# A PROPOSED MODEL FOR THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CRITICAL STUDY

by

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# DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation submitted for the degree of Magister Artium at the University of the Orange Free State is my own independent work and has not been previously submitted by me at another university/faculty.

I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Orange Free State.

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Welma de Beer
Kroonstad
November 1998

# FOREWORD

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**WELMA DE BEER**
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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1    BACKGROUND

The use of theatre for purposes other than entertainment is not a new phenomenon. Some of the earliest recorded plays were performed for educational purposes. In the last three decades, there has been a renewed interest in the potential of using theatre in a variety of settings, not for its performance value, but as a powerful tool to bring about change and human progress in general. One of the areas that has received specific attention has been development with its particular areas of concern.

Theatre-for-development is one of the tools that has been used extensively and with great success in development programmes throughout the world, especially in developing countries in Africa, Asia and South America. Its successes have been well-documented and the diverse environments within which it has been applied, bear testimony to its ability to make a meaningful contribution to the efforts of development programmes and agencies.

Theatre as a tool for development is seldom used in South Africa. Although some attempts have been made to use theatre as a method for community education, especially addressing health issues such as AIDS, no programmes have as yet had as their objective specific development issues.

A recent example of a health-related project, *Sarafina 2,* drew international attention, unfortunately not because of its contribution to AIDS education, but as a result of the misuse of donor funding (Powell, 1996:1). Furthermore, the impression could have been created that this particular play represented the manner in which theatre is used for purposes other than entertainment. In reality, it was a poor reflection on the utilisation of theatre for educational and development purposes as it proved to be performance-oriented, financially benefiting only the professional players of Committed Artists (Mbongeni Ngema's company) and not necessarily the community. Most of the 'community' never saw the production, as Powell (1996:1) points out: *"Some*

*performances have been attended by as few as 15 people."* Ramklown (1996:2), a theatre worker, wrote the following about the play: *"All in all, Sarafina 2 is a dismal masturbatory attempt at health and social conscientisation. In fact, it has probably done more harm than good – and created more myths and misconceptions with regards to AIDS and HIV prevention and awareness."* Sarafina 2 was ultimately not theatre-for-development, but rather an example of professional theatre workers trying to cash in on the current reconstruction and development high tide in South Africa.


## 1.2     THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Theatre is a social phenomenon that cannot be divorced from its context, which includes politics, the environment, social issues, community needs and more.

During the apartheid era, the belief was held that South Africa is firmly part of the 'developed world'. The fact that the largest part of the country's population was in desperate need to become personally and economically empowered seemed not to be part of the equation. As such, it is still seemingly difficult for many South Africans to see the country as 'developing' and the idea of 'reconstruction and development' has not really been established as the priority it should be.

South Africa needs committed artists who want to make a contribution to the present situation more than ever. The modern Western concept of art as an individual creation and expression does not hold true in a country where human needs supersede the needs for *"nihilistic portrayals of angst ... for angst's sake"* (Weinberg and Schreiner, 1990:34). The self-indulgent, escapist, political or protest-oriented theatre has a place in the larger theatre genre, but theatre as a powerful tool to create positive change and facilitate development also demands its rightful place as a part of this genre.

*"South African society is unique. Politically it is complex, socially it is contradictory, economically it is divided by class and artistically it is still in a state of becoming"* (Tomaselli, 1981:64). This statement still holds true,

even in South Africa after 1994, in a period where social reconstruction and development are the buzz words in our society. Apartheid left deep scars in every sphere – economically, socially, politically, morally, culturally, environmentally – and South Africans are confronted by serious problems. There is not a single sector of South African society, nor a person living in South Africa that has remained untouched by the ravages of apartheid (ANC, 1994:2).

The government has stated that it aims to address these numerous problems through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). At the moment, the RDP seems to be less important, even though development as a goal remains a priority.

Like many other African countries after liberation, South Africa follows in the footsteps of other countries in its quest for a better society and a future for its children. During his inaugural address at the opening of Parliament on 24 May 1994, President Nelson Mandela said: *"My Government's commitment to create a people-centred society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear. These freedoms are fundamental to the guarantee of human dignity. They will therefore constitute part of the centrepiece of what this Government will seek to achieve, the focal point on which our attention will be continuously focused. The things we have said constitute the true meaning, the justification and purpose of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, without which it would lose all legitimacy"* (ANC, 1994:1).

South Africans are becoming impatient with development programmes, feeling that the government is taking too long in implementing and delivering on promises made during the 1994 election. The *Sowetan* reports, for example, on 29 September 1995 that *"[s]mall business operators lose hope in the RDP"*, that organisations which have helped small businesses in the past are closing down because *"... the Reconstruction and Development Programme which many South Africans believe will help them was failing to become a reality"* (Matsebula, 1995: 2). Many of these organisations were haphazardly established under the assumption that the RDP will give them financial assistance and are finding it increasingly difficult to find funding.

This is also true for many non-government organisations (NGOs) that have rendered a consistent and effective service before the 1994 elections.

## 1.3    RESEARCH CONTEXT

The realities of South Africa's socio-political, spiritual, intellectual, physical and economic context demand an holistic approach to society. The ultimate challenge remains to create a conscientisation process through which people will come to acknowledge all human beings as equal and with fundamental human rights. It must be addressed in a collaborative development effort between all the stakeholders. Development, in the best sense of the word, implies "... the liberation of the creative energy of people" (Rahman, 1993:195). It seems from preliminary reports that development actions in South Africa were mostly experienced as patronising (unequal), and uncreative. This study will investigate international models where theatre is used as a stimulus and a facilitating tool for development.

A variety of studies about theatre-for-development have been done and as a concept it has been successfully implemented in other developing countries. However, a study to define a suitable model for the South African context has not yet been undertaken. Even though many development processes and models are discussed and studied in South Africa, theatre-for-development has not been included.

## 1.4    RESEARCH PROBLEM AND AIMS

The discussion of the research context above is the basis for the research problem that will be addressed in this study:

> **Although theatre-for-development projects have been successfully implemented worldwide, it is not a tool that is used in the South African development context and an integrated model for its use does not exist.**

This dissertation therefore aims to:

- describe briefly theatre-for-development projects in the developing world that show characteristics comparable to the South African situation;

- investigate different international models for theatre-for-development and identify models suitable to the South African context; and

- formulate a practical model for application in South Africa based on the above international models.

## 1.5    RESEARCH METHODS

For the purposes of this dissertation, information was collected through a combination of literature study, discussions and participation in workshops.

The literature study focused on books, articles and newspaper reports dealing with both local and international theatre. Although the dissertation deals with theatre-for-development, sources also came from a variety of other subject fields, such as psychology, sociology, cultural studies and development studies.

An important source for this study that has to be singled out is the official ANC publication, *Reconstruction and development programme* (ANC, 1994). It was accepted as a starting point that this document was based on broad consultation and was democratically accepted by all South Africans. Even though there cannot be full agreement with all statements in the document, and it cannot be regarded as the definitive and exclusive approach to development and reconstruction in South Africa, it is a watershed document. This study attempts to find some practical solutions and a possible model to implement many of the ideals included in the document.

The RDP is mainly based on the alternative development paradigm and utilises many different principles. It remains a document of principles and ideals, implying that the methods and practices of implementation will vary

according to the uniqueness of the situation and region where development takes place. Finding a flexible method/model of facilitating development according to RDP principles as well as some other paradigms, is thus the challenge that will be addressed.

Discussions took place with a number of experts over the years which were integrated into the arguments in this dissertation. As these discussions were not conducted on the basis of formal interviews, it is impossible to acknowledge them as sources.

A number of workshops were attended while this study was being undertaken. The experiences gained from these workshops were invaluable in the process of preparing and formulating the dissertation. Among these, the *South African Training Workshop in Theatre for Development* presented by Augusto Boal in 1997, was of great importance to the study.

Involvement in the following activities also informed the thinking behind and the ultimate formulation of the findings presented in this dissertation:

- the establishment of the National Arts Policy Plenary (NAPP) in the Free State and nationally;

- the National Arts Coalition (NAC) which was subsequently formed;

- development projects in the Free State, with specific reference to the Modulaqhoa Environmental Project in Botshabelo and the ANC Department of Arts and Culture in Bloemfontein; and

- the working committee for the Minister of Education in the Free State on the reconstruction of arts and culture in the region.

## 1.6      TERMINOLOGY

Terminology is of crucial importance to the dissertation as it deals mainly with intangibles of which 'development' is an obvious example. Concepts are best

understood within the particular context in which they are used, both theoretically and in practice. Relevant terminology is thus contextualised and defined in an integrated manner as part of this study. This occurs in Chapter 2.

## 1.7 PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

Apart from this introductory chapter, the dissertation consists of four further chapters that address the subject of theatre-for-development as follows:

- Chapter 2 deals with key concepts used in the dissertation and provides a theoretical and, where applicable, practice-based contextualisation of concepts, as well as definitions that are applied for the purposes of this study. International examples of theatre-for-development are also described.

- Chapter 3 looks at different models for theatre-for-development by focusing on its various dimensions. The context in which theatre-for-development takes place, with specific reference to the South African political and cultural situation and history, is examined. It focuses on the similarities between the South African context and that of other countries where theatre-for-development projects have been successfully implemented. It also takes into account the way in which theatre-for-development is created, its aims and functions, and the nature and performance context. Some key ideas concerning criticism and censorship, as well as criteria for measuring the outcome of theatre-for-development performances are taken into account during the latter half of this chapter.

