



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

A LANGUAGE & STORYTELLING CENTRE

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1 INTRODUCTION



“It is what is already here, the inferno where we live everyday, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.” [Calvino:1974:pg99]



This dissertation explores the creation of a space that highlights culture and heritage through the study, documentation and expression of oral language. The space is within an established urban environment, responsive to its vibrant physical, historical and social African context.

South African society is complex and unique. At this time in its history, many negative perceptions exist and many of its people are living in challenging environments which are difficult to escape from.

In view of this, Italo Calvino's advice to "Seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space" [Calvino, 1974:pg99] seems particularly relevant.

There are many aspects of South African society that can be immediately nourished and celebrated. One such aspect is language communication, an essential ingredient in the understanding of our diverse cultures and the functioning of our society.

"Language is seen particularly as a social or cultural phenomenon: it is apart of society, it is partly shaped by society and in certain circumstances it also shapes society." [Kaschula, 1995:pg1]

A parallel exists between space and language. They both grow and develop through a multiplicity of connections and relations. Designing a centre for the research, development and recording of language within the capital city, provides a way to create spaces through the interactions of people expressing, studying and recording language.