active contributors to the research practice.

Contents

The following four pages are named as the 'Accessible Summary'.

This was distributed to all the participants in the field work undertaken for this thesis, in explanation of and thanks for their time and work.

My name is
Becky Higgins.
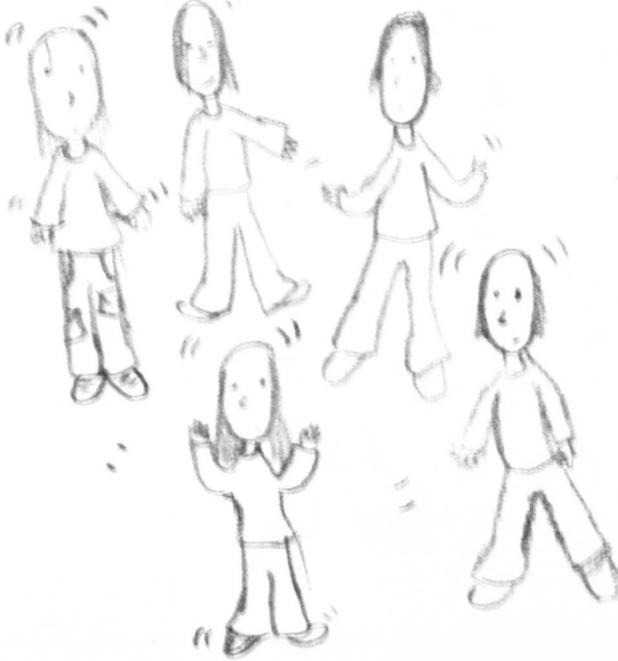
I do drama
with people in
day centres, in
hospitals, and
in drop-in
centres.
Sometimes I
work in
theatres, and
sometimes in
schools.

Me?

I can!

Yes!
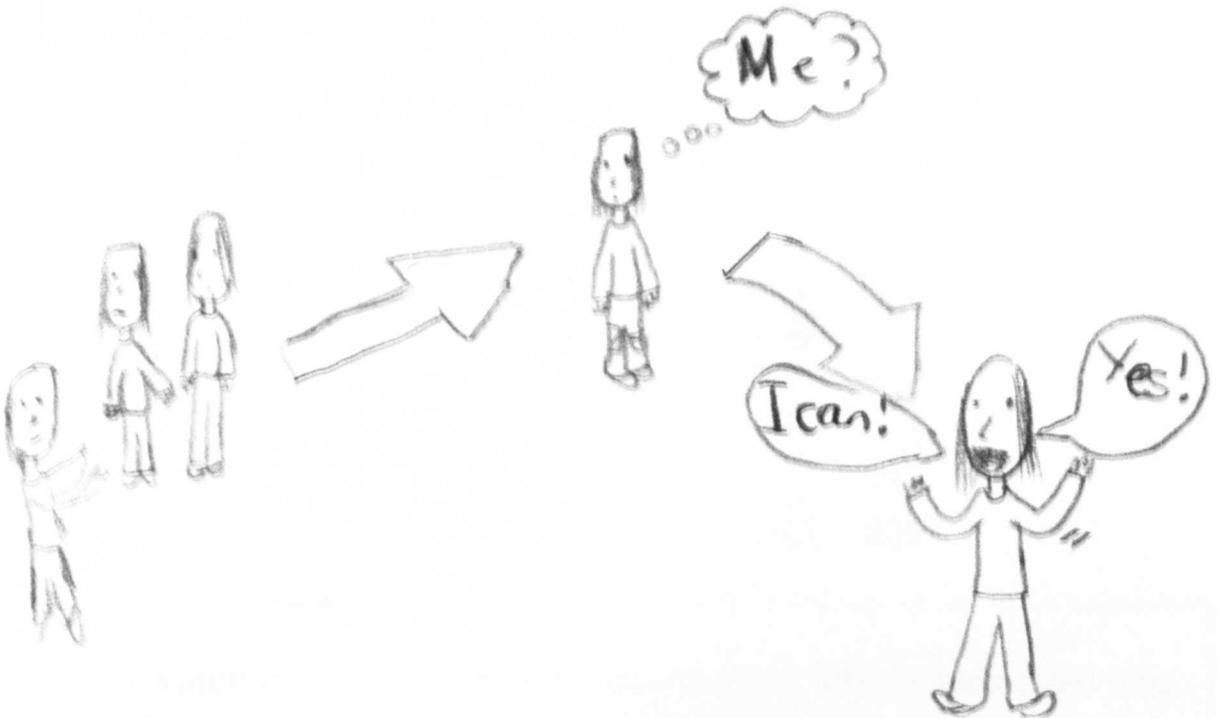
I think doing drama changes the way people feel about themselves.

Hopefully!

PhD

I am writing a 'thesis' (a report) about drama at the University of Northampton.

I hope I will get a certificate (a PhD) for my writing.
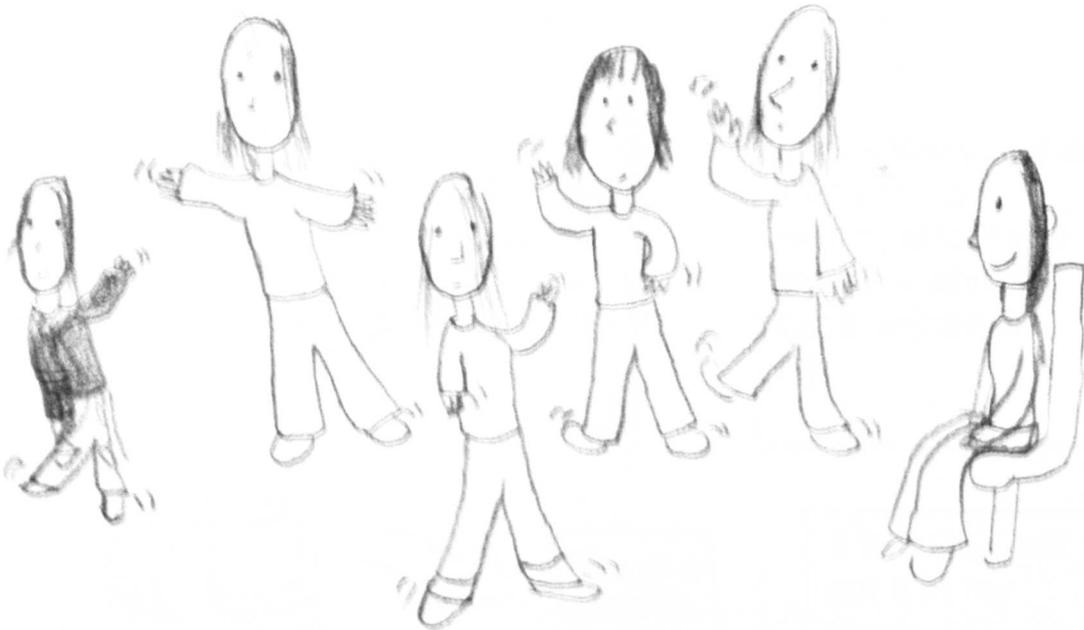
I watch other people do drama in day centres.

Come and see 'Mind The Gap' in ......

And I watch professional theatre companies, where the actors who get paid are people with learning disabilities.

My friend Jo

Because other people will read this I promised to change your names.

My friend 'Jan'
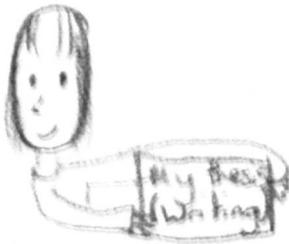
I will show you the parts of my writing about you to see if what I have written is OK.

If it is OK I will put it in my thesis.
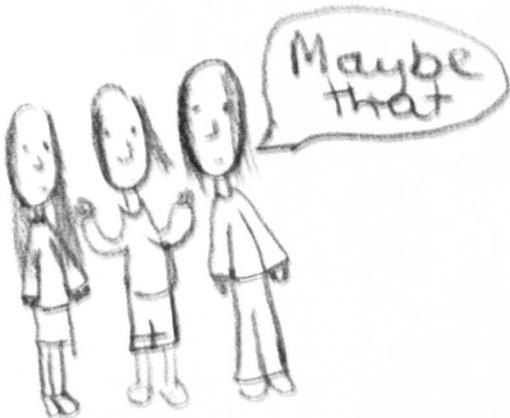
I hope that working on my thesis will help me do better drama with people recovering from mental illness, and people with learning disabilities.

I hope other people working in day centres and drop-in centres will want to try doing drama.

I hope we will ALL enjoy our drama and feel good about ourselves.
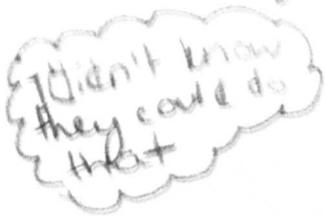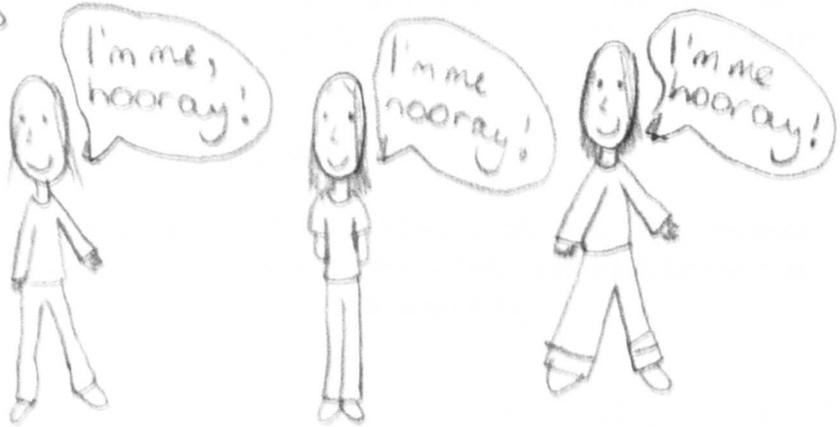
I hope our drama promotes an understanding of what we can all do.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND WORK. This writing could not have happened without all of YOU.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to my three supervisors, firstly at Manchester and then at Northampton: James Thompson for his inspiration, continuing warm support, and admitting to the bewilderment; Jumai Ewu for her commitment, thought and care; and Jane Bacon for her punctilious approach.

I would also like to thank Jo Nutt for her energy and commitment, always against the odds!

Thanks also to all the tireless and enthusiastic support staff who worked with ALL the groups mentioned in the thesis, especially Rio Ellis at Mind The Gap, a truly inspiring company.

Thanks to Greta Higgins for her beautiful illustrations.

My biggest thanks go to my wonderful family: Mins, Greta and Euan, without whom there would be so much more time to do everything, and so little point to doing anything...may you all continue as my own liminal zone.

Figures and Tables

Introduction.

'[Drama...] opens up new areas for self-determination and political empowerment.'
(Goodley and Moore, 2002:8).

'Withdrawal from the burden of reality allows one freedom to contemplate, to
speculate, to construct alternatives.' (Taylor and Warner, 2006:110).

`'You can bring some more chocolate biscuits
[next time] we do drama.' (Member Group A,
return visit June 2008).`

The 'show' is about half way through. One group member walks across the stage

carrying a placard that says '1970s'. The placard is facing the group and not the

audience. A care worker runs over, changes the placard round, pushes the group

member to continue, and sits down again. The group member puts her hand over her

mouth. She puts the placard down and stands uncertainly, not sure what to do next.

The music track begins: a 'glam rock' track (apparently). The tutor begins a vibrant

dance movement to the thumping of the music. She motions to the group member

and models the movement to her. The face of the group member splits into a grin.

She begins the movement, swaying her hips, and crossing hands over at the knees.

She looks at the audience. She throws her head back... and laughs... and dances.

(Group G presentation and return visit, June 2008).

The aim of this thesis is to clarify and explain the concept of transformation

within the fictive situation offered by participation in drama or theatre. This analysis

occurs through the application of a particular theory: Turner's liminality (1969).

This is with specific participant groups in contemporary Britain: adults recovering

from mental illness, and adults with learning disabilities. Links with young people

with specific needs are also discussed. These participant groups are ones with whom

I work as a theatre practitioner. The liberation offered by participation in creativity

and specifically participatory drama became clear through many years of practice:

that the theatre event accessed an arena of activity not limited or prescribed for these participants in terms of their dis/ability or recovery/illness. This transformation also seemed to affect participants after the theatre event had finished, and thus suggested a possibility for different 'activity' beyond the fictional situation.

A bewildering and varied set of terms is used to define theatre and drama in settings within health and social care, education, community arts, and professional theatre: Drama for Health; Drama in Health; Social Drama; Community Theatre to name but a few. Common to all is that participation creates different opportunities for the actions and behaviour of a participant, during the process of creating and performing the fictive situation (the theatre event). These may, and do, develop a participant's self-esteem, confidence, and cognition, but this has proved difficult for those working across these fields (practitioners, teachers, artists, care workers) to evidence.

Documentation of the processes and products of these forms of drama and theatre as research is therefore scarce. There is a strong tradition of drama in education in so-called 'mainstream' schools supported by a body of literary material, both pedagogical and analytical (Bolton, 1979,1998; O' Neill and Lambert, 1982; Woolland, 1993; Heathcote and Bolton, 1995; Taylor and Warner, 2006). There is similar material (not as much) available to support and comment on drama in special education (i.e. with young people with varying specific needs within the school environment) (Peter, 1994, 1995; Kempe 1996; Brigg, 1996; Longhorn, 2000; Peach, 2003; Crimmens, 2006). There are excellent handbooks for artists and practitioners outlining specific exercises and stories to use when working

in drama with adults with learning disabilities (Currach and Darnley, 1999; Chesner, 2001).

There is a strong body of research across the fields of health and social sciences exploring the needs of adults and young people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness, and the development and accessibility of services for them (Philpot and Ward, 1995; Porter and Lacey, 2005; Day 2007). Sociological referencing and terminology have formed equivalent research in these fields (Paterson and Hughes, 1999; Chappell *et al.* 2001; Swain and French, 2003; Beart, 2005). Increasingly and rightly an ethical emphasis has resulted in the research process involving the participant groups themselves (Goodley, 2000; Clegg, 2004) and in doing so the challenges presented by such methods have contributed to the research (Stalker, 1998; Webb and Sanderson, 2002; Williams and Simons, 2005; Brooks and Davies, 2007).

This ethical methodology has also been supported in government research. The White paper *Valuing People* (Department of Health, 2001a) contains an 'accessible summary' as do all the cited journals in health and social sciences. *Valuing People* was also published as a strategy paper in 'full and accessible formats' (Department of Health, 2008a) i.e. accessible print, CD and audiotape. This led to an ongoing consultative process most recently published as: *Valuing People now: from progress to transformation*: 'on the priorities for the learning disability agenda.' (Department of Health, 2008b). An evaluation of its outcomes was undertaken through the Learning Disability Research Initiative (LDRI) and also through a survey of adults with learning difficulties in England (2007), commissioned by the Department of Health and conducted by Central England People First and the Institute for Health Research at Lancaster University (Friendly

Reports, 2008). The website Friendly Reports was set up by Speakup Self Advocacy specifically 'to be the place to find friendly reports from the Government.'(Friendly Reports, 2008).

In arts research however, even within the vast body of applied and educational work cited at the opening of this introduction, there is little material that explores the process of how and why the creative process of drama and theatre has such a powerful effect on these specific groups of people (particularly the adults). This was the stimulus for my research. Some have focused on drama as a research technique (Mienczokowski, 1994, 1995; Leighton, 2003; Whitehurst, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2007) and clearly this shares some common ground with the practice that contributes to the research of this thesis. Theatre as a social construction and its contribution to identity also shares common ground with this work (Taylor, 2004; Leighton, 2005; Conroy, 2007). It seems clear that cognitive development is accessed more readily by some groups of people through this form of creativity. But how precisely does this happen?

Goodley and Moore focused on the 'participation in performing arts, as a forum for maximising participation and bringing about change [that is] rarely mentioned.' (2002:9). Allan explored disability arts to identify and challenge exclusion (2005). It is the focus on inclusion and change (transformation), and how that is realised through participation in a theatre event, that is at the centre of this thesis. This must be examined and made available as research to raise the profile of valuable and life-enhancing practice, and to suggest why this creative process is worth accessing for non-drama specialists working in the areas of health and social care. It is also hugely important to highlight the amazing creative work achieved by these particular groups of people, specifically adults with learning disabilities and

those recovering from mental illness, which remains unseen and unacknowledged by many and is still restricted within the public arena.

Inclusion is defined as one of four key principles in the Government White paper *Valuing People* (2001a). This was defined as follows:

> Being part of the mainstream is something most of us take for granted. We go to work, look after our families, visit our GP, use transport, go to the swimming pool or cinema. Inclusion means enabling people with learning disabilities to do those ordinary things, make use of mainstream services and be fully included in the community.
>
> (Department of Health, 2001a:24).

The importance of being 'included in the community' is also a principle of Applied Theatre and participatory drama, both of which are defined in the glossary later in this introduction. Inclusion is also a key feature of special education. Also at the beginning of the 21st century the integration of young people with specific needs into 'mainstream' i.e. non-special schools began (DfES, 2001). The importance of this socialisation lies in rejecting former medical definitions of disability and in challenging 'how difference is realised in social practice.' (Thomas and Corker, 2002:27). It is not individual 'ability' to participate that matters but the collective ability to embrace and include all members of society. This is a key feature of the thesis: the responsibility of the collective in enabling individual potential within the theatre event, defined by Turner as 'communitas' (1974). It is difficult to identify a single political movement relating to people recovering from mental illness, in the same way as, for example, the self-advocacy movement with regard to learning disability. However, there are campaigning charities such as the National Schizophrenia Fellowship (NSF), Mind, SANE and the Mental Health Foundation. These differing participant groups are brought together in this thesis because the transformation effected by the theatre event lies precisely in this socialisation: that within the fiction lies the potential for challenging perception and construction of

identity. Inclusion does not ignore people's difference, but respects and celebrates it. As, indeed, does the theatre event.

One reason for the lack of arts research with these participant groups may be the many challenges presented in involving these participants as subjects, and not the objects, of research. Ethical progression has very recently (within the last decade) and rightly insisted on this. It is no longer acceptable for practitioners such as myself to benefit from researching the work that I do without involving the participant groups in the process of the research, as has already been established in the research in health and social sciences cited previously. This formed one of several interesting pathways in my journey from practitioner to practitioner researcher outlined in Chapter 2.

Although as a practitioner of Applied Theatre and theatre in education inclusion is a high priority in practice, translating this into research is less familiar. The recording of research is also challenging because of the need to satisfy two opposing ends of the continuum: the practice that is as accessible as possible versus the constraint imposed by the text that records this practice. As Goodley and Moore so accurately put it: 'Here we are again losing a fight with the descriptive powers of text.' (2002:143). Written text has to be accessible in ways suggested previously or it excludes many of the participants it describes. The description articulated by the researcher uses skills and terms that again exclude many participants. It is also true of any theatre event that it is very difficult to describe completely the 'happening' using only words. The use of video and photographs is difficult (and forbidden during the field work of this thesis) because of issues of confidentiality associated with the participant groups. There are also issues surrounding the effect that the use of recording media has on the group dynamic during a participatory drama session.

The challenge is therefore to develop research methods that enable the sharing of the research process with the participants, and to record this in a way that highlights their own findings. Post-research practice may suggest ways of documenting practice as research (through recording and presentation) with which participants are comfortable. For example, the participant group could make their own 'accessible' recording (as DVD or to play online on protected websites) to accompany the student's recording of the shared work. This applies the accessible summaries of written research and of government documents to practical work. The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD) is currently (2008) working on a national electronic library for learning disability. Although this is primarily for the supporters of people with learning disabilities, this principle could extend to cover documented research in a form accessible for all. (BILD, 2008). It might also be possible for other 'witnesses' to the research to contribute to the documentation or even examination process. Ongoing visits to the participant groups would mean they would not be a worrying 'strange' presence. This may seem challenging to the received practice of academic research, but surely inclusion means that disability challenges the research (documentation) and not the other way around? The majority of the words of this thesis, as written document, are mine. Therefore in order to highlight the words and presence of the participant groups the font has been changed and enlarged when quoting their words. The members of the acting company at Mind The Gap were happy to use their names when attributing quotations, and these are in the text with first name and then surname so that they (and other readers) are able to recognise and celebrate their contribution to the thesis.

This thesis begins from Turner's ritual theory (1969) and this is explained in detail and particularly in Chapters 1 and 3. Turner's 'liminal zone' provides a space for experimentation and creativity within the social and chronological progression that is life. This offers a parallel with the 'break' offered to participants by the creation and/or presentation of a theatre event that provides different opportunities for playing with roles and behaviour, from those taken in 'real' life (beyond the theatre event). Chapter 2 discusses the methodology of the thesis and the development of the methods specific to this field work. The physical element of performance and the contribution this offers to alternative roles and behaviour is explored in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 formulates the central argument of the theory surrounding the cognitive development that occurs through participation in drama in a reflexive cycle of transformation. Finally Chapter 6 relates the situation of the participant groups of the thesis to the excellent drama practice undertaken by young people in drama in special education.

The field work undertaken for the thesis, and the other practical work examined, were undertaken with a total of seven groups of adults and young people with varying specific needs: some with learning disabilities, some recovering from mental illness, and some with behavioural difficulties. I offered a series of ten weekly participatory drama sessions to all day centres in Northamptonshire. The adult groups selected were the ones who responded. Some members of these groups also had sensory impairments. Other groups examined were projects on which I was working professionally, and permission was obtained to include these in the research. Each group is outlined below although the interesting factors concerning their attendance and choices are included in discussion of their work throughout the thesis. Each group whose work was undertaken specifically for the field work also

defined themselves, of crucial importance ethically and politically for these participant groups (this is explained further in 1.5). These groups were revisited to ensure that all their work was represented in the thesis as they would wish. This included an agreement to change all their names, a source of much enjoyment and hilarity during these return visits.

Group A was a group of eleven regular attendees at a (County Council) day centre for adults with learning disabilities: six men and five women. They were all aged between 18 and 60. The 'drama group' was voluntary (advertised by posters several weeks before we started working together) and set up specifically for this field work, meeting once a week on Tuesday mornings. This was due to run from 10.30 until 12.00, but the start of the session was always very flexible, and there was a tea break about halfway through. These participatory drama sessions ran for a total of ten weeks. **Group A** defined themselves as: `'Adults […] definitely grown-ups not children.'` (Return visit, June 2008).

Group B also attended a (County Council) day centre for adults with learning disabilities. Originally comprising eight members, two left after the first week because the approach to drama was different from that of their (Further Education) college drama course. They were disappointed that we would not be working towards a show. (Both told me this several times during the introductory session). The centre had asked me to explore 'issues of change' because the centre was undergoing restructuring. The group that attended consistently for the remaining sessions comprised four women and two men. Their age range spanned 18 to 60. Their participatory drama sessions ran for about two hours, again in the mornings

from 10.00 until 12.00. This is a long time for a small group, and we would usually take a tea break halfway through during which the whole group stayed together for a chat. Group B each defined themselves as: **'A lady', 'A gentleman', 'A comedian', 'An actor', 'A man' and 'My name'.** (Return visit, July 2008).

Group C was a group of young people at a special secondary school. This project was undertaken professionally and not specifically for the thesis. The project was on behalf of The Royal Shakespeare Company. Described by the school as having a mixture of 'behavioural difficulties', some within the group also had some sensory impairment and physical disability. The school had a strong tradition of drama led by two excellent teachers, which focused on devising work around themes of interest to the young people. There were about twenty five in the group of whom only two were girls. They were aged between 11 and 14, and had been chosen by staff to attend the weekly afternoon session that ran for about one and a half hours over a period of six weeks. One session was cancelled because of a performance of a school production.

Group D formed part of the project 'Silent Voices' which was undertaken by a community arts media company that employed me as the drama worker and director of the product video that was commissioned in 1999 by the local health authority, and social services (now Social Care and Health) to elicit the view of 'service users' recovering from mental illness. Due to the confidentiality agreement of the project, the video can only be accessed with the agreement of all group members. A copy is held by the author as director. **Group D** was a 'drop-in' group run by social services

and was supported by two social workers. Attendance was entirely voluntary and the sessions ran for about an hour for six weeks. There were nine members who attended consistently: six women and three men. Participants were aged between 20 and 60.

Group E was also part of the 'Silent Voices' project; attendance was voluntary from the drop-in facilities for people recovering from mental illness at the local hospital. Initially comprising one man and four women the man did not attend again after the first session. This ran for about an hour and a half over a period of six weeks. The women were aged between 30 and 60.

Group F was the final group involved in 'Silent Voices' and attended another drop-in group, this time run by a mental health charity. This group was entirely voluntary and was made up of two women and five men. We met for approximately an hour and a half every Wednesday afternoon over a six week period. This group was slightly younger, aged between 20 and 50.

Group G was the only group observed specifically for the field work. Attendees at the same day centre as Group A, this group was led by an 'Expressive Arts' tutor from a local Further Education (FE) college. The official group comprised four men and four women, but this was often supplemented by other people from the special care unit at the centre. Of these only two are cited in the research as being of 'medium dependency' or having 'moderate learning disabilities' (as described by the centre), thus maintaining consistency with those I had worked with in Groups A

and B. These two members described themselves as: 'My name' and 'A man who loves his music'. (Return visit, June 2008).

There is also reference in the thesis to Mind The Gap, a theatre company and actors' agency based in Bradford working with actors with learning disabilities in training and performance.

Definition of terms.

Below is an explanation of some common terms used throughout the thesis and the context in which they have been applied. The use of a particular term is often because of the perspective of the user and the importance and influence of my many years as a theatre practitioner is thus present within these definitions. Turner's theory of liminality is sourced and explained in detail within the body of the thesis.

Applied Theatre is the generic term for the use of the art form - theatre - in settings other than a conventional theatre building. The aim behind this was originally to ensure accessibility for people who might not want to enter a conventional theatre building, and this has become part of the subject matter of the art form created. Taylor suggested that Applied Theatre resides at the intersection of education and the arts: '[...] the art form becomes a transformative agent that places the audience or participants [...] in situations where they can witness, confront and deconstruct aspects of their own and others' actions.' (2003:xx). Theatre has therefore become accessible in placing the audience as central to the action in terms of content as well as technique. Nicholson interchanged this with the terms Applied Drama and Applied Performance, all: 'reviewing common theoretical and political concerns

which accompany their [drama practitioners in educational, community and therapeutic settings] various practices.' (2005:3). Applied Theatre is the use of theatre to achieve other ends beside and beyond aesthetic enjoyment or entertainment.

Theatre in Education (T.I.E.) is the use of the art form (theatre) with input from a professional theatre company within an educational setting i.e. a school or college. This may use drama in education techniques, but remains 'able to do what the school curriculum [...] cannot' (Redington, 1983:7).

Drama in education (d.i.e.) is the use of drama techniques such as enactment, devising and role-play within educational settings with input from theatre practitioners and teachers. This does not always include, but does not exclude, performance.

Participatory drama is a method often used in all of the above, in which the process of the creation of drama is the focus of the group activity, rather than a presentation. The concept therefore similarly supports this focus on material of relevance to the members of that particular group. The involvement of everyone within the group is also of importance, again reflecting the ideology of accessibility. (Bolton's 'Type D' drama (1979:41): 'drama for understanding').

Participatory drama session is used as a description of the workshops undertaken for the field work of the thesis. Although the subject matter was not always chosen by the group, as is explained in the relevant chapter, the method was chosen in order

to include every group member within the process of creating the make-believe. Some of the early work was concerned with developing trust and spontaneity within the group, and this is the category described by Bolton as 'Type A exercise' (1979: 3-4), because the games or exercises did not aim for a piece of make-believe (a scene) although they were practising make-believe actions i.e. naming an object differently.

Theatre event is a happening (Hunt, 1976) but specifically using the form of creativity that is make-believe or fictive. This can occur as the process of participatory drama or the performance or presentation of theatre, but there is a mutual recognition of the created make-believe and that we as a participant group are responsible for it. Kershaw, following Schechner, identified the:

> '*production* [as] simply the most concentrated part of the performance event [...] everything else which is done in preparation for, and in the aftermath of, the production is part of the performance and may affect its socio-political significance'
>
> (1992:22).

Although other factors are clearly of relevance both socially and politically in the transformation explored within this thesis, the recognition of pretence is crucial within the development of the reflexive cycle that outlines transformation, and is therefore used to define the theatre event.

Performance or presentation: within the context of the field work, a theatre event that is watched by an audience that may include members of the group. This is rehearsed, and agreed by members of the group: it only happens if they are happy for it to take place.

A moment describes a point within a theatre event (either the art form of theatre or the process of participatory drama) during which something significant happens: something that is of meaning and/or enjoyment for the participant. The participant registers this (it may be remembered as an action, gesture or sound). This moment has the potential for transformation.

Transformation is a development that contributes to a changed sense of self that is then carried beyond the theatre event. This discourse in and out of the theatre event, and what a participant may carry back and forth, forms the discussion of Chapter 5. '[T]he essence of transformation [...] is based on [...] a belief that personal power can come through collective problem-solving and action.' (Duncan and Watson, 2004:310). This definition highlights the importance of the relationship between individual and community that is crucial in the theatre event and in the use of theatre to generate personal development and change.

Reflexivity may mean to examine research methodology and its application and as such it has a place within reflective practice (Taylor and White, 2000). This also questions the location of the researcher with regard to the participant groups i.e. the imposition of the researcher's own dominant culture on such groups. With specific reference to researching with adults with learning disabilities, Goodley (2000) defined this as requiring outsiders to formulate understandings of insiders. Turner referred to 'public reflexivity' (1998:64) as a time for examining signs and traditions demonstrated by a society through public, 'redressive' actions. Kershaw placed performance within this context, suggesting that through the rules of performance, the assumptions on which those rules are based are similarly

examined; this develops 'an increased sensitivity to the ways in which power relations are embedded in cultural practices.' (1999:66). This concept of looking back at the self to inform is used throughout this thesis to trace the cyclical process of transformation through the theatre event. This may be more experiential than purposely analytical for some members of the participant groups. However, the recognition and understanding of the make-believe so crucial to this transformation informs a participant as it occurs, and is thus termed reflexive. This term thus recognises the participants as subjects within the research. This is outlined in detail in Chapter 5.

Health and Social Care forms part of the Department of Health (2008) that provides health and social care policy and supports professionals working within these fields. These services are currently implemented locally by County Councils, private companies, and Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). Confusingly some County Councils term these services Social Care and Health (as does the Council responsible for commissioning the 'Silent Voices' project previously cited).

The celebration of her performance by a member of Group G at the opening of this introduction is a reminder of the contribution creativity can make to anyone who chooses to participate. It is sometimes easy to forget, in the earnest search for 'better' practice, of the importance of enjoying the theatre event (and the chocolate biscuits!). This is also central to this thesis: that within the liberation of creativity, and within the possible transformation, exists the joy of being who you are, and being alive.

Chapter 1: Disarming the tyrannies of everyday: discussing Turner's theory of liminality.

'[It] is this liminality which provides us with the first clue to theatre[...] as a site of passage, structurally related to ritual, and in its own way englobing the world.' (Hastrup, 1998: 33).

'This capacity to see is in itself a radical notion.' (Landy, 1996:27).

1.0 **Chapter 1** explains Turner's concept of 'liminality' in detail, including theories such as 'liminoid' and the 'liminal zone', which form part of liminality. 'Communitas', a further contribution to Turner's liminality, will be briefly explained and subsequently outlined in detail in Chapter 3. This chapter explores the relevance of this concept to an understanding of the relationship between participation in the theatre event and transformation within specific participant groups. The work of practitioners such as Boal (1979), O'Neill (1995) and Bolton (1992, 1998) contribute to an examination of this in later chapters. The work of Schechner (1988, 2006) has further explored the complex nature of this transformation and its association with theatre.

1.1 Liminality after Van Gennep.

Turner developed his theory of liminality (1969:94) after borrowing the term from Van Gennep, who defined the transition stage of rites of passage as liminal (1977:11). These rites of passage according to Turner 'accompany every change of place, state, social position and age.'(1969:94). Van Gennep further divided these rites of passage into three stages: separation; limen or threshold; and finally the reincorporation or reaggregation (1977:21). The participant in the ritual, after leaving one group, completes the transition by resuming a stable 'state' once again,

changed from their original 'state'. S/he also resumes rights and obligations as a member of their new grouping.

Turner explored and developed this theory in some length over his lifetime. He applied Van Gennep's theory to ceremonial ritual (e.g. marriage, coming of age, religious baptism) common to societies across the world. The progression of formalised change of status is easy to identify: the breakaway from a former position e.g. as single, the threshold or 'in between' limen of the ceremony itself and finally the reaggregation into the new grouping of 'married people'. Turner also applied the theory to what he termed 'social drama' (the ways in which human beings continually interact with each other). Turner's work focused on the relationship between the form of ritual and its similarity to the art form of theatre (in performance) both of which he described as 'crucially [involving] liminal events and processes' (1998:62).

Turner explained social drama as following a particular pattern, which is similar to the structure of Van Gennep's definition of rites of passage, but which also demonstrated the influence of theatre. A community's movement through time takes a shape that is essentially dramatic: thus the 'breach' is the breaking of a rule in a public setting; the 'crisis' the conflict that follows this, challenging the unity of the group/society; the 'redress' the public action that is intended to address the crisis, often in the name of law or religion. Finally the 'outcome' may be either restoration of peace or 'normality', or social recognition of the breach i.e. incorporating a change. If the outcome failed, society would revert to crisis until the society was reconstructed i.e. revolution. A resolution has to be reached, because the breach has occurred. (1998:63).

A very topical example of this might be a dispute over car parking outside a school. Someone parks illegally on a double yellow line (breach) and is challenged by a teacher. Watching parents divide in their support and opposition for the offender (crisis). The police arrive and move the car (redress) and everyone collects their children, with possible warning from the police about parking in the future, or the provision of parking facilities at the car park of a local shop (outcome).

What is of use in Turner's original definition in exploring the relevance of liminality within the theatre event? This contains elements both of the art form of theatre, and also social interaction, in the *creation* of the make-believe that is group participatory drama. How does the 'breach' (the breaking away from the usual way of operating) and ensuing 'crisis' manifest itself for the participants? Placing people within the different context or environment (of group work or of the theatre event) may result in different behaviour. There are opportunities for behaving differently because the circumstances are concurrently different, and changing (the crisis). This may offer an active chance for participants to do something they may not have done before, or may not have been allowed to do before. This *active* contribution is of particular importance to people who may be restricted in taking responsibility in their own lives, as are many people with learning disabilities and those recovering from mental illness in contemporary society, placed in a marginalised, 'disabled' position. Secondly, these opportunities for different behaviour offer a chance for participants in drama workshops to experience how others might feel and behave, a valuable learning experience and an important part of drama in education (O'Neill, 1995). Finally, the 'public reflexivity' (1998:64) Turner referred to as part of the redressive process (the public action) is a time for examining signs and traditions

demonstrated by a society through such actions - and through those the way a society defines itself:

> It is in social dramas that plural reflexivity begins. If social drama regularly implies conflict of principles, norms, and persons, it equally implies the growth of reflexivity.
>
> Turner (1987:103).

In other words, the way a society operates as a whole is always because of the ways in which individual members of that society interact with each other, and vice versa. There are times in public life that highlight and reinforce or question the way society operates. Within the theatre event, there are opportunities for individuals to experiment with presenting a different way of behaving and these can contribute to a similar self-examination, challenging stereotypes and preconceptions in both individuals and as a group. This can then be continued by the whole group (performers) to challenge beyond the group (audience). In both situations (ritual and drama) participants ask the question: 'Is this how we want to define ourselves and be defined?'

1.2 Life and fiction: the social and the aesthetic.

Hastrup suggested that the dramatisation of social life became separated from the 'institutional reflexivity on stage' at the time of Shakespeare, and that the trend is now reversing, with spectacle and theatre taking place on the streets and in other non-theatre venues. (1998:33). In other words, that theatre had to reflect and present the values and behaviour of the institutions of society (state and religion) in certain ways to satisfy those institutions. Since the relaxation of attitudes towards these institutions, particularly since the mid-twentieth century, it has been possible to present others within society as worthy of attention and profile within the public art form of theatre. This begins to explore the continuum between the aesthetics of

professional theatre and the educational and social value of Applied Theatre and participatory drama and to look at the purpose of the art form: how and why a society represents itself.

O'Toole and Lepp examined this relationship to explore the links between participatory drama and performance: the huge range of the theatre event. Their continuum suggested learning activities as 'new dramatic forms', moving from dramatic play through drama to theatre (2000:33). They suggested that each form both supports and develops the previous one. The content moves similarly from private and informal, through to stories, events and characters, before culminating in 'performance to an audience' (2000:33). Again each sharing contributes to the next, so adding to the understanding and creativity of each participant. Finally the act of performance further informs and changes the experience of the participants.

Schechner contributed to this argument in his discussion of 'aesthetic drama' and 'social drama'. He acknowledged Turner's influence on and approval of the 'infinity loop model' (1988:190) which demonstrated the contribution that theatre (aesthetic drama 'that works on consciousness') makes to social drama ('in the world', as was Turner's social drama). This is highlighted in the 'Silent Voices' project in which Groups D, E and F took part, in the link between the art form of the product video, and its use to influence services 'in the world'. Schechner agreed that social drama is informed and shaped by theatrical techniques (as Turner had suggested that social drama takes the dramatic form outlined above) and that the aesthetic theatre of a society is informed by its social interaction (1988:190). Schechner also drew attention to the visible and hidden aspects within this relationship.

1.3 The individual and the potential for transformation.

It is important to return to the specific and personal dimensions of the liminal in order to examine this relationship between art and reality in terms of individual transformation. To return to the relevance of Turner's liminal theory to this work: the 'breach' and 'crisis' move a participant away from a current role and accompanying situation, and it is also a time of existing without the responsibilities of that role: 'a stage [...] for unique structures of experience [...] in milieux detached from mundane life.' (Turner, 1998:65). As the whole process of the ritual (e.g. the marriage) symbolises the change from one state to another, it also gives the participant a physical and temporal space (the location and duration of the ceremony) in which to prepare for the forthcoming change. Referring to ritual, Turner described this variously as a 'liminal phase' or 'pod' (1982:84) or 'liminal zone' (1969:94). It is the location: 'a time and place lodged between all times and spaces defined and governed' (1982:84). Turner also used the term 'cunicular': being in a tunnel, to describe the 'hidden nature' and 'mysterious darkness' of this place (1982:41). This formed an anti-structure in opposition to the structure of the hierarchy of society: within this liminal phase society became an unstructured community (1969:97). This is discussed further in relation to Turner's term communitas in 1.4 and in more detail in Chapter 3.