- Chapter 4 suggests a model for theatre-for-development, and touches upon places where development occurs, fieldworkers, techniques and problems.

- Chapter 5 concludes the study by pointing out some of the difficulties of applying the model in the South African context, as well as its potential for having a positive impact on development programmes in the country.

## 1.8     CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced the study by providing a brief background, making reference to the South African context, the research context, the research problem and aims, and the methods employed to collect and synthesise information.

As indicated above, the following chapter will focus on defining and contextualising terminology, such as 'development', 'theatre' and 'theatre-for-development'. It will also provide short descriptions of international examples of theatre-for-development projects.

# CHAPTER 2

# DEFINITIONS, THEORETICAL CONTEXTS AND INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES

## 2.1     INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to briefly outline the conceptual framework that underlies development. In the process, a variety of theoretical models and viewpoints will be considered, as they have evolved over the past two centuries. Key concepts that lie at the basis of this dissertation will be contextualised and defined. These include 'development', 'culture', 'theatre' and 'theatre-for-development'. The last part of the chapter is devoted to the work of Boal and a number of other successful theatre projects that took place in countries in the developing world. These examples are studied as part of the process of identifying relevant models which could inform the model for theatre-for-development that will be presented in Chapter 4.

## 2.2     HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF DEVELOPMENT: A CONCISE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPMENT

Key development paradigms are summarised below to show how the concept of development has changed over time and to indicate the paradigm in which the RDP and its principles are based. The aim is to provide a conceptual background to the proposed model for theatre-for-development.

### 2.2.1     Economic growth and the duplication of Western industrialisation: Modernisation paradigm

Just after the Second World War, underdevelopment did not seem to receive much attention, because most 'developed' countries were concerned about

their internal situations. However, the situation soon changed with most Western countries becoming involved in massive reconstruction aid to other countries, mostly for political reasons. The United States of America (US) was fighting communism by financing development initiatives in 'underdeveloped' countries. Hulme and Turner (1990:34) describe how the US tried to ensure the continuation of capitalism in many developing countries during the Cold War: "... it is not surprising that modernisation theory commenced with and maintained a conservative, pro-capitalist ideological framework." But while the US was fighting the Cold War in developing countries, European countries involved themselves in protecting their own interests in their colonies (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:6). The period between 1955 and 1965 was the beginning of decolonisation during which most colonies achieved independence. The establishment of the United Nations (UN) and the subsequent formation of a large number of specialised UN agencies resulted in information about the developing world becoming more readily available. These agencies collected and disseminated information and, for the first time, comparable statistics made people aware of the needs of developing countries. During this time, it was common to regard economic development as a fairly simple evolutionary process. The only thing less advanced countries had to do, was to follow in the footsteps of industrialised countries (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:8-12).

Hulme and Turner (1990:34) describe the period when the modernisation approach was followed as one during which the economists were in the vanguard, promoting simple models of development which focused on how to secure rapid economic growth and capital formation. The modernisation paradigm is the culmination of Western civilisation, a sign of its self-confidence in its ethno-centric achievement. The Western world was seeing itself as superior to the developing world in all aspects (social, political and economic). Because the Western world believed itself to be the master of its environment (a result of the scientific revolution), it also believed that the underdeveloped nations should follow in its footsteps, "... if they [were] to achieve the privileged status of being modern" (Hulme and Turner, 1990:35).

Thus, since the Second World War, development has been regarded as synonymous with economic, social and political change in the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. The first

definitions of development focused on economic growth and the replication of the economic, social and political orders found in the industrial nations (Hulme and Turner, 1990:5). But the war in Nigeria and the Congo a few years later proved strongly that modernisation was not such a smooth ride as many believed. There was a failure to establish organic solidarity, with the result that many developing countries ended in political decay with ungovernable societies. Some governments were unable to govern, resulting in increased poverty, political repression, conflict and stagnating economies (Hulme and Turner, 1990:40-42). Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989:13-14) note some of the resulting problems as increases in income disparities, massive urbanisation and migration, growing unemployment, inadequate housing, and dependence on food imports.

A reconsideration of the meaning of development occurred when it became evident that the developing countries were not 'developing' as anticipated.

Hulme and Turner (1990:5) indicate how the modernisation paradigm had to redefine development "*in terms of progress towards a complex of welfare goals*." People felt that development should realise the potential of human personality and therefore fulfil basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, health, education, clean water), create employment and reduce inequality.

These models, which were adapted from the experience of Western countries, were not successful in the context of the developing world's complexity. The situation asked for an interdisciplinary approach with co-operation between sociologists, political scientists, public administrators and other social scientists (Hulme and Turner, 1990:34).

It was within this depressing situation that the paradigm which later became known as neo–Marxism, was developed.


## 2.2.2    Imperialism and dependency theories: The result of Marxism and neo-Marxism

Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) was a German social philosopher, political activist and the founder of the global Communist movement. He developed his

theories as a response to the growth in industrial capitalism and wrote *Das Kapital*, the 'bible of the working class', in which he explained the exploitative and self-destructive tendencies of capitalism (*Hamlyn Illustrated Encyclopaedia*, 1988:376).

Marx's theories focused on man's economic activities. He argued that major historical changes (e.g. the transformation of feudalism into capitalism) were caused by conflicts generated in the way people participated. According to Marx, capitalism comprised forces of production and the relations of production. As the forces of production are developed (i.e. increasing development of raw materials, tools, machines, etc.), the relations of production will alter (i.e. relations of people involved in the productive process). He believed it was only a matter of time before the proletariat would give way to the capitalist bourgeoisie, leading to socialism and communism. Marx believed that pre-capitalist societies (developing countries) needed colonialism to lead them to capitalism, and finally to socialism, the ultimate stage (Hulme and Turner, 1990:46).

Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989:216) note that, in contrast to what is often contended, Marx considered capitalism as the most advanced socio-economic system ever achieved. He felt that its expansion into pre-capitalist ('backward') areas of the world was progressive and positive – not retrogressive. He therefore welcomed the extension of capitalism to non-European societies by means of colonialism.

However, in contrast to Marx's belief about colonialism, it has been proven to be one of the major causes of underdevelopment, and has led to exploitation, unemployment, and a myriad of other social problems. Lenin, in opposition to Marx, felt that colonial expansion would never have a positive effect on social and economic development in developing countries. He held colonialism/imperialism responsible for underdevelopment (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:217-218).

Colonialism is believed to have been instrumental in the exploitation of indigenous populations, destroying their traditional way of life, culture and self-sufficient mode of production. Indigenous people were forced to pay taxes and compelled to work for wages or grow cash crops for Western

markets. Many artisans and craftsmen were forced into unemployment because they were unable to compete with imports of cheap, often mass-produced, textiles and other manufactured goods. Modern industrialisation was purposely discouraged in the colonies by the mother countries, because the colonies became a dumping ground for their goods (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:215).

The mother countries created a dependent development dumping ground which could be seen in the spatial organisation of the colonies. The modern infrastructure of roads and railroads in the colonies existed only in those areas which produced primary goods needed by Western industries (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:216).

Colonialism also led to increases in population growth, following an initial decline in population, caused mainly by the spread of new diseases and the slave trade (Africa). This was due largely to the introduction of Western health standards, insecticides (e.g. DDT) and modern medical facilities and medications. While traditionally high birth rates remained high, death rates dropped, particularly during the last few decades of the colonial era. The slow rate of economic growth, the persistently low levels of productivity and the population explosion resulted in widespread pauperisation and marginalisation (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:216).

To summarise, colonialism led to

- the exploitation of the indigenous people, their economic systems, culture and way of life;
- unemployment and the decline of indigenous skills;
- dependent development as a result of the modern infrastructure;
- the spread of new disease;
- slave trade;
- population explosion;
- pauperisation; and
- marginalisation.

At the beginning of this century, imperialism was generally equated with colonialism. Imperialism could be defined as *"the existence, establishment or maintenance of international relationships of dominance and subordination between states or other collectivities. The main purpose of imperialism is to gain control over the political and/or economic life of the other areas"* (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:239).

Hobson, although not a Marxist, is regarded by Reitsma and Kleinpenning as the father of the imperialism theory, and has influenced Lenin's thinking to a great extent. Hobson pointed to the unequal distribution of income and emphasised the limited purchasing power of the working population. This 'underconsumption' made it necessary for industrialised countries to seek foreign markets for surplus goods and to find external possibilities for the investment of surplus capital. Imperialism was the result. Hobson also felt that a simple *"rise in wages – leading to increased purchasing power and greater investment opportunities at home – would reduce or even eliminate the need for imperialist policies"* (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:239). Unfortunately, this did not occur. The industrialised countries continued to spend their energy and money on gaining political and economic control over other areas.

Lenin, regarded as a Marxist imperialist by Coetzee (1989:44), focused on the rise of the big monopolies. He believed that capitalism has reached the highest stage, that of monopoly, around the turn of the century. Imperialism, which provides opportunities for investment and larger profits outside the national boundaries, only delayed the carrying out of capitalism (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:240).

Coetzee (1989:49) defines the most fundamental point of criticism against imperialism theory as its inability to conceptualise the internal dynamics of underdevelopment adequately. Again, the imperialism theory has failed to give an answer to underdevelopment. But imperialism as a political system also failed (Coetzee, 1989:60).

By the late 1960s, early 1970s, development sociology experienced a crisis, because neither modernisation, imperialism or the classical theories of Marx could provide explanations for what was happening in developing countries.