The theatre event offers a similar space. During role-play in self-advocacy or dramatherapy, or in specific theatrical techniques such as Boal's Forum Theatre (1979) an action may well be rehearsal or preparation for a particular situation, just as enactment in the crisis stage of the ritual may prepare a participant for their new role in the outcome. Or it may be a more general playing with different roles: behaving in different ways, and experiencing different responses, in the way described previously as of value within drama in education. The actions that occur within this space are

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'free from' the imposition of usual roles and behaviour, echoing the implied liberation in the liminal stage of Van Gennep's rite of passage, and the 'crisis' of Turner's social drama. In both cases, a participant moves onto their next 'state', and the completion of the 'free from' stage leads to the next stage. In ritual the next stage is the relevant change in status e.g. from being single to being married. In social drama the crisis (division between group of parents) moves to the redress (police action) and then to the outcome (new parking or threat of punishment). After the theatre event the move is the return from the agreed make-believe back to the real world beyond the pretence.

The consequences of the *experience* of the liminal space of the theatre event may be very different. The opportunity to behave differently, and to be observed behaving differently, is of immense importance to a participant who may use that behaviour beyond the frame of the drama. Even more exciting is the possibility that this different behaviour may be empowering because of the role the participant usually plays and in which the participant is placed by others. This is the potential that may be life-changing. Therefore it is vital, because of the importance of this *experience*, to find a term that acknowledges this inner change, or the potential for it, rather than the more obvious or superficial 'outer' change demanded by ritual.

Schechner used 'transportation' to describe the way in which a participant enters the experience of a theatre event, is moved or touched, and then 'dropped off' at the same point in development at which s/he entered. (2006:72). He had previously developed the 'efficacy – entertainment' continuum which was his theory of the way ritual that effects change develops and evolves into theatre that is focused on entertainment: 'ritual is an event upon which its participants depend; theatre is an event which depends on its participants.' (1988:126). He stressed that the polarity

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was between efficacy and entertainment, not between ritual and theatre (1988:120). This theory will be explained in more detail in relation to Turner's terms of 'liminal' and 'liminoid' in 1.10.

This thesis will state the case for a development in a theatre event that because of the position occupied by the participant group within society (i.e. people with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness disabled by that society) provides potential for personal individual transformation. This might be seen as the springboard from which they may depart for somewhere else i.e. enable them to contribute differently in life beyond the theatre event. This is certainly not automatic, nor immediate. How this development occurs, and its process, forms the central argument of this thesis: 'Art experiences make sense of life experiences: an understanding of the patterns that connect us.' (O'Toole and Lepp, 2000:34). These 'patterns' will be examined in detail in specific relation to the practical field work undertaken.

1.4 'Spontaneous communitas'.

Thus far Turner's liminal zone has been defined in the context of the theatre event as the space precipitated by change (breach developing into crisis) in which different behaviour and actions (from those usual within the group or the society) may occur. It is now important to examine what contributes to this difference. For Turner 'communitas' was of primary importance. This term will be discussed at length in Chapter 3. However, it is useful to provide an outline of its meaning, and the way communitas contributes to the liminal zone, at this point in the thesis. Turner clarified this as the state of existence that occurs within the liminal zone or phase: an unstructured community of equal individuals, 'stressing equality and

comradeship as the norms' (1974:233). The liminal phase is the location, the communitas:

> [the] way by which persons see, understand and act towards one another [...] essentially 'an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals.' [...] For me communitas preserves individual distinctiveness.
>
> <div align="right">Turner (1982:45).</div>

The communitas is the experience of this group interaction within the liminal zone. There is a strong parallel here between the physical space of the theatre event, and the interaction that occurs within that space, and the metaphorical space offered by the theatre event as a break from the usual progression of participants moving through their lives (Turner's social drama) and the different opportunities this offers to the participants. The experience of the interaction is real within the 'fiction' or ceremony of the ritual and the theatre event.

In defining the liminal zone and communitas as elements of the anti-structure, i.e. not the usual structure of society, Turner developed further the idea of the structure as a limit, rather than a starting point. He suggested that societal interaction within the structure is limited because human beings are playing roles within that social structure and interacting with each other only through these: *'full human capacity is locked out'* (1982:46). This is of particular relevance to participant groups who may be limited by these usual social roles. The potential of the liminal zone is for action, thereby challenging the passivity of roles allocated to these groups, and also providing accessibility. Communitas is about the sharing of the interaction, not the reflective analysis of what has occurred. This analysis of the action is, of course, of immense importance within drama in education, and the contrast between this and the 'here and now' group dynamic of communitas is highlighted in Chapter 6.

If the starting point for communitas is this interaction that occurs between participants accepted as the individuals they are (as Turner's definition above), there needs to be an explanation of how this translates in dramatic terms in the theatre event. In a participatory drama session this might equate to everyone being given an opportunity to contribute to and create the make-believe: what is happening. In a presentation this might be watching a role model (someone you know acting on stage), or knowing that you can do drama, or having devised the piece that is being presented. In other words that a participant, whether creating or observing, knows that s/he can be part of what is happening: it is not an activity for others. These are crucial features of the theatre event in terms of the politics of this thesis. Participants are not defined by individual roles or collective groupings e.g. 'shy Jane' or 'people with learning disabilities', as happens within the social structure of contemporary technologised society.

From this starting point, the development of communitas among a group is a particular and specific combination of various elements, some of which are present in other forms of passive and active leisure activities: play, sport, watching television. The key elements are spontaneous interaction; the relationship between participants; the presence of an 'other' in addition to the 'self' (self as object and self as subject); and the simultaneous occurrence of the individual being somewhere 'not part of' their usual structure and the group also taking a break from their usual routine. Communitas is a collective experience, and it supports and develops each individual in that other place (the liminal zone) and also strengthens the possibilities for different behaviour beyond the experience of that moment (spontaneous interaction) and that place (the liminal zone). Communitas also deepens the

commitment of the participant group to the event (whatever is occurring in the liminal zone).

Applying Turner's term to the theatre event is therefore relevant because communitas supports and strengthens actions by a group, and by individuals within that group. O'Toole used the term 'percipient' to define the 'totality of real people directly involved in a theatrical or dramatic event.' (1992:185). The same term was used by Bolton (who in turn attributed it to Fleming) to mean the functions of dramatist and participant, i.e. both shaping and being part of the dramatic action (1998:199). This is hugely important in the theatre event and of particular relevance to groups such as those with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness, for whom the actions of a usual day may be restricted and defined by other people. The investment in the group action, discussed as both contributing to and springing from communitas in Turner's theory, enables and reinforces each contribution to the theatre event, whilst developing the strength of the group work.

Communitas makes another important contribution for these participant groups in challenging perceptions, both of self and others, within this group relationship. The 'anti-structure' of the liminal zone enables participants to observe others in the group as they each respond and contribute differently. Within the theatre event, the option of a different role or action is of value to each participant not only because of how it feels to them as they do this, but also the way this challenges and alters the perception other participants have of them. This may reinforce the potential for change beyond the drama. This also feeds back into the way the participant sees herself: a participant's changed view of herself is reinforced by other people's memories of her 'different' role or action. This is outlined in detail in Chapter 5.

Turner compared this with what he termed 'root metaphors' produced in conditions of liminality and communitas (1974:26). The metaphor makes known the unknown, as participants seek to make sense of their experience and their world. The creativity (of the metaphor) can take participants further from what they already know. The parallel with drama and theatre is striking: making sense of the universal through the particular and vice versa. This is relevant too in the continual relationship between action and thought: the being and the happening, and the making sense of what has happened. What provides insight is the interaction of the two, not one or the other. The gesture or exchange in drama which becomes the image: symbolising what has happened, and providing a stimulus to see from a new perspective following that experience. This image may then act as a reminder of the other self and a new perspective. In this way liminality extends and develops the immediacy of communitas.

Schechner saw these relationships in terms of 'actualising': 'handling experience' (1988:40): the continuous and continuing relationship between self and others; past and present; individual and group; and inner self and outer self. He suggested this term applied to art, particularly 'the new theatre [that] belongs next to worldwide, rural-tribal tradition.' (1988:40). This again highlights the crossover between theatre and ritual.

1.5 Self-definition and the politics of disability.

Self-definition has become an important issue for groups seen as having less important or minority status within contemporary hierarchical society. Corker and Shakespeare placed the categorisation of disability within the context of postmodernism, suggesting that groups are categorised through how people

perceive, think and act, rather than through their place in the mode or nature of production: '*how we build inclusive societies* and with *the social role of knowledge* in this process.' (2002:3). This argument and its derivation distinguishes the more recent self-advocacy movements in disability and learning difficulty politics from the older, more traditional, rehabilitative approaches (Chappell et al., 2001). If descriptive labels have to be used, perhaps for the purposes of care and education, then people should be allowed to choose how they describe themselves. The terms people used in self-definition thus emphasised people's ability rather than disability. For example, many people with learning difficulties prefer not to be called disabled; they feel they are not. Yet many local authorities use this term, and regard the term: 'learning difficulties' as inappropriate and old-fashioned.

Throughout this thesis the term 'learning disabilities' has been used for consistency, but the explanation of each participant group in the field work in the introduction includes the group's own description of themselves. The inclusion in this discussion of the groups recovering from mental illness similarly struggles to find an appropriate term. The term 'service user' is used by County Councils (as providers of day care services in England and Wales) in describing all these participant groups. It is important to highlight that much of the discrimination faced by those recovering from mental illness is associated in this thesis with the social model of disability, since it is the perception and attitudes of others that perpetuates discrimination. It is nothing to do with the 'ability' of any member of these groups.

In participatory drama, there is a chance to explore and play around with these labels and names, an opportunity to claim 'equality' within a safe environment, and without consequences. No-one is obliged to keep a label they choose, for example, unless the group agrees that this is to be so for the remainder

of their time together. There is also an opportunity to understand why particular labels are rejected and others preferred, another way of exploring a participant's actions and behaviour. In turn this provides an opportunity for others to understand this through observing action rather than explanation. This is of obvious value with participants who are uncomfortable with verbal explanations.

How is this related to Turner's liminal zone? The creation or presentation of the theatre event may provide this space in which to play and experiment, as has been outlined above. However, within Turner's definition of social drama an individual moves from one group (in which the breach occurred) to another (in the outcome); both groups decided by the structure or society to which the groups belong. Thus the individuals might well explore different ways of being together (and experience communitas) during that liminal zone, that in-between space, but the way in which participants might define themselves within that space will be lost on their return to the structure. In Turner's view, societies always reformed in the 'outcome'. Where this thesis challenges Turner's theory is in the possibility of transformation in the world beyond the liminal zone of the theatre event because the participants have seen and *identified themselves* differently.

1.6 The politics of resilience.

Goodley explored issues of identity and self-definition using the phrase: 'politics of resilience' (2000:201). He explained this 'resilience' as contextualised, complicated, optimistic and interpersonal. For Goodley, resilience embraced the gap between the complicated and personal nature of impairment and the way this is translated as disability in current society: that the personal impairment leads to being seen (and labelled) as 'disabled' by others: friends, peers or strangers. The history of disability

politics has moved on from the medical view of disability (that responsibility lies entirely with the person with the label of 'disability'). The 'social model', which arose out of the self-advocacy movement supported by people with sensory impairment and physical disability, was originally developed in opposition to the medical viewpoint by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). 'The social model distinguishes between impairment (i.e. the loss or lack of some functioning part of the body) and disability (i.e. the meaning society attaches to the presence of impairment).' (Chappell et al., 2001:46). This definition of disability is relevant to people with learning disabilities, in that a 'learning disability' is defined in terms of the way society expects people to learn and behave.

In 'defining' people with learning disabilities for the purposes of education and care, the focus has changed from the emphasis on what people cannot do. Oliver (1990) linked this emphasis with the growth of capitalism in the nineteenth century because people with disabilities were identified as inefficient workers. Goodley (2000) further discussed the importance of a move away from the 'paternalism of empowering' to 'incorporating self-empowering actions that already exist' (2000:195): that the initiative for change comes from within the relevant group. The Government White paper *Valuing People* instead described: 'Rights, Independence, Choice and Inclusion' at the heart of its proposals (Department of Health, 2001a:10). Comprehension and participation are both key in self-advocacy that truly enables and supports people in doing what they want to do in ways that they can access.

There are clear similarities in the politics of resilience and participatory drama. Firstly, that whatever is created by the participant group comes from the context: the group are in a particular place, grouped together at a particular time.

Secondly, it is complicated. It is both personal and collective; the potential may be enormous or tiny, changing lives, challenging labels, exploring a certain gesture or word. Thirdly, stories and actions within drama may be optimistic. What can we learn? What can we do again? Let's try. Finally, interpersonal: interactive, participatory drama explores in practical and accessible terms how we all deal with each other, and how that shapes what happens in our lives (Turner's social drama). In terms of the disabling frame placed around people by society, the context of the theatre event (in which the operating frame is altered) may demonstrate that people can behave very differently. It becomes explicit that their behaviour in the context of the real world is defined substantially by the disabling way they are perceived and treated by others.

Turner discussed this in terms of status reversal and elevation (1969, 1974). The idea of playing 'as if' you are a different person not only brings a sense of liberation, but of power and choice. This 'putting yourself in someone else's shoes' is of huge significance in drama in education (Bolton, 1979; Heathcote, 1980). The experience of how someone else might feel in a particular situation will always be of developmental value, because it widens and informs understanding. The quality of specific importance in the theatre event is that it is an action: a 'doing' not 'receiving'. 'Being' someone else is very different from a seated discussion: exploring their choices, making their decisions and being treated as they are by others. Turner saw this different view as a vital element of communitas; a chance to take an overview (i.e. including those of others) rather than focus solely on an individual position within the structure (1974).

1.7 Returning to the structure: 'normative communitas'.

The final stage of liminality involves the ending of the transition. A transition cannot continue for long because its participant(s) move into a new state. Following Van Gennep, Turner (1969) saw this as a move between predetermined and recognised states of being within the social structure of an organised society. This outcome is part of the inevitable progression of the social structure. Reinforcing this progression are the elements of 'normative' communitas, in which the communitas itself becomes organised rather than spontaneous. There may be an element of the unpredictable within this, however, the group event according to Turner took the form of a predetermined ritual in which group members shared a particular activity and a feeling of community (the anti-structure) but is predetermined and comes to an end in the ways outlined above.

This thesis however explores the liminal zone (in which communitas is experienced) as having potential within the theatre event that may lead to an altered way of being in the world. Not necessarily a revolutionary or visible change, but through its occurrence alone contributing to an altered state of the participant. S/he may then return to the same circumstances and situation as those prior to the theatre event, but the participant is no longer the same. The potential Turner referred to when discussing liminality exists not only in the moment but also in the person beyond the moment. Turner classified normative communitas as: '[an attempt] to foster and maintain [...] spontaneous communitas on a more or less permanent basis.' (1982:49). A group feels in unity because they are sharing and take part in an expression of this sharing. This lack of spontaneity need not be negative, if the feeling of communitas remains among members of a group who are usually isolated. If people placed in powerless positions become used to feeling powerful (through spontaneous communitas) then the movement from spontaneous to

normative becomes positive. As Johnson points out, it is obedience rather than dominance that maintains the legitimacy of power in the modern state (1993). A fear of not conforming ensures obedience to the structure. Yet if powerless people become comfortable with feeling more powerful and want to contribute differently, the structure has to accommodate that, as it has with other groups in terms of race, gender and religion.

It is vital to be clear that the methodology of this research draws on the social model of disability cited previously in refuting a person's own responsibility for their disability. The participant groups have been placed by society in a position that controls and limits their power. However, a key question is whether this oppression makes the experience of liminality more powerful or of greater effect. This will be discussed throughout the thesis but in more detail in Chapter 2. The situating of participants is challenged by a vision beyond that situation, provided by the make-believe of the theatre event. Thus normative communitas applied to this context may have a more positive outcome than Turner suggested.

1.8 The power (and the fear) of action.

In the theatre event participants are free from the constraints of usual roles and liberated from having to deal with the consequences of actions except within the make-believe: a heady, possibly frightening mix, even when bound by the rules and structure of the leisure form and practice. Perhaps this is why leisure has been relegated to predetermined times and places. Paid work has become such an obsession in contemporary Britain that it provides an excuse to limit leisure time. Turner discussed: 'reducing each of these sensory domains to a set of entertainment genres flourishing in the leisure time of society, no longer in a central, driving

place.' (1998:65). In other words, taking those spaces in which spontaneous human interaction can occur and placing them in a predetermined slot. Within the structure spaces are allocated for powerful emotions, for the human-ness that remains in human beings: crying at weddings; shouting abuse at football matches; enjoying the abandonment of inhibitions at a 'stag' or 'hen' night.

Kempe suggested that contemporary obsession with 'celebrities'; the personalities seen involved in creativity, e.g. through the medium of television, is an avoidance of exploring creativity itself (1995). The focus on someone's personal life prevents the discussion of her performance. O'Toole made a convincing argument aligning the 'trivialisation' of drama with this fear of discovering and dealing with 'real' selves in creativity (1992:191). Yet elements of this spontaneity are relentlessly maintained as part of staged and elaborate ritual. As part of humanity there exists a powerful need to express the emotions and needs that are often hidden and repressed in an increasingly technologised and individualistic society. Ritual provides a way of controlling these.

Turner referred to this as 'meta-power' (1998:66) and suggested that theatre, in a similar way to ritual, draws on 'power sources' in human beings often 'inhibited or at least constrained' in the cultural life of 'society's "indicative" mood' (1998:65). Turner's view suggests that alternative behaviour enables people to access and share feelings of joy, power and liberation, which may be suppressed in their everyday lives. This 'power source' may contribute through communitas in creating the potential of the liminal zone.

In theatrical terms, this may be placed alongside the exploration of physical power within theatre explored by Grotowski, who focused on theatre practice using the enormous energy generated by this freeing from usual behaviour to create new

patterns of movement and sound: new ways of being. Again there is an interesting comparison with liminality as Grotowski discussed the stripping down and rebuilding of an actor. The loss of the actor's 'old self' was followed by a transition (period in which the actor's physical performance changed radically) followed by the integration of the psychic and bodily powers the actor had discovered. Grotowski even referred to the use of trance, often associated with ritual (Barba, 1976). Emphasis was upon the huge resources available to the human body, ignoring the trappings of costume and setting. Grotowski discussed this as the elimination of blocks, rather than as the addition of 'bolt-on' skills. Thus the learning process of the actor became one of eliminating resistance to the natural process of impulse and (re)action, the impulse and action becoming concurrent. This meant that the inhibition placed upon the actor (not dissimilar to the inhibition Turner discussed as restricting behaviour within the social structure) was replaced by spontaneity (Barba, 1976).

This relationship between action and impulse, and its potential within liminality is particularly interesting within the context of this study and features in the practical field work. Creating the theatre event may offer a situation that gives the participants permission to be themselves, by accepting and validating their contribution to the work of the group. This then develops confidence that in turn enables their impulse to contribute to the spontaneous dramatic action. This in turn strengthens the participant's investment in the action, because their action (and their impulse) is accepted.

I attended a performance showcasing some music and dance pieces (as part of a disability festival) with members from Group B. All the performers had varying learning disabilities, and the audience was made up mainly of groups from local day

centres. During a lively 'rock and roll' number, a woman turned to her carer and asked if she could join in, getting up to dance and sing as she did so. Singing along often occurs at concerts, but she saw no boundary to prevent her moving to the performing space, no barrier to her becoming one of the performers (who were all extremely welcoming). She asked permission, but her impulse carried her through to action. In a different situation this might not have been possible. Although people do join in with the singing during the last night at the BBC Promenade Concerts (Proms), the action of participation is predetermined and a ritual in itself, including dress and behaviour: the so-called spontaneity itself obeying many rules about who can participate, and how. The audience abides by the rules in order to allow the performance to progress in an orderly way to the end. The boundaries limit the impulse and the experience. The spontaneous impulse is restricted by the structure, only to be allowed to proceed during predetermined and agreed forms of leisure.

There is also an important element of 'being part of' in this example. As spectators, people with learning disabilities are often treated as tragic observers: 'if only, what a shame', when they may simply be watching the unfolding action alongside others. The presentation to an audience is of value because it places the participants not only in a 'can do' but a 'we are' position. How often are society's actions framed as 'belonging' to a particular group, with the audience excluded as aspiring onlookers? Kempe's comments concerning celebrity are relevant to this argument. The theatre event is in a position to challenge this 'othering' of people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness. This is similarly achieved through the work of professional actors with learning disabilities in companies such as Mind The Gap, interviewed during this research. This places participants in an immediate empathising role, and one of enjoyment and creativity

rather than passive acceptance: 'People *like me* are doing this'. There is also celebration in a group watching video of themselves performing. Not just: 'look at me, I can do' but: 'look at me, I *am doing*'. 'In trying alternative responses to common experience such as verbal abuse in public, people could see *themselves* dealing with it differently as well as watching other people try it.' (Higgins, 1995:4).

1.9 Frames and roles within the theatre event.

The label assigned to people in their particular roles - or rather, the role in which they are placed at that moment because of signs observers believe identify them in that role - carries with it an expectation of people's capabilities, and subsequently the value attached to their contribution. A hierarchical structure obviously carries within it an inequality. Within the theatre event the participants can opt for different roles, and challenge what a person in that role might do, and do so without consequence. Participants may use actions closely associated with particular roles in the course of the make-believe; it would be inaccurate to suggest that stereotypes of actions and speech do not exist in drama and theatre. Schechner (2006) termed these actions twice-behaved, meaning that any created action is always repeated: it has been rehearsed or seen in another context. It is through these actions that human beings interact with and understand each other. They are coded (placed in a form that encapsulates meaning) and transmittable (a form that will convey meaning to others). Crucially, although these actions may have been seen, they may not have been *performed* by the participants themselves. In the context of these participant groups it is about a participant accessing and 'owning' this behaviour: '*I* can do that'.

Within the course of creating the theatre event group members can stop the action and try a new signal or explanation: perhaps one associated with a different role, perhaps one a participant has never used before. This action then leads into different behaviour, and to the group responding to that participant in a different way. Bateson (1979:116) used the term 'metacommunication': a signal that frames all the signals contained within it, that suggests how the signals should be interpreted i.e. defines the relationship between the speakers. If the theatre event is framed as enabling all the participants to take on different roles (the metacommunication), different actions are permissible within those different roles as indicated below:

It is the introductory session. I am nervous. There is tension between members of the teaching staff. The group members (Group C) may be apprehensive, but are giving a superb performance of not caring what is happening, enjoying sitting on the floor, giggling, pushing at each other's feet in the circle. I ask each member of the group in turn for their name. Gradually group members begin to make eye contact with me. Some are eager to tell me, shouting out other's names. Some whisper, and are cajoled by staff. 'And you are...?' **'Kylie'** announces the group member, defiantly. **'No, that's ...'** shouts another group member. 'Shhhh' shouts the teaching assistant. I look her in the face. 'Kylie?' I ask. **'Yeah I said.'** She looks at me with bravado and longing. I nod my head. 'OK Kylie. While I'm here. For the drama. Thanks Kylie.' There are giggles from other members of the group, and a gasp from a member of staff, waiting to see what I will do. I move on to the next person in the circle. 'And what's your name?' Kylie looks around at the group, and smirks. At the end of the session the teaching

assistant challenges me: 'They all knew it was wrong, you calling her that.' (Author's notes, 2004).

Did the group think it was 'wrong', or did they recognise that the acceptance of her crossing the usual boundary of classroom behaviour (by not telling the truth, by challenging an adult) made the participatory drama session different from their usual classroom practice? Perhaps this enabled the group to define the boundary of the session (different from the usual) through the explicit action of a participant, and not just through the explanation of a teacher. This framing created by the metacommunication is relevant beyond the pretence. As outlined earlier, if every action is placed within that frame, any signal society receives from a person with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness is framed by the over-riding signal that they are a person with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness. Subsequent interaction is developed on this basis. It is possible therefore that if the metacommunication or the signal is altered in some way, the person may be liberated from their 'disabling' or 'ill' frame without losing their identity as an individual human being. In the acknowledgement of this frame responsibility is placed upon the receiver of the signal.

Within the fictional experience, both collective and individual, it is clear that different rules and goals are in operation, defined by Voss Price (2000:149) as 'operative' and 'inoperative' frames of existence. The operative being the rules governing behaviour in the present, and the inoperative concerning rules of which the participant remains aware, but do not govern her behaviour at that moment. Although 'doing' something that she might not do within her inoperable frame of existence, the awareness (that s/he is in a different frame) has to exist for the understanding of the operative frame to occur. In other words, the participant is

aware of the make-believe (the operative) and remains aware of the 'real' world beyond the pretence (the inoperative). She has to maintain an understanding that the pretence is different from the 'real world' in order to understand that she can operate differently within the pretence. This understanding, and how it is reached by a participant, is crucial to the development of potential for transformation.

However, this is not easy for members of these participant groups. For example, at the second of ten sessions with Group A the group worked on expressing emotions as a 'statue' with no dialogue or sound, emphasising the facial expression and gesture associated with basic feelings such as 'angry', 'happy', or 'bossy'. These were modelled with the help of a partner and then of the rest of the group. Every group member who was asked to be 'angry' or 'bossy' found these specific emotions difficult to portray. Their objections included: **'I'm not bossy'** and **'It's wrong to be angry'** (Author's notes, 2002). This is a possible reference to a desire to please linked with some aspects of institutional care. But the overriding difficulty was the separation of this fictional portrayal from their behaviour as themselves. This became one of the ground rules used at the start of each participatory drama session throughout the field work: that all participants know and remember that the scenes the group create are pretend, and the characters are not 'us': they also are fictional.

This understanding of consciousness and frame is in contrast to the pedagogy of knowledge as something to be attained. O'Toole termed this knowledge of consciousness 'comprehensive comprehension' (2000:22): to know and to understand what you know. Wilshire saw theatre as: 'illuminating the actuality of mimetic relationships' through 'fictive variations' (1982:16). Perhaps with these participant groups, this may be illuminating the potentiality. Thus the

enacting within the theatre event develops: 'one's sense of self and identity of that self' (Wilshire, 1982:149). This means that within the operable frame of the present, there is an awareness of past and future experiences. Does this moment have a sense of future, of the potential, for the participant? Perhaps this is what enables the participant to take her 'different feeling' into the real world as was discussed in relation to normative communitas.

Kempe discussed this in terms of the concept of the 'plural self' (1995:180). He suggested that people change all the time, through their experiences, through their understanding of the world around them, and in the subsequent way they present the 'new' person, i.e. with this understanding, to others. This is discussed further in Chapter 6. Crucially, in terms of this work, he emphasised the control each person has over this presentation: people do not have to occupy the social and cultural spaces society has assigned to them. Of course, as many a group or individual fighting prejudice has rightly responded: that is easy to say, not so easy to do. But people must have the option of being active and not passive in their response to the world. The theatre event may provide the tools with which to do this.

In terms of physical presentation of role, this translates into the use of participants' bodies in performance, either on stage or in life, in contributing to this link between what people do, and how they want to be seen. Gestures thought of as 'natural' are determined by cultural and social background, and what is happening at that precise moment. Barba and Savarese described these as 'extra-daily' techniques (2006:8). The main purpose of these habitual conditions is communication. Further to this comes the transformation of the body: to amaze, transform, perform. Thus the intention becomes to present information; as Barba

and Savarese clarified, to put the body 'in-form' (2006:8). These techniques appear to be based upon the 'reality' with which a particular group or society is familiar. But what is actually presented is a previously observed role. The power of experimentation within the theatre event is again of importance, in allowing participants to explore different physical movements and how this affects them and their experience. This is explored further in Chapter 4.

1.10 The liminal and the liminoid.

The beginning of the chapter (1.1) outlined Turner's theory of liminality (following Van Gennep), and in doing so examined the relationship Turner sees between ritual and theatre. This section also referred to Schechner's exposition of the same relationship. In doing so a difference was established between the so-called tribal, agrarian ritual, based in cyclical societies and based around natural events e.g. time defined by the movement of the planet, and secondly ritual as part of developed and technologised societies such as that of contemporary Britain. Turner defined the former as 'liminal' and the latter as 'liminoid' phenomena or happenings (1982).

In this differentiation, Turner discussed the development in contemporary 'industrialised' [sic] (1982:54) society of delineating spaces for recreation (and the different behaviour associated with recreation) as previously discussed. Artificial methods of controlling working lives reduce the occurrence of cyclical and natural ritual. Although many work in daylight, some do not. 'Work' time is separated from 'leisure' time; and each individual's leisure time is personal, often fragmented from others and reducing communal leisure time. The choice of how to spend this time has become more individual than in societies where group 'play' follows group 'work'. Traditional 'factory fortnights' (holidays when factories are closed and all

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employees have to take time off) in developed societies still echo this communal pattern, but are steadily disappearing.

With differing patterns of shift work and twenty-four hour service industries, experience of others as human beings within a society has become fragmented. Many people spend more hours in a day looking at a screen than interacting with other human beings. Recent attempts to challenge the supra-importance of (paid) work and the obsession with this in Britain have placed emphasis on 'work/life balance': flexible working and working from home. However, this does little to encourage the communality of our leisure experience.

How does this relate to Turner's theory? To return once more to Turner's emphasis on structure and hierarchy, and following his subscribing to Van Gennep's theory concerning rites of passage cited in 1.1, the use of the term 'liminal' is ascribed to a 'break' for a group in their passage through developmental stages and roles within their defined social structure. This is a communal break, and one in which people have respite from their specific roles and the constraints, responsibilities and expectations that accompany these roles. This 'break' is always a pause between a past and a future already outlined by that structure. Turner suggested that: '[The] *liminal* phases of tribal society invert but do not usually subvert the *status quo*' (1982:41). This echoes the contemporary rituals cited previously, in which the element of rebellion is 'traditional', for example behaving in a determinedly 'single' way the night before marriage. The threshold itself has become ritualised and meaningless, and the potential for change does not exist.

In contrast 'liminoid' is explained by Turner with reference to a concept of leisure existing in 'industrialised' [sic] society, specifically citing 'entertainment genres, such as [...] theatre' (1982:41). 'Liminoid' occurrences are defined by

Turner as more individual, though with possible collective effect, and are experimental rather than a central part of a social process. This definition thus acknowledges the increasing rarity of a collective experience. They are also associated with a less defined grouping and much greater individual choice, whereas the 'liminal' is associated more with a group to which members have an obligation or allegiance. Liminality is therefore functional within tribal societies (1982:52) whereas the liminoid is a more 'individualised' experience of literature, drama and even sport. The 'maker' of liminoid symbols and ideas: 'is privileged to make free with his [sic] social heritage impossible to members of cultures in which the liminal is to a large extent the sacrosanct.' (Turner, 1982:52). Industrialised society, by creating its delineated work time, has also created delineated leisure time: 'The liminoid (successor of the liminal in complex large-scale societies, where individuality and optation in art have in theory supplanted collective and obligatory ritual performances).' (Turner, 1987:29).

In contrast, the play of the liminal is always part of, and returns to the 'work', because of the cyclical nature of both the ritual and the agrarian or tribal society. For example, the ritual might be concerned with the gathering of crops: a celebration or plea for good weather, and thus 'play' but part of 'work'. This does not apply in industrialised (and now technologised) society because the members of the society do not share this overriding collective experience: The usefulness of Turner's distinction between liminal and liminoid in this thesis therefore depends on its framing in contemporary British society, and whether this automatically places all the experience of the participants in the liminoid category. This may not be the case, because of the importance of the group experience. The participant groups are not people meeting purely by chance, as would be the case in leisure activities such

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as sport or cinema. They share a history and experience of disablement or illness, and in some cases of their institution concretising that experience i.e. this is a place where disabled people spend their days.

With reference to Schechner's efficacy-entertainment continuum cited in 1.1 (his theory of the relationship between ritual and theatre) it is worth noting that he places 'collective creativity' and 'results' with efficacy, whereas 'emphasis now', 'criticism flourishes' and 'individual creativity' are placed with entertainment (1988:120). Is liminal aligned with efficacy because of the collectivity of its experience? The immediacy (spontaneous communitas), critical (anti-structure) and individual qualities of the liminoid experience would place it at the entertainment end of the continuum. Yet the effects of this experience, as will be clearly demonstrated throughout the thesis, are not those associated with passive acceptance of entertainment. As this seems to return to the undermining of 'entertainment' (1.8) there needs to be a new label for active, positive and transforming entertainment:

> Artists work at the interface between the real and the imagined. They coax us out of the numbness of the everyday- where life passes in a blur – and into a heightened space where we can inhabit other lives [...] This is not just relief – it is revelation.
>
> <div align="right">Winterson (2001:11).</div>

In other words, that this experience can effect real change precisely because it is a transitory and fictional experience. As cited previously, Schechner emphasised that the polarity was between efficacy and entertainment as labels, not between ritual and theatre. Is collective creativity more important than individual creativity? There is a vital relationship between the experience of the individual and the experience of the group outlined in Chapter 3, in discussing Turner's communitas, and this

relationship is at the heart of the transformation explored by this thesis. It is also at the heart of the theatre event.

The practice of the participatory drama sessions explored during this research is equally difficult to categorise as either liminal or liminoid. Certainly within the sessions participants were encouraged, and in many cases felt able, to take a break from their usual roles and accompanying 'baggage'. This is a huge advantage of working with a 'stranger'. It is possible to see the workings of the day centres, however friendly, forward-thinking and flexible, as structures which have a predetermined future for their attendees. Indeed many participants/attendees themselves assumed this. This would place the experience of the participatory drama sessions in the liminal category. However the qualities attributed to the liminoid experience (and from the entertainment end of the continuum) of greater individuality and experimentation are recognisable within these sessions. Although the structure and the break from the routine may be predetermined in some way, the participants' experience of the break is not. They share the same experience of 'different from the usual', but the individual experience is unique to each of them, even if it is not challenging, or potentially life-changing. Thus their return to the structure, although subjectively planned, may be as different selves, and objective in that they can see and/or feel this difference. This concept of objective and subjective, and the participants' experience of this, is discussed further in Chapter 5.

There is a supposition that groups treated poorly or as a minority by society, form an alliance in their opposition to the inequality. Whilst their individual experiences will be different, their collective feeling of being discriminated against is strongly shared and identified. This would again place the experience of the sessions within the category of liminal (as members of a particular group) rather

than the liminoid. This might be reinforced, for example, during an outing made by a group of people with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness. The break from the usual structure would allow and enable different behaviour (action) at a different location. However, their roles within the group might remain the same, e.g. as the 'loud one'or the 'bossy one'. The frame might also remain the same as the location enables different actions but remains within a defined context i.e. that of an accompanied and supported group, returning to its place within the social structure.

Yet the theatre event alters this context and offers the opportunity to try out different actions and behaviour, as defined previously. This is not a rehearsal as used in some role-play for self-advocacy and assertiveness, although there may be elements of this. Rather, it is the feeling of being able to try alternative behaviour that may then become familiar and repeated in a different situation. Throughout this thesis the term liminal is used to replace the liminal and liminoid distinction, and the term 'liminal zone' is identified as the location for this. The discussion of this thesis may generate new terms that better describe the relationship between the collective and individual experience, and also between the immediate experience and its effect (the entertainment and the efficacy).

Schechner discussed these differences in terms of the destinations reached by the participants as cited previously (1.3). He suggested that rituals permanently change who people are, terming these 'transformations' (for Turner liminal), whereas play (liminoid) effects only a temporary change, as people always return to their ordinary selves. This he termed 'transportation' (2006:72). The transformation is all to do with the change of status, regardless of the experience of the participant. A person may enjoy an extensive wedding ceremony or not, their 'status' has still

changed to that of being married. They may be happily married or not, their status remains unchanged. Therefore this definition comes from the outside, a label placed on that person by the society in which they live, even if they choose to take on that label. It is not an internal change. This is not the transformation examined in this thesis.

> We do not have to try to gain an insight into who we really are; this would be an unproductive backward look to a non-existent state [...] we would see how human identities are a narrative being constantly developed as we vacillate between the part we wish to write for ourselves *at any given moment,* and the way in which society tries to cast us. (Author's italics).
>
> Kempe (1995:182).

1.11 Summary.

Turner's theory of liminality within ritual, and its subsequent application to what he termed social drama, is of relevance to Applied Theatre and participatory drama in terms of the potential for change within individual participants, and how subsequently they as a group may use these tools to challenge discrimination within society. How might this be examined and facilitated in the practice explored throughout this thesis? In defining further the experience of liminality within the theatre event, the following must be carefully examined.

Firstly, it is important to explore the use, meaning and practical application of the term 'role'. Through its use in the theatre event, there must be an examination of how and why a role is inhabited in everyday life, i.e. beyond the make-believe. How do participants make active choices about physical and verbal signals and actions that confirm or deny these roles? How can participation in a theatre event support and extend these choices?

Secondly, it is important to examine fictive frames and the way in which these are made accessible. Beyond the situating of participants within the theatre

event, their memory of previous actions must be supported: what has gone before, how they might behave in the future, and how this affects and frames our present behaviour. This cognitive understanding of past, present and future, may be enabled by the recognition of objective and subjective self (self and other) and the cycle of understanding that this develops.

Finally, all of the above must be placed in the political context of the grouping of people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness, and the implications this places on all of the above. This recognition of an active self and a 'can do' position within the participant group and society must be explored. Specific actions that enable and contribute to this behaviour must be examined within the above contexts.

Rather than isolating this group in exploring the way the liminal zone occurs, it is vital to view the theory from the perspective of the disabling attitude of society, and the limitations placed upon groups such as these. How can the techniques and methodology of Applied theatre and participatory drama be used to challenge prejudice and support pro-active behaviour in the same way self-advocacy has developed as a political movement led by people with learning and other disabilities? This thesis will explore some possible answers. Turner described the liminal as: '[an] institutional capsule or pocket which contains the germ of future social developments, of societal change, in a way that the central tendencies of a social system can never quite succeed in being.' (1982:45). The same might be said of Applied Theatre.

This thesis also attempts this research using methodology that supports the ideology of the practice, i.e. involving and supporting the participants in a pro-active process that is about them as people, and not just as subjects of the research.

This is linked with the application of Turner's theory. It is this methodology that is

explained in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: The Silent Voices of the Debate:
The Methodology of my Research.

'Many researchers struggle to resolve the tension that exists between research that is academically rigorous, acceptable to funding organisations and publishable, and [...] which is of use to the people who are subject to it [...] and can inform and promote needed social change.' (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003:9).

'It isn't change – it's changing thinking, not changing completely.' (Participant at CAST!: Mind The Gap conference, 31 May 2006).

2.0 Chapter 2 discusses the methodology of the thesis with reference to the terms of the introduction. Specifically, the ethical concerns are outlined in the application of research theory to research practice. The Action Research context of the study is explained with reference to the participatory drama sessions of the field work, and the contribution of the participant groups to the research. Challenges of the documentation and explanation of this study as research are also discussed, echoing some elements of Practice as Research (PaR).

2.1 Action Research: learning how practice becomes research.

This research has partly been undertaken in order to develop and improve drama practice with these participant groups (with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness). This may then be more widely disseminated through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff in education and Health and Social Care. CPD is defined by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) as:

> reflective activity designed to improve an individual's attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills. It supports individual needs and improves professional practice.
>
> (2008).

This activity may be internal, or involve inter-organisation (cluster) networks, or external practitioners. But in all cases the activity is designed to improve practice through reflection on existing practice. This focus on activity is therefore clearly distinct from the theoretical pedagogy or instructive handbooks of early drama in education research (Bolton, 1979; Morgan and Saxton, 1987; Neelands, 1990). CPD is also, crucially, a pathway for workers across the sectors of both Health and Social Care, and education, to access drama.

As a practitioner one of my aims has always been to discover ways in which theatre and drama in education techniques will better enable both participation in the theatre event, and an experience that is of meaning, for the whole of the participant group involved. This might be through feeling, action, or thought, but an occurrence in which the participant is interested by the process, becomes involved in the process and thus invests in what is happening. This may then become something they remember, something that enters and becomes part of them. This understanding of behaviour and communication (within the context of the fictive theatre event) is linked in this research with 'emancipatory interests' in understanding the self in particular contexts. This understanding is aimed at enabling a transformation in the self, or within a personal or social situation. (Moon, 1999:14). Reflexivity, as used in Chapter 5 to explain the detail of this cycle of transformation, is used in this thesis as a term aligned with reflective practice in health and welfare research, examining 'aspects of practice taken for granted or intuitive' (Taylor and White, 2000:37). This is applied firstly to my own practice as research, and to the participant groups in their understanding of the change occurring within and beyond the theatre event.

This cumulative relationship between responding and initiating, or realisation and application, is central to my practice. Therefore I chose 'Action Research' as my primary research method for the thesis to explore and develop this relationship. This method is 'a major mode of enquiry in professional development.' (O'Hanlon, 2003:23). It is a priority to disseminate my research to the wider community of artists, educators, and Health and Social Care workers because this is not always possible through practice. As Stenhouse strongly phrased it: '[T]he act of finding out has to be undertaken with an obligation to benefit others than the research community.' (Rudduck and Hopkins, 1985:57). This debate is at the centre of Practice as Research (PaR) and is also of relevance to Action Research in attempting to ensure that the findings of the research find their way into practice that touches the participant groups and other practitioners.

The shift from my professional practice to this research is one of investigation, and the techniques used and developed with the participant groups support this. Yet it is only through the doing that I can do. It is only in the implementation that this research is validated. Practice does not exist in order to be placed:

> within the vocabulary of a universal research language [...There has to be a] reasserting [of] the research equivalent of practice?
>
> Thomson (2003:179).

Ultimately the practice is not a tool for research; the research is the tool for the practice. As Action Research, the research informs my future practice. Yet as Thomson highlighted, the profile of such important and exploratory practice seems only to be validated through the label of research. This research is not Practice as Research because there are other supporting elements to practice in the field work as explained

above. There must also be consideration of practice that necessarily involves ethical issues such as ownership of the work, and confidentiality. This care and acknowledgement of participants has to be transferred from the field of practice to that of research, and documented in a way that supports this ethical stance. Research disseminated as performance (Leighton, 2003) does not encounter this problem. It is the translation into the writing that shifts the ownership and analysis of the research. It is only as practitioners (as practitioner researchers) explore this that the debate of documentation in this field of research is made explicit.

It is of prime importance in the thesis to clarify the process through which members of the participant groups involved in the field work feel able and want to contribute to the research.

> What will the research achieve in terms of improving the lives of those whose selves become 'sources' and whose meaning becomes 'material'? Will it achieve any more than furthering academic careers and publication lists?
> Stone and Priestley (1996:7).

It is especially important with this particular group of people that they are seen as contributors to, and not receivers of, the process of the drama (field) work. This is a 'given' in my practice with these participant groups, the 'levelling' effect of the make-believe that was discussed in relation to spontaneous communitas in Chapter 1 (1.4). Yet these practised assumptions are challenged afresh by the practice of/as research. It follows that each participant's perceptions of the work they undertake, and their understanding of the way in which it happens, forms part of the research. It is also important to highlight this in the hybrid field of arts and health. It is only through exploring these challenges that new ways of researching can be recognised. This is already occurring in the field of Health and Social Care through work such as that of

Clegg (2004) and Brooks and Davies (2007). Alternative ways of more accessible documenting of research were referred to in the introduction, and the 'Accessible Summary' to this thesis is an example of this.

The defining characteristics of Action Research include that it is practical, that it promotes change, that it forms a cyclical process, and that it focuses on active participation by practitioners (Denscombe, 1998). Thompson described Theatre Action Research (TAR) as an 'action research spiral' that 'continues and necessarily multiplies.' (2003:150). In this thesis a cyclical, informing mode of research completes the whole picture of which the participatory drama sessions of the field work form a part. This is very similar to the process through which the participants in the field work develop their participation in the theatre event. Although this research is complete, this continues as a spiral through my practice informed by this research. Perhaps for the participants also the experience of the field work has begun rather than completed different ways of being and doing. Are development and dissemination in professional practice enough for the participant groups within the thesis? The research of this thesis is not inclusive, in that the research is not primarily concerned with enabling people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness to become researchers. Yet elements of this may form a 'move on' from inclusive research. (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003:220). Inclusive research by definition suggests an assumption of 'us' and 'them' i.e. there is a need to include. This 'othering' of people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness forms part of the debate concerning reflexivity in Chapter 5 (5.5). However, the use of Action Research and its emphasis on professional development may enable research such as this to develop if the findings

are disseminated. The different practitioners who access the research, either through CPD informed by the research, or as document, may take the research further within their own professional development. This in turn develops practice and the contribution of the participant groups. O'Hanlon referred to the 'participatory paradigm' as opposed to a 'distributive paradigm' (2003:11). As social policy, this demands equality through giving everyone a voice in defining their own needs, instead of one group deciding on behalf of another. The methodology of this thesis therefore shares the ethical concerns of Practice as Research in that it is of use to the participants and not just the researchers. In dissemination this may contribute to a model in which the skills of a practitioner, and the tool of participatory drama, are used alongside and in support of the participant group in the group's own research.

There is also an element of 'emancipatory research' (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003) in that my skills as a drama practitioner are at the disposal of the participant group: I become an 'expert servant' (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003:50). Previously this term was linked with the understanding of the self in transformation within a particular situation i.e. the theatre event, but not in research terms i.e. changing the role of the participant groups into researchers. In the emancipatory research model the control is in the hands of the participant group and this was not the case in this research. '[W]here the researcher has expertise in research skills, this should not be taken as a green light to assume knowledge of the needs, feelings and conceptualizations of other research participants.' (Stone and Priestley, 1996:21). Substituting either drama or practice (skills) for the term research in the above quotation is true and a guiding principle of my professional practice, or indeed, my research as practice. But not of the practice as

research and I admit this openly. Although the content of the field work was shared or part-'controlled' by the participant group, the research question was not. This is documented as my PhD, however ethical my concerns and my awareness. 'Theorising by people with learning disabilities rarely finds its way into print.' (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003:56). However, as research such as this is disseminated more widely into practice across the fields of education and Health and Social Care as discussed previously, the group's own research may be published or enter the public domain in ways described in the introduction.

The principles of my research are ones that I apply in *my own* future practice, as my work includes more evaluation from the participant group, and not just from myself to the funding body. As stated earlier in the chapter the use of the term reflexivity is linked in this thesis with my reflective practice. Goodley (2000) explained two contrasting attitudes towards disability research: firstly the rational theorists, for whom the discussion was of the subject versus object. Are people with learning disabilities the subjects (I do) or objects (They do)? Are they part of the research, or are they observed as the research? This continuum takes shape as the search for the 'authentic voice' i.e. the voice of people with learning disabilities. The second approach is that of the practitioners and considers the questions put forward by participants, involving them in the research process from the outset.

This thesis uses elements of both approaches, in combining input from the participants as well as observation of other groups. The input from the participants has however been mainly confined to the content of the practical sessions rather than the direction of the research. The research question is mine as researcher and I have

explained this to all the groups I have worked with, although initially in more general terms of change within theatre and drama, rather than identifying Turner's liminality within performance analysis as the stimulus for the research. However, as previously discussed it is important in terms of ethics to involve the participant groups as much as possible in the process of the questions, and not only in working out the answers together. This was a gradual realisation for me as researcher as the thesis progressed.

Some of the debate and my subsequent writing have arisen because of the input of the participant groups. For example my rediscovery of the importance of performance, and indeed the whole of the debate concerning the movement in and out of the theatre event, arose because I could see the difference made to the participants by their 'achievement' and the recognition they received from others through presentation. This was echoed by the professional actors in the acting company at Mind The Gap. This offers an opportunity to me as researcher in this gap between what we know as a group and what I can express in my research findings. This is similarly reflexive in my own struggle for articulation and to do the participants justice. The use of Turner's theory of liminality proved a vital frame of reference for analysing the Action Research and documenting the results from the field work. Turnbull defined field work itself as liminal: a 'temporary suspension of belief and practice' (1990:76). Turnbull also importantly reiterated that 'total involvement [in the practice] in no way detracts from objective analysis.' (1990:53). In Chapter 3 my sharing of what came to be defined as communitas in this thesis is important (3.11). It was vital for me too to experience what was happening in order to define *and contribute to* the process and the transformation, as a researcher as well as practitioner. I was not an observer recording what I saw,

although at other times in the research I have been able to complete my picture of practice through observation.

Techniques and understanding of transformation through the theatre event are similarly applied throughout my practice. These elements of change and application of own research to own practice are essential components of Action Research. Were I to begin this research now, I would work differently with the groups involved with the early field work. Thus this research has ended, and informed my professional practice. My understanding informs future change in my practice.

The methodology has to support the exploration of transformation in the theatre event through Turner's liminal theory. Conceptually his description of the space between realities (the liminal zone) appeared to parallel that of the theatre event. The importance of this space away from a participant's experience of reality may be crucial to their development within it. This in turn may provide the (liminal) potential for transformation in participants beyond the make-believe: the possibility of participation in the theatre event providing different opportunities for a participant in real life. It follows therefore that the research method(s) employed must allow for the exploration of this potential for participants in and out of the theatre event. This has to occur in the research as practice i.e. the participatory drama sessions, and in supporting research methods.

These supporting methods included observation of a range of theatre events: participatory drama sessions led by other practitioners, and rehearsal of professional performance. Understanding the shift from fictive to non-fictive, and what this means to participants, cannot be explored only through interview because of the varying

confidence and willingness of participants to engage in verbal discussion. Therefore as this shift or movement was identified as important in individual transformation, so this formed part of the content of the participatory drama session. This realisation occurred through the analysis of the theatre event through Turner's theory of liminality, and the subsequent change in research and practice to further develop the inquiry outlines the link between Action Research and reflective practice.

2.2 Reflective practice: when practice becomes research.

Schon's discussion of reflective practice (1991) asserted that the evidencing of learning that does not involve a *fixed, knowable endpoint* challenges established technical rationality. Even though one discovery may not follow directly as a result from another in a progression towards this endpoint, the knowledge acquired through the process is still cumulative, and this formed the central part of Schon's argument. As many of the problems in the technical rational type of research are uniform, similar solutions can be applied. It is also typical of this approach that the separation between research and practice is common, and the relationships between them are very carefully defined. This is obviously different from the approach taken in this thesis. Schon distinguished in this model between the 'problem-solving' of professional practice, and the 'problem-setting' of research (1991:40).

The importance of research *'as part of practice'* in Action Research (Denscombe, 1998:59), and hence its use in this research highlights Schon's theory of knowing-in-action as an element under scrutiny. Schon defined this as follows: the knowing is not an application of knowledge, but *is* the knowledge; knowing is inherent

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in intelligent action: 'the know-how is *in* the action' (1991:50). This does not take the form of rules or plans in the mind before action, and this suggests a theory that at least acknowledges the relevance of times in which what is happening is informed by instinct and emotion as well as rational application. Schon explained the properties of knowing-in-action as follows: -

> Actions, recognitions and judgements which we know how to carry out spontaneously. We do not think about them prior to, or during, performance.
> We are often unaware of having learned to do any of these.
> We may sometimes be aware of the internalised understanding in our feelings during the action.
> We are usually unable to describe the knowing which our action reveals.
> (1991:54).

This is of course particularly applicable to the sorts of decisions taken every day by professional practitioners across the fields of education and Health and Social Care. It is also true of work in Applied Theatre and drama in education. When leading a participatory drama session, I do, think, reflect and apply ideas and thoughts continuously throughout a session. There is no magic formula, nor am I searching for one (I do not deny the use of 'tricks': favourite phrases or exercises that I use while I decide what to do next!). However, as a practitioner I am rarely in a position to spend time on post-event analysis beyond the demands of the relevant funding body. This research offered an opportunity to focus on this in detail. I rarely explore why I took a specific decision, or the group decided on a particular practical exercise, beyond documenting this for partners within the project, e.g. staff at the day centre, or the evaluation for the funders. Again this research, and my practice in the field work, have provided me as a practitioner with the opportunity to do this.

It is also important to explain another component of Schon's theory: that of reflection-in-action, which can refer to performance or preparation for performance in a work situation. Schon was clear that this became a crucial part of research that enabled a researcher to research within a practical context, in that there is no separation between thinking and doing. Implementation is built into the enquiry. The investigation that distinguishes the use of my practice as research from my professional practice is already present, even if unacknowledged or undeveloped. Action Research takes this one step further, in using the acquired knowledge to further develop practice.

I have to confess that my recognition of Action Research was more an acknowledgment of what was taking place in the early stages of my research, rather than a conscious decision to use my early field work to support the Action Research, which perfectly demonstrates the concept of reflective practice. It is also due to my starting point for this thesis as a practitioner and not a practitioner researcher. It was only when I began documenting the process of the practice in the research that I became aware of what I was doing in research terms. For example, in running a practical workshop, I am continuously assessing if people understand my instructions; feel comfortable with the action; or want to have first/last turn. I never stop and think about this, it happens as I am going around the group, while I am talking, laughing and explaining. I 'know' as I act. But as I stop and look around, notice who is doing what, and then speak again, I am reflecting in action: putting what I have observed into practice. The methodology for this research has therefore to support this development within myself, in addition to supporting the ethical concerns in supporting the participant groups. Action Research does this, as I learn to describe and disseminate the

'knowing that [the] action reveals.' (Schon, 1991:54). This has to be accessible for practitioners, and practitioner researchers, in other fields. Taylor suggested that the emphasis of Action Research was placed on evaluation whereas reflective practice focused on the documenting and understanding of the 'tacit knowledge base' (1996:29). However, whilst this rightly acknowledges the often unacknowledged theory that exists in excellent practice, Action Research exists in this research as a cyclical process in using research methods to 'enhance and systemise [the] reflection [of reflective practice].' (Denscombe, 1998:60).

2.3 Specific methods used within the field work of the Action Research: devising as oralysis.

The term method, as previously stated, is aligned with research, whereas technique is identified in this thesis with a particular way of working in theatre or drama in education in my practice. All of these are clearly used in support of the over-riding methodology. It is important to clarify the content and format of the practical field work in this discussion of methodology. Each participant group and the length of the field work has been outlined in the introduction. Each group took part in participatory drama sessions and I use the term deliberately to reflect the participation of every member of the group in the process of creating drama. My aim as a practitioner and as practitioner researcher is to involve everyone in some way.

For example, someone not wanting to stand up can be given a seated role; someone not wanting to speak can be given a gesture; someone not wanting to 'act' can help me 'direct'. Difficulties with reading and writing were made irrelevant by the use of showing and co-directing which I used with all the groups in the field work, with a

record of our choice of movement and dialogue being kept by me as workshop leader. I always asked a character what they wanted to say and do (in the scenario already decided) and if they were unsure would ask for help from others e.g.: 'What could Pat say? If she's angry, how could she show us that?' so that the resulting pose, tableau or scene used contributions from several group members. Thus the dialogue was 'scripted' by the group without being written down. We also replayed scenes to check that the overall effect was as we wanted, as outlined subsequently in rehearsing and recording the video scenes with Groups D, E and F. This is precisely the clarification required of my 'knowing' as a practitioner for dissemination within the research.

The process of the field work used devising techniques such as those used by O'Neill (1995) and Boal (1979, 1995) to build make-believe scenes (the theatre event). These practitioners were chosen because of the accessibility of their exercises. For example, O'Neill's 'Process Drama' (1995) outlined an episodic structure that enables groups to explore a situation from different points of view, and within an extended time frame. Thus if a group cannot relate to a particular character or scenario, it is possible to approach the 'story' from a different angle. During the field work this was used to devise material in settings familiar to the participants.

Group E talk a lot about their 'days out'. I move some chairs into rows, two behind two. `come on, let's get on the bus` says Rosemary, motioning the others towards the chairs. `I'm going to have that black pudding again.` `Full English for me` nods Jenny, more quietly. `Thank you Bill` she adds, to an imaginary bus driver.

However, in the application of reflective practice it is important to clarify how the cumulative devising process used with many of the groups became a research method and not just a teaching technique or theatre skill, or indeed my usual practice. In devising and rehearsing the extended final scene for presentation with Group A there were opportunities (by setting them as part of the scene) to re-present participants' experiences in the session that they and not just I had selected. This provided an opportunity in research terms to explore the idea of transformation from the perspective of the participant group, and how they had experienced change (if they had) during the creation of the make-believe. The process also had to provide space for the group to respond to the presentation of what had happened. This took the form of a brief discussion after the scene in the final session, which was not an ideal solution.

The work with this group was not about exploring a particular issue (although my early notes state that the management asked for an emphasis on 'caring and sharing' if possible). Yet the presentation could easily have been 'Work we have enjoyed in our drama sessions' or 'What we have found difficult in our drama sessions', either of which would comprise a sharing of the participants' experience of themselves in a particular situation, through the medium of drama. Some 'scenes' were repeated and built into a form of presentation that Group A shared with staff members. The argument of this thesis is not about the efficacy of the theatre event i.e. whether or not the creative experience holds enjoyment and meaning with potential for personal development for participants. Nor at this point is the focus on the ways in which presentation and celebration of skills might support and develop the self-esteem of the participating actors. It is the evidencing and documenting of what every artist, teacher,

researcher, participant or all of these has seen happen in drama. This is the challenge for the devising process in this context, within the framework of the application of Turner's liminal theory to the theatre event.

It seemed there were possibilities for developing a research method involving photographs into one that utilised the comfort and familiarity the groups developed with the devising process. 'Dramatic oralysis' was outlined by Kajic Jackson as a research method: 'to record and retell these transformations [within drama experiences].' (2002:47). Kajic Jackson stressed the importance of involving the group participants in explaining their experience, terming their role 'co-researchers' (2002:48). Their explanation (presentation) is of what they know because of their involvement in the theatre event in what Kajic Jackson termed: '[the] duality of [...] representation and discussion of meanings.' (2002:49). A photograph is taken not during the process but of an 'image of their experience' (2002:49) that the co-researchers have created for that purpose. Thus the meanings that might be difficult to articulate are shown in dramatic form. This is obviously more accessible for those to whom verbal communication is not easy or usual. The image is a depiction of their own feelings and thoughts, embodied in their physical picture. These images are then supported in the documentation of the research by the words of the participants explaining and supporting their choice of image. A celebration and 're-telling' of a show was done in a similar way with Group G, although as an evaluatory tool for the group rather than a research method, and this is outlined in Chapter 6.

However, photographs lose the dynamic of moving living active theatre in being a flat two-dimensional image. It is also difficult to avoid the construction of such a

tableau being led by the more verbally articulate within the participant groups. It is true of any research that it is framed by the bias of the researcher, if only by the question the researcher is asking. It is therefore important to clarify this starting point and what is important to the researcher in the aims of the research. It is equally vital, to match this, that the participants are able to determine their own meanings i.e. what the project has meant to them, and to share this in some way, even if they are not co-researchers as outlined earlier in the chapter. It is then the researcher's responsibility to present this as accurately as possible. I was unable to obtain permission to use photographs with Groups A, B and C and so developed a technique that, following Kajic Jackson, created tableaux about the experience of the theatre event for the participants. The application of Turner's liminal theory contributed to my reflection on the group experience.

The echoing hall is full of chairs left out from a meeting. I slowly stack them at the sides, looking up at the clock. The start of the session is always drawn out, as group members make their way from their various activities throughout the day centre. Saucepans clank in the adjoining kitchen as lunch preparation begins. The stage is festooned with tinsel from the Christmas production several months before, and there is some fading artwork pinned to a wall. The door swings open and I hover nervously with my 'register'. Jim moves towards me, head bowed, and shakes my hand. 'Hallo Jim, how are you?' Others enter the room, alongside staff. **'Alright Becky?'** smiles Billie and I am relieved to answer and remember her name correctly. 'Yes thanks Billie, you?' There is lots of greeting and hand shaking among the group members, many of whom have been coming to the day centre all their adult lives. 'Hallo David, nice to see you' I say to the newest arrival. **'That's not**

David, that's Micky' Billie calls out, and the group break into laughter and shouts of 'Not David, Micky' 'That's Micky' 'His name's Micky'. I apologise, and share the laughter at my mistake.

By the end of the sessions with Group A (my first within the field work) the focus was upon the devising at the centre of reflective practice with myself as participant observer. My notes were my articulation of what had occurred, although I recorded comments from the group members. We decided to end these sessions with an extended scene involving all the group participants. This was partly in response to their enjoyment of the 'acting' scenes we worked on throughout the sessions. The group were becoming increasingly confident in their ability to demonstrate the emotions of their character and to improvise gesture and dialogue in keeping with the scenario we had decided upon. Without exception, their desire to contribute and take part in the action had grown. Along with repeated requests to be animals, and do a kidnapping, group members asked if we could act out a television soap, so the presentation was based on the BBC serial drama 'Eastenders', but renamed after the day centre which the group attended. The plot and dialogue were mainly suggested by me, but some group members improvised additional dialogue which was then included in the 'script'. Although this did not lead to a 'performance' we did share it with all the staff members who had worked alongside the group throughout the sessions, and this gave the group the opportunity to present their work to an audience without strange people being present.

One example highlights the experience of devising by two participants and the understanding of this through Action Research. Rob took on the role in the presentation

of 'the heavy' into which he could put his knowledge of karate. He enjoyed demonstrating a particular kick and gesture which became the way his character greeted the rival 'baddie', but was sufficiently aware of the pretence to ensure he did not make contact with or hurt anyone. At the final session a group member returned who had not participated for several weeks, due to ill health. Martin found concentration and maintaining a role extremely difficult. He also did not have the benefit of the development of skills the others enjoyed. However, he wanted to take part in the scene. I placed him as the brother of the karate expert, so that standing alongside he could easily copy what Rob was doing, and contribute in whatever way he wished: by mimicking a phrase, gesture or move. What occurred was that Rob effectively directed Martin, teaching him the karate pose and gesture, reminding him when to move, and initiating the action when required within the scene. This series of moments is worthy of analysis because the form of the theatre event, and Rob's own understanding of the distinction between reality and pretence, enabled Rob to go beyond his usual role in becoming a teacher/supporter/director. In participating, he wanted Martin to be able to join in, and to make the presentation of the scene as good as it could be i.e. that Martin's pose and gesture in role were both accurate and on cue. How does the devising as a research method enable an investigation of what was occurring here, framed within the liminal zone of the theatre event? Several points are worthy of examination: -

1. Rob demonstrating the karate pose to Martin.

2. Both actors playing characters in the presentation.

3. Both actors individually showing how they felt about their part in the presentation: what happened, did they enjoy it?

4. As 3. but about working/acting with each other.

From this I believe they (not I) demonstrate the way they worked together and show that both participants took on different roles and different ways of behaving in the frames both of performance, and preparing for performance. The sharing of photographs within dramatic oralysis is replaced by the creation of the tableaux and accompanying discussion. This might then enable recognition, and perhaps an understanding, of their experience in the theatre event. This provokes further discussion and tableaux, to enable the participation of those less comfortable with vocal discussion. For example other group members express their opinions of these particular actions. Although the written record is my record, this is a method that enables greater contribution from members of the participant group than verbal discussion.

At what points in the above do I use reflective practice as defined by Schon? In terms of reflection-in-action: I was able during and between each session to decide which exercises people enjoyed, those with which they felt comfortable, and with which they had a particular sense of investment. This is part of my usual practice. In the case of Martin's involvement however, I had no time to do this, because Martin arrived at the beginning of the session having missed several weeks, with the rest of the group having previously been allocated characters in the 'Eastenders' presentation. I needed to involve him, and I needed to allocate a part that would enable him to contribute in some way. As mentioned previously, although Martin's concentration span was short, he enjoyed copying the actions of other people. As Rob's part was so action-centred, I thought Martin could supplement this, whilst still leaving Rob with the 'heavy' dialogue that he had devised with such relish. If Martin copied this too, there would be

no problem within the drama, rather a realistic echo of the supporters surrounding a person who perceives him/herself to be powerful. As a participant, Rob might see this as inflating his own importance within the action, as the actor who leads.

All these decisions were taken in a matter of minutes, and would definitely form part of my knowing-in-action: I would have been unable to describe precisely why I took the action I did at that point in time, even though I have explained it at some length above. I am also aware in retrospect that I did not separate my thinking from my doing i.e. I was reflecting in action also. What became clear, through Martin's development in concentration, and in Rob's sensitive sharing of the pose, was not just a development in their using learned skills within the scene as actors, but as people interacting in a different way together.

As Action Research this method of enquiry progressed from the field work with this group. Tableaux were used in an extension of Boal's techniques (1995) in order to discuss participants' feelings *about* the drama, as well as through the drama, with Group B.

2.4 Specific methods used within the field work of the Action Research: ethnographic theatre.

Mienczakowski explained a feature of 'Ethnographic Theatre' (1995:8): the research report as script, with reference to a project in which the same script, as a theatre event, was performed several times (1994:16-23). His emphasis, as Kajic Jackson's, was on the prime importance of the participant group's experience and the group contributing to the *process by which this is reported* as truthfully as possible. This happens through a process of recording and transcribing interviews and transforming them into

performance pieces. The resulting pieces use the group's own words, and are subject to their approval and constant revision. The group cited in his project attended 'detox' units for drug and alcohol-related problems, and the script explored their health concerns and critical moments in their lives. Once scenarios were chosen (Mienczakowski does not state how this was done) they were scripted as much as possible using the group's own dialogue. This was then read, shared and reviewed by the participant group. The research process even continues into performance, as the audience are invited to discuss the content with the cast and writers, often revising the material using Boal's Forum Theatre techniques (1979).

The second example of field work outlined formed a complete project, and it progressed in a very similar way to the project described by Mienczakowski, although I am not making an explicit comparison, rather referring to points of interest in Mienczakowski's own discoveries about this method of research. This project was not undertaken specifically as research for this thesis. This is also the work involving three groups of adults recovering from mental illness, and not with learning disabilities.

This project (called 'Silent Voices' from which the title of this chapter was taken) was to record the experiences of so-called 'service users' of County Council services, in the area of mental health: '[...]an attempt to create a genuine understanding of how it actually *feels*' (Mienczakowski, 1994:16). By recording a video of the presentation in dramatic form of these opinions, the Council hoped to produce an honest range of responses from as many participants as possible. I worked with three separate groups, who never met each other and who did not even see each other's parts of the video because of the strict agreement regarding confidentiality. With each group the journey

working towards the product video took a similar route, although the contents of these practical drama sessions were radically different. Group D for example would not stand up to do any drama for the entirety of the first two sessions (half the devising time we had together). This is explored further in Chapter 4. Group E began enacting scenes and tableaux within the introductory session, a very friendly and mainly female group who could not wait to 'show me' what went on. Group F were vocal in discussion and this type of 'meeting' was familiar territory in terms of vocalising their discontent. Understandably, they were initially reluctant to work in drama to explain their views. Two of the groups worked exclusively with me and subsequently the cameraperson, another had supporters present throughout.

Generally we began the process by discussing the issues of concern within the services on offer: problems and possible solutions. Wherever possible I would use tableaux or enactment to clarify and maintain accessibility for all members, although verbal and listening skills were not an issue once people had committed to the project. But I wanted to ensure as many people as possible felt they could take part if they wished. I scripted the scenes for the video, using as much verbatim material (from the discussions) as possible. If the dialogue was too sensitive or personal, I would use people's own words in other ways. For example, one hospital ward was described as Victorian, and this echoed in various actions throughout the scene, such as the 'patients' in the ward curtseying to the 'staff'. This scene opened with a shot of a prop newspaper called 'Victorian Times'.

All of the above corresponds with Mienczakowski's *critical* ethnography (Author's italics) in being open about a 'framework for empowerment' in voicing 'the

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concerns of those who have little access or control over the institutions which generate meanings on their behalf.' (1994:17). In the same way as critical ethnography, this thesis embraces the concepts of oppression and ideology. The 'Silent Voices' project was an attempt to promote and invite debate, and to influence change. Our (the participant groups and supporting staff) intention in making the video was that it was a true account of people's experiences, and did not present any other side of the debate. The views put forward in the video were of the service users alone, there was no triangulation or verification by any of the staff of the institutions or bodies challenged by the video. The group run by Social Care and Health had two social workers in attendance throughout, who were completely supportive even when challenged on their own roles; they did not suggest any corrections to the material. The process of filming and viewing each recorded scene both during and after the filming ensured that the product video was what the participant groups wished to present. As a research method, ethnographic theatre therefore retains the ownership of the documentation and guarantees practice as research.

The groups themselves were happy with the truth they showed; we had 'faithfully reconstructed' their 'world of others' (Mienczakowski, 1994:18). The use of drama did not take away from their truth of what was shown. The primary concern of the participant groups was that they deserved an answer, as a group, to the points they raised in the video, having invested so much time and energy in its production. I did my best to ensure that those who commissioned the report and who made decisions about the services on offer answered the issues raised by the video, either in written or verbal form accessible to all participants.

In terms of the discussion of transformation the video as theatre event was also a reminder of the content of the participatory drama sessions. In watching a scene, there are glimpses of the process (of the theatre event) through which it has developed, and memories of actions and dialogue within this process. Thus there were opportunities to stimulate discussion among the participant groups regarding their own recognition and understanding of change within the theatre event. However, the strict confidentiality agreement under which the participants agreed to take part prevents the sharing of the product video as research. Thus the documenting of this work reverts to the inequality of myself as researcher recreating this in written words. Yet the use of video documentation as research is a method for future practice as research and has again informed my professional development.

This emphasis on the practical 'doing' that was established as central to drama and theatre and that is equally important in disability politics may itself enable links between research theory and research practice:

> Employing a variety of practical methods [...] as research destination points in their own right can provide a tangible way of illustrating the connectedness between theory and practice.
>
> Grady (1996:61).

This is the challenge, but it may well provide some solutions. There are several potential interpretations of Grady's 'practical methods'. The importance of moments within the practical work has already been highlighted, despite their transience. Applying and using different techniques within practical drama sessions, for example exercises from Boal (1979, 1995) and O'Neill (1995) encourages experimentation for myself as practitioner researcher and for all of us within the group as participants. The exploration in itself forms a link between theory and practice as it happens. In Chapter

4, the use of Boal's methods (who claimed these techniques would facilitate change) enabled a group to participate in the sessions, in effect testing my (practice) aim of enabling participation, through his theory, which in turn became practice and research for us as a group. Finally, including the participant groups as contributors to the entire process i.e. to acknowledge their link with the findings and not just the questions could be seen by itself as a 'research point'. This was done through revisiting all the adult groups that had taken part in field work specifically for the thesis. Much of the interviewing involved creating and sharing tableaux as discussion as previously explained. 'I feel different - [acting is] thinking in your head' was Susan's response when asked what she felt like when acting. (Group A return visit, June 2008). This delineation between the fictive and non-fictive became central to the research because of the participant groups, and the documentation acknowledges the link between the group's drama (not 'my field work') and the 'discovery' that Susan articulated in words for the group members.

2.5 The process versus product continuum: non-participant observation.

There is continuing debate within Applied Theatre and theatre and drama in education concerning the continuum along which 'product' and 'process' are placed. (Bolton, 1979; Jackson, 1993; Hornbrook, 1998; Heddon and Milling, 2006). My own stance as a practitioner whose roots lie in Theatre in Education has remained that too much emphasis on the end-product, and the skills required to present it, usually and necessarily detract from the exploratory process of developing abilities and capabilities: Gardner's 'know-how v. know-that' (1983:68). (A more detailed discussion of

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Gardner's terms and their relevance to liminality is outlined in Chapter 4 (4.3) and

Chapter 6 (6.5)). In other words that participants (and this is of particular relevance for

the participant groups in this research) are placed in situations in which they do not

understand what is happening, for the benefit of others watching and the so-called

'achievement' of a show. This may be termed an achievement for an institution because

it is an undisputed event. It has taken place. The convention of drama always leading to

performance, or that performance is the only possible culmination, is one that as a

practitioner I oppose, especially when the participant groups have been told in advance

of my work with them that drama is about 'doing a show'.

In the field work discussed in this thesis, I was able through participant observation and

non-participant observation to identify and understand the importance of a conscious

recognition by a participant of knowing they had done something that they had not

done before. This was in making or during the theatre event i.e. a fictive action known

by the participant to be fictive. An action is here taken to be a 'doing' previously

perceived as only for other people (particularly important for the participant groups)

and the change this engendered in self-perception. As a practitioner I had observed this

'transformation' throughout many years of practice both in education and in working

with adults and young people with learning disabilities, although I had not articulated it

as clearly as I do now as practitioner researcher. I had therefore prioritised this

experience of meaning within the process (O'Toole, 1992) as participatory drama

session throughout my practice, in support of my position as an

artist/educator/practitioner. The meaning of the work is ultimately for the participants.

During the field work, and particularly the sessions I attended as a non-participant observer, I became more and more aware of the importance of a 'product' as an end to the work that could be celebrated and witnessed. In doing so I moved radically from promoting only process work in drama, a previously 'anchored belief' (O'Hanlon, 2003:49) within my practice. The 'achievement' of pretence, and of these different actions, was concretised for the group members through this experience, and therefore held meaning for them. The participant groups clarified the ability of the theatre event to challenge other people's perceptions of them. This is explained in detail with reference to Turner's communitas in Chapter 3. This was exactly the case with all the groups (D, E and F) in the 'Silent Voices' project in taking part in a video. It is this witnessing that forms an important part of a transformation that might occur within a participant, as was previously discussed in relation to Turner's spontaneous communitas in Chapter 1 (1.4). The observation I was unable to make as a practitioner enabled this understanding as practitioner researcher.

The terms 'achievement' and 'success' can be redefined in the application of the concept of liminality and specifically the liminal zone: a space away from the usual progression of daily life, with the potential for transformation. These moments may occur during the process of the participatory drama session, and are in themselves contributing to the 'success' in that they are a different experience enabled by participation in that process (a theatre event). A participant can be part of this as an actor and can then remember or witness this as something they have accomplished: an achievement. However, the 'product' (another theatre event) extends this further because the 'achievement' and 'success' are witnessed and celebrated by others. This

supports the experience of the participant. This was again identified for me through observing and not leading the sessions. Thus my journey towards practitioner researcher has begun to alter my practice.

2.6 Post-research practice.

In the discussion of the methods of research, the relevance of liminality has moved on from Turner's liminal versus liminoid argument (1.10) into a different area: a process and product that includes aspects of both, and which questions the delineation of process and product in Applied Theatre with these participant groups. But having challenged my stance as a practitioner on the use of process and product, how does this perspective of practitioner researcher affect future practice? This is of course the reason for the choice of Action Research.

It is always possible in developing practice to experiment with the interaction between process and product that best enables creative participation and enjoyment for each group, and each individual. For non-drama specialists the recognisable aim of the theatre form of presentation may be placed as of meaning for the participant group through the change from the fictive to the non-fictive. Liminality, like the theatre event, exists uniquely for each group and each participant and the exploration of process and product supports the experimental nature of the transformation. This formal record stands as a point in a cycle of development for artists, researchers and others working with similar groups. This record, in openly discussing my own journey and highlighting the challenges of becoming a practitioner researcher, also challenges research in this hybrid field. The continuing task in research is to document this valuable and life-

changing work in ways that do justice to outstanding practice, and the creativity of the participants, as briefly discussed in introducing this thesis. Thomson's quest for 'the research equivalent of practice' (2003:179) must continue. Methodology must promote research that combines the ethical (again using the best of practice) alongside the narrative. This dichotomy is at the heart of the debate concerning methodology in this field: that the accessibility of practice is rejected by the documentation of research in turning social contexts into research contexts. In supported autobiographical work, Goodley *et al.* present the 'idiographic' rather than the 'nomothetic': the private and subjective nature of life rather than the public and general (2004:97). As in this thesis, the focus is therefore placed upon the meanings of a culture or person rather than *measuring* the observable facts. The transformation through liminality is defined here in terms of the meaning of the experience for the participants, not in identifying specifically what change has occurred for them. This opens the way for more emancipatory research (Walmsley and Johnson, 2003) within arts in health.

It is important that I acknowledge once again the importance of the contribution the participant groups have made to this research. This record is the articulation of my thoughts, and yet so much of the stimulus that enabled me to write this came not just from the work done by the participants but also from them as people. It could not have happened without them. It is therefore vital that I represent them as best as I can within this record. This is discussed further in Chapter 5 (5.5). For future practice I therefore situate myself as a subject (we do as a group) alongside the participants, in a search for their no longer silent voices.

2.7 Summary.

This chapter has outlined my methodology as adapting different methods of research that involve and include the participant groups in the Action Research. An analysis of oralysis enabled an adaptation of this research method in devising drama scenes. Devising itself was explained as another method, in the change from practice to practice contributing to research. Mienczakowski's 'research as playscript' (1994) was explained with reference to the video made by Groups D, E and F (Silent Voices, 1999). My journey from practitioner to practitioner researcher focused on the journey through the process and product debate. My position on this as a practitioner has altered radically during this research completing the cycle of Action Research in this context.

The continuing quest for research methods that use documentation of the theatre event and yet recognise the ethical concerns associated with these participant groups was discussed. The chapter highlights the importance of the contribution made by practitioners, for whom this ethical stance has been long established, and the use and recognition of this practice in research.

The use of observation as a research method, specifically in connection with the process and product continuum, confirms the importance of the relationship between the group and the individual. The following chapter outlines a term central to the understanding of liminality in Turner's communitas. This is explored in relation to the group dynamic present in the theatre event, and its effect on the individuals within that group. This connection influences the witnessing and celebration referred to previously as reinforcing the change individuals experience for themselves. This is explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Communitas: the group enabling the individual.

'Fragment joins fragment to make humanity.' (Fischer, 1963:13).

3.0 Chapter 3 examines the concept of communitas in Turner's liminality. The spontaneous and felt *connection* between the group, and the resulting contribution this makes to an individual's liminal experience, parallels the unique importance of group work within the theatre event and the effect this has on individual participants. Turner's term is applied in a useful and appropriate context as an important contribution to transformation within the theatre event. This is placed within a discussion of other group activities including sport and play, and in relation to different types of group: created and natural. The link between group experience and its contribution to individual change within the theatre event is outlined in detail with specific reference to two practical exercises from the participatory drama sessions of the field work with two of the seven participant groups.