The dependency theory was developed during the 1960s by Latin American scientists looking for solutions for and explanations of the economic problems which confronted their part of the world. André Gundar Frank popularised the neo-Marxist dependency theory. Once the theory gained some acceptance, around 1970, it was increasingly applied to other developing areas, and before long it could account for most of the problems of underdevelopment anywhere on earth (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989:221). The approach originated in Latin America, as it realised as a region that its growth and development depended on American buying-power and it was unable to develop autonomously. The 1930 depression and the Second World War reduced Western demand for its products and the system of free trade was immediately seen as the villain. *"The solution of this problem was to industrialise, specifically aiming to substitute current imports with domestic production"* (Hulme and Turner, 1990:46-47).

Marxism and modernisation focused on activities within developing countries, while the dependency approach broke out of this straitjacket and identified the world economy as the principal object for analysis. The relationships between nations determined developmental status, and the blame for underdevelopment could no longer be placed exclusively on those who were underdeveloped. Poverty, economic stagnation, failure to industrialise, the absence of take-off and poor project performance could be better explained. But, like its predecessors, the dependency paradigm had its limitations (Hulme and Turner, 1990:53).

Coetzee classifies dependency as either *structural dependency* (i.e. economic, military and political) or *cultural dependency* (i.e. values, preferences, techniques and ideas). He feels that different levels of society are affected by dependency and that it has a much wider influence than just economically. It is therefore important that more attention is paid to the different nuances of dependency, even though these are interdependent (Coetzee, 1989:71).

The dependency theory seemed to be able to account for many problems in Latin America, but failed to take some of the unique and specific problems relating to other *underdeveloped* countries into account. South Africa, for example, had a specific socio-historical and political situation which

complicated the implementation of this perspective. The call seemed to be for a detailed analysis of the dependent situation (Coetzee, 1989:81-85).

While this model of development (import – substitution – industrialisation) proved to be a failure, the analysis of Latin American development had brought two important observations into the spotlight. Firstly, the world could be seen in terms of a *core* of developed industrial nations and a *periphery* of underdeveloped nations. Secondly, the core and periphery were closely linked economically, for example, through trade and investment. However, these economic links prevented true development from taking place in the periphery, as they were designed to work only to the advantage of the core (Hulme and Turner, 1990:46-47).

While the neo-Marxist theorists, like Arghiri Emmanuel, Froebel, Samir Amir and others argued over the theory behind modes of production, world systems and economic systems, another group of theorists were examining the populist thought as will be discussed below (Hulme and Turner, 1990:56-58).


## 2.2.3    Seeking alternative methods for development

With the increasing focus on development as a practical approach towards the upliftment of underdeveloped and underprivileged societies worldwide, the latter half of the 20$^{th}$ Century saw theorists shifting their attention to the provision of a paradigm that would rather address the realities of these groups, than cater for the prevailing academic (often removed from reality) discourse. Attention will be paid to neo-populism, self-reliance and the basic needs approach, eco-development and human scale development in the section below.


### 2.2.3.1    Neo-populism

Hulme and Turner include Julius Nyerere, E.F. Schumacher, and Michael Lipton as a few of the famous neo-populist theorists. They also refer to theories put forward by organisations such as the International Labour Organisation and the World Bank that fall within this category. They believe

this theory to be the most popular of the many development paradigms because of its accessibility and practical approach.

Many writers, since the beginning of the 19th Century, have been criticising industrialisation because of its destruction and degradation. It was felt that the social and human costs of industrialisation far outweighed its benefits. The neo-populists gave their attention to small-scale enterprise in terms of petty commodities and peasant agriculture. Current neo-populists, however, are not incurable romantics pursuing some rural utopia. They know rural life is hard and poor. They use the science of economics and accept partial industrialisation. They are intent on modernising (i.e. making more productive) peasant agriculture. Their moral concern is *inequality* and the principal problem which they address is how to distribute wealth and income equitably. This concern provides the principles for their proposals, like small-scale production and other related policy innovations (Hulme and Turner, 1990:58-59).

### 2.2.3.2    Self-reliance and basic needs approach

Julius Nyerere developed an African socialism which was based on the basic principles of "*ujamaa – mutual respect, sharing of property and income, and the obligation to work*" (Hulme and Turner, 1990:59). Nyerere's vision included self-reliant villages with an intensive labour system, appropriate technology that were geographically dispersed, as towns and cities were seen as places where exploition occurred.

But the *ujamaa* principles did not work as well as was expected. Even though services certainly improved and equality was at least maintained, economic growth did not occur. Slow production increases in food crops were of concern and the forced 'villagisation' often proved to be unpopular. Administration left much to be desired, communal agriculture was neglected by the people and drought did nothing to help (Hulme and Turner, 1990:60).

The idea of self-sustaining and self-reliant villages links well with the model developed in this study where geographically dispersed communities take responsibility for their own development and environment.

## 2.2.3.3　Eco-development: Global crises and global interdependence

Eco-development is another option of the neo-populism paradigm. The concept of eco-development refers to development on an ecologically sound basis. During the late 1960s, people began to realise that the rapidly increasing pressures on world resources could not be tolerated and that the present course predicted disaster. The eco-development paradigm has as its central concern that of economic growth in relation to the environment. Apart from environmentalists, many economists were questioning whether development could be equated with constant increases in the Gross National Product (GNP) or whether such growth could be maintained. More production invariably meant more pollution and environmental destruction. The cost of efforts to remedy these catastrophes were excessively high (Hulme and Turner, 1990:62).

Distrust and hostility towards eco-development in some developing countries soon gave way to changes in their ideas about industrialisation and appropriate technology. Eco-development has therefore continued to make inroads into development policies, as the world becomes increasingly aware of environmental matters (Hulme and Turner, 1990:64).

## 2.2.3.4　Manfred Max-Neef: Human scale development

Human scale development is yet another alternative method of development that originated in Latin America with inputs from Sweden and Canada. Human scale development is based in and focused on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs and on the generation of self-reliance. It focuses on the construction of organic linkages between people and nature and technology, global processes and local activity, the personal and the social, planning and autonomy, and civil society and the state (Max-Neef, 1989:12).

Human scale development is rooted in a direct and participatory democracy. This form of democracy nurtures the conditions which help to transform the traditional, semi-paternalistic role of the state into a role of encouraging creative solutions flowing from the bottom upwards. This corresponds with the real expectations of the people (Max-Neef, 1989:13). It is evident that human

scale development focuses on the democratic nature and advocates the need to:

- develop processes of economic and political decentralisation;
- strengthen genuine democratic institutions; and
- encourage increasing autonomy in emerging social movements (Max-Neef, 1989:14).

Max-Neef contends that the most important issue of democracy lies in how to respect and encourage diversity rather than in trying to control it. Development must therefore nurture local spaces, facilitate micro-organisations and support the multiplicity of cultural matrices comprising civil society. This type of development must rediscover, consolidate and integrate the diverse collective identities which are part of the social body (Max-Neef, 1989:15). Max-Neef believes that different styles of development should be implemented in different regions, instead of insisting that national styles prevail (Max-Neef, 1989:39). These principles of increased autonomy, while maintaining diversity and democracy, seem to be comparable to the principles expressed in the RDP and the model which this dissertation proposes.

Max-Neef (1989:25) believes that an alternative method of development should be researched, as traditional and orthodox approaches have created a sick environment where people have become dehumanised. Max-Neef feels that it is mankind's greatest challenge to humanise itself again from within the disciplines at its disposal.

The model for implementing theatre-for-development proposed in this study is based on many of the strategies of the alternative development paradigm of Max-Neef:

- development geared towards satisfying human needs;
- development retaining its diversity within different development styles;
- developing the human being as a whole;
- self-reliance as the centre of development;
- 'bottom-up' development;
- empowering groups and social actors in local spaces;

- strengthening micro-organisations; and

- resources for local development and from local organisations.

Max-Neef states that a *"... sense of responsibility for the future of humanity along with trans-disciplinary action are crucial. This may be our only defence. If we do not take up the challenges, we will all be accomplices in creating and maintaining sick societies"* (Max-Neef, 1989:25).


### 2.2.4     Summary

Development, the improvement of the standard of living and the creation of meaning in the 1990s seem to need a multidimensional paradigm which draws appropriate components from many development paradigms. Development always takes place within a socio-political, an economic and a cultural environment. Theatre always takes place within a socio-political, an economic and a cultural environment. Both theatre and development are influenced by and create change within the environment in which they are active. This dissertation will endeavour to study how the influence and use of both development and theatre can strengthen a community in its quest for a free, equitable, democratic and just society.


## 2.3     WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

The differences in definitions of development are clear from the various development paradigms described in the previous section. These differences of opinion necessitate the formulation of a suitable definition of development for the purpose of the study.

There are many definitions for 'development'. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, 'develop' means to *"unfold, reveal or be revealed, bring from latent to active or visible state ..."* and development is *"... gradual unfolding, fuller working out, (//~**area**, one where new industries are encouraged in order to counteract severe unemployment there); growth; evolution (of animals and plant races); full-grown state; stage of advancement ..."* (Sykes, 1976:281).

From references to development, it can be deduced that it is often unfortunately seen as the relationship between the affluent, industrialised nations of the northern hemisphere which are generally taken to be 'developed', and the poor nations of the developing world which are mostly regarded as 'underdeveloped'.

Hulme and Turner (1990:6) feel that the idea of development stems from the 19th Century's idea of progress, but unlike its evolutionary predecessor, development places the emphasis on conscious action to bring about the desired transformation of society. Development policies, plans and programmes interrupt the free play of social, economic and political forces. Development is thus induced or imposed.