3.1 The relevance of communitas within the argument of this thesis.

There are three main points in Turner's definition of communitas that are particularly relevant to this exploration of transformation through the theatre event.

The first of these is the importance of being together. The experience is not focused solely on what the group is *doing*. However, this must not contradict the importance of active versus passive in terms of the taking part identified previously as very important for these participant groups. But the emphasis is on a more existential quality. They are also being together as people liberated from their usual way of behaving, because they are in the liminal zone. It is important to examine the differences between a group experience in terms of communitas, and other shared experiences. For example, watching sport and supporting a team; singing together;

or watching and being emotionally affected by a piece of theatre or film. The mood may be shared, but does this promote action? Does the shared experience acknowledge the individuality of each group member? This is discussed in detail in 3.9.

The second point is the response of the group to the actions of another both during and after the theatre event. Whatever an individual may do in terms of spontaneous action or a moment is strengthened for them by the group witnessing and response. This is extended by the group's altered perception of a participant because of this change.

Thirdly, Turner stressed the importance of individuals within the theory of communitas: 'a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals.' (1969:131). This again is crucial in the context of disability politics and psychiatric care: that people are treated as individuals rather than lumped together as a 'disabled group'. It is also a quality prized and respected in work in theatre: that we each bring ourselves to the work. Indeed performance relies on a person bringing elements of their own emotional experience to their work. Boal's Forum Theatre (1979) defined a technique based around the experience of an individual but very precisely in terms of theatrical action and not emotion.

In summary, much of what might be termed the best and most positive about liminality is encapsulated in communitas. This is explained in analysis of exercises during the participatory drama sessions of the field work. But firstly Turner's concept is explained in more detail.

3.2 The human bond.

Turner described communitas as recognition of: '[an] essential and generic human bond' (1969:97) 'that has ceased to be' (1969:96), whilst also acknowledging the fluctuating nature of this bond. Turner suggested that there were two models of the way humans relate to each other as a society, and that these models juxtapose and alternate. The first of these models is a structured hierarchical system that divides people. From this develops the second model: an unstructured community of equal individuals. The first (hierarchical) model was described by Turner as the usual way in which society operates, and the second model (unstructured and equal) more unusual. Yet the second unstructured community is an experience that is easily recognisable. This recognition of what Turner termed communitas may be because it is different from the 'norm', and is commonly associated with a group experience, for example at a football match or concert, or a group reaction to an event such as a tragedy or disaster. Events such as these encourage different rules of interaction among people, and Turner placed this second model as existing within the liminal zone i.e. when different rules of interaction are in place during the stages of the ritual or his social drama.

There is a tendency, and Turner himself succumbed to this, to associate this sort of camaraderie with nostalgic memory, as if there was a time in which society worked happily together and treated each other equally and contemporary moments of this are a link to that time. As Turner asked: 'Has it [communitas] any reality base, or is it a persistent fantasy of mankind [sic], a sort of collective return to the womb?' (1982:45). Association of this camaraderie with ritual inevitably places it in a distanced context i.e. that it is a particular response to a particular situation. That

in itself sets it apart from an emotional response within the usual social structure. This is also true of interaction within the theatre event as identified previously.

Turner specifically referred to the existential quality of communitas, involving 'the whole man in his relation to other whole men [sic].' (1969:127). However, this existential quality requires further definition, specifically in relation to the theatre event. Neelands linked this 'commitment to the idea of the ensemble [...] as the irreducible unit of human agency in theatre making' with 'the idea of social [...] and equal engagement in a processual public sphere.' (2007:315). Is there a propensity towards a common bond between members of a marginalised and oppressed group because of their experience within society, or does this question continue an assumption of 'othering'? In this context, how does a group support the development of individuals within it? Turner's emphasis on the individual in the group is of equal importance within the theatre event and also politically for the participant groups.

3.3 The group versus personal experience: communitas within the liminal.

The importance of Turner's communitas in this thesis is to define and highlight aspects of drama and theatre as a group activity and the ways in which this affects an individual in that participant group. As discussed in Chapter 1, Turner recognised within his theory of liminality the two categories of liminal and liminoid (1982). Liminal he ascribed to agrarian and tribal societies as collectively experienced breaks within the social process. In contrast 'industrialised [sic]' (1982:54) groups experienced liminoid more individually and within time clearly delineated as leisure. The usefulness of these two terms with reference to the theatre event has been questioned, but they may suggest links between the group and individual

experience of liminality that are central to communitas. Turner's liminality is a personal experience. However, because of the social context of this experience it is necessarily affected by other people, and may strengthen or develop each personal liminal zone. Others may experience your moment of liminality, but they do not experience it as you yourself experience it. But their experience extends your own, just as your observation of their behaviour informs and develops their liminality. This is particularly relevant for groups who are unused to sharing positive and affirming social interaction. The liminal zone is the location that makes possible this experience of communitas: the personal experience strengthened and developed by the group experience.

3.4 The distinction between Turner's spontaneous and normative communitas.

Within Turner's explanation, communitas is described as: -

> [the] liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition and creativity [...] from the normal constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses [...]
>
> (1982:44).

Turner thus clearly identified this as a revelation of qualities (usually suppressed within that person) made possible within a specific environment and with different rules of operation in place. Turner emphasised that within his social drama people are conditioned to play specific social roles which he termed 'norm-sets' (1982:46). Communitas provides liberation from these roles and the accompanying behaviour expected in the performance of each role. The power experienced by the individuals and the group as part of this liberation Turner described as 'meta-power'. There are also implications for an event experienced by a group with something in common, a shared history, or both e.g. a group of parents watching their children in a school

event. This is because their relationship to the event may predispose them towards a sharing of their experience of the event.

Yet this experience of liberation need not be transitory or spontaneous. Communitas is a meeting between people: the 'direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities.' (1969:132). Meeting is such an overused word that it is hard to remember its real meaning. Instead of an arrangement to plan work or a collision for an exchange of platitudes on a busy street, as it has come to mean in colloquial usage, Turner used it as a description of the *being* and *being together*: a mutual recognition between people of their similarity rather than their difference: 'Communitas is a fact of everyone's experience.' (1974:231).

However, this does not mean that people completely forget or ignore their usual way of behaving, or the structure in which their usual behaviour occurs. This may affect the experience of communitas, if it is an abrogation, negation or inversion of usual behaviour. For example within a conventional hierarchy a ritual involving the exchange of one social group with another may provoke new ways of interaction and a depth of mutual understanding not previously experienced. This would be reincorporated in some way into the system as people resumed their usual placing within the hierarchy. Afterwards usual roles, status and ways of interacting with each other are resumed, but would be informed by this new level of understanding. The ritual is completed and reincorporated into life. The communitas (in the same way as the liminal zone) can only ever be transitory before itself reverting to a structure.

Turner further defined the following categories: the 'existent spontaneous communitas' once reincorporated becomes normative communitas. Turner applied a third category: 'ideological communitas', to utopian models of society (1969:133).

As identified in 1.4 the spontaneous communitas is deep rather than intense and Turner referred more than once to the quality of honesty occurring in this. What is important here in terms of liminality and the transformation under discussion in this thesis is that the experience of spontaneity is remembered and celebrated. This is of relevance because of the potential for different behaviour in life beyond the theatre event.

3.5 Turner's ideological communitas.

Ideological communitas formed the 'theory' of communitas: a description and summary of the interactions of spontaneous communitas. Turner emphasised that this description contained certain aspects of the language and culture of the group attempting its definition. This is also true of the theatre event that is context-specific i.e. created and/or performed by people with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness. This ideal of communitas emphasised the importance of the existential quality of spontaneity.

This concept of being and being together, and the value it holds for participants, is of huge importance within this thesis. It has clear relevance in both Applied Theatre and participatory drama because of: '[t]he "eventness" of performance – something happens here and now' (Heddon and Milling, 2006:63) but is also true of the make-believe in process. As participants in drama and theatre, we enter the space not knowing what is to happen. This may well be within a setting in which we observe the 'ritual' and as ourselves submit to a hierarchy: of leader and group members, or of actors and audience. But during the event the interaction occurs between the 'human identities' of Turner's theory, not between people exemplifying a particular role or status. Whether within the process or product

discussed in Chapter 2, the being together of the theatre event initiates, supports and develops the creativity:

> an individual's dramatic work is *recognised* and *understood* by others. The feelings and experiences they depict are empathised with and responded to by others.
>
> <div align="right">Jones (1996:13).</div>

This is again of particular resonance for groups for whom this recognition and understanding *by others* is less frequent. Communitas is thus central to the application of liminality to the context of the theatre event.

3.6 Playing together and the development of creativity.

It is important to define this interaction of human identity more carefully: the unique, the individual, the whole, perhaps usually hidden, most of all the transitory. What creates this bond between people? How can this genuine feeling occur within the artificiality of ritual or the theatre event?

It is important to state at this stage that there is no magic formula that might create communitas. Nor does every theatre event result in deep feelings of togetherness, and huge potential for change within an individual. But it does happen. It should be clarified at this point that this section explores the creativity within participatory drama in creating the theatre event and examining the way participants respond to one another. The elements of modelling and celebration that contribute to the importance of the theatre event as performance, in the context of these participant groups, are examined in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6.

There is an obvious link between the concept of play within creativity and the improvisatory nature of drama. Play shares a function with the liminal zone in that it places participants in a situation they might usually reject, or not find themselves in at all. As anyone who plays tag or digs a sandcastle with their

children knows, there is something hugely satisfying about both the physical elements (getting dirty, running around) and the anti-structure (free from consequence) that is missing from much of adult daily life. It is interesting to note in contrast that many adults with learning disabilities are anxious *not* to play games. Often at the beginning of a participatory drama session someone will want to establish what will happen 'other than playing' to maintain their dignity as adults and resist the patronising attitudes of other people.

Whereas playing may encompass making, forming, inventing and discovering, creativity requires the significance of meaning (Bolton, 1998). Furthermore, meaning within the context of your own life, actions, and understanding (Best, 1992). Instead of categorisation and differentiation, Ehrenzweig (1967) applied the concept of de-differentiation: the unconscious scanning people undertake during an activity is relinquished, allowing attention to scatter and a different experience to occur for that person. Corker and Shakespeare placed this within the context of postmodernism as the blurring of boundaries between social and cultural spheres (2002). There is a similarity here with the shifting of the usual associated with liminality.

Piaget (1951) discussed the relationship between make-believe play and symbolic thought in young people: that a child could use an object as a representation of another object, or symbols as part of an expression of feeling and experience. Extreme care must be taken not to ally a learning disability with the thoughts and feelings of a young person. Nevertheless, in terms of social context, it may be that a young person can experiment more readily in symbolic play because they have not been placed within the ongoing adult social structure Turner discussed (1969). They do not have to be liberated from situational constraints, because

relatively few have been placed upon them. In the same way, society does not enable people with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness to participate as fully as others within the social structure; however, the prevalence of institutional care may mean that a different structure has been imposed upon them.

This consciousness of the symbolic object, and indeed the pretence, suggests that the participant is trying to *do* something, or create an action; they are not simply being there. Thus the 'being together' described previously does contain elements of doing, even if this action is a step in the process rather than the aim of the activity. These are also agreements of self-determination, not external rules. This divergence between vision, meaning and action is crucial. Two exercises played with participant groups illustrate much of interest on this point. (The use of the term 'exercise' instead of 'game' came about precisely because of the trivial connotations of the word 'game' with some members of the participant groups). It is also important to locate these exercises as specific to participatory drama.

3.7 Practical exploration.

Both these exercises were led and explained by myself as group leader. The first (Exercise 1): 'What are you doing (name)?' involves a group member miming a simple action. The person next to them in the circle asks: 'What are you doing Jane?' To which Jane names another action: 'I am ...' but not the one she is miming. For example, she might mime digging in the garden, but when asked the question answers: 'Cleaning my teeth'. The next person then mimes what she has dictated i.e. cleaning their teeth, but when asked by the next person what they are doing, answers with another action i.e. jumping, which the next person has to act out, and so on.

There are several useful functions to this exercise: as a warm-up; as a way of beginning simple actions (which can develop out of mime with sound effect and lines of dialogue as required); and it can also be a way of stimulating creative ideas within the group. However, it does rely on people performing one action, but suggesting another. No-one has to think of more than one action except the person starting, but the action they present is not what they say. This proved very confusing. All participants in Groups A and B found this very difficult. (My professional experience of many similar groups beyond this research supports this.) Everything about their act of make-believe: tactile, visual, and verbal led them to answer the question with a description of the action they were portraying. For example, 'Jane' would mime brushing her hair, and then answer: 'What are you doing Jane?' with 'Brushing my hair'. I experimented with various ways of explaining this: as an instruction to the next person; as NOT saying what you are doing but anything else; and by demonstrating with staff members. However, all members of both groups continued to find it very difficult and although we returned to the exercise in several sessions, no-one could easily remember or adapt to the requirements of the exercise.

Compare this with another exercise, again in a circle, but with a visual object (Exercise 2). This object is passed from the first person saying 'This is a dog'. The next person asks: 'A what?' to which the answer is 'A dog'. They pass it to the next person in the circle and say: 'This is a dog.' When asked: 'A what?' they turn back to the first person and repeat: 'A what?' and on hearing the answer: 'A dog' can then pass it on. The only person who can ever answer the: 'A what?' question is the first person. The crucial point here is that there is an object (but not a dog!) that is passed around the circle as the exercise progresses. Before long, the

first person introduces another object, which progresses around the circle in the opposite direction, described as a cat. Obviously there is great confusion and hilarity as the two objects cross over. It is unusual for the exercise to reach the end i.e. both objects to get back to the start. One group of undergraduates I worked with took ten sessions to work this out. But Group A did this within two sessions, firstly doing just one object and then adding in the second. Of course there was some verbal prompting and help with repetition of words. But the progression of the exercise happened reasonably easily. Group B found it straightforward also.

An analysis of these two exercises will focus first on Exercise 2, as this is the one the participant groups found easiest. There is not necessarily any pretence occurring in the second exercise, other than naming whatever object is being passed around 'a dog'. It does not require any creative action in thinking of an instruction to pass on to the next person (as in Exercise 1). The participants can remain as themselves as individuals (the group process will be discussed shortly). Yet it does require focus on an object that is not as the group are naming it. It also requires continuous repetition of a statement that is false, repeatedly confirming that this object is, for the duration of the creative exercise (within the pretence), something else.

In terms of Ehrenzweig's differentiation (1967), what is occurring? Ehrenzweig suggested that creative work co-ordinates unconscious differentiation and conscious differentiation. To explain this further, undifferentiation corresponds to a child's view of the world, taking each action and object as she comes into contact with it. As development occurs, she progresses from understanding the form, to understanding the content. Differentiation is now conscious, and can rely on cues, or signals, in between the tangible objects and present actions. She does not

have to match detail to detail, relying on memories of previous situations to identify an object or situation. The perception of the specific occurs before the awareness of the abstract. De-differentiation is then the process by which the consciousness 'scatters or represses the surface imagery' (Ehrenzweig, 1967:19). This enables the growth of new images and perception, but also demands the confidence to allow this 'scattering'. This risks abandoning the knowing of the structure for the not-knowing, not-controlling of spontaneous creativity. This links back to the break in structure offered by the liminal zone.

In terms of Exercise 2, the naming of the object (e.g. a book) as 'a dog' is not undifferentiated. It is a book, not a dog. Thus each participant is setting in motion the flow between conscious and unconscious. They know that it is a book, but will call it a dog for the duration of the exercise, and to enable the exercise to happen. The de-differentiation is in the recognition of the book, but the naming of it as 'a dog'. The participant allows herself to reject this surface image and replace it with an acknowledgement of the object in creative terms, for the purpose of the exercise. Each participant also chooses to create a boundary around this creative action (of calling the book a dog) that recognises that the reality inside that boundary is different from the reality outside it. This is the boundary created by an artist. It can also act as a safety net, in clearly identifying the pretence as separate from 'real life' i.e. life outside the pretence.

In this exercise the not-knowing within this frame is limited, because it is focused purely on the object and the dialogue is all linked to the object. In Exercise 1 there is a similar demand for de-differentiation, in that the participant must reject the action she is presenting and name something else. Indeed it is the concurrence of action and naming that may present the difficulty, because instead of a

straightforward naming of the action that is happening, de-differentiation has to occur again and the participant has to suggest a new action to progress the exercise. Thus the boundary around the creative action she is doing has to stay, and a new one placed around the vocalisation of the instruction. If she was describing the creative action she was enacting i.e. answering the question with: 'Brushing my hair' (as participants did) she has only to extend the boundary already in place for herself. In the exercise, the flow between conscious and unconscious is interrupted and has to resume incorporating a new demand.

What is relevant in the analysis of this comparison to an understanding of communitas? How does communitas (within the context of the theatre event) assist de-differentiation or the flow that has been discussed? Are there ways in which communitas might assist the progression of Exercise 2 that do not happen in Exercise 1? Certainly both rely on members of the group contributing in turn, and everyone has to contribute for the exercise to reach completion i.e. travel round the whole circle. Are people contributing as individuals, and is the individuality recognised and celebrated? This might be seen to apply more in Exercise 1 in that each participant has to think of a new action to instruct the next person to do. What appeared to happen, in the replacing of boundaries discussed above, is that this became a pressure and a problem that no-one else could help with. That in an attempt to enable group members to own their instruction people felt isolated, and even if others made suggestions to help, they wanted to do it themselves.

This is fascinating in drama and theatre: the contradiction between a group activity that cannot take place without contribution from everyone, yet can simultaneously be extremely isolating. As any professional actor knows, there is no place to hide on stage! In Exercise 2 however this did not seem to apply. If people

forgot the words ('This is a dog' etc.) and other people prompted them it did not matter. As the words were the same for everyone it did not rely on people individually producing something, rather on everyone in the group doing as the group did, and de-differentiation to occur in a way that had already been witnessed by group members.

Is this a further qualification in an application of communitas to the theatre event? Everyone within the participant group feels safe so that creativity can develop, not because they know what is going to happen, but that because whatever happens they will feel valued? Similarly a group in their experience of spontaneous communitas within ritual feels safe in their spontaneity because they exist as a group moving through an accepted social pattern. This is again of relevance for participant groups who may be unused to feeling valued in their daily lives. The difficulty that clearly occurred during Exercise 1 was uncomfortable for the group members and did not enable the activity to progress, either for individuals or the group. It seems that the witnessing and repetition of dialogue during Exercise 2 supported the frame of pretence, and thus the being together of the group enabled the individual contributions to happen. All of that recognition is momentary; if it is to be placed within communitas, perhaps it has to be as a step in the process, in the same way that the 'doing' together became a step in the process towards the 'being' of communitas.

We have finished our cup of tea and toast, and move from the canteen area to the small 'social' area next door that is our room for drama. I see James outside the window. He places his hands on the glass and looks at me, waiting for me to place my hands on his, with the window glass in between our hands. I place my hands and smile at him. He moves his hands higher. I follow his movement,

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reaching up to match his hands again. He moves them once again, I again copy the movement, and he stares at my hands. ‘come on Becky’ calls Coral, and I motion to James to come in and join us again. As I take my hands away, James looks away. A few minutes later he comes in and sits down with us.

James made many contributions vocally in Group B that were not about the work we were doing, or would become involved in a particular story e.g. the Three Little Pigs, which he would repeat at length whenever he wanted. This became annoying for other group members, even if they were used to his behaviour and viewed it as ‘the way James is’. In drama, they wanted him to focus and concentrate on the exercise we were doing. This happened when we were working on Exercise 2. James did make some barking noises when it was his turn to pass on the ‘dog’ (and at other points in the exercise). However, the group responded to this positively, with laughter and agreement: ‘Yes James, a dog’. In this way James was acknowledged positively as the human he is in his contribution to the exercise. He in turn seemed able to maintain his focus during the exercise, because he saw that his contribution was welcomed and enabled the exercise to progress. This demonstrates the rejection of labelling (Turner’s norm-sets): ‘James won’t be able to do it; James is stupid’ outlined earlier as a key feature in communitas.

Indeed this was the beginning of a huge shift in the attitude of the group towards James, emphasising the importance of the witnessing of this different behaviour (within the liminal zone of the theatre event). Exercise 2 was first played in the second session of ten with Group B. The way he was viewed by the other group members began to change: the response of the group and James himself enabled more to happen than a sharing of a funny game and a joke, even though

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these began the process. My evaluation notes from the eighth session state that: '[the group are] very patient with [James] in exercises – real progression in teamwork.' (Author's notes, March 2003). This also demonstrated the movement from passive to active mode for James: he was no longer restricted by the way others viewed him, but was able to take an active part in the exercise and feel good about his contribution. Although not specifically identified within Turner's communitas, the *active* contribution of participants has been identified as crucial to the politics of this thesis within the different behaviour possible within the liminal zone.

3.8 United by yourself? The importance of interaction.

Anthropologist Geertz saw meaning in cultural practice as a comment on human nature. He suggested that the art form 'renders ordinary, everyday experiences comprehensible by presenting it in terms of acts and objects which have had their practical consequences removed.' (1975:443). The pretend 'dog' carried no practical consequences for James; he was therefore able to participate in the experience and, just as importantly, be allowed to be different by the others in the group without feeling negatively about his contribution. The frame of the pretence allowed him to participate equally in the activity. The connection between group and individual is crucial within the developmental experience of both. This suggests that although the experience itself will become part of that person (and thus offer liminal potential for transformation) it is further developed during and after the event through interaction with others.

Does that initial moment of significance occur within yourself or between you and someone else? Does that matter? In establishing so clearly the importance

of the interaction in Applied Theatre and participatory drama it is important not to disregard personal internal moments that are also liminal in this analysis. But is it possible that communitas makes an identifiable contribution to this catalyst of a moment? For James in Exercise 2, was this the moment when he barked like a dog (part of his usual pattern of behaviour within drama sessions)? Or was it the moment when the group laughed with him rather than at him? Or the later moment when he helped to complete the progression of the exercise around the circle because his behaviour had been accepted rather than derided? This final action is the creative one and also the action in which James himself changed what was happening. In the previous two examples James and the group were acting and reacting in behavioural terms, even though these were changed by the context of the exercise. Foucault explored Kant's theory of 'present-ness': signs of behaviour that demonstrate the state of a particular society at that moment. These signs are: -

a) A rememorative sign: that things have always been this way.
b) A demonstrative sign: that things are happening this way.
c) A prognostic sign: that things will always be this way.

(1993:14).

Kant suggested that an event containing these three signs would embrace 'the human race in its totality.' (1993:14). Turner suggested that major liminal situations were occasions on which society *takes cognizance of itself* (1974:240). 'Small' actions between individuals can demonstrate and reflect something much more general in sociological terms. Indeed, these actions can change general behaviour. This is particularly true of social interaction that may be denied to participant groups within this thesis.

Thus communitas is clearly opposed to the self in isolation even in that moment of recognition (in behavioural terms) and creativity (in dramatic terms). The experience in itself cannot be separated from the group members who played a

part in it. As within the liminal zone, the circumstances in which the group connection (that can be described as communitas) contributed to this for James are specific to him, his way of behaviour, and the group's attitude towards him (both previous and present). Although communitas primarily concerns the group in its stimulus and effect, the way in which this happens is particular to any individual experiencing this. This is crucial in the theatre event.

3.9 The effect of the masses.

It seems that the difference between communitas as this group connection, and a communal 'feelgood' factor is its meaning, both within and amongst individuals. This level of meaning moves the participants beyond the present, echoing the meaning discovered through frames of existence in 1.9. The experience supports an understanding beyond the immediate moment, as does communitas in its sharing of different behaviour and change in individuals. As this chapter is being written, there are jubilant scenes on every television screen of the male England cricket team winning the Ashes for the first time in many years. (The women's team have also won their Ashes and are allowed to join the celebration.) The crowd and players sing the English hymn 'Jerusalem' together. It is impossible not to feel moved by this moment of 'togetherness': vast numbers of people sharing a good feeling and common activity. Is this communitas? Is there any meaning involved in the celebration? What is left at the end of the hymn? Certainly many happy memories for all concerned, those who played in the matches clearly overwhelmed by the response from the crowd. In terms of the definition of communitas reached thus far in this chapter, there needs to be an examination of whether a change in the perception of any participant by any other participant has taken place. There is a

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sense of shared emotion and the power that this brings that is common to sport: that people are all on the same side. United by their similarity, as stated earlier.

However, it is not their commonality as human beings that unites them, only that they are celebrating the same thing: they are all 'on the same side'. This is obvious at football matches. This carries with it the ugly flipside of the way people supporting the opposing team are treated. This is a crucial difference from communitas. In the description of Group B related above, their attitudes towards another human being change because of his actions. In sport, these decisions are not based on aspects of that person revealed by their actions. They are based on material tokens: scarves, shirts, which place that person in the same group as you without any knowledge of them as a human being at all. No exploration of their language, their interaction, their likes and dislikes, other than that they support 'your team'. Thus there is no meaning beyond that present moment of winning or losing.

Is there a parallel communal competitive experience within the arts? Theatresports, founded by Johnstone, involves competitive live improvisation between two teams (Engelberts, 2004). The winning and losing teams are decided by the audience who throw flowers to their favourite team and sponges to their least favourite. Costumed judges also award points. The setting and characters for each improvised scene are suggested by the audience. This places the audience in a much more active role and not just as receivers of the presentation as in a conventional theatre audience. Does communitas exist here? The interaction is different from a sports match in which the audience can never really determine what happens (although their vocal support might provide a spur to action for team members). There is also an immediacy of response similar to that which that occurs in

participatory drama. People can see and feel their own importance in the process (as James did).

Although there is no practical example of specific theatresports available for scrutiny there is observation of group work 'directing' the improvisation of professional actors. Group C worked on an adaptation of a Shakespeare play (that I have not named to preserve the anonymity of the group). This adaptation was devised by the group and performed by professional actors alongside the young people. During one scene, the professional actors became human 'puppets' obeying the orders of the student actors. This scene was always improvised, although some of the orders would be repeated from rehearsal to rehearsal and guidelines were put in place about the nature of these instructions. Because of this the professional actors ignored inappropriate orders e.g. kissing a member of staff, or removing items of clothing.

This scene became one of the strongest in the final performance: the group enjoying their control of the scene, and their power over the actors (power and control were two of the themes highlighted in the adaptation). The whole group participated and invested in the action. It is important to clarify what is relevant to communitas in the observation of this scene. There are elements of being together (although the doing is the main action in this case and not just part of the process) and working together as a group. There was also acceptance of individuals. In a similar way to 'James' in the previous example, there were members of the group who irritated and annoyed other members merely by their existence, (and the readiness of those members to be annoyed or irritated) and their contributions would often be dismissed or laughed at before staff intervention. In this scene this was never the case, because the actors acted on whatever instruction they were given,

treating all participants as having equal importance (Turner's unstructured community of equal individuals). Some of the most ridiculous instructions would result in the funniest actions, for example 'bark like a dog' became a favourite and repeated in every rehearsal. For the first time in the presentation itself one member called out: 'Be in a boxing match', which was very amusing and sustained for several minutes. The meaning is therefore centred in the spontaneous active participation of the group members and their shared investment of the (theatre) event, similarly to communitas.

Engelberts (2004) discussed the particular relevance of the live aspect of any sort of 'performance' in contemporary theatre, linking once again to the spontaneous quality within communitas. It is fascinating to place this in relation to earlier references to Turner's industrial (now technologised) society in the exploration of liminality; there is a human need for live interaction because of increased reliance on technology, and tendency towards individualisation. Most communication now takes place via mouthpiece and screen, and common meetings between and within communities occur less and less.

Engleberts suggested that theatresports offer a '"flash" community' (2004:166) in the social awareness between members of the audience (contributing to and judging the improvisations) and between the audience and actors (the active collaboration between them). They have nothing in common other than their presence within that group at that moment in time. They do not necessarily share any allegiance to a team or a history. Nor do they form a daily community at work, school or day centre. What they do share is enjoyment of the presented action, and additionally a strong sense of participation, in that they influence both the material, and the outcome, both dramatically and in terms of judging the presentations. No-

one within the audience is likely to feel limited by a particular role e.g. the organiser or the funny one, as they might in a long-term group.

Although theatresports maximises the excitement and immediacy of live theatre, it is necessary to examine the potential for change. Although this group experience shares some characteristics with spontaneous communitas, this environment does not create a situation of meaning beyond that moment. There may be opportunities to behave differently from usual, but is there sufficient investment in the action for the participants to experience this as having meaning? For Group C the experience was of 'real' power within the fictional situation. Although the group experience was important, this meaning arose from the context of them as people influencing a situation, when often they are unable so to do. It is clear that in theatresports and the performance of Group C the group are active (doing), they are being (together), and they can behave as the individuals they are. The concept of the 'group' in terms of shared history, shared understanding in communication, and investment in whatever action is taking place is explored in the following section.

3.10 The participant group within the physical space.

The built environment is now acknowledged as contributing to the health and wellbeing of a society, and its ability to interact with each other. O' Toole drew an interesting parallel with this in defining the space in which educational drama could take place as a factor in the meaning available to the participant (1992). For example, a classroom places participants behind tables and in chairs, the school hall a place for formal ceremonies and applause. Expectations of activity and behaviour are often implied in allocating spaces for 'work' and 'play', although this is not true of modern school buildings, particularly with reference to young children for whom

the distinctions between learning and play are thankfully not so divided. In my early work in theatre in education, we would try to negotiate for a comfortable quiet space in which to work creatively, as opposed to the draughty school hall with a cold floor, which other pupils would use as a corridor in lesson changes, and interrupted by the setting up of tables for school dinners! Many day centres (and schools) are now aware of this, offering carpeted undisturbed places in which to work on drama. By according the work respect and space, these are accorded to the group of participants.

The liminal zone, as discussed in Chapter 1, is the location for communitas. However the liminal zone is defined only as a space between states of progression in the ritual transition. It does not define itself as a space *for* anything, other than 'not' being the 'before the liminal' (one state) or 'after the liminal' (the next state). Mackey and Whybrow suggested that 'non-places are primarily places of privilege [...] place becomes an accepted, uncontested way of being' (2007:8). For the group members who attended day centres, the space for drama became an offer of a different place through communitas. This underlines the interactive process of the liminal zone and communitas: both support and develop from each other. It is the communitas that suggests what occurs here: Turner's meeting of individuals interacting as an unstructured community.

Groups A and B became familiar with the outline of the participatory drama session: a warm up; some exercises (not games) and some improvising. These became their expectations as they entered the space allocated to them for drama. These expectations and the accompanying knowledge, *to some degree*, of what might occur in that space suggest that this 'safety net' may be as important as the location itself. This was referred to earlier in the chapter concerning the acceptance

of any participant's action within the participatory drama session as necessary to promoting communitas. The acceptance of each of them as the individuals they are enables investment in the group, what happens within it, and an experience of meaning to occur.

Cohen (1985:71) discussed the importance of 'social facts' in describing communities i.e. a community's place in the social structure. This suggested that a person's community would define their behaviour and perceptions. Douglas (1983) suggested that the difference between natural and created groups is the nature of origin of the group, and that once formed, the behaviour of groups becomes similar. He defined a 'natural' group as formed by 'ordinary human needs' (1983:35). For example, the community in a day centre meet to share work, activities and care. They spend an allocated time within a specified location. Although they have come to do things, they have not come to do one specific thing all together. In the same way a group of people at a workplace share that place as the location for their employment, but have not all come to perform exactly the same task. Both groups cited previously (Groups A and B) attended the drama sessions entirely voluntarily, but they all knew they were coming to 'do drama'. This turns them into a 'created' group, although of their own choosing. This purpose, and the participation of each group member in choosing to be there for that purpose, may contribute to the investment of each in their participation within the activity. As do the crowds who pay to watch Manchester United each week, part of whose investment is in clearly material terms. But this does not necessarily result in the meaning and the depth that forms part of communitas.

3.11 Communitas in disability politics.

In the context of disability politics, does communitas hold a particular relevance? In terms of self-advocacy and its growth as a social movement there are clear parallels with the contribution communitas can make, as discussed with reference to participatory drama. Self-advocacy, as briefly discussed in Chapter 1, promotes members beyond their typical roles and suggests the emergence of a new identity. It also suggests a reflexive relationship between the individual and the movement, in that the movement is very aware of the individuals that are a part of it, and yet equally the individuals contribute to a group whose strength develops because of those individuals.

Yet the relationship between individuals and a group is very similar, and as complex, as the nature of the contribution communitas makes to the potential for transformation an individual may develop within their own liminal zone. It seems from the cited practical examples that active participation, and subsequent investment in the action, are both essential in enabling the potential for transformation within the theatre event. But this is not within Turner's definition, beyond difference from usual behaviour and interaction free from the social restraint of a participant's usual role. The group of young people working on the Shakespeare adaptation were not attending the session voluntarily, although they had been chosen because they enjoyed drama. At times, their difficulties with working together led to some of them leaving the session (although all but one took part in the final performance). This suggests that their sense of active participation (that what they did made a difference to the outcome of the scene and presentation) and also the response from others (that the professional actors obeyed the directions of the student actors) enabled them to contribute differently. Although Turner

suggested the liberation from situational constraints within the liminal zone that enabled communitas, the witnessing of different behaviour by other people and investment in the action as an active participant are both crucial elements of the theatre event not described by Turner. He did discuss (3.4) the inversion of roles that might develop greater mutual understanding beyond the liminal zone. However, the spontaneity of actions and then behaviour because of the existential quality of communitas, and its acceptance of individuals, is hugely valuable in challenging definitions and perceptions. This is of particular relevance to the participant groups of this research. This may be disseminated through the practice resulting from this research.

The shared experience of communitas is also of relevance in further defining the role of the researcher in the area of disability politics, as Goodley defined reflexivity: requiring 'outsiders' to formulate understandings of the insiders in the group (2000). By working in the participatory drama sessions with the group, I am able as a participant-researcher to share communitas and not just witness it. This was certainly the case with James in Group B. James's contributions initially resulted in many interventions from myself leading the exercises. These would usually be friendly and often humorous in an attempt to promote good group feeling and remain positive about what James might achieve, particularly in opposition to some of the negative comments from group members cited previously. The crucial moment described above, when James realised he was sharing the joke rather than being the butt of it, was also a moment for other members of the group, including myself, to realise this difference too. We could look around each other as members of a group and realise we were laughing together, and sharing something funny

amongst all of us. As participant researcher, I could share this moment, rather than observe and deal with it in my role leading the sessions.

It is also of vital importance within this study because of the political and social placement of the participatory groups, and must therefore reinforce and strengthen this *active* role. Whether or not liminality occurs and provides the potential for change beyond the pretence, the liminal zone may occur for an individual by themselves or as part of a group. Communitas occurs among or between people, and in itself promotes the group as active, even though Turner himself did not articulate it in this way.

3.12 The reality of active participation within the theatre event.

The importance of the active role of participants within the group activity has been established. How can pretending create such a 'real' experience? Understanding of others is usually based around interpretation: interpretation of their actions, based on our own understanding and perceptions, influenced by our own history. We try to find something of ourselves in them. Participatory drama does enable group members to experiment with different behaviour in a safe environment without consequences. As Heathcote so eloquently described it: 'The material of drama [...] consists of man's ability to make "another room" for himself [sic], in order to examine something.'(1980:7). Why does fictional activity have this power?

> A play, book, picture or piece of music stays with us forever. We cannot undo the experience. But only real experience changes us – we are not changed by illusion or make-believe.
>
> Cockett (1998:40).

The answer is of course that the situation may be fictional, but perceptions and understanding (Turner's cognition and affect) move back to the world beyond the theatre event. But what changes perception is real, not fictional. The situation may

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be pretend, but the experience and the sharing are genuine, and it is that connection which effects change. It is not a passive experience of drama that enables this discovery: it is the 'doing' as part of being together that allows this link and new understanding to develop.

3.13 Summary.

Communitas is a valid description of this connection, this experience between and among human beings, as opposed to the vicarious emotion of group catharsis. A stimulus to a general emotion (such as in the Ashes celebration) is very different from a creative experience owned and created with others: 'the elision between trusting relationships and the process of art-making, is embedded in the complexities of a particular local culture, which is in itself open to change and renewal.' (Nicholson, 2002:84). Each action within a theatre event is specific to that individual, but also to that individual *within that particular group, at that moment in time.*

Within the huge and complex area of perception and understanding that occurs within creativity and its contribution to personal development communitas forms a vital element. The interaction in this specific situation (the theatre event) between individual spontaneous action and subsequent connection with others (being and being together) has been outlined. With specific reference to the theatre event, several factors contributing to communitas have been discussed. These include the pro-active participation and investment in the creativity by group members; the importance of the absence of consequences so important in drama in education; the acceptance and valuing of self made possible by the trust and security within a known and familiar group; and the abandonment of usual roles and

stereotypes. All of these, of course, also contribute to liminality. The most crucial of these is what defines the importance of communitas within this thesis, and that is the group context contributing to and supporting the experience of the individual.

The moment of meaning for an individual *in itself* may not be enough to transcend the negative emotions and responses of others, even within a context that is clearly make-believe. What does make a difference is the group experiencing meaning as a group, even if this means, as of course it will, different things to each individual concerned. It is also important that this is an experience in which the whole group actively share this and do not just observe it in others, although observation forms a part of the process. (The witnessing of this and the subsequent development of understanding within the group is outlined in Chapter 5.) This forms a crucial part of the active nature of communitas in the context of these participant groups, and the political importance of the group and participant researcher being pro-active within the process.

The theatre event enables this connection, and communitas contributes to the theatre event in the development of understanding between the group members. The relevance of communitas is clear, because of the importance of the group to each individual participant. Liminality in drama cannot occur in isolation, because of the group nature of the work. Thus whether or not an individual's liminal experience emerges from communitas, feeds into communitas, or occurs at a later point, that experience links to other people, their part in the theatre event, and their understanding and perception of that person and their behaviour.

It is also important to place these findings in a wider context of specific importance to the participant groups involved in this work. The importance of the individual within the group, and the challenge this places upon the labelling of

groups politically has been located within the discussion. The importance of group interaction in the recognised political movement of self-advocacy has already been noted. As communitas values each contribution from an individual (within the theatre event) so must society value all its members, for their potential as individuals, and for their contribution to the whole: 'The individual to develop needs a community.' (Abbs, 1995:46). The community also needs all of its individuals.

The liminal moment created in an individual by group experience of communitas has been thus far variously described as different actions leading to altered behaviour. These actions involve movement, gesture and the embodiment of role within the theatre event. These are similarly important in valuing individual contribution, and sharing this (perhaps in presentation). These may also contribute to liminality in challenging the usual physical behaviour ascribed to a participant and therefore contribute to the liberation of the liminal zone and within the theatre event. This is examined in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: The physical in liminality.

'[A] field of feeling [...] as much as it is a field of knowing.' (Wright, 2005:5).