Coetzee (1989:88) agrees with them when he states that development is often defined as striving for controlled transformation. This traditional definition of development implies the idea of technocratic control. It means that people feel that, if the necessary techniques can be provided, the problem of underdevelopment can be solved. This viewpoint reflects the idea that the world is in essence changeable and that people as change agents have the ability to make the necessary changes. An evaluation of current development research proves that this traditional approach lacks sufficient insight into such processes.

The ANC qualifies its understanding of the concept development in the RDP document as not being a marginal effort of redistribution to areas of urban and rural poverty. In this view, development is a deduction from growth. The RDP disagrees with this approach and acknowledges the following crucial questions when considering its reconstruction and development initiatives: where does growth occur, how sustainable is it, how is it distributed, to what degree does it contribute to the building of long-term productive capacity and human resource development, and what impact does it have on the environment? According to the RDP, the aim is to integrate growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution into a unified programme (ANC, 1994:6).

Mda (1993:39) describes the dilemma of development as follows: "Development is usually defined as both a process and a goal in bringing about social change in order to improve the living standards of the people.

*However, there is no single accepted interpretation of what social change entails, nor is there a generally accepted standard to measure improved living standards."* Development, as indicated by Mda (1993:40-42), should be a process of social transformation and liberation, and a process through which society achieves greater control of its social, economic and political destiny, and not only an increased GNP, economic growth and technological advancement.

Development means an improvement in **all** the dimensions of human welfare rather than economic growth alone. Eyoh (1986:178) feels that development must establish a correlation between mode of life and the people's way of thinking, outlook and sense of values for the community. It should not include the bureaucratic and domesticating assumptions which rush the villager to the consumer stage of Western capitalist technology, as s/he does not have the intellectual option to gratify needs in a meaningful way. These ideas most definitely underline the inclusion of cultural (spiritual) aspects during any development initiative. This could be why Colletta (1981:22) feels that development should be achieved along the lines and the foundations of the culture of the people. Culture should be seen as a foundation to development and not as a barrier.

The definition of development which captures the essence of the word, refers to the releasing of creativity and creative energy in the minds of people (Rahman, 1993:195).

Creative energy or creativity is a concept that is difficult to define. Ortman (1966:202-203) identifies attributes of creativity. Some of these attributes seem important to this study:

- Creativity is an **openness to experience** and relative lack of self-defensiveness. It is freedom from crippling restraints and impoverishing inhibitions, which allows the creator to interact directly with his/her environment, to develop a keen awareness to his/her entire inner life.

- Creativity means being **sensitive to problems** – seeing defects, needs, deficiencies, or seeing the odd or unusual. It is not only the refinement of the senses, but also heightened awareness of social responsibility.

- Creativity is a **fluency of ideas** – both ideational and associational fluency. It refers to peoples' interest in ideational, imaginal, and symbolic processes.

- Creativity is also **flexibility** – the ability to adjust quickly to new situations.

- Creativity implies a **coherence of organisation** – most closely related to aesthetics, as well as to the more complete integration of thinking, feeling, and perceiving, thus affecting the entire personality.

It is contended that development involves creativity. It is a creative process which can lead to empowerment. The concept of 'empowerment' seems to be one of the key words to development. It literally means to "*invest legally or formally with power; to authorize, license ... to impart power (to do something); to enable, permit*" (Onions, 1987:649).

With regard to development and education, the word 'empowerment' would mean to impart (give) power to disenfranchised groups of people. It is thus a process through which such people are given power, through which they are enabled to have a 'voice', an identity and a future. McGrath feels that theatre increasingly plays a part in the process of empowering powerless groups of people which were exploited, policed and culturally diminished by institutions to "*keep them in their place*" (McGrath, 1990:136). Max-Neef (1989:51) focuses strongly on community participation and empowerment when he states that relationships of dependence flow from the top downwards: from the macro to the micro, from the international level to the local level, from the social to the individual domain. Relationships of self-reliance have greater synergetic and multiplying effects when they flow from the bottom upwards, e.g. when local self-reliance stimulates regional self-reliance which, in turn, fosters national self-reliance.

For the purposes of this dissertation, development is defined as a

> **multidimensional, inclusive process of liberating people's creative energy resulting in their empowerment so that they can find their own voices and become the masters of their own destinies.**

## 2.4    PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

Korten (1990) discusses a few principles which should be taken into account when planning development projects. These are:

- to build a just society: all people will have the means and the opportunity to produce a minimum decent livelihood for themselves and their families;

- to build a culture of inclusivity: everyone will have the opportunity to be a recognised and respected contributor to a family, community and society; and

- to encourage people-centred development.

Rahman (1993) agrees and notes other important principles of development which can encourage **people-centred** development. People must acknowledge the fact that:

- all people are knowledgeable on many subjects that touch their lives, a fact that should be utilised; and

- the process of learning must be one of self-search and discovery. Skills development can be stimulated and assisted, but it cannot be taught.

Development should assist people to **build** and **manage** their own organisations, thus enabling them to seek out the path of development for themselves slowly, so as to reduce the risk of being dominated by the more able (Spier, 1994 and Burkey, 1993).

People must **participate** and 'own' their own development. They must learn to take charge of their own lives and to solve their own problems. Participation is an essential part of human growth. Methods must be used to ensure that knowledge is articulated and generated in a participatory way. Community knowledge and understanding of the problems and the generation of solutions

must be acknowledged and must be articulated through their art and cultural expressions.

Sustainable development should be encouraged according to an holistic and integrated approach to arts and culture which contributes to the notion of **sustainable** living. It must be an enriching, educational and developing process for all people and thus enhance and support life. According to the IUCN, UNEP and WWF document *Caring for the earth* (1991) development should sustain life and help people to:

- respect and care for the community of life;
- improve the quality of human life;
- change personal attitudes and practices in societies; and
- enable communities to care for their own total environment.

The creation and sustaining of a **sense of community** is an important principle. However, one should not forget that all communities consist of individuals and that they will control the success of development. It is also in the power of the individual or the 'smallest cell' in social organisation to liberate the whole society of oppression. Boal (1990b:36) formulates the following hypothesis: "*All the moral and political values of a given society along with its structures of power and domination are contained in the smallest cells of the social organization (the couple, the family, the neighbourhood, the school, the office, the factory, etc.) and in the smallest events of social life (an accident at the end of a street, the ID control in the subway, a doctor's visit, etc.).*" He continues by saying that big national themes are inscribed in the small personal ones (Boal, 1990b:36). Development should therefore also set itself the task of developing the individual, the family, or any small cell of social organisation.

In accordance with these principles, all artistic and cultural activities must not only be expressions of life, but should also be the means of creating and encouraging sustainable income and community participation. Theatre has been involved in liberating South Africa from apartheid. Theatre should also be involved in creating a 'new South Africa' through development and reconstruction.

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The section below will deal with some of the concerns with development in South Africa at present.

## 2.5     THE CONCERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

According to Friedman and Shaw (1995:communiqué 5), many development programmes in South Africa are raising concerns. It is becoming clear that a number of development programmes were haphazardly established without proper consultation and that many are now not effectively managed. These 'failures' have become some of the root causes of **violence**. Experience over the last couple of years indicates that development, if not effectively managed, can cause violence. The view that development is desired by everybody and is a unifying factor which heals wounds, is naive. This can be illustrated by subjecting five propositions to debate:

- The term 'community' is used to describe people with differing interests who might coalesce around common goals such as the elimination of apartheid, but whose interest differences will crystallise sharply once development is an issue.

- Development is destructive: it destroys what exists in order to build something new. This does not imply that what exists, is desirable, but important groups within 'communities' sometimes have a stake in what exists and are threatened by change.

- Development can be a source of patronage for leaders and can heighten conflict between leadership groups.

- Development can disturb or entrench existing patronage relationships which have emerged in particular areas.

- The full range of interests affected by development cannot be captured by dealing solely with visible organisations.

Friedman and Shaw (1995:communiqué 5) continue that the above propositions mean that negotiated development requires a patient process which should endeavour to extract community dynamics and ensure maximum inclusiveness, or else people would feel threatened by the project. The biggest challenge of all is to make sure that the people who do not have the capacity or the desire to participate in formal organisations, are also involved in the process.

Malan (1992:15) identifies some concerns about development:

- So-called developed countries have achieved and maintained their developed level by **exploiting** their own human and natural resources and those of the developing world.

- Concepts of development are inadequately expressed in local **languages**.

- Many 'advanced' development models are defined in **economic** terms only. Human, social and cultural development issues are omitted.

- Some aspects of development are given **disproportionate emphasis**, e.g. some countries focus on population control rather than on any other important aspect.

- **Western models** are not always applicable and new definitions must be arrived at.

Theatre-for-development has the potential of addressing many of these problems and concerns. For example, communities can decide which aspects of development are the most relevant to their situation and needs, they can then proceed to address these problems in their own language, according to their own model. Communities are in charge of their own development and will therefore be able to control any exploitation of human or natural resources.

However, Mda (1993:1,2) notes that any current development paradigm that does not take the structural causes of underdevelopment into consideration, will fail. Such a paradigm will typically **restrict** development to improve the

GNP and other economic indices, and refuse to acknowledge that development strategies are prescribed by the larger social system. Coetzee (1989:100) notes that, because development is about people, one also has to remember that it coincides with social change. Any change inevitably causes erosion and even the destruction of existing social structures. The new development approach *"centres on a more pertinent position of people with regard to development"* (Coetzee, 1989:100). Any development paradigm should therefore continuously work towards the fulfilment of the non-material, as well as the material needs of human beings.

Development actions and programmes are seldom initiated by individuals, and are mostly preceded by programmes, policies and plans (Coetzee, 1989:104). Coetzee (1989:106) notes that development that is forced from a macro-dimension without being favourably experienced and accommodated by the individuals involved, will in all probability not have any **permanent influence**. In other words, when a government decides that illiteracy should be addressed in rural areas, any development actions would probably fail if the communities involved do not agree with this perceived need.

This raises the question whether development could take place in communities without outside intervention.

It seems that development is state-planned in most cases. This is evident from past apartheid policies, where the state used development as an important mechanism to exert **control** over its people. As Barthes (1964:136) states: *"... no one lives without ideology: the absence of ideology is itself an ideology ..."* There is very little indication that the new era will not bring its own ideological underpinnings to the cultural and social milieu. Theatre, for either educational or aesthetic purposes, is definitely not without a particular system of ideas. But it is one of the few tools which, if used correctly, could be ideally suited to the principles of reconstruction and development, because of its liberating approach.

Theatre-for-development or popular theatre is politically more inclined towards the left. Eyoh (1986:173) states that theatre workers, from whatever political persuasion, must not shy away from the truth of the ideological direction of popular theatre which is inclined towards the left and has liberation as its

goal. He feels that efforts should be intensified by theatre workers to uphold its ideology, because this would ensure its proper direction and commitment. Eyoh (1986:173) quotes the statement of the Popular Theatre Dialogue International Workshop, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which says that theatre practitioners should not use theatre to reinforce or promote a **culture of silence**, but should consciously contribute to the struggle for liberation and emancipation.

Kidd and Byram (1978c:81,82) contend that the task at hand is to reject cultural elements which only serve an élite and which reinforce the dependence of the masses. It is necessary to build on those elements which increase participation and which serve the interests of the majority. According to them, development should be concerned with social justice and the interests of the masses. A new culture must develop out of the old. But they also feel that this should not be done uncritically, worshipping the past at the expense of the present. Certain aspects of indigenous culture can be used to reinforce national identity, but also to mobilise people for active participation in development. They feel that the development of a nation's language, literature and arts is not only for consumption, but it can be a means of arousing people's consciousness of their situation and problems, and of directing their energies to solve problems.

The fact that development could very easily be seen as state intervention in the lives of the poor, stresses the importance of community participation and ownership of any project. A major concern about any development venture is thus to encourage participation, self-reliance and equity, and to close communication gaps. However, many facilitators of development have identified **apathy** on the part of those to be developed as one of the most important constraints. Kidd and Byram (1982:99-100) point out that, without a clear explanation of its historical and socio-political roots, apathy takes on the function of an explanatory cause of poverty/underdevelopment. Apathy, according to them, should rather be understood as a symptom of an inequitable social structure. They feel that the Freirian concept of a 'culture of silence' is converted into the 'blaming the victim' ideology of conventional development work. Villagers are then seen as 'underdeveloped' because they are apathetic and resistant to change. They believe that the role of the development programme is to shake them out of their lethargy.

It is accepted that no one can develop anyone else, let alone a whole community. Development should be seen as an internal process in which willing and self-motivated individuals and communities, motivated by inner energies and the will to improve their circumstances, are engaged in.

However, the state should be involved in **facilitating** development processes in communities and **co-ordinating** their activities with other similar structures and organisations. The government should not be in a position where they can dictate the 'what', 'how' and 'where' of development according to their own agenda or needs. Theatre-for-development can effectively assist the government in the facilitation and co-ordination processes of communities' own development. Theatre-for-development is a process which can assist any facilitator in steering clear of the problems which development can cause. It is thus important for this study to explore definitions of concepts underlying theatre and theatre-for-development.

## 2.6    COMMUNITY AND *UBUNTU*

The concept of 'community' to which the RDP document and others refer, is problematic.

According to Thornton and Ramphele, 'community' should imply people who have something in common, albeit shared beliefs, a geographic region, common membership and even similarities of economic activity or class position (in Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:29-39).

Scott Peck (1990:25) feels quite differently about community. He feels that 'community' in the truest sense of the word is rare at present. It has come to refer to geographical collections of people who have political structures in common, but have very little else to relate them to one another. Thornton and Ramphele explain that community should be seen as an 'image of coherence' which is a cultural concept used by people to *"give a reality and form to their social actions and thoughts."* The word is derived from religious concepts and its use in a political context is recent (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:38).

Like culture, it seems that communities are dynamic and in a "... *constant state of flux* ... *Community is the unpredictable product of history, and the product of people*" (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:38).

Communities share common processes, such as the assigning of meaning, and therefore common activities and purposes. Communities receive and compare new meanings and their application can lead to achievements of growth and change.

Thornton and Ramphele (in Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:29-39) contend that the word 'community' is often used as an euphemism for race or ethnic groups, with the aim of justifying separate development. According to Scott Peck (1990:61), community should never be exclusive or excluding. "*Community is and must be inclusive. The great enemy of community is exclusivity. Groups that exclude others because they are poor or doubters or divorced or sinners or of some different race or nationality are not communities; they are cliques – actually defensive bastions against community.*" Scott Peck (1990:64-70) continues by saying that community is realistic and contemplating, a safe place, healing and converting.

It seems as if Scott Peck's definition of community is directly linked to the concept of *ubuntu*, which is widely used in South Africa. From previous statements on conflict and development, it is clear that development has the possibility of destroying the *ubuntu* or sense of community if not implemented with the utmost care and sensitivity in a development programme or project, and can even lead to conflict.

According to Mbigi and Maree (1995:1): "*Ubuntu is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity, on survival issues, that is so central to the survival of African communities, who as a result of poverty and deprivation have to survive through brotherly group care and not individual self-reliance.*"

Mbigi and Maree (1995:2) continues: "*The cardinal belief of ubuntu is that a man can only be a man through others. In its most fundamental sense it stands for personhood and morality ... The key values of ubuntu are as follows: group solidarity, conformity, compassion, respect, human dignity and collective unity.*"

It is interesting to note that Mbigi and Maree (1995:xxxxx) use the concept of *ubuntu* to find a solution for the development problems facing South Africa. For them, Africa's achievements and genius lie in **social** and **spiritual** spheres and not in technology. To enter into the global economic arena will imply that the continent has to draw on its spiritual and social heritage. Social innovation, including the creation of relevant organisational collective rituals and ceremonies, is an important dimension that has to become the centre of organisational transformation and renewal in Africa.

Theatre, and specifically theatre in South Africa, has its roots in the social and spiritual spheres of society and is thus ideally suited to address social problems as it has done in the past.

## 2.7    WHAT IS CULTURE?

Despite the fact that the concept 'culture' has been defined and redefined over the past two centuries, the need remains to reconsider its meaning within the context of specific fields of study. As culture forms the framework within which theatre-for-development is created and presented, reference will be made to its meaning, although it is not the purpose of this dissertation to provide an exhaustive or definitive definition. The focus will rather be on providing a conceptual framework for culture that is applicable to this study, as well as indications of the nature of the relationship between culture, ritual and tradition.

### 2.7.1    A conceptual framework for culture

According to Botha-Ebbers (1993), people live in a world that is filled with other people, situations, objects and environments. She divides it into two aspects, namely the natural world which consists of people, animals, mountains, oceans, etc. (these objects are mainly organic); and the cultural world which is created by people. This world is created when people change the natural world. The designs and products are inorganic. People design and produce artefacts that satisfy their needs and improve their quality of life and living conditions. It is generally accepted that theatre, the visual arts, creative

writing, and many others, are cultural products that people produce to satisfy their needs.

Hagg (1990:95) states that, *"some stretch [culture's] meaning to 'anything that gives meaning to life', others limit culture to the refined artistic products of a society"*. He says that it is the very nature of culture that makes it difficult to define, quantify and predetermine. *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines culture as: *"... improvement by (mental or physical) training; intellectual development; particular form, stage, or type of intellectual development or civilization ..."* (Onions, 1987:249). It is clear that this definition is limiting and restrictive, but it acknowledges the partnership between culture and development.

Coetzee (1989:71) defines culture in terms of development and sees it as a kind of overarching reality that influences and exercises control over individuals and their own personal creative potential. These include symbols, ideas, values and beliefs within society. Development is seen as a process of resocialisation and acculturation with a close affinity to culture. Culture therefore has inherent normative and personal dimensions that need to be considered when studying or applying development efforts. The need to include culture in any process of development is stressed by this definition. Culture is a dynamic and changing process of signification to which both the individual and the community contribute and development cannot take place if the culture of the people does not allow it. The culture of the people defines and redefines any changing or developing process through cultural activities, in order to define and derive meaning from it. It is thus clear that culture would also be a changing process.

Steadman (1990a:15-16) states that culture should be seen as a process rather than a fixed object in time and space. Popular culture is never static, and is continually influenced by changing images, forms and techniques in a society.

Steadman (1988:115) also feels that culture is inseparable from the surrounding cultural relations. Many collaborative cultural products are proof of the adaptation and integration that took place in South Africa during the apartheid era. A variety of venues were used for the collaborative efforts of

theatre practitioners who searched for alternatives to the established theatre, epitomised by the work of the Performing Arts Councils, founded in 1963 (Steadman, 1985a:88). Culture cannot remain pure and unchangeable if the society which it serves, changes with time.