'Knowledge acquired aesthetically is already, in itself, the beginning of a transformation.' (Boal, 1995:109).

4.0 Chapter 4 examines the physical skills present in the theatre event, principally those of gesture and movement, in relation to the transformation under discussion. There is reference to the contribution modelling and role models can make in seeing 'people like me' represented on the stage (or screen) and the inclusive effect this can have for people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness. There is reference here also, further developed in Chapter 5, regarding the work of professional actors with learning disabilities.

4.1 Physical aspects of the work within participatory drama sessions.

Turner's theories of the liminal zone and communitas have been explored in relation to the group and individual experience of the theatre event. In the discussion of the concept of liminality, the importance of both the frame of the theatre event, and roles within the theatre event, have been identified. In addition the reflexive relationship between the group and the individual within this experience, and the accessibility of the process leading to investment in the theatre event, have been located within a cycle of participation and its effect.

It is important to note at this point that the voice is not highlighted as a physical theatre skill within this chapter as might be expected. This is because verbal and vocal skills of participants in the field work varied widely and depended on each individual's confidence. Although obviously one aim of the field work was to develop comfort and confidence for each participant, I did not want to focus

specifically on an area with which many participants felt uncomfortable. I am not treating the group differently in this instance; for example, work with young people often involves waiting until a participant feels confident enough to vocalise and I never insist on anyone doing this if they are unhappy or uncomfortable. Some individuals did develop the confidence to contribute vocally when they had previously not done so (and this is noted later in the chapter with reference to the ways in which confidence developed within the participatory drama sessions). I decided therefore to develop lines of text with the group, so that each actor who wanted to speak could 'own' their line in a scene, but would be supported in deciding what to say. The only time I tried to ensure that everyone contributed vocally was in a name game, which participants played in other situations in the day centres, and during which they received support from staff members in encouraging the usually not-vocal to speak. I tried to encourage the use of sounds as part of the action as much as possible, to enable verbal freedom in the same way as the physical, and examples of this are also noted throughout the recording of the field work.

The devising of the theatre event allows flexibility for people to contribute in their own way, as outlined in Chapter 2 in the discussion of devising as a research method. Clearly movement and gesture contribute to this devising. Is this a major contribution made by a theatre 'skill' as opposed to the more general enabling of the creative process? Devising is itself another theatre skill. In the discussion of communitas in Chapter 3 the 'being' among and within a group was highlighted as a factor in effecting change in an individual. Is physicality part of this 'being'? In the same way as different behaviour is possible, is different movement possible, and does this contribute to the development of an individual? This may again be of

particular relevance to people who may have been constrained in their physical behaviour into passive and accepting models.

4.2 The importance of gesture as communication.

There are several moments recorded in the field work that seem to define the importance of freedom to express oneself physically, and of physical actions replacing verbal interaction. On many occasions, group members would express their approval of someone's behaviour, or recognition of a good piece of 'acting' by shaking hands with the actor involved. As workshop leader I generally use a verbal: 'well done' in appreciation, although I also use a 'thumbs up' as a way of not interrupting the action or during the enactment of a scene. There are also ethical considerations for myself politically in this situation. Whilst wanting very much to convey positive recognition and appreciation, I do not want to turn the work into participants seeking my approval. Therefore care must be taken to emphasise the importance I attach to the opinions of every member of the group, and to demonstrate that during a participatory drama session I value each and every contribution to the process.

There are also clear moments of significance within the theatre event when a positive memory for a participant is specifically of a movement or gesture, rather than accompanying dialogue or a scene as a whole (as has been identified, it is often the briefest of occurrences within the pretence which initiates change for a participant). Theatre is good at providing these images of meaning: the showing as part of the telling, the doing rather than the thinking. A striking image from a film may be more memorable than the accompanying dialogue.

In one exercise, Group A worked on providing a 'soundtrack' for the action. A specifically skills-based exercise, this also involved separating one action from another, which had proved difficult for the groups in the previously cited game of: 'What are you doing?' (3.7). In the soundtrack exercise, one actor moves through an agreed sequence of actions for which the rest of the (watching) group provide the sounds. It is hugely empowering for the actor as an opportunity to work by herself and yet remain supported, and fun for the participants providing the sounds, who have to respond on cue and work together to enable the scene to progress smoothly. There is also scope for the enjoyment of the pretence in terms of exaggeration of movement and sound. This group (Group A) worked on the sequence of a bus journey in which the actor got on the bus, paid her fare, sat down, saw the bus stop where she wanted to get off the bus, rang the bell and got off. A row of chairs was used to represent the bus, and we used another participant as the driver (this proved useful in offering an 'acting' role to members of the group who felt initially less confident about performing in front of the others). The sequence of movement was agreed after discussion with the whole group, checking when accompanying sounds would support the action best. I then asked the group to improvise these, for example the 'swish' as the bus doors opened, and the jingle of the coins to pay the fare. Support was needed in building these sounds.

Once again participants experienced huge difficulty in separating the actions from the sounds, most doing the actions e.g. reaching up to ring the bell to stop the bus, as they made the 'ting ting' noise for the soundtrack. The staff member present at that session reminded me: 'You're asking them to do something very difficult, you know.' (Author's notes, October 2002). I did know (and I could see) but decided to let the activity continue as it was a group experience and no-one in the

solitary acting role seemed distressed. Each participant did this only by choice in any case, although every one did choose to take on the acting role of the passenger. One particular participant, Brenda, was the initiator of this ringing the bell sound, everyone else forgetting. When it was her turn to be the actor i.e. performing the movement not doing the soundtrack, I was fairly sure there would be no 'ting ting' noise for her. However, another participant, Ellen, was triumphant in her memory of the bell ringing. Interestingly she began the action of raising her hand to the bell that prompted her to remember the 'ting ting' sound (the soundtrack was supposed to be without movement). It is possible to see her significant pleasure in doing this right (i.e. completing the soundtrack to support her fellow group member) as a feat of memory, which it was. However, it was the physical memory that prompted the sound cue. Her physical memory enabled her to take the initiative and lead the group. She took great delight in telling this to the staff member present: `That was me, that was.` She reminded us of her achievement at the following session, a week later.

4.3 The knowledge of the physical.

McNiff suggested that the images and processes of creativity are 'at least one step ahead of the reflecting mind' (1998:27). This suggested that in creating a theatre event, participants challenge the necessity for considered analysis of what they are doing, and its articulation. This echoes the 'being' referred to as an important element of communitas. McNiff continued this discussion in terms of 'knowing': that artistic knowing is different from intellectual knowing. This is hugely important in valuing contributions other than intellectual and of obvious relevance to the way society disables people who contribute in one way rather than another. Particularly

if this effect is reinforced by the created environment supporting one group rather than other, for example in its use of visual and worded signs. The knowing is in discovering how something works, not in measuring its efficacy. For Ellen, the trigger to remembering the sound was to perform the action, a repeated and unoriginal action, but nevertheless a creative one i.e. it was hers because she made it, and she was representing something and thus responding through an art form. Had this been repeating words, would this still have been so clearly her own? Clearly professionally trained voices make the texts of plays their own 'reading' i.e. interpretation: 'so and so's Hamlet', but this is really an inaccurate description of their whole performance. It would have depended on Ellen's confidence and ability to verbalise, as discussed earlier (4.1). Ellen made this action her own by making the gesture in her own way (physical moments as part of acting are rarely identical, unlike physical exercise), and by doing something she had previously not done i.e. remembering the sound to accompany this point in the action. This was clearly a significant moment for Ellen.

Gardner's theory of human intellectual competences that he called: 'human intelligences' (1983:8) was referred to in Chapter 2 (2.5). His theory outlined the varying ways in which human beings identify and manage information and response to that information. In doing this he also explored the potential for human development, dependent on the capacities each human develops. Gardner also stressed that these 'intelligences' were not to be thought of in evaluative terms even though intelligence carries an evaluative connotation in developed and technologised society. Within the context of this thesis this is in the assessment *by other people* of someone's 'intelligence'. It does not really matter what a person can or cannot do, if someone else has made that decision on their behalf and the care

and/or education of that person is based on that premise. This reinforces the juxtaposition of different participant groups within the thesis i.e. with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness. It is the definition and not the person that places someone as 'disabled' or in a position in which they are discriminated against.

In terms of physical competence, Gardner defined the kinaesthetic as involving control of 'bodily motions' and a 'capacity to handle objects skilfully' (1983:206). These actions as reflexes lead to behavioural acts. However the freedom of the theatre event, for example in throwing and catching a 'pretend' ball, enables a different action ('I *can* catch the ball') and thus result in different behaviour. This is what the karate move enabled with both Rob and Martin (2.3). One other point, which is examined in Chapter 6, is Gardner's definition of 'personal intelligence': that there are particular ways of knowing at different stages of life. What might seem rather obvious in purely educational terms is considered afresh in the light of the transformation examined in this thesis. The inference is that people become different people because of their behaviour, and their behaviour becomes different because of their actions. This echoes the cycle of transformation in the theatre event that emerges through the thesis (Chapter 5, Figure 2).

4.4 Boal's practice: an exploration of physicality within the theatre event.

Boal developed his now famous *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979) and focused specifically on participants with varying disabilities in *The Rainbow of Desire* (1995). Boal's work is of interest in this thesis because of his own focus on transformation: in his case, leading to revolution. The individual transformation discussed in this thesis as contributing to possible greater change within society: the

revolution. The essence of his practice suggested that enacting a situation in which a participant experienced oppression, and then changing the action to 'rehearse' a different outcome, would enable the participant to challenge that oppression and in the long term bring about revolution. Elements of this (practising words or action to try and change the way someone deals with a situation or person) are clearly present in contemporary dramatherapy and role-play at day centres, and Boal's model for practice remains a powerful one. This model of 'Forum Theatre' was used during Theatre in Education programmes during the 1980s by leading companies such as Greenwich Young People's Theatre (now Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre), Half Moon Young People's Theatre, and Theatre Van, Harlow. The use of this in Theatre in Education was based on the premise of giving control of the action, and by implication the outcomes, to the young people as active participants. His technique has been used widely throughout theatre (both Applied and within the mainstream) ever since, and has also been of enormous influence in educational and therapeutic drama.

Boal used the term: 'metaxis' (1995:43) meaning belonging in two worlds, to explain the positive effect for change that the frame of pretence in a theatre event can provide: the reality and the image of reality created by the self. Boal cited the importance of the aesthetic dimension of this 'second world', which in this thesis has been defined in terms of accessibility and subsequent investment in the pretence. The element of creativity was important to Boal, as was the relevance of the theatre event to the participant's life beyond the pretence: 'He [sic] practises in the second world (aesthetic), in order to modify the first (social).' (1995:44).

Boal's practice is of great importance in this thesis. Boal was one of the first theatre practitioners to highlight the use of theatre techniques with people with disabilities

(though not exclusively learning disabilities). Boal placed huge importance on the *active* participation of the people involved in the theatre event: 'If the oppressed himself performs an action (rather than the artist in his place), the performance of that action in theatrical fiction will enable him to activate himself to perform it in his real life [sic].' (1995:46). Whether or not there is truth in this theory formed an ongoing divisive debate in the Theatre in Education movement beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present day. (Vine, 1993; Redington, 1983). This is not to be examined here. What is of relevance is Boal's insistence on active participation regardless of the theatrical and other skills and abilities belonging to each person present at the theatre event. This is the acceptance of each participant as Turner's equal individual in communitas, and outlined as crucial in the theatre event (1.4).

Boal's work is examined in this chapter because he placed great emphasis on physical work and exercises in his theories. For example, in his outline of what became known as Forum Theatre (1979:139-141) and the active change of the spectator becoming the 'spectactor', he stressed the importance of the control of the body in order to make it (the body) expressive, listing: 'Knowing the body' and 'Making the body expressive' as of prime importance :

> [T]o control the means of theatrical production, man must [...]control his own body, know his own body [...] he will be able to practise theatrical forms in which by stages he frees himself from his condition of spectator and takes on that of actor, in which he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject [sic].
>
> <div align="right">(1979:126).</div>

Boal also used the phrase: 'muscular alienation' which he described as 'to undo' or 'disjoint' the habitual ways the body of a participant might work and move (1979:126). There is an obvious comparison here with Grotowski's 'elimination of blocks' (Barba, 1976:17). Grotowski discussed this as eliminating the resistance to

spontaneous action in response to an inner impulse, as outlined previously. He also translated this as an elimination of learned behaviour in terms of signs, which obscured that natural impulse. Grotowski's aim was more truthful performance, instead of the repetition of so-called natural behaviour that conformed to an already identified role. Boal's intention was to eliminate the learned behaviour (signs and actions of the body) in which the participant was oppressed, and it is this aspect of the physical emphasis in his theory that is of interest here. Boal's exercises enable others to assimilate his practice: Boal was not writing a theory for discussion, he wrote his 'handbooks' for practitioners to use. These exercises have been chosen for the field work because Boal attributed these to non-professional actors, whereas practitioners such as Grotowski demanded a physical dedication and commitment only expected from professional actors.

Boal's approach was a direct attempt to build change or transformation in the lives of participants and then throughout society, and his exercises formed a detailed breakdown of how this might be achieved. This focus on Boal's work (in some cases faithful to his outline, in some slightly adapted) is to explore the contribution physical work within the theatre event makes to the potential for transformation. Although Boal also referred to roles and frames, his primary aim was to create physical work in which the spectators *took part*. Linds described Theatre of the Oppressed as 'A Form of Embodied Drama' (1998:72)

> In order to be 'in the moment' which theatre requires, we need to re-sensitize [...] we need to re-realise that we control our senses and our muscles and our body.
> (1998:73).

It will be necessary therefore to examine the emphasis on the physical body in the following practical exercises in the context of Turner's theory in establishing if this physical aspect substantially contributes to the development of the liminal zone.

4.5 The 'spectactor' (Boal, 1995:42).

In all the practical work undertaken in this research, Boal's concept of the 'spectactor' is an accurate description of the role of each group member. Boal did not want 'passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon' (1979:122) as he described spectators at a theatre event, instead wanting active participation:

> The spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or think in his place...he himself assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change[sic].
>
> (1979:122).

Although in leading the participatory drama session I obviously take responsibility for everyone's safety (emotional and physical) and lead the exercise by explaining the procedure or format, everyone in each group involved in the field work played a part in deciding what to do next. For example, with all the groups, once we had learned some drama exercises, I would ask what people would like to do. Whilst not pretending that we were 'equal participants' (part of my function being to share my skills) I always checked which participant would take part in which activity, what role they would like to play and so on. Choice of words and action in a scene was always the choice of the participant, with help from the whole group (not just myself) if they requested it. If people were unwilling to take part in a scene, I would ask them to help me 'direct' and decide what should happen next; if a particular piece of dialogue could be improved; or if a gesture or movement was appropriate. Thus as far as possible, as previously discussed in Chapter 2, the practice of the field work reinforced the political and ethical concerns of the methodology. The following practice will be discussed in terms of individual exercises and scenes built by the groups. No attempt was made to build stage upon stage as is so thoroughly outlined in *The Rainbow of Desire* (1995) as this might focus too closely on the

work of Boal instead of in this context, as exploring the importance of the physical in contributing to liminality.

4.6 Examples during the field work.

The first exercise discussed is possibly the closest to Boal's Forum Theatre (1979: 139-141) and involved Group F, termed 'service users' by the commissioning County Council and all recovering from mental illness. This 'scene', which formed part of the resulting video (Silent Voices, 1999), was a recreation of a situation experienced by nearly all members of the group: a meeting with a psychiatrist whilst an in-patient. (Boal's Breaking of repression 1979:149-50):

> [A] reproduction of the [...] event, [...] something that has happened to someone in particular, but which at the same time is typical of what happens to others.
> (1979:150).

 Group F recreated the scene as if this meeting was occurring in an 'ideal world', or as a group member phrased it: **'If we were in charge.'** The first part of the exercise involved recreating the experience of one person as closely as possible (although all agreed that this was completely representative of many meetings they had attended). Other people taking part in the scene wore labels denoting their job titles. In an attempt to heighten the intimidation group members had experienced, I took the part of the 'patient'. Participants were then asked to avoid eye contact, to speak among themselves but not to the 'patient', and to keep silent as much as possible. This exaggeration echoed Boal's 'For the deaf mode' (1995:174), although, alarmingly, it did not appear to be much of an exaggeration. One participant was outstanding in his portrayal of a psychiatrist ignoring myself in role as the patient whilst maintaining a telephone conversation, and then talking to a colleague rather than directly to the patient himself. This was eventually filmed

using the camera in the patient's place. The effect was stark. It is also interesting to note that the group found it very difficult to behave in this oppressive way. Their instinct was to put me at ease. The difficulty the participants experienced in rejecting the group leader as 'patient' forms an interesting comparison with Boal's muscular alienation, in undoing all their usual bodily movement of smiles, handshakes and other gestures to welcome and include someone.

Instead of asking people to intervene by themselves when they wanted to change a word or an action, which might have been intimidating even for this angry and articulate group, at the end of the scene we discussed possible changes in the behaviour of the staff in the scene, and what might happen differently. We then replayed the scene in this way. This second version, in the video following the first and providing an uncomfortable contrast, portrayed a very different atmosphere. The group's suggestions included more equal seating: around a coffee table instead of across the desk; an explanation of the function and identity of everyone present; a reduction in numbers of staff, and the 'patient' having a 'supporter' present. Although these ideas began through discussion, we then acted them out to clarify what was wanted, with other group members directing the action and in particular focusing on the gestures and movement of the 'actors'. When everyone was satisfied, the scene was recorded, and then immediately played back to all present.

Although there was clearly verbal interaction between participants, both in the scene and in discussing the work, this exercise and the resulting scene in the video are striking because of the use of body language. The lack of attention to the patient in the first version was characterised by people turning their faces away, looking around, and shifting their chairs so as to turn away from the 'patient' character. Similarly the 'psychiatrist', although he did speak a little, conveyed most

of his attitude through his animated 'conversation' on the telephone, his avoidance of eye contact and the repeated shuffling of his paperwork. No trained actor could have performed this scene with more casual dismissiveness, so characteristic of the oppression these group members felt they had experienced. This was characterised mainly through body language and not dialogue. Indeed this caused me to rethink completely my attitude towards enacting something that has been oppressive, chiefly because of the power of its effect. The impression given by a scene such as this is far more powerful in presenting the experience than any discussion, however carefully that discussion is facilitated. The presentation (the product video) embodied the group's perception of their treatment by professionals within the care sector, and makes it possible for others to see the oppression that the service users feel they have experienced. It also promotes an understanding of why they might want to change this. It was also very clear that their movements within the scene demonstrated a confidence not present during our discussion. The contrasting frozen images we chose at the end of the first and second scenes showed this awareness of body language and its contribution to a presentation, and to the empowerment produced by this creativity. This empowerment was developed further by watching the two scenes on video, both during the recording and at the showing of the completed video.

This observing and celebrating 'people like me' is of particular relevance to oppressed groups who are not given the opportunity to see themselves in a positive light. It is also about seeing themselves presenting a performance that achieves the effect they want, and this was clearly the case as this group watched themselves on video. The physical contribution made here is of particular importance, as it was the strength of the images that was so powerful. As stated previously, the theatre event

offers this particular power of image, which has an 'extraordinary capacity for making thought *visible.*' (Boal, 1979:137).

How does this compare with the earlier example of a physical action stimulating and creating a different response within the theatre event? Is the potential for transformation created by viewing the image of yourself on video greater? Does the physical side of performance alter the focus from the pure experience to the post-event analysis (in the viewing of the action) that was rejected earlier? Both examples 'transported' the participants to a different place, in doing something they had not done before and in celebrating that achievement. Did this translate into further change? Again, the evidence would suggest that this was true in both cases. Ellen (4.2) was pleased with her achievement, and had a strong memory of her action at the following session, and this contributed to her participation in the following sessions. She had realised she could do what she wanted; she didn't need prompting or persuading. My notes show that she was noticeably 'more vocal' for the remaining practical sessions, culminating in saying a line in the presentation that she performed confidently and exactly as rehearsed (Author's notes, 2002). The confidence among members of Group F was high at the beginning of the video, although this was in terms of verbal advocacy and participation in the group. There was total rejection of the idea of acting in the video. But during the devising of their scenes, this confidence developed until all members did take part in that product, and enjoyed watching themselves. They had developed these skills, and they had seen the result. This meant that their involvement in the remaining scenes, and the recording of these, was confident and active.

Another scene with Group B similarly used Boal's forum i.e. building a scene in which a participant felt 'oppressed' and the group changing the scene to present a more positive outcome. The aim of the scene was to highlight 'something in day care you don't like' (the work with this group had been focused specifically on managing change at the request of the centre management as previously explained). One group member, Mandy, complained of excessive noise while she was trying to sit quietly or do her knitting. We used the techniques described previously (4.5) to build the scene and then discussed and rehearsed ways of changing this. Someone suggested Mandy could get angry and tell the noisy people to go, another participant during an improvisation initiated the noisy group choosing to leave the room. Mandy chose to ask them to be quiet, and then move to a different space herself if they remained noisy.

This was a good piece of devising, and the group collaborated well, listening to each other and helping each other with dialogue. (This took place in session five of ten sessions.) There were also some clear and striking physical images: Mandy with her hands to her ears in protest at the noise, and Mandy in a different version pointing at the door telling the noisy group to leave. This clearly contributed to the strength of the scene in dramatic terms, and to the ways in which the group were working together and developing their investment in the process which was discussed with reference to communitas in Chapter 3. However, no video was taken of these sessions, and the group did not see themselves performing, even if they witnessed each other's performance. There was no visible difference in the way the other participants responded to Mandy because of the strength of her portrayal, as there had been in the group's response to James, also in Group B cited in 3.9. This was a group developing their work together. However, a huge part of the

development the group made throughout the overall process, and in their devising skills, was the use and portrayal of physical images.

Another significant moment occurred with Group A and has similarities to Ellen's realisation referred to earlier in the chapter (4.2). An important feature of Boal's work is the sculpting or modelling of an image. Frozen scenes, termed variously as tableaux or depictions, have become common in the vocabulary of drama in education (Bolton, 1979; Neelands, 1984; O'Neill, 1995). Boal's version is partly distinguished by the content, i.e. the image is of a situation that is oppressive for the participant (The image of the images, 1995:77) or word that is oppressive for the participant group (The image of the word, 1995:87). It is also partly distinguished by the method used to produce this image, about which Boal is very specific: the 'protagonist' (to whom the image belongs) has to work in the 'language of modelling' by using: '*Mirror language,* himself making the gesture or facial expression he wants to see reproduced, or the *language of modelling,* manipulating the actor with his hands, like a sculptor with a statue [sic].' (1995:77).

Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre (formerly GYPT) were one of the first Theatre in Education companies in Britain to experiment with Boal's techniques in working in what were then called Adult Training Centres and are now termed Day Centres. Work with Groups A and B for this research took place in two such centres. One of the games GYPT used was 'Concrete mime', in which participants are used to build different objects with their bodies: 'The principle [...] that we use a whole person or a number of people to become different things [...] (in pairs) one person is the sculptor and the other the raw material.' (Greenwich Young People's Theatre, 1983:1). This can be used in a variety of ways: the experimentation with the shapes and uses of the human body (ies) makes a useful

starting point for Boal's sculpting. For example, small groups might work together to build a familiar household object such as a gas cooker or armchair. This encourages them to explore the shape and form of the object, and translate their own physical shapes into that form. It is therefore looking very differently at everyday objects; at our own bodies; and at stretching and manipulating those bodies. It is also very funny, good for encouraging groups to work together, and always achievable. If the object is made too quickly, complications can be added: 'Where do I switch it on?'; 'Where are the gas burners?' or 'Does this chair recline?'. This exercise may also be worked on in pairs. This technique can then develop into building scenes and the sculptor becoming the director, and clarifying attitudes of characters within scenes to enable the development of the narrative. This can also promote the understanding of the 'spectactors' resulting in empathy with the character/protagonist, as Boal discussed in terms of enabling empowerment to occur.

This game was first used with Group A in session two of ten and was much enjoyed by the group, although both groups were led and directed by staff members. By session six we were using the technique to develop acting parts within a vocal scene for the group members who did not want to take on the role of a character. The scene was set in a shop, and some people took on roles as the 'shopkeeper', the 'customer', and the 'customer's friend' whilst others became 'a bag of crisps' or 'a cake on the shelf'. We then added a 'manager' and a 'store detective', whilst the customer and friend became shoplifters stealing the cake. Susan was helping Ellen to steal the cake and the scene was halted to try and focus on who might notice what they were doing, and what the shoplifters might do that would give themselves away. Susan suddenly performed a wonderful 'I've got something hidden under my

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coat' walk, holding the 'cake' and shuffling toward the imaginary door whilst looking around to make sure no-one had noticed her. Of course this was even more funny because of the way she handled the group member who was the cake (!), but her enjoyment was clear in performing this furtive shuffle, with her shoulders hunched and swivelling her head from side to side to see if anyone was looking. This was clearly a 'performing' movement, acted for others to watch. Susan remembered her enjoyment and the action in detail a week later, performing her movement at the next session for a member of staff who had not been present the previous week. The focus was not on someone being a cake, which might have been the comic focus, but on Susan's own face, gesture and movement.

This was over half way through the series of sessions with Group A, and by this point they could reasonably be expected to have developed confidence with most of the drama exercises and a reasonably high level of participation and commitment to the acting scenes, including both movement and vocalisation. Susan was not vocal, and although her facial expression was usually one of enjoyment, she usually followed what others in the group said, rarely initiating thoughts about what to do next or opinions on what was going on (Author's notes, 2002). This made this particular action stand out. However, the crucial point here is not the action itself, but its effect on her as a participant in the group. In the remaining sessions, Susan did not initiate more of the actions, but her contribution did change. Her enjoyment of performing had changed. Her confidence was then such that she was able to contribute physically and more vocally in the final presentation.

It is impossible to say whether this action specifically resulted in this change in contribution, but it was certainly a significant moment for Susan, and one identified by the supporting staff, even though they had not witnessed the event itself. When

they referred to this, they did describe it as 'stealing the cake', but also showed her physical action (that she had obviously shown to them) or described the action in words ('She had something under her coat') describing the physical movement, rather than what the acting was trying to present i.e. the stealing of the cake. Wright referred to the 'epistemology of emergence' in describing the nature of 'some of the best forms of drama education' (2005: 2). He went on to explain that:

> [the] structure of learning in drama is such that this emergent cannot be anticipated or known in full beforehand. Furthermore, it cannot be generated simply because it is (or assumed to be) known. 'It' arises in the complex feedback systems that comprise communication between mind(s) and body(ies).
>
> (2005:2).

Wright referred specifically to Boal's work in citing 'embodied processes designed to "dynamise" the senses.' (2005:3). This is what happened to Susan. Her embodiment was the result of the spontaneity of her physical response in developing her contribution to the scene, and subsequently to the content of the remaining practical sessions. She did not analyse this in reflection, but rather celebrated it by repeating the action, now no longer spontaneous, but part of her and part of her as an active participant in the group. This is a development from Ellen's use of action, which acted as a trigger for her participation, of a sound already decided and rehearsed, as part of a scene that was already established and rehearsed. However, this still became part of Ellen as a participant, because this had enabled her to contribute in a way she had previously felt unable to.

4.7 What happens when nothing happens?

There follows one further example of physical work enabling a change in participation and this provides an interesting contrast because of the nature of the

group involvement in the scene. Or not ...! This group (D) were initially very wary of drama, as were all the participants in the 'Silent Voices' project (outlined in Chapter 2) at the beginning of the practical sessions. Indeed, such was their level of uncertainty that no-one, not one participant would leave their chairs for any sort of warm up game or exercise at my second meeting with them, the first practical session. It seemed unlikely that we would be filming scenes with this group only five weeks later. I had never faced this situation before or since, although if it did happen again at least I would have some experience to draw upon. The group were in their own space, they were accompanied and supported by their usual two members of staff, and attendance was voluntary for the whole group. Because of the nature of the space however, it proved difficult for a drama session to run alongside other activities (e.g. chatting, coffee, playing pool) and as it seemed wrong to impose drama on every one who arrived for the group we (myself, the participants and the attending social workers) decided to run the drama session for the first hour, leaving the second hour of the session free for other activities. People who did not want to do drama could therefore turn up an hour later, or sit and watch the drama. Whilst not ideal, this seemed an acceptable compromise. At my first session, which turned into a meeting led by one of the social workers present, this group were, according to my notes: 'a very vocal group' and 'seemed very willing'. However, at the second session, when I asked people to stand and join in, no-one wanted to. I had to find some way of drawing out their enthusiasm and obvious commitment to voicing their opinions and turning this into some sort of participatory drama that we could later record.

One of the issues they wanted to discuss was the provision of group trips, which they felt to be of huge benefit to the group, but were difficult to arrange, due

to budget restrictions. The availability of a minibus was also a problem (this was also an issue for Group E and in fact it was their drama about this which formed part of the product video). I began talking about one of their trips and asking them to describe what they had done, very gradually putting people in role where they were sitting in the room as part of the café or pub: 'So you were sitting together? What were you drinking? And did the waitress bring it quickly? And then what happened?' Very gradually people did begin to join in, responding to me in role vocally and with gestures such as raising a glass to say 'Cheers'.

However, it was the next session (the third of six) at which things really changed. I began by using Boal's sculpting of an image (1995:77) in the concrete mime format devised by GYPT. We built various everyday objects in pairs e.g. armchairs, streetlights. All pairs of participants remained seated whilst doing this. This then developed into half the group building a sculpture on a train; remaining seated, which the others in the group amended and directed. Finally, the other half decided on a sculpture of a football match in which they finally, finally, got to their feet (this was again directed by the other half of the whole group). We were then able to discuss the characters people were playing: attitudes, what they might be thinking, what they had done before coming to the match, and then begin to build some ideas for a scene. This developed further at the following session, when we explored again the issue of the group's 'trips out'. The resulting scene used frozen enactments from the beginning, middle, and end of the 'story' but also used some action and dialogue as well as gesture. Three weeks later, this group contributed three scenes to the product video, which were all their own ideas for problems they wanted to explain to the commissioners of the video.

4.8 Returning to Turner: the liminal zone and communitas.

Several examples of physical exercises or specific physical actions creating responses from participants previously unwilling or unable to participate have been outlined and analysed. In all cases, this resulted in an increased and positive response and level of participation in the work, and in some cases a difference in the way that these participants were perceived by others in the group. In the reflective analysis of Action Research, what links might exist between this change and the potential for transformation associated with the liminal zone in this thesis? In Chapter 1 the relevance of roles and frames was discussed, in terms of how these enabled group members to experiment beyond their usual role and operating frame with action and behaviour. In Chapter 3 the importance of the contribution made by the group experience of communitas was outlined, both in the inspiration of a collective response, and in the cyclical mode of changing the group's perspective of another participant because of different actions(s) and behaviour. This is also of importance in watching others or themselves in a presentation or on video. Throughout this, in terms of both the theatre event and the politics of the participant groups, the focus has been on the 'doing' and the active 'taking part'.

Is physical action an easily accessible way of doing this, particularly for participant groups who find verbal interaction more challenging? Clearly physical exercise is desirable for us all, and the groups in the Day Centres (A and B) all took part in physical classes such as aerobics and Pilates (which they demonstrated to me as a physical warm up and subsequently led for each of the sessions). In the first example, in which Group F recreated a scene of an oppressive meeting with a psychiatrist, the strength of the scene in dramatic terms came from the powerful effect of the visual representation in conveying the exclusion and intimidation

experienced by the group members when experiencing this situation in 'real life'. In other words, their feelings about its effectiveness and accuracy resulted from a reproduction of their own experience, and also themselves as experts; other staff members and members of the production team had no knowledge of this experience. This provides an interesting contrast with some examples from earlier chapters that are focused on the process of creating the ideas for the group's own devised drama. Group F's representation focused more clearly on recreating specific moves and gestures that they had witnessed during a real meeting, such as the psychiatrist turning his face away from the service user to talk on the telephone.

The power of the scene comes from the accuracy and effect of such actions, which Schechner defined as 'twice-behaved' (previously cited in 1.9). As explained previously, he meant that every action has already been performed, although perhaps not by that person. This is surely of relevance in relation to this scene, in which the participants were in the position of ignoring the 'patient' and focusing elsewhere which was the cause of the participants' oppression. They were able to reproduce this so well because of their own experience, yet the actions were beyond the actions they would usually use in that situation (beyond their 'operating frame': 1.6). It is also a vindication of Boal's technique that they were so clearly able to demonstrate this oppression without much explanation, instead 'showing' me what happened in these interviews. I agreed with the participants that ideally we would like to place a psychiatrist in the position of the patient (Turner's status reversal, 1969) but had to settle for placing the camera there instead. The oppression here was the attitude taken by one human being to another, and body language was the best technique the participant group could find to exemplify this. Although they were able to reproduce some of the language used, it was the gestures and

movements of this character that were most easily reproduced. Perhaps this is part of the value of movement and gesture, because it is 'twice-behaved' it is copied, whether consciously or subconsciously, and that the creativity is in taking ownership of movements not usually made by yourself.

This is in contrast to the alienation technique of Brecht's gestus, through which Brecht wanted to show the difference between the reality of life, and society's view of itself: to demonstrate how social forces change what people do. (Willett, 1974:33-42). With Group F, it was the reality of the naturalistic acting and the authenticity of the reproduction (agreed upon by all the group members) that shocked the cameraperson and staff, with no experience of that particular interview situation. However, this reproduction was also of a situation and a 'type' (a role rather than a character) and it is that which objectified the action in the scene and made it possible for those watching to recognise the truth of the action rather than the presentation of one psychiatrist in particular. Wilshire suggested that theatre reflects real life if it can exemplify types and essences which make: 'actual persons and things what they are' (1982:138). This recognition of our common life arises from these moments in enactment. We can all identify with the frustration associated with someone not looking at us when we are talking to them, for example. Thus the change is in giving the power and control (within a fictive situation) to those not usually in that position, and this echoes Turner's status reversal previously cited.

Wilshire described this as 'de-distancing' through which persons are given presence through 'bodily stances of attitudes' (1982:139) leading to behaviour as a condition of identity which he saw as the emergence of theatre. If this body language is indeed a crucial way of promoting equality through role, then this must

be addressed within a theory of transformation within the theatre event that seeks to enable and perpetuate this equality. Barba also discussed this difference between the way bodies are used in real life and in performance as previously outlined in 1.9. Meldrum discussed dramatherapy technique regarding gesture 'as a part-action which others complete' (1994:81). If this scene had been about developing assertiveness, I would probably have offered different participants the opportunity to play the 'patient' role and experimented (as a group) with ways of challenging the behaviour of the 'psychiatrist'. This happened in any case as we explored the participants' alternative scenario for the meeting, but the product video, and its presentation to the commissioning committee clearly politically challenged the 'psychiatrist' to take responsibility for her/his behaviour within their portrayal. In addition, the group could witness this challenge through their use of the theatre event.

In what way is this liminal in nature? It can be argued that this scene took the whole group 'beyond' their usual behaviour rather than any one individual, although I have emphasised the performance of the participant taking the role of the psychiatrist. The whole group took part in the animated discussion building the scene and were clearly impressed with their end product scene, not just my reaction, but watching it on video too. Thus the spontaneity discussed in relation to Turner's communitas was as a result of the group's involvement, and subsequent investment, in the recreation of the scene. There is no doubt that at the point of performance i.e. the first time we tried acting it out after a discussion, spontaneous actions did occur. The context and attitudes presented within the scene were detailed in a way that enabled this deepening of investment. This was also as a result of Boal's emphasis on accuracy in the 'language of modelling' cited previously (1995:77) which was a

technique we used during the rehearsal of this scene, either one participant showing the face or movement they wanted someone to reproduce, or physically modelling them by moving a limb or part of their face. (This was obviously subject to the participant's permission.)

In contrast, the example of the member of Group B who objected to noise did not focus on this physical detail, although there were some physical gestures that illustrated her feelings and attitude within the scene. Because the focus in this scene was, as requested by the management, about managing particular situations, the focus for the group was on thinking what to do and then translating into a) action and b) words. Thus the focus in physical action was about creating a dramatic gesture that would show everyone what she was thinking. This is a theatre skill. In terms of participatory drama this was about enabling the participants to think of this gesture by themselves (i.e. without me directing them) and to perform in a way that was effective i.e. clearly demonstrated her feeling. This 'effectiveness' was then commented on and further directed by the other members of the group. The difference between the two examples is thus the difference between taking ownership of a specific role from which you are excluded, and the creation of a gesture to enable clarity in terms of the presentation of that action. The example in Group B focuses only on the latter.

Both of these examples have the potential of the liminal zone, and both contain aspects of communitas. Both involved reinforcing the self esteem and contribution of participants, and the theatre event enabling this to happen. The form enabled the participants to take control of the (fictive) action. Both examples also demonstrate that the moment of significance for an individual or a group is not the end of the liminal process. In the first example, the efficacy of the scene, and the

veracity of the behaviour, was completed by two further actions. Firstly, the group watched the product video and appreciated their performance. Secondly the group suggested ways to conduct a more user-friendly interview. The physical actions and body language were again the focus of this second part of the scene (their suggestions for an 'alternative' interview). Did viewing this transform the participant group, or only transport them temporarily? This group were anxious not only for the commissioners of the video to view this, but to implement the changes they suggested. For them the action they required was to effect change in the situation, not change in themselves. But as Boal argued, the empowerment came through the art form (the theatre event): the actions in the scene demonstrated a confidence not present in the discussion. They had suggested the changes, then created them and presented them, and because of the video recording had *seen themselves doing this*. It is then possible for them to translate these actions in the wider community beyond the pretence, or take the knowledge that they 'can do' into the world.

> The responsibility of each participant [...] is a multi-artistic function [...] she is remaking her known world and observing herself in all that.
>   Bolton (1998:273).

Thus once again the concept of reflexivity and its importance within the liminal zone is highlighted. Shared investment in the event, and the spontaneity of an action are both important. They effect transformation when supported during and after the event by a consciousness of what has been achieved.

Is this also true of the other group example: that of Group D, the group who found it initially hard to join in the participatory drama sessions? This appears to be true, in that it again involved the whole group of participants involved in the creation of scenes. There is clearly a case for transformation, as the group moved

from a standpoint of not joining in, to a point at which they all did participate. During the final two sessions, in which the filming took place, my notes show that some group members had made and brought in props to use. They too were very impressed with themselves on film, and they had every right to be.

In this example, the physical exercises reminiscent of Boal enabled the group to access the actions of the pretence that had proved so intimidating. Once they had begun to 'pretend' they then felt able to add dialogue, and even build in some additional imagined happenings, to create their own theatre event. Although this began with an experience common to all (the very first scene built was in a café) and the others (train and football match) had been experienced by most, it was not the recreation of a specific scene experienced by them all that had been the focus for Group F cited previously. These are two different uses of techniques involving physical skills, but with the same result. They both involved participants in the creation of the art form of pretence, and in their own empowerment through this creation. Group D required direction of their physical actions, whereas Group F were very much in the position of experts showing others what this experience was like. In both cases however, had the group begun by exploring dialogue, the scenes would not have resulted in the level of power and commitment that they did. As explained previously, Group D found this impossible in the opening participatory drama session. Group F were asked what sort of things the psychiatrist might say, and what questions the patient might be asked, and they appeared to remember phrases and be able to use this. But the physical rejection of the patient character seemed to encapsulate the overriding mood of the scene for them, and they were able to see this on video to confirm the visual effect these actions had. Perhaps their

most powerful memory was what it felt like, and they were best able to translate these feelings into gesture and movement rather than into words.

Group D were not primarily translating their own feelings into their actions, but they were being directed or sculpted by myself as group leader, and the rest of the group, in their half-group scenes in the bus and the football match. Thus the skills they felt unable to attempt in the first practical session became more accessible when supported and reinforced by their fellow group members. The initial taking of roles in a café also began with what was happening, who was placed where, what the waiter was doing, rather than on dialogue, although some of this was included. As did Group F, the whole group reached a level of participation and performance which neither they nor I would have anticipated at the beginning of our work together. For Susan in Group A one action, the way it was received, and how she felt about that, enabled her contribution to change for the remaining sessions. For Ellen the physical action triggered another level of participation. In all cases, however, the physical and active use of group members' bodies within the theatre event enabled them to do something they had previously felt unable to do. Whilst the elements contributing to communitas: the being and being together; and active participation, are present, the contribution made by the specifically physical elements in these examples is important.

4.9 The lived experience of the body.

Paterson and Hughes (1999) identified the body and its application in the context of disability politics in placing this within a debate of impairment. In this thesis impairment is not primarily an issue because of the involvement of people with

learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness, although some participants involved in the field work did have physical disabilities as well, for example hearing or vocal impairments. Paterson and Hughes challenged the concept of the 'body as a passive recipient of social forces.' (1999:597). As discussed previously, the social model of disability separates the socially produced disablement from the bodily impairment. However, Paterson and Hughes argued that the social model denied this 'sociological agenda' to impairment, and claimed that impairment also is social. In other words, that it is only termed impairment because of the way society, for example, uses visual signs or announcements to convey information. The environment, physical and intellectual, that is shaped for the so-called majority (without physical impairment or learning disability) produces a consciousness of exclusion: that you don't quite belong: 'Any body that is excluded from making a contribution to the construction of the social world cannot find a home in it.' (1999:604).

Within the argument of this thesis, it is important that the 'body' is placed as an active tool in the use of participatory drama and Applied Theatre. It is important that participants feel able to use their bodies in the practical work, and celebrate this contribution as of value. This takes on political and social implications when viewed as an element contributing to the liminal zone and its potential for transformation. In previous chapters this *active* participation was highlighted as of huge importance in effecting transformation, and this is also clearly supportive of the participants in a socially and politically active role. Physical actions, as are other contributions to the theatre event, are identified by the participants as 'I can do' rather than the 'I cannot do' constrictions placed upon them in everyday life.

The evidence of the physical element in this active stance (in itself an interesting choice of word with physical connotations) is clear in all of the above examples, in that the participants used their bodies within the pretence to present dramatically, to clarify their words or express something beyond words, and to cue their next action. Did the participants themselves recognise this? Did their physical actions enable them to experience their bodies differently, as part of the difference in their participation in the field work? What was their awareness of this change in perception by themselves and others watching them? This physical awareness extends the consciousness of participants' experience of themselves in and beyond the theatre event, moving into the reflexivity that is outlined in detail in Chapter 5.

It seems clear that the physical techniques outlined in the field work, and in particular in the work of Boal, do offer participants access to transformation within the theatre event, and an opportunity to contribute to the social world, made up as it is of everyday interaction. This is where the misunderstanding of Boal's techniques has arisen, in the application of his 'rehearsal for revolution'. It is precisely in these small actions (talking at a meeting, sitting in a café) that those of us privileged to contribute to the mainstream of society take for granted, that creativity and empowerment occur for those usually excluded from this mainstream participation in the world. The practical examples suggest that these empowering actions may be accessed through the physical, becoming part of each participant's 'lived body' as well as 'lived experience'.

4.10 The physical as space: the liminal?

Linds continued his exploration of Boal's metaxis in discussing the space and potential for change from the re-creation involved in the theatre event. 'By

continuously altering our perspective we are disrupting our taken-for-granted consciousness, destroying again the momentary present, transforming ourselves in an ongoing basis.' (1998:80). The experience of the theatre event offers the space that in itself challenges perceptions of the participants and the observers, both of themselves and of each other. The definition of metaxis has similarities to the liminal, in the awareness of possibilities in the state of in-between, as Boal described metaxis with reference to Aristotle's 'Coercive System of Tragedy': 'the participation of one world in another' (1979:7). This was further qualified: it 'must have its own aesthetic dimension' (1995:43). The importance of this continuous relationship, between consciousness of selves in body and mind, in the pretence and the real, seems to dominate the potential for transformation in the theatre event. The analysis of theatre and drama in education has not been replaced, but acknowledged differently as an element of the lived and embodied reflexive experience also present in educational terms, but which is of particular value to those participants for whom analytical and verbal discussion is more difficult.

This 'witnessing' present in the reflexivity alters perspective, both of own selves, others, and the role(s) that can be assumed. It is through these actions, and the witnessing of these actions, that changes in understanding are reached. This analysis may occur during the event, not just after it. Linds also stressed Boal's emphasis on the physical: 'All ideas, all mental images, all emotions reveal themselves through the body.' (1998:73). It is hugely important for participants to see this, through their witnessing in video or of each other, because the witnessing confirms something that may only be a transient experience. The embodiment of emotions and dramatic action that form the theatre event can best be seen in the presentation of these. Is this a different and vital contribution made by the theatre

event as a presentation? Previously the importance of modelling (people like me can do this) to support participation has been discussed. The recognition of 'I can do this' has been emphasised. But what about: 'Look what I can do' i.e. demonstrating skills of presentation (acting, showing feelings through gesture and body) and this sense of achievement in turn reflexively changing a perspective and supporting the taking of different roles? As Jez Colbourne so eloquently described himself as an actor: 'It [the acting] is still within me. [That is] really exciting.' (Interview. 24th April 2005). This can be a revelation for those unfamiliar with the power of theatre and drama: that you see yourself doing things you didn't know you could do. This is part of you, because it is your body that you feel and see doing this.

In Chapter 3 a moment of creativity was examined in detail in terms of Ehrenzweig's de-differentation (3.7): the conscious scanning of the mind during which a participant decides to accept and frame the pretence for themselves. Does the body also make a similar decision? Jennings contributes terminology from dramatherapy of relevance to this work in the Dramatherapy Developmental Paradigm of EPR, which arose from the Harvard Body Barrier Test (1959). This suggested a movement form Embodiment to Projection to Role (EPR). Thus the embodiment begins with gesture and movement, resulting in body and sensory play. This develops into projective play, such as sculpting and painting, involving the creation of an image outside the self (perhaps this could encompass Boal's body sculpting and the concrete mime exercise). Finally this moves into role in enactment, role-play, drama games and improvisation, bracketed as dramatic play (Jennings, 1994:97-98). Clearly 'body play' is seen as a starting point, developing into dramatic play. This supports the theory that the physical gesture or movement

enables the pretence (the theatre event) to become more accessible. Jennings had previously referred to a 'shamanic model of dramatherapy' (1994:99), in which she outlined the importance of 'aesthetic congruence' (1994:112) as part of a healing process, combining the physical and the metaphysical: the physical reality with the imagined portrayal. Jennings recognised this reconciliation between biological and aesthetic as part of the process. This reconciliation is not dissimilar to Turner's breach and re-incorporation (within ritual and social drama) discussed in 1.1.

It is important to remember that dramatherapy, with its specific intention of healing the individual involved, has a different emphasis from the Applied Theatre and participatory drama examined within this thesis. Nevertheless, it is relevant in terms of its emphasis on change within an individual, and within the individual as a member of a group. Other theorists: Meldrum and Cattanach contribute from this field. Reference is also made to the work of Landy.

In theatrical terms, practitioners known for their physical work include Grotowski, who challenged the way that physical presentation is rehearsed, practised and seen within contemporary theatre. As his focus was solely on professional actors, it is not appropriate to apply the theories in detail to the participatory drama sessions examined in this thesis. It is however necessary to refer to some thoughts on the importance of physical work in theatre from a practitioner who spent his life refining and working on this aspect of theatre. The individual is connected through theatre with her own relationship to language, and her body. This is in direct contrast to both dramatherapy and drama in education practice, in which the boundaries between reality and fiction are always carefully explained and adhered to.

Grotowski (cited previously in 1.8 and 4.4) also focused on eliminating the 'artificiality' of theatre and replaced the narrative and representation with 'here and now' for the actors and audience: this has echoes of empowering the actor but in order to transform and develop the art form, rather than the participant. Grotowski was primarily concerned with theatre, not with any participant, either actor or audience. In contrast, Applied Theatre is precisely about the people it involves, because of its location in non-theatre spaces and its accompanying ethos, as previously defined. The ideology is thus differently focused. However, there is no doubt that Grotowski saw the element of the physical as hugely important in transforming the art form through the liberation of the actors, and this physical element is one identified as liberating and accessible in the transformation explored in this thesis.

4.11 Summary.

Various moments of significance in the field work which were based on physical participation have been examined in detail. In the cases cited, there appears to be a link between the liberation physical movement can offer participants and their participation in the pretence. In one instance this was a trigger for a sound cue, in another a gesture demonstrating an emotion in a dramatic scene, in both cases developing theatre skills and deepening investment in the work. In another movement and gesture provided a 'way in' for participants unwilling or unable to take part in participatory drama sessions. In all cases, the witnessing of participation developed the participation and confidence of group members. The embodiment of these actions became part of the participants' experience, both within the theatre event itself, and in achieving a greater level of participation. In some cases this

developed further through watching the product video and witnessing their own performance.

Some theories of the physical in both the art form (theatre) expounded by practitioners such as Grotowski, and also within the field of dramatherapy have also been outlined. The techniques used in the participatory drama sessions of the field work owe much to the theory and practice of Boal, and his emphasis on the transforming nature of theatre as a *participatory* art form has been highlighted and discussed.

It is clear that the physical forms a unique and accessible contribution in enabling participation in drama and theatre. It also offers a lived and felt experience not dependent on verbal contribution. However, the cycle of experience identified as reflexivity: of witnessing actions in other people and others in turn observing these changes, requires further exploration. This occurs in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Reflexivity: the analysis of the discourse in and out of the theatre event.

'What if what is dismissed as dramatic diversion can be a consummation of our being?' (Wilshire, 1982:4).

'[H]ow we do the process of knowing.' (Taylor and White, 2000:41).

5.0 Chapter 5 places transformation (whose components have been outlined in previous chapters) within the context of experience beyond the theatre event. The argument formulates a cycle of development within and outside the theatre event acknowledging the influence of Schechner's 'infinity loop' (1988:190). In defining this there is further discussion of role in social and professional terms, and the distancing provided by role in the theatre event. All of this is placed within Action Research, and specifically reflective practice, from where the term 'reflexivity' is derived. Turner's liminal theory is once again applied in the analysis of the interpretation of the field work.

5.1 'Me' and 'not-me' (Meldrum, 1994:84).

Thus far in the research the context of the (inner) person within the (outer) environment (i.e. beyond the theatre event): the micro and the macro, has been referred to only briefly. This has occurred in the discussion of Turner's social drama (1982; 1998) and his recognition of ritual within social drama. The argument has focused on the similarities between the liminal within ritual and the potential for transformation that may occur through Applied Theatre and participatory drama. This also raises the political context within which the participant groups of the thesis are allowed to operate. Do human beings always enjoy or need a place in which to be 'not their usual selves'? Previous arguments concerning the definition of communitas (Chapter 3) suggest that this is so, but that what happens in this

space is superficial: a diversion from or a bolt-on to the demands of everyday existence. For people confined by society's labelling into restricted and powerless roles, this space of 'not-me' creates not only a powerful space of liberation, but the potential (that following Turner, has been identified as liminal) to take this sense of difference, this recognition of another self back into the non-fictive world.

Particular examples from the practical field work undertaken for this research have highlighted 'moments' of internal recognition. These 'moments' were snapshots of change for individuals, and sometimes the witnessing of these changes by other members in the group. Sometimes the whole group was involved. What is the process through which witnessing an action in a fictional situation can alter the perception of another's behaviour and subsequently how they are defined? Why does this witnessing change the responses of others towards that person? How do the internal feelings of the individual themselves within that fictive moment contribute to an external change? The difference, if this exists, between an internal recognition, and an experience prompted by the external in performing to others, is also examined.

This chapter uses the concept of reflexivity in answering these questions. It is important to describe the discourse between: action and reflection; subject and object; and group and individual in the move from 'unconscious competence' to 'conscious competence' (Taylor and White, 2000:194). Thus for me as researcher instead of practitioner this discourse became more relevant and allowed me to understand the process of transformation that I had previously taken for granted. This research process itself also moved through this discourse. This term also reflects the move of the participant group towards recognition of the cognitive process of enacting the fiction in the theatre event.

The external context of the everyday for most people with learning disabilities is that of the outsider: 'waiting by the window, looking at other (non-disabled) individuals [and] seen as an indicator of tragedy rather than curiosity.' (Goodley, 2000:204). The vast majority of images seen during the day, in life or in the media, are of people 'not like me' i.e. with no learning disability. Day care institutions offer wide and varied choices of activities, sometimes vocationally oriented, but the service users are still constrained within an operating framework that does not apply to people without a learning disability. The same is true of the options available to people recovering from mental illness. Many people may feel restricted by society or an institution at varying points in their lives. However, the stigma of learning disability or mental illness means that people in British contemporary society have more freedom of life choices if they do not belong to either of these groups. Goodley's 'politics of resilience' (1.6) suggested that participation in self-advocacy may enable the move from potential to action for people with learning disabilities: the external and excluding becomes the internal and included:

> In this sense, resilience seems to reside in the space between structure and individuality. It is not an individual attribute or a structural product.
> Goodley (2000:201).

The same may be said of participation in the theatre event, in the space between the structure of the group, and the input of an individual group member. This relationship may similarly act as a catalyst for different behaviour. The relationship between the group setting and group activity and how this supports the development for an individual has been explored through Turner's communitas (Chapter 3).

The following section continues the application of theories of dramatherapy in its use and application of role. The link is between the self you know (subject) and the self as object, doing something different or differently, and the view of

(your)self as object (Landy, 1996). These terms are used in this discourse of reflexivity, although Boal used the term subject and object differently in aligning subject with the ownership of the theatrical form (acting), and object with the powerless spectator (1979:126 cited previously in 4.4). In participatory drama with the participant groups of this thesis this translates into self as object during a theatre event, and the changes this may engender in the way you see yourself after the event is over. Obviously this also affects the way others see you and this strengthens and supports your own understanding. But the starting point is the self, how you see 'your'self during and after this recognition of self as object, and how this occurs through the theatre event.

5.2 Distancing and role.

Landy (1996) discussed the dramatic process in dramatherapy as implying two different realities: the everyday, and one different from that 'everyday' because of a change in environment or consciousness. This was previously discussed with reference to frames (1.9): the different places in which people are located, and how this affects both their behaviour, and their way of viewing themselves. For example, within a frame at work, within a frame at home, or within the theatre event. In a discussion of role, it is useful to note Landy's use of 'distancing' and each individual's approach to this. Landy noted that individuals identify more closely with some roles and not with others. This has been referred to in the discussion of portraying specific emotions, particularly to do with aggression and control, qualities that these participants may be discouraged from displaying. This identification implied a variation in the relationship between the self and the role someone is asked to create: 'Any time the drama therapist makes a decision to work

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with a psychodramatic role (role of self) or a projected role (role of other), he [sic]
is choosing an approach to distancing.' (1996:25). Thus an invitation to participate
in any form of pretence has to enter the debate concerning under-involvement and
over-involvement with the 'fiction' of that pretence and the therapeutic and
aesthetic experience this provides. Distancing is also the centre of a debate in
theatre, both for actors and audience. In terms of the participant groups in this
research, the focus is on the continuum between observer and participant and the
experience this provides for a group member.

In aesthetic terms this distancing enables a performance that the group can
experience as meaningful: using material and demonstrating skills that are
entertaining, truthful and possibly thought-provoking. In 'therapeutic' terms (I use
this in its widest sense to embrace the meaning of beneficial to the participants) the
performance is real enough for people to identify with, and yet not so real that
people become upset about the action. In dramatherapy this develops
psychodrama's focus on the material of your own life: your story becomes
everyone's story and allows the experience of reality in a different way. 'Drama is
[...] a separation of the self and the non-self within a particular time and space.'
(Meldrum, 1994:14). This also enables a participant to move from subjective to
objective. 'My story' becomes 'That story'. This thesis thus far has highlighted the
application of the liminal zone, a place in which it is possible to be not-me, to the
theatre event of participatory drama and Applied Theatre. The separation is clear for
actor and audience, and for participants as they watch and as they do. The ways in
which continual movement develops back and forth between subjective and
objective are explored later in the chapter.

Thompson, following Daniel, suggested that an 'ontic' participation placed participants and their stories at the centre of a lived experience during the (Applied Theatre training) workshop and therefore: 'there would not be a pulling back or distancing' (2005:35). Whereas the 'epistemic' approach would keep the participants distanced in observing the stories and/or learning techniques to use themselves at a later time. This difference would therefore exist between the doing/experiencing and the receiving/analysing of the participants in such a workshop. Thompson's point is that in certain situations the distanced approach is impossible and redundant because of the location of the participant: 'Theatre projects should not flee from moments of tension or conflict [...] as facilitators we have to take responsibility for creating added stress.' (2005:37).

A direct comparison is futile, but this may also be true of people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness, in that to maintain participation the stories have to be based in known situations. Kershaw's term 'authenticating convention' described these as 'the key to the audience's successful decoding of the event's significance to their lives.' (1992:26). An example of this was the gradual participation of Group D previously outlined. It is also true that Applied Theatre and participatory drama offer participants the space in which to articulate and experience thoughts and feelings precisely to do with their location, as in Thompson's case in a place at war. Yet ethically the enacting of specific personal situations, or a focus on 'disability' or 'illness' may be misunderstood, cause distress, and abuse the possibilities of the research. This was a particular issue during the filming of the 'Silent Voices' project when the participants had been asked to focus on personal experience.

This has similarities with the naturalistic versus gestic of performance theory. It is interesting to note that practitioners using theatre as a tool for political change such as Freire (1972), Brecht (Willett, 1974), and Boal (1979) return us to the 'doing': either demonstrating or participating within the pretence, and it is this that provides the means through which change will occur in the lives of the participants and observers. In contrast, the showcase performances I observed (in rehearsal) at professional theatre company Mind The Gap were entirely distanced from the lived experience of the participants, providing the acceptable 'Shakespeare and modern pieces' for casting, albeit with material adapted for the range and performing ability of each group member (Observation of rehearsal, February 2007).

In this thesis the importance of the 'doing' has already been emphasised as *participating for groups who are often denied a chance to participate*. Thus the additional layer is as an 'active participant' as well as the 'active agents' (for external change) that Boal and Brecht sought to create. Yet this thesis has focused upon the internal change *within an individual* that may result from this participation. This ability to feel able to contribute is also dependent on various factors including the liberation of spontaneity within each participant. It is also a feature in the aesthetic aspect of theatre as discussed with reference to the 'unblocking' of Grotowski and, in a very different way, Stanislavski, whose theory of naturalistic acting was based around accessing unconscious forces within an actor through connection to past affective experiences (1980). Therefore whether or not the role is distanced the 'doing' and 'being part of' are vital components in the potential for transformation.

5.3 Distancing as empowering.

Does distancing therefore enable participation in providing a balance for spontaneous and empowered contribution? Previously the contribution the group can make to this feeling of power and change for an individual was discussed in relation to communitas in Chapter 3. Part of this discussion focused on an explanation of Ehrenzweig's de-differentiation: the process by which an individual represses surface appearance and allows different images to enter the conscious. This was also discussed in relation to a specific practical exercise in which the emphasis was upon the flow between the fictive and non-fictive in the contribution made by each member of the group, and how this contributed to an experience of group sharing which was allied with Turner's communitas.

This was not, however, in any sense of a role within that pretence, even though each participant (by naming an object within the exercise differently) created an artistic boundary around themselves. This in turn created a distance between them as themselves, and themselves performing the action in the exercise. As previously explained, this exercise concerned a pivotal object and a repeated sequence of words. What was of interest in terms of role was the participant James for whom this exercise was the starting point of a process through which he changed from being James that other group members laughed at and ignored, at best tolerated, to James who became a respected and acknowledged member of the group. As another group member said in the final session: 'I know more of [James] now.' (Group B discussion, March 2003).

Wilshire made this link with reference to body language and attitudes that was discussed briefly in Chapter 4. Wilshire named this movement from the fictive to the non-fictive a cycle or 'circle of concepts' in which theatre feeds into life and life

feeds back into theatre (1982:139). This supports the transformation of an individual: something that has happened within a fictional frame, or to someone in a fictional role, informs and enables that person beyond the fictive situation on their return to everyday life. He used the term 'identity' to label this 'self': someone is conscious of their own 'self' and what is perceived by others (that in this discussion has already been termed the objective self), and also involves reference to the physical body of this self. But what is being translated or carried beyond the fiction is the reality of the 'experience', as outlined in 3.12. The 'doing' contains an awareness of the possibilities of playing this different role, through the doing of different actions and then behaviour. This behaviour in Wilshire's terms was what defined the identity. Thus the 'doing' within the experience enables an awareness and then a memory of 'not-you': this different role, the objective self.

> Just 'doing' will not provide learning outcomes. Participants evidently need to do in relation to feeling and thinking from a new perspective.
> Voss Price (2000:157).

Thus it is the distance, the objectification, which enables the transformation beyond the fiction, but it must transfer back to the participant as subject. This forms part of the analysis and post-event discussion 'out-of-role' common in drama in education (Neelands, 1984; Bolton, 1992, 1998; O'Neill, 1995). This is not necessarily true of drama in special education and this is discussed further in Chapter 6.

In the previous discussion of 'operating frames' the participant's awareness of operating within a frame of fiction and yet maintaining an awareness of the real self was discussed. 'Remembering it is pretend' is difficult for some people with learning disabilities as has been outlined previously. This was also an issue with people recovering from mental illness in terms of identifying their personal situation too closely with the pretence as discussed in relation to distancing. This needs to

develop and change to a recognition of seeing yourself doing this pretending i.e. self as object, and *remembering* this. Then this 'witnessing consciousness', as Pillay defined it, becomes itself a tool in behaving differently in the real life beyond the pretence (2000:144). This brings us back to the 'can do' rather than 'cannot'. The participant can pretend, and knows it is pretend and sees herself pretending. This was absolutely the case for every member of the acting company at Mind The Gap. Because of the approach to their work and the roles they were accorded as professional actors, no-one had any doubt that they were taking part in a fiction they had created at work (Observation of rehearsal, February 2007).

5.4 Awareness of pretence outside the art form: social and professional roles.

Goffman (1959, 1972) suggested that the roles people 'play' in real life are the ones they live up to or the selves they would like to be, along a continuum of belief in their perception of reality. At times participant group members would avoid taking part in a game they did not like or perhaps found difficult, by emphasising their lack of understanding and 'playing stupid', to the annoyance of other group members. They also told stories of taking pleasure in teasing figures from services they found unsympathetic e.g. a social worker by pretending not to be able to understand or to do something. They were thus reclaiming their 'power' through pretence. Was this what Group D were doing in their refusal to join in during my first session with them? Perhaps they were simply maintaining a basic human right and saying: No thanks' in a way they felt able to i.e. by pretending not to understand about the drama.

It is important to clarify the distinction between the pretending that is assuming social roles (in real life) and the performed artifice of participatory drama.

This was briefly alluded to in Chapter 1. Goffman named the 'face' as crucial in enabling an immediate emotional response in contact with other people, clarifying being out of touch with a situation as the 'wrong face' or 'out of face' (1972:8). Expressions such as: 'putting my face on to face the world', the use of smiley versus sad face when monitoring Reception class behaviour (sad face is a warning to the child of future censure), 'saving face', and 'out of one's face', all confirm that when people interact they focus primarily on the face. This may be through touch for the visually impaired. But as this is only one part of that person, it is also a metaphor that reflects reliance on the superficial in much of daily interaction. It is also necessary to conform superficially in order to be accepted. 'Mutual acceptance is a basic structural feature of interaction.' (Goffman, 1972:11). When one person volunteers a message, another has to show it has been received. This sharply defines the role of outsider for people whose face 'doesn't fit'. If you are not able to easily play the game of social interaction, and assume the required 'role' by presenting the right face, it is easy to become an observer rather than participant.

For members of the acting company at Mind The Gap, this translated into the status that a professional (working) role, and its accompanying label, accorded them: 'People know I'm an actor.' (Jonathan Lewis interview. 6th February 2007). People might know he has a learning disability, but that is not the focus. As was discussed earlier, the role has shifted, and because of this outsiders' view the actor's own perception of himself has changed. However, this shift because of a catch-all role is not the cognitive learning experience of participatory drama. This may be the next stage of the process that is recalled and realised once the performance is finished. But this difference between performance in Applied Theatre and participation in drama sessions is all part of the cycle of

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performing and change within a participant and then an awareness of this change that contains the potential for transformation. 'In drama we are not just in search of ourselves, we want to try out these selves on others.' (Kempe, 1995:182). This returns to the location within, and understanding of, the frames of pretence (theatre event) and consequently how these contribute to the cycle.

The understanding of non-fictive roles (as identified by Jonathan Lewis) varied among the groups involved in this research. Davies and Jenkins (1997) suggested a huge difference between knowing the phrase 'having a learning disability', and identifying yourself as belonging to that group either emotionally or literally. Although people with learning disabilities may experience discrimination in their daily lives, and feel excluded from a world in which they are not allowed to participate fully, they are often not part of the debate concerning this. People's awareness of practising assertiveness, and developing confidence, can be to do with the world of 'face': fitting in, doing what is required, behaving appropriately - not to do with joining in the dialogue about their place in society. The groups recovering from mental illness were much more aware of the stigma and misconceptions surrounding their roles. Group F spent part of one session building a so-called 'Mr. Normal' (based on Boal's image of the word, 1995:87) and this led to a lively discussion of how 'the others' view people with or recovering from mental illness. For the groups with learning disabilities, this was a label they might argue about, but it was less easy to access other people's considered opinions. It therefore remains a debate in which they are rarely able to engage.

5.5 Reflexivity and 'othering'.

This raises once more Goodley's own definition of reflexivity, requiring 'outsiders to formulate understanding of insiders' (2000:65). My research question and thus the writing of this thesis is focused on participation in the theatre event: how best to do this, and how this can be accessed further, with these specific participant groups. Swain and French challenged the concept of 'othering' in questioning the divide and categorisation of disabled and non-disabled in their 'affirmation model of disability' (2003:150), confronting the supposed 'personal tragedy' of disability and impairment. This is of particular relevance to an understanding and exploration of identity and perspective in this chapter and the reflexive relationship between the two. Swain and French proposed a model of disability as a 'positive personal and collective identity' (2003:151). In the overview of this research, am I attempting the integration of different groups into 'normal' society? Does the transformation that liminality effects suggest as desirable a move towards 'being non-disabled' rather than an acceptance and celebration of people with differing wants and needs: cultural, social, physical? The reflexivity of the research may therefore be vital in reflecting this society. In other words, I am not just learning about 'them' as object, I am learning about us all as 'subject' including myself as researcher as part of that society.

Swain and French further suggested that this construction may be as a result of the possibility of disablement in our own lives and the fear of this, in a way that does not exist in terms of race or gender. It seems therefore that another transformation that drama and theatre may offer is playing with ways in which having a learning disability, or having experience of mental illness, may form part of that person's identity of which they are proud. Whilst I am keen to avoid 'doing

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disability issues' always with people with learning disabilities, this sense of pride and sense of self is something I might work on with groups of young people for example.

5.6 The flow between reality and pretence.

In Chapter 1 Schechner's theory of actualising was briefly explained. This theory (1988:51) focused on the performance event (whether in theatre or in a social context) and its constituent parts. However, Schechner emphasised that within this event there was a continuous flow between past and present, the inner and outer self (what you think and what you show to others) and between the individual and the group: 'jumping the gaps' (1988:40). Neelands termed these 'interlocked domains of performance – education, healing, ritual and entertainment' (2007:313). Thus during such a performance there is interaction between your own level of experience, your understanding and appraisal of that experience (both conscious and subconscious), and finally the ways your experience feeds and reflects the experience of the other participants in the group. The fictional experience presents and symbolises, but within that a real experience changes: it can transform. This is a combination of artistic (rehearsed, artificial) behaviour and everyday (spontaneous, real) behaviour. But the divisions are blurred, and one action continually informs and influences another. For example, James's passing of the 'dog' (3.7) was completely staged: the dog was pretend, the words a repeated phrase and the gesture of passing on formal and repetitive. Yet what happened in the group's acknowledgment of James's contribution was real, for them and for him.

Schechner also stressed the experience for the audience as one of reflexive transformation, from a unified group as part of the event, to individuals going home

at the end. Mind The Gap highlighted this for the audience in terms of disability politics: the audiences are 'transformed' through seeing the performances of people with learning disabilities. The experience changes the audience's ideas about people. Indeed some venues (not at the request of the company) did not advertise the Mind The Gap shows as using performers with a learning disability, and this provoked discussion about 'cheating the audience'. If they had known beforehand about the actors with a learning disability, would they not have come to watch? That would have excluded the possibility of this particular change for them as an audience. (Ellis, R. interview. 21st December 2006). This then informs and changes the audience's attitudes not just to 'people with learning disabilities who are actors', but 'people with learning disabilities'.

Schechner distinguished between change in these three categories: firstly in the fiction (story), secondly in the performers, and thirdly in the audience (1988). Schechner termed these changes as 'temporary' in entertainment and 'permanent' in ritual (1988:171). As noted in 1.3 this was discussed as Schechner's 'transportation', that a person is temporarily altered by their participation in the theatre event, but then returns to their original self once the 'performance' is over. Myerhoff took this further in terms of reflexivity by defining 'transcendence' as an awareness of the flow between the actions made within the drama. The heightened concentration of this 'limited aspect of reality' [the drama or fiction] enables spontaneous flow of action and behaviour within the fiction, yet there exists a simultaneous awareness of this: the 'transcendence' (1990:248). This reflection may not be the post-event analysis of drama in education (Bolton, 1979) but some recognition or realisation of the fiction itself or what occurred within that fiction

(the theatre event). But both flow and reflection have their place within the kind of change, artistic, social and political, that is explored within this thesis.

The exploration of some practical examples focuses on this and reference is also made to the two worlds of Boal's 'metaxis' (1995:43). As these two worlds (awareness of the reality and of the fiction simultaneously) occur in the theatre event, what differences can be found in the relationship between them: the flow of awareness and experience, fiction and reality? As has already been identified, the move from one state to another (and back again) may be imprecise and hard to define. How will this help focus my technique as a practitioner with people for whom the boundaries of real and pretend may be problematic? This analysis revisits some examples of practical work to probe more deeply into this relationship and which parts of the reflexive process are of most use in a praxis centring on people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness.

Linds examined Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (1979) as a form of embodied drama that: -

> reframes our knowledge and opens us to the senses, helping us to think about the process of thought. It concretises the knowledge we have but then makes this knowledge problematic [...] this inter-connection between looking back in order to move ahead.
>
> Linds (1998: 73).

Linds identifies this reflection very clearly as conscious and objective: self as object as previously defined. This occurred very clearly in the project 'Silent Voices' in which the version of Mienczakowski's playscript (1995) took the form of a product video. Although all the participants had seen themselves performing throughout the filming process, all three groups were delighted with their 'achievement' when viewing the final edited version of the video. Indeed, most of their comments were about the relevant committee (for whom the video had been commissioned) 'taking

notice', because the video was 'so good' (Author's notes, 1999). Already a new process is in place: performance has moved to recognition or analysis of performance and then to what that performance needs to achieve. This pattern was clear throughout the processual nature of the participatory drama sessions in the creation of scenes and tableaux. Their participation informed the fiction (entertainment) that the group could then see as an achievement.

'We treat them [the actors] as professionals, and that is not always an experience they have received elsewhere in life.' (Ellis, R. interview. 21st December 2006). This aspect of seeing yourself as object in a particular role (of professional artist) is different from the witnessing of actions or a different mode of behaviour. For example, members of the acting company at Mind The Gap behaved during the rehearsal process as professional actors, getting drinks only in breaks, maintaining their timetable; they clearly saw themselves within this role, *other people placed them in this role,* and this fed back into each actor taking on this role. Specific fictional actions were also made by members of the company in their role as professional actors. For example, one actor within a scene had to enter on his hands and knees carrying a heavy backpack. This was clearly balanced wrongly, and kept slipping down. Yet despite assurances from the director and accompanying theatre worker ('It's OK, we can see that's difficult') the actor persevered until the end of the scene, carrying on until he could return offstage. This is clearly an action as an actor within the fiction, not an action made by his fictional character. (Observation of rehearsal, February 2007). This is different from the perceptions of other people making such a contribution as was discussed with reference to communitas in Chapter 3.

Were there any examples of this in the participatory (non-professional) field work? Obviously these participants could not see themselves as professional actors. But they could be aware of themselves within a different operating frame and taking on a different role: as people taking part in drama and doing something they might not usually do. For example, in the product video of the 'Silent Voices' project (Silent Voices, 1999) the scene called Victorian Times (described in 2.4) presented 'patients' curtseying to the 'Matron'. This was clearly a fictional action decided before the presentation of the theatre event, and taken into the event by one of the participants. This is not an awareness resulting from within the performance, rather carrying in to the performance a perception from the outside (self as object: actor performing curtsey) as did the professionals at Mind The Gap. In this example a clear delineation has been reached between the real and the pretend, something which was discussed earlier as problematic.

This is substantially different from the contribution communitas makes to an individual's experience of participation in a drama session. Turner's communitas, as it has been defined in this research, as group connection contributes to a person's sense of self and self within the group. In contrast the recognition of your own actions or role is more liminal, in focusing entirely on how you feel about yourself, once you have seen your self as object. If this is associated with a formal recognition of performance (e.g. the product video Silent Voices (1999); the showcase at Mind The Gap) was there an equivalent for the participatory groups? Is a presentation the only way for people to see themselves as object: 'the actor'? Is it necessary for me as participant researcher therefore to include this in any practical sessions as part of my responsibility to the group, in giving them the maximum choice of options?

For Group A the presentation was of the mock television serial drama in which Rob and Martin's performing relationship developed. During Rob's teaching and directing of Martin, in enabling him to take up his karate pose, was Rob aware of himself as other than Rob, not as a fictional character, but as a teacher or director? My observation (and that of the staff member present) was that he was (Author's notes 2002). However, more importantly, Rob himself did not mention this to us in our brief discussion at the end of the show. He was more aware of himself acting out his karate. This 'Look what I did' was common throughout this group (and it is important to note that my own role as researcher did not allow time for full and accessible feedback on this, in my first piece of field work). Nearly all members of this group did achieve something in the performance that they had not managed in rehearsal. This varied from saying a line, remembering a cue or gesture, or beginning the scene, through to presenting a focused pose as Martin did. All of the participants then wanted recognition of this from everyone present, and affirmation of themselves as achieving what they had achieved.

Group B did not perform at our final session together. Instead, we played some favourite exercises and replayed some favourite scenes, such as being a contestant in a television programme. My notes record that there was a 'huge improvement in the [exercises]' (Author's notes, 2003). In terms of maintaining a fiction, of taking part, tolerating each other; and responding to cues and signals within an exercise progression had occurred for all participants. They had noted this themselves in our discussion (verbal and practical) that took place in session eight of the ten. ‘You feel like — I can do things’ said Liam, and everyone agreed. Thus there is recognition by the participants of their 'can do' status. This is again centred on actions rather than a specific status-based role (e.g.

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an actor). However, this 'can do' may then translate into a 'can do' role (I am a person who *can do* things) and thus enable experience of a different status.

This echoes Boal's practice and the relationship he established between action and capacity to change. A huge part of the use and application of his practice is precisely this acknowledgment of the fiction and the real, and the relationship between them for the participant(s). In educational terms, Bolton saw this progression from the internal experience to the reflective analysis of drama in education. According to Bolton: 'the deepest [...] change is at the level of subjective meaning [...] it has to be *felt* for it to be effective.' (1979:31). However, Bolton later placed this in context: the overview of the spectator or dramatist, a more objective standpoint, when discussing Heathcote's work (1998). In this analysis he highlights that part of the learning experience for the young people is in shaping and managing the theatre event in order to strengthen the meaning of the event. In other words, the learning of the young people is supplemented not only by the distancing that their role as author/dramatist enables them to experience, but in their knowledge of the aesthetic theatre form itself, and by implication their roles as actors. For the participant groups involved in this research, the equivalent of this learning experience is that of Boal's metaxis: the recognition of the fiction and themselves manufacturing this fiction. The term 'percipient' (used by O'Toole and Bolton) was highlighted previously in its ability to cover the functions of both the response of a feeling or experience, and the qualification or objectification of the overview.

However, the metaxis of Boal is recognition of the process in which participants within a created fiction are aware of both selves, their 'reality' and their 'image of reality' (1995:43), at the same time. There are sometimes difficulties with

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some members of these participant groups distinguishing between the role in pretence and their real selves. When this is achieved however, they not only experience the spontaneous joy and celebration of creating the art form or the fiction, but also witness themselves doing this. It is this combination that is important. They feel they 'can do': their recognition is that they *can* make this and that they *are* making this. Other people witness this, and this feeds into the celebration and recognition of the participant group. The combination of this internal recognition and the witnessing of the group is therefore of significance in supporting and strengthening the potential for individual transformation.

5.7 Reflexivity in ritual: returning to Turner.

Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed is rooted in a desire for political change and in challenging 'the presentation of the world as a perplexity, as inexorable fate.' (1979:179). The description of his 'Joker' system was 'a permanent form [...] dramaturgy and staging' (1979:172) designed to place spectators as contributors to the action, because of the Joker's explanation of the action. In this process Boal referred specifically to ritual and breaking up both the ritual of the theatre event and the 'unmasking' of social ritual, and 're-presenting' these as the 'structures of possible human relations' and 'all the roles [the character] performs.' (1979:196). In other words, breaking down the artifice in social relations between human beings in all the roles undertaken in daily life, and then identifying and presenting these through theatre as the assumed presentation that they are. According to Boal this process then enables analysis and discussion of the 'new possibilities of combining and transforming social masks and rituals' and 'possible [...] changes [of the structures].' (1979:197). As has been examined in Chapter 1 Turner's analysis of

ritual as both aesthetic and social form explored the potential for change which might occur through the ritual. This is the 'public reflexivity' Turner discussed through which 'groups take stock of their own current situation' (1998:64) through examining their interaction and communication. Turner's reaggregation or reincorporation allowed change in these after the liminal stage of the ritual. Schechner's infinity loop model (1988:190) demonstrated the links and reflexive relationships between the aesthetic drama (experience of the theatre event) and the social (world beyond the make-believe). As Schechner highlights, the mode of experiencing is shifted from private to public (1988:77). In relation to the participant groups in the thesis, this meant the group recognition of their individual experience within the theatre event. In other words that a participant could experience a 'moment' (in which something of meaning happened for them) and this would then be strengthened for them by the group's witnessing and appreciation.