While it is true that culture in South Africa – even under apartheid – could not remain pure, it is also true that, because of the segregation laws, among others, traditional African cultures have survived, if in an adapted form. "*Unlike black Americans, Africans constituted the vast majority of the population and retained their own languages, cultures, and communities, enduring the peculiar two-world system of migratory labour*" (Coplan, 1985:148). This peculiar 'two-world' system compelled black South Africans to find new structures, order and a new culture which would be flexible enough to suit their changing environment. *"If black South Africans have retained some vitality and autonomy in their culture, it is only because they have managed to build new structures for social order and survival"* (Coplan, 1985:4). Culture is thus a changing entity with the aim of giving meaning to changing social orders.

Some of the most important qualities of culture are its flexibility, mobility and adaptability, and its integrating nature. Sole (1987:84) says that culture is a concept with strong historical undertones. Cultural studies emphasise the ways in which people understand their lives and organise themselves to cope with their environment. As social circumstances change, they use and transform elements of their identity and experience to make sense of these changes.

The notion of 'pure art' in Africa is clearly not possible, as all art is to some degree syncretic. It reflects the concern with social change and the relations between the indigenous and the foreign, while performance art is concerned with establishing contact with the audience. Art is communicated through shared conventions which are to some degree elusive, changing and difficult to establish (Barber, 1987b:107).

From the above, it is clear that even so-called 'traditional' and 'ritual' cultural expressions cannot be pure and distanced from change. Both forms imply the transmission of culture over decades. The repetitiveness of traditional

and ritual expressions, conventions and practices implies that they can never be exact replicas because of the social interaction between the two generations.

The following questions therefore arise:

- Is all African art inherently traditional?
- What is the difference between African and traditional art?
- Are there no traditional elements in Western art?
- What is tradition?

## 2.7.2    The relationship between culture, ritual and tradition

Traditional African theatre has mostly been involved in education and development. It was around the fires that people told stories and danced to create meaning and understanding about their environment. Shore (1969:8) feels that traditional theatre *"... demands relevance to the concerns of society, and ... attempts to effect some kind of change in the life of man, magical or otherwise."*

According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Sykes, 1976:1229), tradition means *"opinion or belief or custom handed down, handing down of these, from ancestors to posterity esp. orally or by practice ..."*

Steadman (1985b:39-40) quotes Williams when he states that tradition is often falsely reflected when it *"... is not seen as it is, an active and continuous selection and reselection, which even at its latest point in time is always a specific choice ..."*

Etherton (1982:37,38) describes traditional forms as follows: *"... (1) there is no text; (2) performance is secular; (3) the performance is a transformation of ritual and ceremony into entertainment; (4) the performance is a depiction of social realities, and, perhaps, (5) a satirical comment as well"*. As performance depicts social realities it is obvious that traditional performance will change in accordance with the social realities of the performers. These changes affirm people's ability to cope with their changing environment.

Changes in traditional forms in order to depict social realities became evident in African works of art during the late 1930s, when many Africans, like Dhlomo, attempted to preserve traditional art forms by incorporating African themes and performance techniques into European drama. Many other artists throughout South Africa's history worked to ensure that African values, themes and presentation styles are preserved in modern urban theatre expressions. Coplan (1985:126) gives such an example of a concert given by the Africans' Entertainers in June 1936. Along with the usual jazz vocals, tap dancing, Negro 'plantation songs' and comic sketches, they performed an 'Abakweta' Xhosa male initiation scene, Zulu wedding celebration, and Hlubi love tragedy.

In his attempt to show how traditional cultural forms change and evolve, Coplan (1985:64) refers to the journal of Friar Joao Dos Santos who visited a Bachopi royal court in 1586. The Friar writes about 'marombes', something akin to a court jester. This jester sang, told jokes, performed acrobatics, and shouted praises as part of the court proceedings. Coplan continues: "*The Xhosa, Sotho, and others drew on equally vigorous traditions of mimetic dance, poetic expression, musical and gestural narrative – all of which contributed to the development of a popular urban African theatre.*"

Even though Africans endeavoured to preserve their traditional expressions, it is evident that these forms incorporated European ideas. It is evident that traditional forms changed over time even as far as their contents, aim and form were concerned.

Malan (1988b:3) points out that, during the late 1980s, traditional forms of performance have been rediscovered and evaluated in terms of the changing society and the aesthetic needs of communities. "*Theatre has become a microcosm of what the country could be, in that it thrives on a synthesis between Africa and the Western worlds, the interaction between artists regardless of any superficial differences and the resulting upsurge in the creation of performance, such as celebration, ritual, song, dance and the wearing of masks are to be found in contemporary theatre. Myths and historical heroes figure in the contents of plays, as well as the detail of everyday as experienced by people on all levels of society.*"

It is the very nature of traditional practices which makes it useful to development processes. Traditional performance modes can carry modern messages because they have the following characteristics:

- They are readily adaptable to new themes, with varying degrees of flexibility.

- They are aimed at a homogeneous ethno-linguistic audience, rather than an audience consisting of a variety of social groups.

- They are consistent with oral traditions of developing regions, where audience participation is important.

- The credibility of the messages sent through the indigenous communication system is usually higher than the mass system, since it is a known entity with proven reliability.

- Messages and information that are transmitted, are usually more effective in promoting changes in beliefs and attitudes because they are characterised by emotions, feelings, values and social experiences shared by members of the culture.

- The use of the indigenous communication system is less costly than modern technology-based media (Mda, 1993:73).

Like traditional practices which led to contemporary theatre, it is well-known that ritual in both African and Western societies led to the development of theatre art and many other art forms.

What is **ritual**? Is ritual partly tradition or did ritual practices develop into traditions? One thing is clear: ritual is a form of communication.

Schechner (Cohen-Cruz and Schechner, 1990:24) feels that the ritual can be seen as "... *certain behavioural displacements, exaggerations, repetitions, and transformations that communicate and/or symbolize meanings not ordinarily associated with the behaviour displayed.*"

Turner (1982:81) describes ritual as a synchronisation of many performance genres, often with a dramatic structure and a plot. An act of sacrifice or self-sacrifice is frequently included which energises this cross-cultural expression in many ways and enhances the meaning inherent in the dramatic *leitmotiv*. It is evident that communities use ritual to communicate meaning and structure to its members.

Where did ritual originate? Does it lead to traditional practices? Nicoll (1959:26) states that the "*tragic dramas of Aeschylus and his successors, sprang from the ancient dithyramb, a choral song chanted in honour of Dionysus.*" Nicoll (1959:25) further speculates that the Greek tragedies which developed from these rituals were also influenced by sacred dramas from ancient Egypt. This could mean that both so-called Western and African theatre originated on the African continent from ritual practices.

Malan (1989:3) describes ritual as " ... *the archetype of all theatre forms. Ritual is described as prescribed, formal behaviour during specific occasions such as the hunt, initiation, festivals and religious ceremonies. Documented evidence in the form of rockpaintings indicates that the San of thousands of years ago performed ritual dances. The handful of Bushmen surviving in Southern Africa today still perform very basic rituals, yet the notion of the ritual has been part of theatre to this day.*"

Ritual practices led to the development of many art forms, such as dance, music, song, storytelling and poetry. It is, however, the rich ritual and traditional quality of the theatre which makes it an extremely beneficial tool for development and education, especially in South Africa and other African countries.

Ritual and traditional forms changed through evolutionary processes into the cultural expressions of today, albeit theatre productions, African masks, songs, dances, puppetry or other forms of expression. These evolutionary processes and influences include the arrival of Westerners in Africa.

## 2.8    WHAT IS THEATRE?

Most people share the idea that theatre is a building with sound and lighting equipment and an auditorium where dramas and musicals are presented on a stage to audiences for entertainment purposes. This is certainly not a misconception. Theatre, however, is much more, and can therefore not be limited to this concept.

According to Reyneke (1986:1), theatre is a cultural product and as such, is developed within a specific geographical, social, linguistic and cultural milieu. It is also a product of a person's spirit, a creative action which culminates in a specific form. It is a form of communication, verbal and non-verbal, formal and non-formal. Thus, it also implies relationships between the people involved in the action, including the audience. It is always created by the people involved in the creative effort, including the audience. And it is created from the people for the people.

Van Graan (1991:26) states that, *"theatre is not apolitical. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it communicates or is associated with – through form, content, creative process, venue of performance, etc. – particular values, assumptions, beliefs about the world, ideological constructs and ideas, which themselves arise out of and have meaning in particular conditions and at certain moments in history."*

## 2.9    THE AIMS AND USES OF THEATRE

The aims of theatre have always been to **educate** and **entertain**. Turner (1982:121) believes that it is this ambiguity which is the soul of theatre. It is not a mechanism of repression or sublimation, but a fantasised reality even while it realises fantasy.

Steadman (1992:36) explains how theatre in South Africa has communicated the effects of social construction in the past. Theatrical performance has represented these constructs by examining them critically. This has lead to a more accurate understanding of how South Africans responded to apartheid,

how they experienced and interpreted it, how they tried to oppose it, and how they tried to assert their identities against it. A consideration of South African theatre will contribute to an understanding of how people in this country tried to make sense of their lives under the apartheid regime.

Theatre arts **communicate** and interpret the total 'environment' of a society. This is true of theatre throughout the world, and specifically in Africa. Kerr (1981:147) states that *"[i]t is difficult to establish the extent to which African performing arts serve to perpetuate a stable order of society, and how they might act as catalysts for social change."* Nevertheless, theatre responds and contributes to socio-political change and events, and it is therefore important to note the strength of theatre in any developing or changing situation.