There is also a reminder here of the importance of the community that was explored in Turner's communitas (Chapter 3) in Schechner's acknowledgment that industrial cultures standardise and separate private and public, and social and aesthetic functions, which in combination meet the needs of individuals within their communities 'for person-to-person interactions' (1988:141). It is this interaction: inclusion, which is so vital in enabling the integration of people with and without learning disabilities, and people recovering, or not, from mental illness. Thus this is the process of inclusion, in enabling all members of the community to interact with each other. It is not about where they are, it is about being part of the social interaction.

Schechner also defined the 'anti-structure' in performance, that enables communication and connection between actors, author and audience, as liminal. Boal similarly identified this connection as enabling potential change. The definition of liminal in this thesis therefore translates the integration of the anti-structure of communitas as inclusion. In other words, that the separation into different groupings of the structure is replaced by inclusive exchange among and between all members of the community. This is explored in detail in terms of the participant groups, their consciousness and understanding of these links, and the types of activity and creativity that enable this awareness to occur. This discourse will be examined as reflexivity as previously explained, firstly in the development of Schechner's infinity loop (1988:190) and outlined in detail as the reflexive cycle of drama's transformation for people with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness (Figure 2).

5.8 Schechner's infinity loop (1988:190).
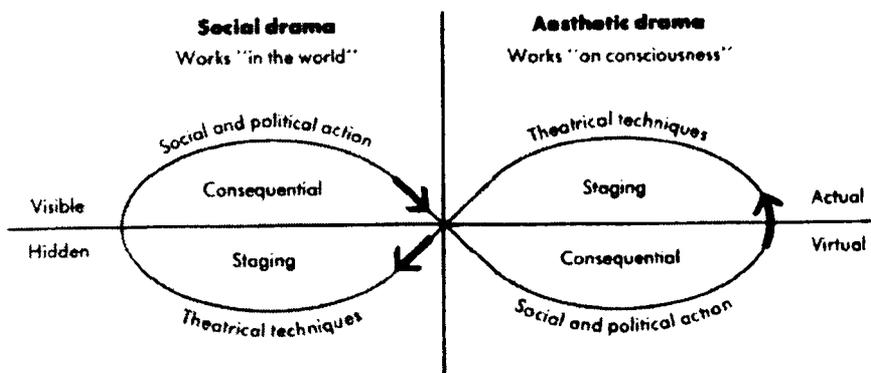
To clarify this diagram, Schechner related the hidden structure of each type of drama to the visible structure of the other:

> Techniques of the theatre (staging) to support social action – events that are consequential [...] designed to change the social order or to maintain it. The theatre artist uses the consequential actions of social life as the underlying themes, frames [...] of his/her life.
>
> Schechner (1988:190).

How is this of relevance to the field work, and the participation of the group members? The project 'Silent Voices' demonstrates this with reference to the scene recreating a meeting with a psychiatrist (4.6). The hidden use of staging in the treatment of the service user moves into the visible political action of oppression (in the real 'social' world). This then becomes consequential political action (virtual) through the participants' recreation (staging) of the scene and finally the visible 'actual' staging of the drama in the product video. The participants' recognition of the metaxis, their two co-existing selves, objective and subjective, contributes to a development in understanding as the recognition of the 'can do' experience and celebration of the aesthetic relates to their objective selves. This is then assimilated into an understanding of their subjective selves. Thus participation in the theatre event makes an essentially cognitive action, a development in understanding, more accessible to people who may find cognitive acts in other contexts more difficult.

Three different examples during process and performance are explored in an attempt to establish how this works in terms of reflexive action (if any) and create a diagram of this action. In other words the participants themselves as 'researchers' into their own interaction: something experienced but not identified, and then revisited to develop understanding. The first example is within the process of the participatory drama session and was originally explored as an individual celebrating an achievement in the theatre event. This was Rob teaching Martin his karate pose

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(2.4). Is Rob conscious of the changes in himself that occur in his taking on this teaching role? In other words, does he have a reflexive awareness of his 'objective' self and how participation in the theatre event changed his contribution? The first challenge in this particular example is that the transformation occurs in preparation for the theatre event, not in the event itself. In Schechner's terms this translates as the 'staging' (the teaching of the karate pose) through the 'hidden' (was it?) staging in the real world (Rob's role as teacher). This became the social action (the sharing that meant Martin could take part) that fed into the sharing in the pretence (virtual) and into the presentation of the shared or copied action (the actual in the drama).

I am stretching Schechner's use of terms considerably, but nevertheless the core of the action is the relationship between the two participants (social) that was not just informed but developed by their involvement in 'specific theatrical techniques'. As in turn the performance was developed by their 'social interaction'. This exchange was wholly unexpected. Had Rob not been aware of his objective self in the pretence, through his karate gesture and stance, the transformation into teaching role would not have occurred. The performances of both 'gangster brothers' in their roles in the pretence were witnessed by other members of the group. This is part of the development of the discourse of transformation, and is illustrated through an adaptation of Schechner's infinity loop (Figure 1). Boal's definition of metaxis was as follows:

> the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different autonomous worlds [...] The participant shares and belongs to these two autonomous worlds: their reality and the image of their reality, which she herself has created.
>
> (1995:43).

Did metaxis occur for either Rob or Martin? Boal's reference here to the 'image' is an aspect of his Theatre of the Oppressed (1995:46) and the creation of an image by

the participant of her 'oppression' i.e. a situation in which s/he experienced oppression. However for the purpose of this thesis the application of this may encompass any recognition of this separation of self i.e. self as object as opposed to and in addition to self as subject. In other words, the understanding of the pretence that proved so difficult for many of the participants in the field work. It is precisely because this is so difficult that this makes such a contribution to the transformation, as previously stated.

The recognition of this is also a cognitive act (why it is so difficult) and yet can be achieved through the theatre event. This cognitive leap in itself enables different kinds of learning: -

> [A] new kind of knowledge emerges from this process of interaction between the observing-I, the I-in-situ and the not-I, the other. We begin to see everything in new ways.
>
> Linds (1998:74).

What is vital for these participant groups is that this recognition may also enable *realisation* of the participant's 'can do' as an act in itself. The development of this 'can do' in acting as pretend characters, strengthening the feeling of potential for participants, is the placing of this objective self in an empowered and enabling position as contributing to the action. The importance of this has already been emphasised for participants for whom it is rare to be placed in the position of contributors who affect and change action rather than be influenced and directed. Thus the reflexive recognition and owning of the spontaneous action enables the participants to see this happening, as it is created and as it happens. Everyone in the group is creating this. It is not something done by other people and beyond reach.

Did this state of recognition occur for either of the two participants in this example? As stated earlier, Rob clearly had an understanding of his role in the pretence based on his physical definition of his character (the karate pose and

gesture). Although obviously this was based on his knowledge of karate he was also clear that he was pretending to be someone else. My notes suggest that all of the participants were clear about this by the final session. Rob also appeared confident in his 'teaching' role although he did not articulate this in terms of recognising what he was doing.

It is important to examine if this recognition occurs differently in processual exercises rather than in (or because of) performance. Previous examples in Chapter 3 focused on two exercises: 'What are you doing?' and 'This is a dog'. This highlighted the contribution that group work in drama and theatre, and the positive recognition and support provided by this, form a version of Turner's communitas. The obvious reflexive aspect of this is the recognition by the group of someone's contribution, and the way this affects their treatment of the group member in question. In turn this may then enable that group member to participate differently. Is metaxis an identifiable and useful part of this? In the first example, 'What are you doing?' the participants found it difficult to separate what they were presenting from their instruction to the next participants in the circle. The pretence of the action was present, but the difference between that and the instruction was difficult. Is this a sort of metaxis that was impossible for them to recognise? The identification of the objective self (acting the pretence) and the simultaneous subjective self in the game passing on to the next person did not take place. This lack of separation was created by the requirement of the exercise in demanding simultaneous action (objective self: actor) and the verbal instruction to the next participant (subjective self: instructor).

In the 'This is a dog' exercise the pretence (focused on an object) did occur and the exercise progressed very well. What was discussed in terms of communitas was the way in which a participant's usual habit related to the exercise and was thus

accepted by the group as adding to, rather than detracting from, the ongoing work. This then fed back into the acceptance of this group member by the rest of the group (the witnessing of the other self by the group members). Thus the clear separation between self as object (in the exercise) and self as subject (usual self) did exist although in a constant exchange. Whether James himself had this understanding was difficult to know, but other members of the group identified taking part in the drama sessions as the reason for their friendship with him (Author's notes, 2003). Their understanding of him as a person (subject) was informed by their seeing him within the drama (object) and reflecting back on this. This development was clearly as a result of their memory and its subsequent cumulative effect on their interaction with James.

5.9 Summary

Beyond this recognition in the process or creation of the pretence it is crucial to highlight this in performance such as the presentation observed in rehearsal at Mind The Gap (cited earlier in this chapter) and secondly the product video Silent Voices (1999). It is in these examples that the division between subjective and objective is easiest to see (for practitioner researcher) and for participants to experience. The stepping out onto a delineated stage in performance, and the viewing of this on video, established this boundary (between self as subject, and self as object) beyond doubt for all participants. This was a realisation and recognition for me as a practitioner of the use and validity of a performance or product as an outcome with these particular participant groups. The presentation clarifies the boundary between pretence and reality, and the realisation and understanding of the difference between pretend objective self and real subjective self makes a vital contribution to the

potential for transformation for these participant groups. This cycle is drawn in Figure 2.

This has travelled a long way from Turner's liminal within ritual. Yet it is the ritual form of the aesthetic, in the art form or performance, which may enable this development for the participant groups in this thesis. But this ritual and form have to mean something to those involved. This product has to be supported by the process of understanding, of group work and investment, and of inclusion, for the fictive to prove a real experience and develop this potential. The artificial in itself will only ever remain artificial. Boal said that: 'Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself, [...] see itself seeing.' (1995:13). Perhaps human potential may also be developed when human beings see themselves, see themselves seeing and see this through theatre.

It is important to place the theory developed thus far in relation to adults with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness, in the context of drama within special education. If the theatre event enables access to the cognitive recognition of the pretence and subsequently transformation within a participant, how might this be accessed within formal education of young people? This may translate across other curriculum areas in enabling cognitive development within participants. Or do the application of curriculum and the frame of formal education prevent the occurrence of a liminal theatre event? This is explored in Chapter 6.

Figure 1: REFLEXIVITY IN ACTION: an adaptation of Schechner's infinity loop.

Aesthetic drama: working towards and in the art form

Social drama: 'in the world'

| ACTUAL | | VISIBLE |

Pretence (role or action) of not-me

Awareness of self in pretence

Witnessing of 'transformed' self

Transformed self in world

'Can do' feeling

Development in cognitive capacity

| | | HIDDEN |

Exploration of other selves
LIMINAL POTENTIAL

| VIRTUAL |

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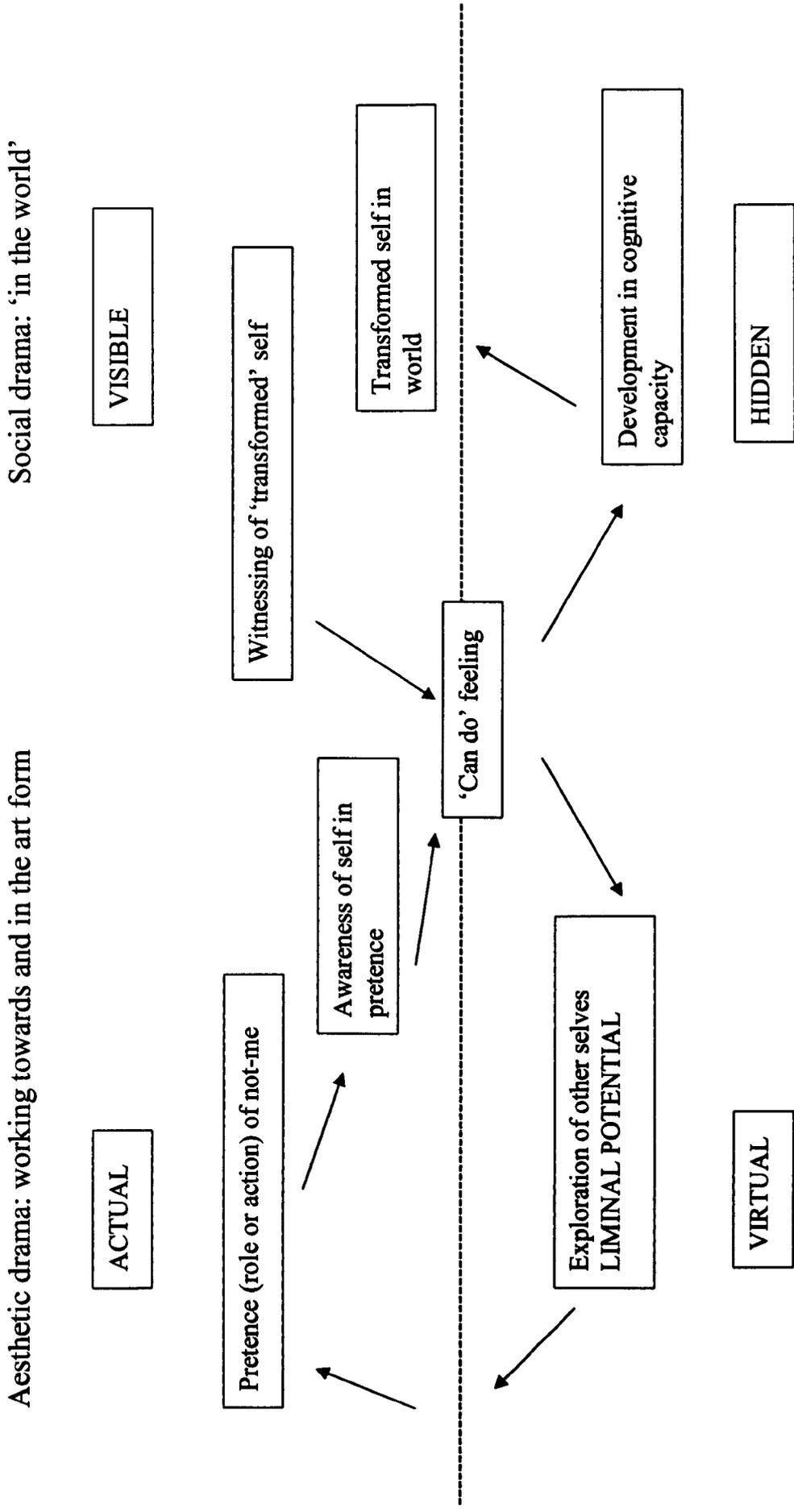
Figure 2: THE REFLEXIVE CYCLE OF DRAMA'S CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND RECOVERING FROM MENTAL ILLNESS.

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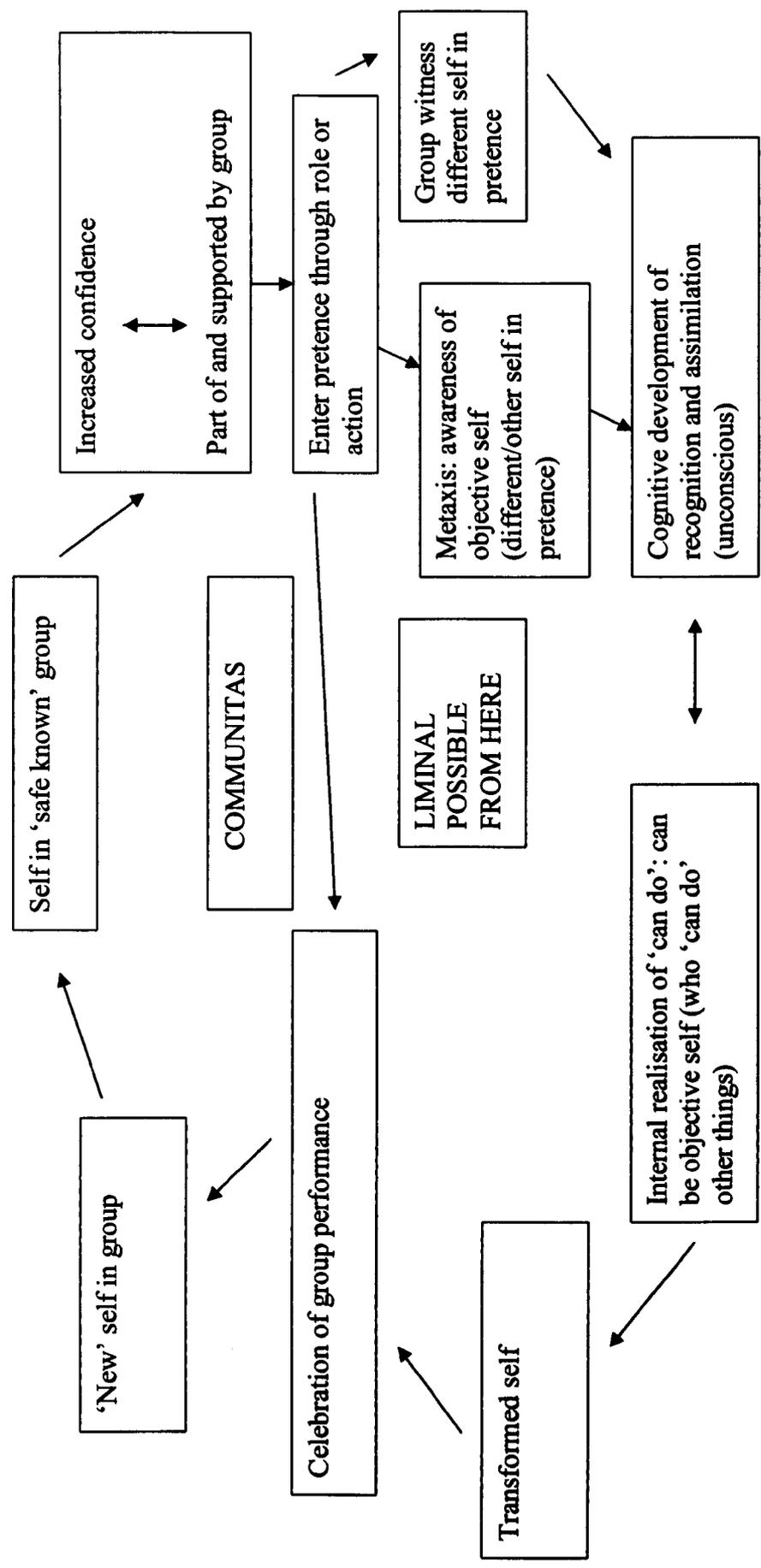
Chapter 6: Transformation in special education?

'The most important reason for doing drama is that it frees the students from the present time and the present location and places them within a fiction.' (Brigg, 1996:86).

'The strategies used to overcome such resistances in the interaction between teacher and pupil will need to be subjectively meaningful, not just objectively valid, for learning to take place.' (Goss, 2006:212).

6.0 Chapter 6 explains the development and application of drama in special education both in special schools, and with students with learning disabilities in mainstream schools, where the majority of these students are now located. Specifically this will be related to aspects under examination in this thesis. For example, the concept of the liminal zone (the place away from the usual), communitas (the group connection), and finally the contribution that reflexivity makes to a transformation within an individual and the attitude of the group towards that individual. This is questioned in the move from formal education to adult life for these participant groups.

6.1 Drama as special education.

What status does creativity hold within the continuum of vocational and social skills in formal education and in the provision of day care services? There is currently (2008) a strong vocational emphasis that translates into basic skills targets in contemporary day care. There is an emphasis on 'returning to work' for those recovering from mental illness. Is there sufficient opportunity to practise and nourish 'skills for life', such as social interaction, for adults with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness?

> We have almost set this generation [of people with Down's Syndrome] up to fail [...] children go through mainstream schooling, college courses, can

expect to live long lives but then they reach the first hurdle of adult life and the support is severely lacking.

Curtis (2007:28).

Perhaps a continuing encounter in role-play or drama may bridge part of this gap. The field work of this thesis is only of value if it can inform the practice of those working continually within day care services and in special education offered by local authorities, as well as theatre practitioners whose work in these settings is more sporadic. This considers the political implications within institutional care for adults with learning disabilities and recovering from mental illness as continuing care for young people with learning disabilities and behavioural difficulties. This questions the values society places on care and provision for these participant groups, and whether the best possible opportunities exist for inclusion (Turner's public reflexivity, 1998:64). As previously discussed, this process itself is reflexive: each member of society can learn from another, and in doing so tolerance and understanding of different needs can progress.

Drama in special education has been recognised for many years as contributing to learning, through skills-based activities, developing self-advocacy, and enabling creativity and communication (Peter, 1994, 1995; Kempe, 1996). Just as importantly, it has been recognised as contributing to the experience of pleasure and self-worth (Longhorn, 2000). More recently, it has been seen as a tool enabling inclusion (meaningful integration with students without learning disabilities) and thus supporting a major change in the education of young people with learning disabilities (Department for Education and Skills, 2004). Most, if not all, of the excellent creative practice and initiatives within schools are the results of particular committed and dedicated members of staff. However, there are very few sceptics

who are not persuaded, by the end of a participatory drama session, of the value of drama for young people with learning disabilities and behavioural difficulties

My impression as an artist in education is that the emphasis on measurable 'achievement' through testing in mainstream schools has squeezed out the space for creativity within the curriculum, although there are encouraging signs of its revival. The Arts Council initiative Creative Partnerships (Arts Council England, 2008): the Government's flagship creativity programme, is spreading across the country, not 'just supporting teachers' work in the arts', but 'bringing in creative professionals to work with teachers and take some risks'. (Hinds, 2005: 1). The Royal Society for the Arts (RSA) has developed a competency curriculum: 'Opening Minds' that features five categories of competence (RSA, 2007). These include Competences for 'Relating to People' and 'Managing Situations', both of which can be seen in relation to the sort of individual and developmental work undertaken in drama in education. This emphasis on imaginative and creative interactive skills is of increasing importance in an education system, and a society, that focuses on the individual in contact with others mainly through technology.

6.2 Drama for 'special needs'.

The umbrella term 'special needs' reflects the catch-all nature of special schools, in that one educational institution has the challenge of educating young people with, for example, profound and multiple sensory impairments, varying learning disabilities, autism, and behavioural difficulties among many other groups. The handbooks written by drama education specialists often use this umbrella term in titling their work, although specific chapters and/or exercises clarify the specific groups, and needs, for whom they are intended.

Cattanach works in dramatherapy alongside play therapy and is the final theorist from this field to contribute here. She outlined three 'models of practice' in offering drama 'for special needs'(1996: 11-15):

1. Creative/expressive – exploration through forms of play and improvised drama to explore and develop communication. This encompasses the embodiment projection role paradigm discussed by Jennings (previously cited in 4.10).

2. Tasks/skills – focused activities, can involve general social skills, learning appropriate interaction through an engagement with making (role play).

3. Self-advocacy – in this context, identifying personal and group strengths, describing their oppression to others, and validating their experience to the wider community.

All of these are categorised differently, but still present, in the Arts Council's Drama in Schools guidance levels (Arts Council England, 2003) which differentiated between three categories: making, performing and responding. This was an analysis previously made by Bolton in his conceptual framework of drama in education (1998:249).

The processual devised drama of the field work discussed thus far in this thesis encompasses all three of Cattanach's models. However, it is important to discuss at this stage whether learning in itself forms or contributes to transformation as defined by this thesis. If someone learns something, that necessarily changes them, because of what they have learned. Conversely, a situation in which learning is supposed to occur, and does not, highlights the conditions of that situation. What prevented learning from taking place? This is an appropriate time to clarify the

differences between these terms, all of which may be placed along a continuum of development. 'Development' is a progression of any sort made and/or experienced by an individual or witnessed by someone as taking place for an individual. Along this continuum (this may not be linear but circular in the style of the reflexive cycle outlined in the previous chapter) are placed 'learning' and 'transformation'. Learning may be applied to a skill or ability but is a term attached to a specific 'development' e.g.: 'I have learned to swim'; 'I have learned how a body floats in the water'. In educational terms this is often aligned with the use of the term 'cognitive'. 'Transformation' in the context of this thesis is how a development, whether 'learning' or otherwise, contributes to a sense of self (perhaps supported by the witnessing by others of you as this self) that may then be taken forward to the world beyond that moment of development (in the theatre event). As previously discussed in Chapter 5, the transformation occurs beyond this point: the moment provides only the potential or the opportunity from which the transformation may occur.

It is clear from the above that drama in special education (with students with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties) is very similar to drama in 'mainstream' education in its aims and objectives. This suggests a parity of achievement as well as access: 'Pupils in special schools where good drama is provided are given parallel experiences to their mainstream peers.' (Arts Council England, 2003:27). My work as practitioner across the age and ability range in formal learning settings confirms this. This is because of all the contributory elements discussed in Chapter 3 in referring to the parallels between Turner's communitas and participatory drama. These elements include the involvement and importance of the whole group, the group connection, and the 'levelling' effect of

creating something by and for the group. All of these criteria apply to *any* group doing drama.

Throughout the field work undertaken for this thesis, I have used exercises and techniques used with adults without learning disabilities, and with students without learning and behavioural difficulties. The terminology and approach I use as a workshop leader are adapted to suit the needs of the group, but the content and process become different only because of the participant group themselves, and necessarily anything that is 'created' is made by the group members present during that specific exercise or scene. This is true of any group doing drama: what is created is unique to that group of people at that moment in their lives. Thus drama is undertaken with participant groups in special education for similar reasons to those in mainstream education: that it can make subject matter accessible, that it empowers the students, and that it places them in a position of imagining or visualising a world beyond their own. Peter summarised drama in education as: -

1. A method of enquiry
2. A motivating force, capitalising on play
3. A means for personal and social development
4. A teaching method.

(1994:5).

All of these criteria apply to drama in special education. The specific use of drama as 'a teaching method' raises the issues of teaching and learning for adults in institutionalised care and the aims of such work. This in turn raises the issue of 'normalisation' (sometimes reclassified as 'social role valorisation [sic]') (British Institute of Learning Disabilities, 2008). This is a move away from institutional care into usual community settings, i.e. as enjoyed by non-disabled people. In placing people in traditional teacher pupil roles and relationships, it is clear that questions of power and equality are raised. Of course the nature of participatory drama can

challenge these roles. Beyond that central concern, drama can be used to highlight or explore particular subject matter in exactly the same way that it might be used in a school setting, special or otherwise. An example of this is the work completed with Group B in which I was asked to explore 'issues of change' because of the changes taking place in the Day Centre. Although I applied a similar processual approach to my preparation, and the group contributed to this process, as a group we were completing a task we had been given. The work did not develop as freely as, for example, with Group A although the material was interpreted in a variety of ways, and varying techniques were applied to the subject matter.

In the project 'Silent Voices' the groups were able to give their opinions on whatever they chose, within the remit of services they used. The aim of the project, as clearly stated to the participants, was to elicit and present these views, rather than cover issues suggested to them by other people. This ownership of the work may support a crucial difference between learning and transformation. It may also contribute to the concept of observation of objective self that formed part of the reflexive cycle at the end of the previous chapter. It is important to examine this in more detail, and this next section will explore some of the field work with this focus. But first the assessment and definition of development in educational contexts is discussed.

6.3 Targets and outcomes.

Practical work in drama in special education reflects the current requirement to fulfil targets imposed in public services, and specifically in state education. Within the range of field work the specific objectives or targets were usually imposed by the participating institution. Funding constraints are also usually placed upon such

creative projects. In terms of assisting the extension of practice this thesis has to take account of the conditions under which this practice operates. For example, the participatory drama sessions with Group A were initiated by myself as field work for this thesis. This meant that the choice of material and the end product (the television serial drama) were both determined by the whole group. As previously explained, although I took responsibility for structuring the session and initiating ways of working towards this, the whole of the group, once familiar with these techniques and exercises, chose the content of the sessions. In a school context these would be recorded as learning attainments: the choices made by the participants, their memory of specific exercises, and their application of particular techniques from a selection with which they had become familiar.

Peter distinguished between these as 'drama literacy': knowing the elements of make-believe play, and 'drama fluency' in which 'the pupils' make-believe play is challenged and "play taken into learning" [...]: using drama as a learning medium' (1994:11). Thus the difference is not only the practising of developed skills e.g. improvising, but the participants responding to the unexpected (provided by the teacher or workshop leader) and thus exploring the situation in role, with all the alternatives of behaviour available. Was my aim as workshop leader to equip the participants with these tools? Would they retain these and be able to apply that experience in other situations without me being present? Clearly the spontaneity and initiation of decision-making are important aims, particularly with these participant groups. With adults, this may translate into 'rehearsing' life situations, in which response to the unexpected may prove challenging. This pro-active learning role for participants could have been an aim in school, however this research, in exploring the potential for transformation, required a more flexible approach. The

Shakespearean project that was undertaken in a special school (Group C) did not cite these reasons for working on the project. Perhaps they felt this transfer of skills (from one situation to another), and a pro-active student contribution, were already in place because of the drama teaching present in school (Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service evaluation, 2005). This echoes the emphasis on staff development in the Creative Partnerships initiative (Arts Council England, 2008), in which the aim is for creative practice to continue in school beyond the duration of the presence of the Creative Practitioner (workshop leader).

My plans for the participatory drama sessions of the field work reflect this flexibility by not listing specific aims for the first sessions (this was also within the first year of my research). This gave me a different sense of freedom as a practitioner. Instead, my notes listed events I had noticed, or needed to look out for. 'Being led versus doing own thing' and 'Moment of realisation of "freedom"' were both noted after the second session (of ten) with Group A (Author's notes, 2002). Clearly at this stage my focus in the field work, and my own role in moving from practitioner to practitioner researcher, was on Turner's liminality and the concept of transformation. My ideas were clearly emergent and attempting to understand when *any sort* of change (a development that might or might not become 'transformation') occurred for the participants. At the start of the following week's session, my plan began with a list of four exercises, two already known to the group (to enable them to make a choice) and two new ones. My plan then suggested the following exercise: an improvisation in pairs involving a customer and a waiter in which the customer has to show the group how they are feeling within the scene. Within the scene I asked them to: 'Decide for yourselves something to say or sign'. Following the building of the scene, I have noted a question to ask the participants:

'How does what is happening [in the scene] change what you [as your character] feel?' I could apply educational targets in framing this exercise and its place within the session, and the recording of this. For example, this involved a decision and then a presentation (making and performing). This sits within Cattanach's tasks/skills model cited previously, applied to each individual and the decisions they took. However, the 'freedom' of the research (and not being paid for it) enabled me to take a more exploratory and conceptual approach.

The Shakespeare project in the special school environment (Group C) did have to fulfil certain aims and criteria, some imposed by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and some by the school itself. The ownership of the creative work, highlighted previously as a possible difference between learning and transformation raises an interesting debate. The central aim of the project, agreed by the RSC and the Curriculum Adviser for Drama on behalf of the local education authority, was to enable the young people to participate in a performance of a Shakespeare play and thus encourage parity with a mainstream school. Further elements of this were staff training in unfamiliar (drama) techniques, and the experience for the students of working alongside professional theatre artists and the expectations engendered by this 'modelling': the behaviour and commitment from the participating adults promoting reciprocal behaviour from the students. Alongside this, the school wanted the project to support the performing arts in school and support the curriculum in terms of linking literacy with the text (Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service evaluation, 2005).

However, this use of the text insisted upon by all parties (except the participating students) focuses the question of ownership and in particular whether this establishes a difference between learning and transformation. Lengthy

discussion took place concerning the understanding and use of Shakespearean text, and the participants' need to do this. 'Is there a particular role Shakespeare's complex language might play in special education?' (Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service evaluation, 2005). If one aim of the project is to achieve parity, does this mean imposing problematic work upon the students: to use an earlier description, necessarily placing them in a 'cannot do' position? In none of my work with adults do I 'force' anyone to speak lines from a script they do not want to. This echoes the 'parity' discussion of Chapter 5, in which the casting session with the acting company at Mind The Gap was discussed. In other words, is there a point in drama or theatre at which the use of prescribed (verbal) language and identifiable comprehension of this language necessarily excludes people for whom this is problematic? Or does this assumption place the participant group in an 'othered' position, as previously discussed? There are ways of enabling access to material which place participants in a 'can do' position, and this was clearly demonstrated in the Shakespeare audition piece performed by the acting company from Mind The Gap in which an extract from *The Taming of the Shrew* was performed as a 'non-verbal adaptation' using sounds and movement and focusing on two cast members as Katerina and Petruchio supported by the rest of the company (Observation of rehearsal, February 2007).

Mind The Gap's accredited training course for actors with learning disabilities 'Making Waves' (now 'Making Theatre') has run since 1998 developing such methods. More recently some of the mainstream drama schools, in a scheme piloted by Mind The Gap and Mountview Theatre School, have formed a training model using such methods, in doing so paving the way for people with learning disabilities to work as professional actors. A tutor on this course spoke of how much

he had learned as a teacher through working with people with learning disabilities (CAST!: Mind The Gap conference, 31 May 2007). This supports the suggestion in the special school's work (Group C) that artists from the RSC would learn from their involvement with students with learning disabilities (Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service, 2005). As a drama worker at Mind The Gap phrased it: 'I want to make good theatre; this [working at Mind The Gap] means I have to work in different ways, find inventive ways of working.' (Ellis, R. personal communication. 20th December 2006). Integrated work between actors, directors and theatre workers with and without learning disabilities enables a two-way learning process, and a liminal zone that we can all share. Working in these ways can provide directors, theatre workers and other practitioners with the potential to work differently, and also to recognise themselves in different roles during this work: the reflexivity discussed in Chapter 5. Thus the liminal exists as an opportunity for all participants. Certainly communitas has existed between us all at moments in the field work.

This commitment to integration and equality raises political questions about control in institutions and links back to a fear of drama as challenging this control. Are educational targets structured in such a way as to discriminate against young people and adults with learning disabilities, with behavioural difficulties, or recovering from mental illness? Students are graded according to national levels of attainment and there is some flexibility concerning the application of the National Curriculum. The adaptation of the curriculum is usually because of dedicated and imaginative teachers and other members of staff. The Ofsted inspection (Ofsted, 2008) and the basis on which students and teachers are judged are not adapted sufficiently to recognise the needs of the individuals within the institution. This next

section of the chapter outlines some exercises from the Shakespeare project cited previously (Group C), and some other field work undertaken during this thesis. This is examined in terms of the learning and teaching methods discussed by practitioners in special education, and also within the context of Turner's liminality. This focuses on the potential for transformation within the theatre event (or learning situation) if the necessary conditions are in place: the group connection, the ownership of the 'event' (whatever is happening), and the possibility of the individual and the group having an awareness of themselves in different roles within the event. Is the empowerment and liberation experienced by an integrated participant group accessible within a school environment and with learning outcomes dictated by the curriculum? It may be that a conventional institutional environment and/or the demands of the curriculum preclude this ownership.

6.4 The structure of (special) education and its effect upon drama.

One aspect of my work as a freelance practitioner that I most enjoy is the atmosphere when I go into a school at the beginning of the day. It is immediately obvious that something 'different' is going to happen. With echoes of the discussion of communitas in Chapter 3, there are several factors that influence this. The students may be 'off-timetable' for most or all of the day. I am present, as a 'different' adult ('adult other than teacher' sums up this feeling of the 'otherness' I enjoy). The students may not be in their usual classroom or within the classroom the furniture is rearranged to leave an open space.

There is an atmosphere of freedom from constraint, and the understanding, that has been discussed previously, that none of us knows exactly what is going to happen. There is also a strong sense of the presence of 'play', 'freedom', and 'not

usual'. Whilst this may not establish each member of the group as an equal participant, the dynamic between teachers and students is altered. There is already a predisposition towards excitement and possibilities. There is no doubt that change will occur for some of the participants as the group work together throughout the day. The framework in which this develops has an identifiable educational bias i.e. the creative work is planned with outcomes in mind. Yet moments within the pretence, and the ways in which they affect the participants, are very similar to those identified previously as containing elements of the liminal.

'[P]lay contains all the developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his [sic] normal behaviour.' (Vygotsky, 1976:552). As a practitioner, I endorse 'going beyond where the person is' whether in an educational context or not. Indeed I would hope for this in any session I was taking with any participant group. It is central to my stance as a practitioner. This may happen in either group or individual terms, or both. It may also act as a description of liminality, in offering the potential for a person to be other than their usual self. It was the idea of this potential, and an attempt to define it, that prompted my first examination of the liminal zone and Turner's concept in relation to Applied Theatre and participatory drama. Vygotsky's theoretical framework was based around the premise that social interaction played a fundamental part in the development of cognition (1978). In other words, that understanding was a result of this interaction. In this thesis the term understanding was previously applied to the distinction between reality and pretence. But the experience that has the potential for change is also of knowing: knowing that you have been somewhere else, and done something different. This is an embodied experience as outlined in Chapter 4.

This thesis has placed the theatre event as an alternative and a support to social interaction. Vygotsky also suggested that there was a time limit on this development, which he labelled the 'zone of proximal development' (1978:86), i.e. that at any given point in an individual's life only so much cognitive development can be achieved. But to achieve this maximum potential, social interaction is vital. This reiterates that usual social interaction may be restricted or denied to adults with learning disabilities or recovering from mental illness, and that in this instance participatory drama sessions may therefore provide an alternative. In an educational context inclusion involves young people with learning disabilities and behavioural difficulties in usual (educational) societal human interaction. The 'modelling' of adults within the school environment was mentioned with reference to the Shakespeare project. Participatory drama sessions provide an opportunity for this with adults i.e. being placed in a situation that promotes sharing ownership of the work and active participation, within a supportive group context: positive and creative social interaction.

The first exercise is from a series of workshops devising Group C's version of a Shakespeare play cited previously. The school described this group as having a mixture of behavioural difficulties and learning disabilities. They were experienced and enthusiastic about drama, which in their school drama lessons was usually improvised. There were at least two strong personality clashes i.e. students who would try to disrupt another student's contribution. On at least one occasion this led to an attempt at a physical fight. This workshop was the third of five weekly sessions with the group, who were all familiar with each other although from different classes. During this session I wanted to explore the nature of the power held by the different characters in the play, and the group worked on two exercises

before we reached the making of the scene as described in Chapter 3 in which the students controlled the actions of the actors as human puppets.