Theatre in South Africa and in Africa has had a definite **influence** on the socio-political and cultural milieu. Political and cultural liberation has gone hand-in-hand in Africa, and the theatre has played an important part in the process of liberation in many African countries. Political activists have seen theatre as providing an essential facet of the struggle for political liberation. Because theatre is spontaneous and celebrates creativity, it can become the expression of political aspirations before politically oppressed audiences, and the ceremonial rejection of political oppression. Theatre can become the means of **awakening** oppressed people from the culture of silence imposed by political conditions. There is also the equally important perception that theatre could be used successfully in educational programmes in order to liberate, express and awake participants (Steadman, 1992:42).

The development of Afrikaans theatre, which has greatly **contributed** to Afrikaner nationalism, is a good example of theatre being used for political aspirations. Hauptfleisch (1988:39–40) states that locally written plays of a patriotic nature at the time of the Anglo Boer War, and one-act farces which could be used as entertainment pieces in a broader cultural programme, promoted and protected the fledgling new language and culture. It was thus a highly committed entertainment form.

During the 1970s, theatre of the Black Consciousness movement **stimulated** the development of nationalism among Africans. Hauptfleisch and Steadman (1984:144) describe the theatre resulting from this movement as a new type

which emerged and signified the first radical departure from the influence of Europeans. This was part of the general struggle for cultural identity and political conscientisation. It is interesting to note that, even though many African writers strove toward pure African cultural forms, these were never attainable. Steadman (1988:129) wrote that while Manaka and his actors attempted to create forms of theatre which are undoubtedly 'African', for example with the play *Pula*, they were simultaneously influenced on a conceptual level by his growing awareness of European theorists like Artaud and Grotowski.

Theatre as cultural product also helped to **break down** the political status quo of the apartheid regime. Individuals began to question and reject the rules and borders prescribed by apartheid legislation, a common thread that was reflected in their theatre products. The theatre of Fugard and Workshop '71 are prime examples of such work. It began as projects of the Institute for Race Relations to create dialogue between different racial groups (Fleischman, 1990:99). Fugard described this in 1982 as the *third stream* (Gray, 1982:53). He stated that this development reflected the fight that were being decided on the socio-political front in South Africa. "*Put in simplest terms, this has involved co-operation regardless of race, with mixed casts playing to non-racial audiences*" (Gray, 1982:53). Malan (1998b:29) referred to this theatre when she stated that, despite the opposition from government and politicians, the integrated nature of theatre provided the evidence of the transcending power of interaction between people from different cultures.

Protest theatre or theatre for liberation in South Africa has mostly been created through workshop processes. In an article on workshop theatre, Holloway (1993:27) notes that theatre-for-development and workers' theatre are also produced in the same fashion. He states that the most important aspect of workshop theatre is its ability to harness people from different colour, class, economic and educational backgrounds in a unified creative enterprise which attempts to transcend the barriers of a divided society. The fusion of cultures and backgrounds may be seen to imbue workshop theatre with a particular richness. Its hybrid nature, the combination of techniques and traditions, and the harnessing of the multiple voices which comprise South African society may pave the way for the emergence of an inclusive national voice.

Another form of theatre which has a specific use is psychodrama. Psychodrama originates from rituals, mime and the festivals of ancient man. It is defined as *"a process of experiential, rather than intellectual learning"* (Ortman, 1966:210). As a theatre form, this genre has as its essence a **psychotherapeutic** aim, which corresponds with Aristotle's concept of the healing powers of experiencing a catharsis. The various techniques of psychodrama, such as self-presentation, self-realisation, the dream technique, etc., lead individuals as well as groups (communities) to realise their problems and aspirations. It thus acts as a tool for educating and healing (see Ortman, 1966:204 ff.).

Another term which relates to psychodrama is socio-drama. Socio-drama is a technique used in psychodrama and is also a psychotherapeutic process. Ortman (1966:207) points out that the socio-dramatic protagonist must temporarily abandon his/her own private, individual role and act as a representative of a social group in socio-drama. S/he may be asked to confront a representative of an opposing group. The opposing parties are asked to reverse roles, and thus experience the conflict from both points of view.

From the above, it becomes clear that educational theatre, industrial theatre, workers' theatre, protest theatre, liberation theatre, socio-drama and psychodrama all reflect the purpose of creating change and stimulating the development of the individual, family, groups or society as a whole.

Steadman (1992:33) differentiates between theatre literature and theatre practice. He notes that theatre is currently seen as a utilitarian process in social development. The previous tradition was based on a view through the prism of the literary text, and a series of such texts were used to construct a **history of drama** based on literary products. The new focus is based on a view of theatre not as a product, but as a process.

As South Africa moves into a new era, where reconstruction and development are key words, theatre must and should still play a significant and relevant role in a developing and changing socio-political and cultural milieu. All educational or developmental theatre practices, albeit workers' theatre, industrial theatre, educational theatre or theatre-for-development, are of value

and in no way inferior to each other. Through this study, it will be shown that theatre-for-development can be effectively used in South Africa to establish democratic, 'bottom-up' development programmes, because theatre remains a part of the process of life, change and development.

## 2.10 REASONS FOR THE USE OF THEATRE IN EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Throughout history, theatre has been part of the process of life. Life implies change and development, and it is therefore only logical that theatre could be used for development and educational purposes. According to Hagg (1990:102), all art forms, including theatre, can benefit and encourage individual development, self-realisation and enrichment. Art can also encourage cultural literacy as an antidote for technocracy, thus creating a new culture of inclusiveness. Art creates respect for the diversity of cultures, develops coherence in life experience and celebrates life through artistic ways. Art develops leadership, and provides training for organisational situations, social relationships and the making of friends. Art makes leasure-time fruitful.

Investigating theatre-for-development projects throughout the world, it was found that theatre could also encourage caring for and accountability to the community. Theatre can become an income-generating activity if linked to tourism. As indicated in this chapter, theatre can help communities to find solutions for agriculture and food problems; AIDS and health-related issues; family relationships; conflict-handling; sustainable living; environmental issues; illiteracy; and population development.

Theatre in itself has always had the dual purpose of **entertaining** and **educating/informing** its audience, and is thus well-suited to be used as a tool which encourages and initiates development. Theatre possesses the ability to instruct, empower and conscientise.

This view is specifically true of African theatre. An African politician, Kamlongera (1982:207), notes that, "*there are many reasons why our*

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*forefathers chose songs, dance, drums and masks to educate their young, to comment on socio-political conditions in their societies and to preserve the most effective methods of education through audio-visual aids of what was familiar."* He points out that previous generations subscribed to the modern education axiom that if a person sees and hears, s/he remembers. The presentation of ideas through a variety of media, such as songs, dance, mime, poetry recitals, ordinary narrative and masquerades, can capture the imagination of the people. It was the function of traditional theatre, not merely to entertain, but also to instruct.

Theatre not only has the ability to entertain and instruct, but in many African and South American countries, theatre was used as a tool to search for national identity, settling accounts with history, and examining current realities (Oleszkiewicz, 1989:14). The effectiveness of using theatre for instruction and education is staggering. Ruf (1987:77) explains that, in Nicaragua, like many other South American countries, people started using theatre for community education. In July 1979, it was estimated that approximately 17 per cent of the population in Nicaragua were illiterate. There was also no established theatre tradition. During 1980, they arranged the first National Theatre festival and 39 plays were performed. By 1983, the festival had grown to 579 plays for a total audience of 139 000. The National Theatre festival was not limited to cultural activity in rural areas, but it also helped with community development, reforestation, agriculture and many more. Theatre is a powerful tool to create change. Kaiser-Lenoir (1989:130-131) quotes a Nicaraguan peasant who had the following to say about theatre for community education and development: *"Here in the countryside we know that all art has a function: to educate the people. And we know the function of education is not only to read and to write. It's also that capacity to distinguish between what is good and what isn't. To teach people to become the makers of their own destiny and of the destiny of their community ... Art is a weapon. We say that weapons must be in the hands of the people. And so theatre must be in the hands of the people as well."*

The viewpoint of this Nicaraguan peasant serves to underline the fact that development in South Africa calls for a methodology of empowerment, in which plays are not simply created by catalyst groups from participatory research groups and then performed to peasant and working-class

communities (educational theatre) in order to raise awareness. Max-Neef (1989:16) notes that programmes should be designed to develop **awareness**. It is odd, however, to assume that those who suffer, are not aware of the reasons for their suffering. Development calls for a methodology where the catalyst group or fieldworker initiates a theatrical process which communities could appropriate for their own use at all levels – theoretical, organisational and aesthetic. What is needed, in other words, is theatre serving as a cultural tool for communities to monitor, analyse and criticise their own ideologies and social structures.

The principle of 'bottom-up' development is reflected in the RDP document when it refers to its central objective as the improvement of the quality of life of all South Africans, in particular, the most poor and marginalised sections of the community. This objective should be realised through a process of **empowerment** which gives the poor control over their lives and increases their ability to mobilise sufficient development resources. The RDP reflects a commitment to grassroots, 'bottom-up' development which is owned and driven by communities (ANC, 1994:15).

Theatre has several characteristics in its favour in the promotion of development:

- its accessibility to people who are illiterate;
- its accessibility to teachers and other educators;
- its mobility;
- its affordability (compared to other forms of 'education');
- its ritualistic and traditional nature;
- the possibility of participation;
- the possibility of reaching large numbers of 'pupils'; and
- the possibility of empowering through the process of developing a theatre production.

The usefulness of theatre in development programmes is clearly reflected in these characteristics. Theatre-for-development can potentially overcome many of the most obvious difficulties facing development programmes in South

Africa, such as geographical difficulties, illiteracy, linguistic diversity, cultural diversity and others.