The first exercise involved the group forming a circle with one group member in the centre. The group could then ask permission from this person to do anything e.g. perform an action, say a sentence, sing a song. The person in the centre always had to answer no, no matter how this was challenged. The person in the centre chose when to move onto the next question. I have used this game many times in schools and often in the context of exploring Shakespeare, to explain the concept of absolute hierarchy and the deadly consequences of disobedience. Often this becomes a game of tactics and persuasion, with lots of attempted negotiation from the participants around the circle, who sometimes join forces to give themselves more power. This results in the person in the centre being put under pressure, although they are always supported by myself as workshop leader and members of staff to stick to the rule of the game and answer: 'No'.

With Group C this exercise worked very differently. The person in the centre enjoyed their power, with even the participants who preferred not to vocalise shouting loudly. This seemed an excellent example of Turner's status reversal (1969: 177) although the effects were entirely different from those described by Turner. He suggested that status reversal would 'restore relations between individuals as well as reaffirming the order of the structure.' (1969:177). There was no sign of this in Group C, although of course this was a fictional situation (unlike Turner's actual social situation) and framed as such. The actions for which the group members asked permission were all fictional: no-one could actually leave the room, no-one could eat anything real. The participants were all clearly aware of this. 'They know what's going on.' (Learning support assistant, Author's notes, 2005).

Their power was not in terms of doing anything other than blocking and refusing, which can be hugely enjoyable.

The second exercise then involved me taking on the role of their head teacher in an assembly. They had to agree in secret on an action or word I might say which would act as a cue for them all to behave in a particular way. This would be the cue I had to guess (in the fictitious assembly) through their actions.

I leave the hall and stand outside in the foyer. The school bursar, at her desk in the reception area, looks up curiously. I look outside at the gathering minibuses and fantasise briefly about going to my car and driving home. There are scuffles and giggles from within the hall. The group are rearranging the chairs. The teacher shouts. There is more scuffing and scraping of furniture. The heavy hall door begins to open and I rearrange my features. 'Come in miss' announces a member of the group and skips away to sit down. I follow him in, and stand in front of the rows of chairs.

There are many variations of this exercise but all involve the group against one person. It was this aspect that Group C relished. Their power over me was that I was placed in the 'not-knowing', not in control position, whereas they were in control of the actions and the joke. Once I had identified the cue word, I played along for a few more minutes before 'discovering' what it was, to prolong their obvious enjoyment. In contrast to the previous exercise, the participants identified the reality within this fictive situation and it was this that they enjoyed. Although in role, I was an adult who did not know what was going on, whereas (beyond their role) they all did. They shared the power in that situation and the control over me as the not-knowing. The differences between students discussed previously became less evident, as the group unified in this control of the pretence.

This was not a revolution, nor a challenge to the hierarchy; this group seemed well aware of their power to use their behaviour within school. It was also obvious to most of them that staff or myself could stop the exercise when we chose. But it was a differentiation between a theatre event over which they held control as a group (regardless of internal differences) and one in which they did not. Their awareness of themselves within a fictive situation influenced their behaviour and their ownership of this power ensured their commitment to the exercise (the pretence). Some of them were already able to articulate this in terms of their sense of powerlessness in the world beyond school. Some were equally clear that the 'rebellion' of their behaviour in school was the only sense of power they could experience. This reminded me of the anger of Groups D, E and F on the 'Silent Voices' project and the sense in which the label for their behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself, had limited their participation in the world (for example in applying for work) and altered other people's perception of them. It was the theatre event that enabled all of these widely varying groups to show that they could contribute, and, just as importantly, that they enjoyed being part of something instead of being left out: included rather than excluded. This is a 'can do' situation for groups with hugely differing abilities, needs, and desires.

This enjoyment of real power and control over a situation was developed yet again in a scene during the presentation, cited above and previously described in relation to Turner's communitas (3.9). In the presentation the control of the action became even more strongly sensed by the participants, with the awareness of the audience, and their objective selves, in that situation. Thus relations within the group were harmonised, albeit briefly, before the structure was reaffirmed i.e. the fictive situation ending, and then participants re-taking their place in the world

according to the label placed upon them. Thus Turner's reaggregation within his societal structure (that the next stage in the ritual always returns society to its usual way of operating) is echoed by an education system in which students are always aware of the definition placed upon them, and that they are always returned to that label despite their actions.

It seems clear that these changes in personal and group behaviour, and the participants' recognition of these changes, are steps of cognitive development and not just the glimpses of change for which I was searching at the beginning of the field work. This was the step that was identified in the explanation of the reflexive cycle of Chapter 5 (Figure 2). The distinction between the pretence and reality (and in even more sophisticated terms what was real or not within the fiction) and their recognition of this was clearly demonstrated by Group C. One of the teachers involved in the project with Group C provided a further example of this cognitive step. She highlighted the use of Shakespearean text, not as something to be mastered in itself, but in terms of the students adapting to the demands of that specific situation, however difficult this proved for many of them: 'frustrating but a valuable learning experience' (Northamptonshire Inspection and Advisory Service evaluation, 2005). This was in contrast to the improvisation with which they were all familiar.

Yet the 'knowledge' from participation in the theatre event goes beyond this cognitive step. It is knowing that you know, and celebrating the 'you that knows' as an objective self. This may also be as part of a group 'in the know' or with power in a specific situation, an experience often denied to young people with learning disabilities or behavioural difficulties. This is surely an element in reliance on a gang culture: the alienated take their power wherever they can. This objective self is

then part of you, and may be repressed and constrained in the return to the world beyond the pretence or the liminal zone (Turner's reaggregation). But it may remain a conscious memory and thus contribute to development or transformation of the participant: seeing yourself as a knower and a doer, as an active contributor and an equal. There may also be a sense of owning your experience of life. That experience, however transitory, cannot be deleted. This is what enables transformation of Applied Theatre and participatory drama. But in the context of education and its attendant categorisation and labelling the reaggregation may not enable the experience to develop, and the participant to realise her potential. It is this that Neelands discussed as 'claims for recognition' alongside 'struggles for redistribution' (2007:312). Applied Theatre as 'affirmative action [...] designed to "heal" the psychological rather than socio-economic causes of inequality.' (2007:312). There are some changes Applied Theatre cannot effect, and changing this labelling for purposes of care and education is in this category. Challenging labels, however, is always possible.

6.5 Multiple intelligences.

Gardner's multiple intelligences were referred to in Chapter 4 in a discussion of the development from physical actions (kinaesthetic) to altered behaviour. It is important to remember his definitions in this chapter as the different ways of learning and knowing are explored in an educational focus on the theatre event and what happens within it. In terms of the distinction drawn above between purely cognitive and cognitive as a contributory element of liminality this may encompass the difference Gardner ascribed to the difference between skills ('know-how') and abilities ('know-that') (1983:68). Within the theatre event there are clear differences

between the skills of presentation i.e. voice and gesture to portray meaning, and the know that: understanding the meaning of the story and the relationship between the event and the significance it might have in the lives of the actors and/or audience. This echoes Peter's distinctions between drama literacy and drama fluency.

With specific reference to the liminal this encompasses the 'know-how' of participating and/or presenting and the 'know-that' of observing yourself in the can do role: you know that you took part. This links to Cattanach's categorisation of the models of 'tasks and skills' and 'creative/expressive' cited earlier in the chapter. For example, the know-how of the focused task to practise social skills (tasks and skills model) as opposed to the improvisatory play exploring communication (the creative/expressive model). Gardner's 'personal intelligence' (1983:244) discussed the possibility of assessing intelligences differently throughout someone's life, because the ways of 'knowing' change through these different stages. In terms of Turner's theory this could be applied to the pre and post liminal stages: that the participant experiences 'knowing' differently before and after the occurrence of the status-changing ritual. The experience of the ritual (more precisely the liminal zone) alters the way that they can know. In terms of the theory of transformation in Applied Theatre and participatory drama this returns to the reflexive cycle of Chapter 5 (Figure 2). The participant has a different sense of knowing, and knowing themselves, before, during and after the theatre event. Her lived and felt experience supports this knowing. It is the impetus within the potentially transforming moment of the theatre event, and the realisation of a participant recognising herself as the active owner of this moment. Some of the field work, and some new practice is examined in this light.

6.6 Cognitive progression and 'knowing'.

A framework is outlined below for recording the development of qualities in participatory drama that mark attainments or targets in this cognitive sense, i.e. that it is the development of knowledge which is providing the progression.

Table 1.

	Can achieve with maximum assistance	Can achieve with minimum assistance	Can achieve independently
Physical awareness			
Articulacy			
Improvisation			
Imagination			
Memory			
Concentration			
Analysis			

It is worth explaining these terms, particularly with reference to adults and young people with learning disabilities: -

Physical awareness: whatever the 'dis/ability' of your body, to have some sense of your movement within drama work, and an awareness of the meaning of body language with reference to yourself and how others might see you.

Articulacy: the ability to discuss the content of the material (specific reference to drama). To say what you mean/ make yourself understood (general learning/development).

Improvisation: to sustain an imaginary role and/or situation (however briefly) and to develop it creatively. (This 'theatre' skill is present because of the contribution it makes to learning through drama).

Imagination: to suggest and create ideas to begin or continue work (in or out of role, reflective: what else could have happened?).

Memory: to reproduce words or gestures, to recreate a scene and to develop the work through this. To build on previous work and enable progress.

Concentration: to participate in the required exercise or activity, to assist the focus of the work, to sustain and increase individual and group attention span.

Analysis: enabled through memory, concentration and articulacy, but also an ability to reflect on and evaluate work done.

Progress in any of these areas would contribute to what Whelan termed 'learning outcomes': a broader shape of progress which encompasses the 'very small steps' (Peter, 1995:79) so essential for groups such as these:

> Tolerance of others' behaviour and preferences;
> Exercising expression of compliance with, or refusal of, certain situations or activities;
> Stretching communication from language based exchange to sound, sight, movement and touch [...] (the reverse may also be desirable).
>
> Whelan (1999:5).

Peter also highlighted a crucial cognitive development that is included within 'Improvisation' a 'theatre skill' above (Author's definition): 'distinguishing between reality and pretence' (1995:72). As has been explained, this is part of the recognition of objective self so crucial to the liminal transformation.

This table is used with a simple tick box method, or with supporting comments from staff and/or observers. This is based on the assessment of an individual, although clearly all of these qualities would contribute to group

progression in terms of the 'making power' or creativity generated by the group. The similarities between Turner's communitas and participatory drama were detailed in Chapter 3: the importance of being together as a group, the acceptance of individuals as the people they are, and the witnessing by the group of an individual's behaviour. Perhaps in no other subject in school is there such mutual dependence on the group progress and the inter-relationships between students, and the individual progress that forms the basis of assessment and testing in education. That is why the social skills and interaction between students was of such importance in the work done by Group C.

Peter linked this to a development from 'prescribed drama' to 'open drama' i.e. from teacher planned and led, to whole group spontaneous development (1994:10, acknowledging Taylor 1984). In the long-term strategy of a teacher in school this would be possible. As a practitioner I did not aim for this during any of the field work, although it is clear that the elements necessary to create this spontaneous group development were in place by the end of each group's field work. Clearly there were many moments during improvisatory work in which a group member's action or response in role did spontaneously take the narrative of the pretence forward, and I would encourage the group to respond and develop the action further. But this was not a stated aim in plans or notes for the field work. On reflection, this is because my contribution to and participation in all of these projects was short term. However, some of my work as a practitioner in schools does carry this aim, specifically in terms of staff continuing and developing the work once my involvement in school is ended. An example of this was a project in a primary school as part of the Creative Partnerships initiative. Accompanying staff development is a desirable aim for creative work hin the relevant institution (s) with

people with learning disabilities such as Day Centres. Indeed this was an aim in my original proposal for this thesis, when I was trying to obtain funding from local authorities.

All of the qualities listed in Table 1 contribute to and facilitate all three of Cattanach's models cited earlier in the chapter. There is no doubt that progression in these areas, and the *recognition of this by the student,* enables change in a participant. In terms of the field work for this research, this moves away from Peter's desired autonomy in terms of the theatre event (open drama), and into the reflexive cycle developed through Chapter 5. The focus is on the individual, their development, and their recognition (not necessarily their understanding) of development in turn furthering that change or transformation. There is also the element of the group perception reinforcing this altered perception of self, which has not featured directly in the models of drama in education.

In educational terms it is important to note at this point the contribution of Bruner's spiral curriculum. Bruner's learning theory (1960, 1990) is termed 'constructivist' because the learner constructs new ideas based on their current and past knowledge, through organising and realising the meaning of the information they hold. The curriculum is organised in a spiral manner so that the student builds upon what she has already learned. Bruner's principles involved 'readiness': that the student would be willing and able to learn through selection of experiences and contexts that would enable this; 'structure' through spiral organisation, and that the instruction should 'go beyond the information given' i.e. enable the student to draw their own conclusions, but support the student in doing this.

There are similarities between this theory and the cycle of reflexivity discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to transformation. These include the influence of

the location (the surrounding group as well as the place), the spiral suggesting joining and rejoining at different points according to each individual and their development as is true of the reflexive cycle; and external support that maximises the potential of each individual. Hare outlined the 'Circles and pathways model' specifically in relation to people with learning difficulties [sic] which placed the person at the centre, surrounded by circles of 'creative engagement' and 'pathways of feeling' that formed vertical links between the circles (1993:178). Once again the emphasis is on flexibility and recognition of different people at different stages in their 'knowing', and a movement through learning that treats the participants as individuals, rather than an imposed linear progression such as the National Curriculum.

6.7 Cognitive development in relation to adults.

There is another model of assessment that is now examined in relation to adults with learning disabilities and featuring the last group from the field work of this thesis. This will be compared with the previous framework suggesting attainments within schools (6.6, Table 1). Group G contained several members with profound learning disabilities and sensory impairments (from the Special Care Unit at the centre) and differed from all the other groups featured in this thesis in that respect. My observation of this group is restricted to those members with varying moderate learning disabilities, to maintain consistency in the discussion. However, it is important to note that the tolerance of group members' differing needs was extremely high. Although individuals would sometimes refuse to participate, this was never an issue for the group, probably reflecting the length of time they had known each other and worked together (the same group had worked with the tutor

for over two years). The consistency of the tutor was also important in this and the group clearly held her in high regard and affection, as well as feeling safe within the group because of this familiarity.

The targets for this group were all extremely individual and specific to group members, although the aims for the course were a generalised summary of some of the qualities and assessment of Table 1 (6.6). These were: -

> to develop a learner's understanding of the different aspects of expressive arts;
> to continue to assess each learner's abilities;
> to work towards a performance.
>   Northampton College (2007a).

None of this work was solely about the process, but always with a performance in mind. Despite the title of the course, some of the targets were based around those of literacy and numeracy (basic skills) and the tutor was quite open about adapting these to accommodate the reality of practice, in order to achieve the funding for the group to attend. Most if not all of these targets were cognitive, but none tackled the question of make-believe because this performance was very skills and sensory based. There was no improvisation of the type undertaken in the other field work in the thesis, because of the wide range of participants within the group. Thus the targets included: -

> to know what her part is in the performance with help;
> to know when it is her turn to perform with help;
> to play an instrument with help.
>   Northampton College (2007a).

Other targets for the participants from the Special Care Unit involved focus, imitating actions, taking turns, reacting purposefully, and committing attention to an activity, experience, or object. All of these could form elements in the attainment of skills outlined in Table 1, demonstrating just how small these small steps might be.

There is a progression in learning demonstrated in these targets, and an emphasis on the cognitive within the curriculum. Each participant achieved the specific task set for them. There is no reference here to emotion or pretence, and all of these targets fit within Cattanach's tasks/ skills model (1996). Most if not all of this work was clearly focused on 'doing', rather than 'being' that was discussed in Chapter 3 (with reference to communitas). Communication among the group was infrequent, and most of the interaction was between a group member and a staff member. Interaction between members of the group was occasional. There was an engagement with making, because the group worked continuously on creating their presentation. This making also resulted in elements of play as the group rehearsed, particularly in the songs, which were sung by members of the group to a backing track. These were hugely enjoyed both by the singer and supporting cast as dancers, and the physical improvisation and freedom was very clear. Emotion and pretence were present in these musical numbers, even if not noted or appraised within the targets.

Thus during 'Easter Parade' a participant who usually signed sounded along to the backing track. During rehearsals, she had thrown her handbag down and left the room when she mistakenly thought this song was offered to someone else. Her commitment to performing the song was very clear. The choreography for this song involved the participants moving through an archway created by two other participants, and waving at the audience. Although prompting and assistance took place from members of staff, there was clear participation in this fictive sign to the audience: waving from the parade. This echoes the physical enjoyment and liberation discussed in Chapter 1 (1.8) in relation to action and impulse. One participant skipped with joy, singing to himself, whilst listening to another

participant sing a different song. The confidence and commitment to the present signified by this level of spontaneity has been clear throughout the field work, and specifically with reference to being witnessed by other people, whether group members or audience. However, this investment is not identified as a learning target.

6.8 Spontaneity versus ownership?

What is interesting in the analysis of this group is the different type of process that the group underwent in their weekly sessions. Because of the wide range of abilities among the participants, this work was much more 'directed' than any of the other field work scrutinised for this thesis. However: 'all students were able to indicate a choice, some by showing enjoyment, which items from those experienced should be included in the final performance.' (Northampton College, 2007b). Although the group were consulted about songs and who could sing them, this was from a list supplied by the tutor. Similarly a scripted scene was written by myself, albeit including actions and gestures from all cast members. Roles within this were chosen by the tutor and words and gestures spoken or modelled by a staff member and then repeated by the participant.

Before writing this thesis, despite my extensive experience working with these participant groups, I would have been dubious about the meaning of this presentation for the participants, chiefly because of the lack of ownership. I would have questioned the value of 'copying' the words or action of an adult located in a different position to the participant i.e. a tutor or member of support staff. I would also have been unsure about the selection of material, and whether or not the

participants were able to contribute sufficiently to this. These are all issues discussed in relation to the ownership of the participatory drama sessions in previous chapters.

However, it was possible in observing these sessions to note the sheer joy and celebration generated by the act of performing. For this group the practice of taking part and enjoying that participation meant that they did own and celebrate *their* work, and had an awareness of themselves doing this work. That the work was initiated by someone else did not alter this. This was clear in the evaluation the week after the performance, in which the group and staff shared memories of the event, stimulated by photographs. A simple item of costume such as a hat presented that group member as 'a performer' in the show: an objective self, a 'not-me', a clear recognition of this by the participant even if an understanding of this was difficult to identify within a participant. They were still placed in a 'can do' position, only with more support in the creation of the theatre event (the presentation). All participants enjoyed the presence of the audience (of other attendees at the Day Centre, staff, and carers) and this strongly contributed to their celebration and enjoyment of themselves. This was an enjoyment of their subjective selves also, not just 'Look at me' but 'This is me' and, more importantly, 'It is OK to be me'.

Similarly, in the presentation of Group A discussed in Chapter 2, the interaction between Rob and Martin in the sharing of the karate pose was not purely about presenting this to an audience. It was also between themselves, the sharing of self: 'Here I am'. This is a crucial factor with groups of people with low self-esteem, whose low opinion of themselves is reinforced in their interaction with others. This suggests that the celebration of performance is not only witnessing that

objective self within that performance (as a can-do person). The celebration also takes ownership of the presentation: the participants make it their own, and the acceptance of the subjective self as worthy of celebration is clarified and strengthened by taking part. This challenges the othering of groups such as these and supports the affirmation model of disability (Swain and French, 2003:150) cited previously in 5.5.

Goss (2006) discussed the concept of meaning-led learning with a closer focus on similar emotional factors for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. 'There is a danger we may overlook the pupil's subjective experience of self, others and the world when we apply our own notions about learning to our teaching.' (2006:210). It is interesting that some of the conditions he cited as enabling this environment are similar to those discussed in relation to developing the theatre event and promoting liminality within that. For example, a safe 'warm and secure' environment (Goss, 2006:211) and one in which participants are given the time to develop and initiate their communicative responses. Nind and Hewett (1994) emphasised the importance of reciprocal interaction. Within the dance numbers performed by Group G, staff members and myself as participant observer would copy the actions of group members, in or out of wheel chairs, strengthening the validity of their dance movements and reinforcing our enjoyment of their participation. This emotional connection is emphasised by Goss:

> There seems to be an assumption that because we can never 'fully know' how these factors [the contribution of an emotional dimension to the learning of a student with profound and multiple disabilities] may operate, there is therefore no benefit to us in 'partly knowing' [...] the child [...] still possesses the emotional capacity to seek out [...] relationships with significant others.
>
> Goss (2006:211).

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It is precisely this emotional capacity that is given the opportunity to flourish within participatory drama and Applied Theatre. This expression of emotion and lack of inhibition is often restrained in what are seen as less appropriate social situations when in drama it is a benefit to the process, and the celebration, that participants are willing to share their feelings and 'inner life' (Hare, 1993:182).

6.9 Summary

It is clear from this analysis that although all of the above are worthy and appropriate aims and targets in learning through drama, and when working with people with disabilities and recovering from mental illness, the analysis applied in this context of liminality offers something else. There is evidence of the experience in the theatre event that enables the participant beyond their usual interaction and 'ability'. It is the witnessing and the feedback on this that forms the reflexivity discussed in Chapter 5 as contributing to and furthering the cognitive development: the recognition of the pretence, of the objective as well as subjective self, and other people's view of this self.

In addition, there is the celebration: the spontaneity, the being valued as part of the group, the shared celebration of the group. Finally, the being yourself in a 'can do' situation *in front of other people* that is so positive for participants to witness, and to experience, as they are accepted for who they are in a public (beyond the safety of the group) situation. It is important to emphasise how rare this is for participants who are more used to intolerance and abuse in their everyday lives in the 'outside' world. Earlier in the chapter the ownership of the work was suggested as a possible difference between learning change (having obtained further knowledge) and liminal transformation (the potential for internal and demonstrable

change beyond the theatre event). This acceptance and celebration of participants for and as who they are may complement or replace this 'ownership'. Decision making during the process of rehearsal, and the pro-active participation this implies, may only be as important as this crucial acceptance.

In Chapter 1 Turner's terms 'liminal' and 'liminoid' were defined and discussed in relation to the field work and it proved impossible to usefully ally this research with either one term or the other. Similar discussion regarding Schechner's efficacy versus entertainment continuum (1988:120) was also problematic, particularly with reference to the polarised relationship between the group and personal experience. This relationship is entirely different in the cycle of reflexivity developed in Chapter 5 (Figure 2). As Schechner noted: 'To effect transformation is to be efficacious' (1988:122) and yet this does not acknowledge the joy and entertainment of spontaneity and performance that is so important to the participant groups in this thesis. So an alternative is in evidence, sometimes 'transported' (Schechner, 2006), sometimes transformed.

Turnbull suggested that instead of being 'in between' the liminal state was 'co-existent with our usual state of being' (1990:80) but that this conflicted with the rational approach of contemporary anthropology. From the field work examined thus far there is a strong suggestion that participants dip in and out of subjective and objective experiences that provide the springboard necessary for liminal transformation. Bohm discussed this as the conflict between the creative state of the human mind, and the 'mechanical and uncreative character' of most human activity (2004:22). This confusion echoes Turner's 'crisis' before the reaggregation. Perhaps this is what society can learn most from those with a perceived learning disability or recovering from mental illness: to embrace the confusion of humanity, rather than

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continually compartmentalising thoughts, activities, and even selves. Thus any educational or artistic assessment has similarly to acknowledge the value of many and varied constituents and a moving non-linear progression. *In* this 'confusion', or mixture, lies transformation. And these particular participant groups, with their varied specific needs, and a defiance of neat categorisation, clarify this.

Conclusion: The inner change of transformation.

'The deliberate creation of a detached [...] liminal space, allows a search for such [power] sources.' (Turner, 1998:66).

'Acting is about real.' (Donna Lavin interview. 6th February 2007).

'You feel like I can do things.' (Group B discussion, March 2003).

'A new collectivism is waiting to be born.' (Wright, 1996:141).

From the starting point of Turner's liminal zone within ritual, a theory of the inner change (that may occur for participants through Applied Theatre and participatory drama) that has been termed 'transformation' has been established. The realisation and explanation of this is the central discovery of the thesis. This is with specific reference to the participant groups of this thesis: adults and young people with learning disabilities, behavioural difficulties and recovering from mental illness. The Action Research has informed a cyclical development in my practice. Politically I have explored the theory to support my beliefs, so that my praxis is grounded through other research in disability, and my practice can enable meaningful access to the theatre event for different people. Thus my techniques have developed further because of the articulation of my methodology. In the process I have discovered new things about drama, this medium that I love with a passion and in which I have worked all my working life.

My development as a practitioner is outlined with reference to previously cited examples in the thesis. My ethos as a practitioner is centred on ensuring the participants' understanding of the drama (the theatre event as termed throughout the thesis). By this I mean that the images and scenes of the theatre event are constructed by the participants themselves, that the terms and descriptions used are understood by everyone present (e.g. 'sad', 'angry', 'freeze', 'action') and that,

crucially, the 'pretence' is clearly established so that each participant is playing a 'character' and each scenario a make-believe.

Overall my stance as a practitioner working *with any group* is never focused on my telling people what to do, but on sharing the decisions about what *we* are creating. Prior to working on this research, and specifically in relation to these participant groups, I saw this as an opposing end of a continuum, the other end of which was a formally directed show in which the meaning takes second place to the show. By this I mean that the show looks good: everyone is in costume, moves when and where they have been told, and acts out a script that may have been written by someone outside the group. The understanding of the process of creating the meaning is absent, and replaced by a focus on the superficial. *This is not to say* that performance with these characteristics necessarily excludes meaning, just that some of them omit these steps of the process. This is particularly relevant to the participant groups of this thesis. This is clearly defining two extremes, but my practice was always placed at the 'process' end, with as much distance as possible between myself and the 'only performance' end.

This stance was completely altered by the investigation of this research, and the way that this focused in the field work on the transformation of people central to this thesis. The key to this change for myself was the witnessing highlighted specifically in the reflexivity cycle defined in Chapter 5 (Figure 2). This witnessing comprised two elements: firstly the participant's own recognition and observation of their objective self within the theatre event (that Boal termed 'metaxis' (1995:44)) and the way in which for *these participant groups* this enabled them to see themselves in a 'can do' position. Secondly, how the intrinsic group connection of the theatre event affected and strengthened this change in the perception of self

experienced by a participant. This is because this 'altered self' is witnessed by others. The existence of this changing self for a participant was named the 'plural self' by Kempe (1995:180). The importance of this has also been emphasised in relation to people often stereotyped into passive and 'cannot do' roles. Each person experiencing the 'liberation' of this different self may develop and strengthen their experience of this by seeing others feeling similarly liberated.

Alongside both of these strands runs the joy and celebration released by creativity and performing, that Turner defined as 'meta-power'. The concept of 'ownership' of the theatre event is also of importance. Finally all of this informs, and may *transform*, a participant's sense of self beyond the theatre event as they take this experience back to the outside world. Previously I had always associated this witnessing (that I had identified through Boal's metaxis) only with the understanding of the theatre event as process. That is, in the 'making' or scene building of a participatory drama session. I had identified this witnessing as an awareness of yourself as different in this theatre event, and others in the group (or staff members) watching this different 'you' within and making the drama. Thus the meaning generated through participation in the process was crucial to this understanding of the theatre event and this 'other self'. It was only in the observation of 'performance' with an audience (be it the sharing of Group A, the performances of Groups C and G or the video of Groups D, E and F) that I noticed how this clear delineation supported the move into the make-believe (theatre event) for the participants. It is interesting to note that the only group (Group B) who did not celebrate with a performance were initially very keen on 'doing acting' which I am sad to say I tried to change in favour of other exploratory work (Author's notes,

2003). This discovery for myself as practitioner-researcher has formed a reflexive relationship of its own with my practice.

Much of my work as a practitioner takes place within settings in education or Health and Social Care and therefore necessarily involves evaluation of the participant groups' development through the participatory drama and/or Applied Theatre. The focus provided by Turner's liminality enabled me to separate the interaction of group and individual in relation to objective and subjective self within the theatre event, and the contribution made to the cognitive development of a participant through this. This relationship between group and personal experience was defined by Turner with reference to liminal and liminoid (1.10) and developed at length in the exploration of communitas (Chapter 3). The differences between liminal and liminoid and their application were found to be of little relevance to the theatre event. Yet the concept of communitas focused on the importance of the group within the theatre event as central to change in and for a participant.

The concept of the liminal zone as a space 'away from the usual' supported this discovery, both in the understanding of the theatre event as a similar space (in which to experience and witness different behaviour) and the significance of this for these specific participant groups. It has therefore been possible for this research to integrate both ends of the 'process – performance' continuum and to acknowledge the value of a showing and celebration that develops and reinforces this observation and witnessing that is so crucial to transformation. This performance does however need to be meaningful for the participants i.e. part of a process that involves understanding the make-believe that is the theatre event and their part in creating this together as a group. This is what translates into my practice, and the future dissemination of this.

This 'celebration' is not the end of the process for a participant; it may be a step along the way as the changes in an individual develop: a personal cycle involving both process and performance at different times. This may be the shape of a participant's own transformation, in that it is not the permanent change of status of Turner's ritual, nor is it the 'transportation' Schechner referred to as dropping a participant back where they were before the experience occurred (2006:72). The real experience of a participant in the theatre event may be drawn upon at some times and not at others, depending on external circumstances. But that makes it no less valid or important. The theatre event has offered those choices of behaviour to the participant. This also reflects the influence of post-modernism in terms of self-definition and in placing these individual moments as challenging the central grand narrative and structure of modernism (in terms of this thesis the medical theory of disability with its onus on individual responsibility). The definition of learning disability and mental illness are both challenged as impairments as society faces choices in determining care, education and social interaction. This was briefly referred to in Chapter 6 in the discussion of 'meaning-led learning': not to assume meaning is not present because it is not identified as society identifies it. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the individual actions need others to become the interaction that supports change.

It is fascinating that this research has enabled me to rediscover this joy of performing, not for myself as performer, but in observing the participant groups. Thus my development as a practitioner-researcher moved from the evaluation of progress in the terms specified by each project (e.g. the targets and outcomes discussed in 6.3) to a more complete analysis including the joy of celebration. What this research has enabled me to articulate is a cogent argument as to *how* this

celebration supports and reinforces the progress made by a participant in the theatre event(s) of the participatory drama sessions. My previous analysis of development for a participant had always been with educational bias, content and understanding. But this had remained somewhat piecemeal in identifying particular moments for an individual or a group and a change in behaviour perceived and noted by myself and other observers (e.g. supporting staff). The application of Turner's concept of liminality (particularly the 'liminal zone' and 'communitas') has structured these developments into a model of a reflexive cycle (Chapter 5, Figure 2) that defines the links between group and individual, and process and performance. The use of Action Research has informed and developed this understanding throughout the field work, and observation of others (not easily available to freelance practitioners) has supplemented this. Action Research has therefore clearly enabled change in my practice.

This research has confirmed my placing myself as subject alongside my participant groups (as for example in my experience of communitas in 3.11). As practitioner researcher, I have struggled to translate the ethics of my practice into the research and acknowledge the importance of the participant groups within the research and voice their contribution to the thesis. My stance on integration and inclusion has also altered, in rejecting the normalising of procedures that aim to enable the 'disabled' or 'ill' to participate in 'normal' drama: 'the individual [in normalisation/SRV] in the capacity of subject is hidden' (Yates *et al.* 2008:250). This was discussed in Chapter 6. Instead, my practice in political terms seeks to challenge all of us within society to acknowledge the many differing needs of us all, and to enable access to as many different opportunities as possible in learning from each other. Inclusion is not a place where we are all included. It is how we operate

alongside and with each other. The 'disability' or 'illness' challenges the practice, and not the opposite. This is an important contribution of creativity in education, Health and Social Care, or arts and health: in acknowledging the individual in the system and the importance of the (creative) community for that individual.

The final element of this conclusion summarises the overall relevance of Turner's theory of liminality in its application to the theatre event (the make-believe in either participatory drama or Applied Theatre) as a way of clarifying the changes that occur within or for a participant with the potential for transformation. There remain difficulties in identifying the changes within a participant beyond the make-believe as a direct result of participation in the theatre event. Evidence often relies on supposition and observation by those working with the participant groups on a long-term basis alongside articulation or expression by the participant themselves. Two of these comments are headlined at the beginning of the chapter. The first of these, previously cited in Chapter 5 (5.6): 'You feel like I can do things' was a direct response to the question put to Group B during session eight of ten which was: 'What do you think you have learned or achieved during the [participatory drama] sessions?' This does indeed suggest some form of transformation, and recognition of this, for the participant who voiced this. At the outset of the sessions, although this participant was articulate and willing to join in, he was not particularly vocal and would prefer to be passive rather than active in his chosen tableaux, for example playing computer games. Donna Lavin's observation that: 'Acting is about real' was during a conversation about the differences between 'real' and 'pretend' worlds and the delineation of the make-believe in the theatre event. This echoed the discussion in Chapter 3 concerning the effect of the specific (the theatre event) on the general (beyond the theatre event).

Most importantly, this participant was aware of the real emotions and interaction occurring in the fiction. In Chapter 5 this was a major link in the reflexivity cycle because a participant's experience of 'I can do' is real.

Turner's liminality (1969) explored the relationship between ritual and social drama, following Van Gennep's description of rites of passage (1977). Liminality was appropriate as a starting point in defining transformation in the theatre event because of having *potential*, what Turner defined as 'the subjunctive mood' (1969:127). This reflects the potential emphasised throughout the field work with reference to transformation in participants and translates into a wider context of potential for transformation within Applied Theatre as a whole. Judging and measuring this transformation beyond the make-believe of the theatre event, although possible to identify and evidence, is difficult to relate absolutely to the theatre event. Yet the development analysed in the theatre event(s) clearly provides an opportunity for the participant to take this different behaviour, this level of confidence and active participation back to their 'real world'. This opportunity is appropriately termed liminal throughout this thesis because it is a possibility and not a certainty.

Turner's analysis of social drama and the parallels he drew between this and Van Gennep's rites proved less useful in an analysis of transformation in and beyond the theatre event. This formed the sequence of 'breach', 'crisis', 'redress', and finally the 'outcome' (1998:63). In Chapter 1 this was explained with reference to a theatre event, in that the make-believe is necessarily a break away from the usual (breach); the interaction within the make-believe may be different (crisis); the resolution of this interaction (redress); and finally the reincorporation (outcome) is the return to 'normality' beyond the theatre event or make-believe. Turner's

paralleling of social drama and Van Gennep's original description of rites of passage is valid in terms of the movement society and individuals follow through life. In other words it identified change and the way that people deal with it, and how portraying this makes good theatre that is interesting to watch. However, this precise structure proved of less use in my exploration of the way transformation occurs. This is because allying particular moments in the sequence of the theatre event with Turner's terms did not help in determining what was happening for a participant, or why it was happening. The witnessing described above as a crucial element in the potential for transformation is dependent on the recognition of the theatre event by the participant, and their different self within this. Beyond the informing that may occur in root metaphors and status reversal and elevation (within ritual), Turner did not identify internal change stemming from the liminal zone, although the change from spontaneous to normative communitas might incorporate an individual's changed behaviour. The term that is of use is the liminal zone, which is the space of the theatre event 'away from the usual' that provides opportunities for different actions and behaviour. Turner's use of the term suggested a space in between, a space with potential, and that is an excellent definition of the theatre event, with particular resonance for these participant groups because of the way their lives are prescribed and defined by others.

Turner's communitas was central to his theory of liminality, as the 'human bond' (1969:97) in his ritual and social transition. The importance of the group within Applied Theatre and participatory drama is significant, and plays a specific part in the reflexive cycle enabling transformation. The experience of liminality is an individual one, but the group supports and develops this experience. Turner's description of the group connection that supports and enables it is an excellent one.

What has been of particular value in this thesis was the way in which the definition of communitas enabled this group experience to be defined as other than the superficial. Particular elements of the group interaction in the theatre event contribute to transformation, and this was outlined in detail with reference to communitas in Chapter 3. These include being together as *active* group members: Turner's unstructured equal individuals; the witnessing of different roles and behaviour by other group members: Turner's 'liberation' from 'normal constraints' (1982:44); and the importance of each individual is valued for the individual they are, which replicates the value of each individual in creating the theatre event. This is also crucial in relation to the participant groups discussed in this thesis in being accepted for who they are. Finally, the use of Turner's normative communitas that suggested the reincorporation or reaggregation of this behaviour into 'usual life', which throughout this thesis has translated into the participant's world beyond the make-believe of the theatre event. In other words that although Turner himself hinted at this long-term change in behaviour brought about by the experience of communitas within liminality, he was not specific about its detail for an individual. However, for Turner, the liminal zone and whatever occurred within it was always reincorporated back into the usual societal structure.

These 'transformations' that have occurred for individuals, for the group, and for myself as practitioner contribute to and affect other changes in attitudes and perception, and the way that contemporary society frames and treats people. Kershaw described the practices of 'alternative theatre' as a 'form of *cultural intervention*.' (1992:6). Society in this country is changing in its treatment of people with learning disabilities, and recovering from mental illness. For example, when I started this thesis in 2002, there were very few actors with learning disabilities on

television. Gradually actors such as those from Mind the Gap are appearing on television and radio in mainstream drama, not just in plays 'about disability' but as people within an everyday community, such as Janet in BBC Television's 'Eastenders' (2008). There have been similar initiatives regarding mental illness, such as the 'Secret Life of the Manic Depressive' documentaries (BBC, 2006). However, Day observed that inclusion is 'not merely a question of service provision, it is also about bombs on buses [...] and fragile democracies.' (2007:41). Enabling access to all that is on offer in the world means that individuals need support as the individuals they are, in the world that exists. That support must come from the communitas of the community as the community evolves and transforms in its support.

> Many young people [...] end up in inappropriate adult day centres or find themselves isolated, without any services. Fewer than one in 20 [sic] go into paid work.
>
> (Murray, 2008:5).

Turner rightly emphasised the uniqueness of each individual, as well as their participation in the group, as communitas. Schechner described the aesthetic drama informing social drama (Chapter 5, Figure 1): theatre informing society. My stance as practitioner researcher, returning to practitioner, is to disseminate this research through my practice.

From an ideological standpoint, Wright suggested that '[s]ocial and welfare policy need to combine a principle of inclusiveness, in the interests of equity and social integration, with opportunities for diversity and differentiation.'(1996:141). The application of Turner's communitas allows the recognition of the importance by this community of the discrete individuals from whom it is formed: respecting individuality, and yet flourishing through their sharing as a group. The theatre event demonstrates the significance of this 'rich pluralism of associational life [that]

is harnessed for the performance of tasks that elude remote states and atomised individuals alike.' (Wright, 1996:141). The threshold of 'normality' offers different opportunities to all in its support and enabling of the whole of the community. Through this can exist an imagining of a future in which things are different. It is this potential that is in itself liminal and that is part of the power of the theatre event: that imagination can enable a vision other than the present. It is only then that it can become reality.

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