## 2.11    BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

According to Dall (1980:184), theatre is a tool which can bring about change in urban and rural settings. Its origin lies in Chile, Brazil, West Africa and India. Dall states that, in Chile and Brazil, Paulo Freire used modified forms of dialogue and performance with pictures to make local communities aware of their own problems and their causes. This modified form of performance, though not strictly speaking 'drama' – has an important element of community participation. Participation is an essential component of performance (live or puppet) with the intention to bring about a change of awareness in village communities. In India, the folk media programme made use of theatre, puppetry and other forms to stimulate a response to community problems, e.g. family planning and malnutrition. In West Africa, family planning campaigns have used popular theatre for communicating relevant information to illiterate and semi-literate villagers. In Botswana, Laedza Batanani ('community awakening') has used theatre extensively and successfully, to bring about change in the rural villages of Northern Botswana. In Zambia, Etherton and Simukoko established the Chikwakwa theatre, conceived as a form of popular theatre for the promotion of urban development in Lusaka's townships. From this, the travelling theatre eventually developed which attempted to provide provincial and rural communities with performances on themes related to health, nutrition and agriculture. This experiment proved that theatre in these regions, which had formerly been the preserve of the European minority, could be used and enjoyed by the African community at large (Dall, 1980:184).

If these projects are proof of the existence and success of theatre-for-development in different regions of the world, it is important to establish what theatre-for-development consists of, and how it defines itself in terms of development purposes.

## 2.12    DEFINING THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

The question of the relationship between educational theatre and theatre-for-development has culminated in an extensive debate. Various definitions for theatre-for-development have been formulated worldwide.

Dall (1980:194) states that theatre-for-development is *"... a tool for bringing about change in both urban and rural settings."* Eyoh (1986:161) agrees with this idea and describes it as a wonderful method of adult education and rural mobilisation. He does not see it as adult education or educational theatre *per se*. Although theatre-for-development seems to be educational, it is not 'educational theatre'. Educational theatre refers to a group of people who identifies issues and produces an educational play to a community to which it does not necessarily belong. A few similar projects, especially focused on AIDS, have been developed in South Africa. Tomaselli (1981:65) criticises this type of educational theatre as theatre that is used by Western capitalist society. He feels that, in these cases, the technology of theatre serves primarily to exploit and reproduce the dominant relations of production. Theatre thus creates an audience of passive consumers, spoon-fed with entertainment. Such an audience mediates social roles and delimits class experience. The machine and technology of art are used against the working class to persuade it that dominance is a God-given task that is natural, inevitable and desirable.

Kidd and Byram (1978a:36) agree with Tomaselli when they state that most educational theatre programmes in Africa are based on *"top-down or one-way communication ..."* Educational theatre is promoted as a medium which is much closer to the people than mass media, while these programmes, in fact, play much the same role as the mass media. According to Kidd and Byram, educational theatre consists of centrally determined messages and scripts dealing with government priorities – e.g. family planning, literacy, the green revolution – and are prepared and distributed for uniform use all over the country by government sponsored groups. They feel that the messages are general and sloganistic and reflect the technicist approach to development. Such a technicist approach views development as a process of teaching the poor new skills, rather than of dealing with the real issues and political constraints that they face (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:36). Unfortunately,

this also seems to be the case in South Africa, where theatre is mostly used for 'educational' purposes to 'teach', rather than to empower the poor. A relevant example of such a practice is the *Sarafina* project mentioned earlier.

Kidd (1985:175) describes an educational theatre project initiated by the University of Malawi, where rehearsed dramas were presented to people in rural areas. He writes that, since 1981, theatre workers at the University of Malawi have been involved in experiments where drama has been used as a communication device for focusing on issues such as health, working conditions, nutrition, urbanisation, and agriculture. The idea is to use theatre to research problems found in a particular community and to make use of theatre to allow the community to debate these issues and hopefully to overcome problems. The original educational theatre projects led to the initiation of theatre-for-development, where community members became part of the process and the theatre product.

During the first experiments with theatre-for-development, the catalyst group initiating the programmes overshadowed the **audience** to such an extent that the communities themselves were greatly ignored. It was after these experiments that Kidd and Byram started combining the ideas and work of Augusto Boal, the Kamiriithu Cultural Centre in Kenya, the Wasan Samaru in Nigeria and the Morewa Dance group in Zimbabwe to create a more democratic and participatory approach to development theatre (Kerr, 1988:175).

During the second phase of development theatre, extension workers improvised theatre productions with the community to assist in the process of development. Kidd (1985:179) defined this second phase of the project as popular theatre. For the purpose of this study the term theatre-for-development will be used, as popular theatre is a wider term that consists of more than facilitating improvised theatre productions in the community.

Epskamp (1993:9) defines 'development theatre' as a special form of popular theatre within the field of adult education. It is meant to be a community-focused problem-solving cultural intervention strategy, in which the process of creating a play is in an educational sense as valuable as the product, which is the performance. The process of creation and the performance itself are

accessible to the community because the community members created and performed it themselves.

Mbowa states in Sicherman (1994:65) that development theatre could be traced *"back to the days of our ancestors."* According to her, theatre educates the community about its values and customs, through music, dance, and drama. All these elements were embedded in folktales and rituals. The members of the community all participated, and people learned through seeing, hearing and doing. *"When you actually do a thing, it creates a lasting image."*

Eyoh (1986:165) states that development theatre utilises and enhances the culture of people, while allowing them the possibilities for self-realisation. He continues that it *"is an enabling process which exploits what the people know and own, for their personal emancipation. The performances cease to have any meaning when taken out of their milieu for the situations are different, and the issues raised in one village may not be those experienced eleswhere [sic]"* (Eyoh, 1986:165).

Kamlongera (1982:207) agrees with the above when he describes development theatre as becoming established in the developing world. This kind of theatre has a long history in Africa. Despite this history, there has been a period when it was largely absent, when literary and Western-oriented theatre was mainly performed. According to him, the earlier part of this century shows a clear affiliation to propaganda theatre rather than to theatre for art's sake that has dominated the latter half of the century. He puts forward several reasons to explain this phenomenon, among them the fact that politics and intellectual nationalism have re-established the view that performing arts have always fulfilled a utilitarian role in the community. This encourages and serves to preserve the nearly lost African heritage. He continues by stating that theatre in Africa has proven to be the most effective way of education throughout the ages, pre- and post-colonial periods included. The function of theatre in Africa was not only to entertain, but also to instruct.

It is therefore surprising that Southern Africa has only produced a few theatre-for-development projects until 1993: the Marotholi Travelling Theatre in Lesotho led by Zakes Mda, and the Winterveld project led by Barney Simon

(Holloway, 1993:25). The value of theatre-for-development has largely been overlooked in South Africa. Evaluating the success of these projects is difficult, as is the evaluation of any development project. However, the Marotholi Travelling Theatre was still a totally autonomous, registered non-profit organisation in 1993, generating its own funds from educational videos and receiving funding from many international and national donors (Mda, 1993:67). The popularity of its work surely provides an indication of its success in the development field.

Mda (1993:66&67) explains that the Marotholi Travelling Theatre used many theatrical methods, such as theatre-for-conscientisation, *agitprop* theatre, Boal's forum theatre and modifications of these methods, all of which constitute theatre-for-development.

It is clear from the relevant literature on the subject that theatre-for-development and educational theatre, while widely different, are both categorised under popular theatre. But popular theatre also includes a wide range of other theatre activities, such as folk media, and protest theatre, as will be shown below.

Crow and Etherton (1981:547) describe popular theatre as a wide and contradictory range of theatre activities, and many different types of drama. They use the term to signify a theatre through which intellectuals try to communicate with the people who are the most disadvantaged in their society. These intellectuals communicate either by presenting plays in which the problems of society are articulated from the point of view of the people, or by getting them to present plays themselves which increasingly help them to analyse their society. Mwansa (1981:104) describes popular theatre as a new medium for education to supplement other existing media. It should not be considered as a substitute for other media. He also includes puppetry, drama, mime and dance as popular theatre and states that it "*is gaining currency as a means of education in Botswana and Zambia and is likely to extend to the neighbouring countries*" (Mwansa, 1981:98).

Lambert (1982:242) describes popular theatre as a vent for social unrest. To satirise and protest have been among the principal functions of popular theatre. It has also been a way of using indigenous or folk media institutions

for instilling new ideas, thus increasing the acceptability of these ideas among the rural population. Lambert feels that the most isolated communities have been reached by using the oral tradition and local languages, in an entertaining form capable of holding the attention of large numbers. This definition of popular theatre is also held by Kidd (1980:14) who feels that it is a tool used by peasant and urban workers throughout the developing world in their struggle to access a variety of resources and services, as well as for political rights. Taylor (1981:22) agrees and defines popular theatre as that which reflects the needs and interests of the people. Popular theatre listens to its audience and becomes a liberating experience. He believes that it is a growing communication movement in the developing world and that the real success of so-called popular theatre can best be measured in its **unpopularity** with regimes that thrive on the perpetuation of inequality.

Eyoh (1987a:57) feels that popular theatre encourages people-centred development because it builds on the skills people already possess. He writes that the actors provide the songs, choreograph the dances, create the scenarios and are responsible for the themes which are developed. He notes that, where popular theatre is used as an educational strategy, it combines the entertainment value of the performing arts with their capacity to highlight issues in relation to community development. Kerr (1988:175) points out that popular theatre plays are not simply created by catalyst groups from participatory research and taken to peasant and working class communities, but that the catalyst group initiated a theatrical process which communities could appropriate for their use at all levels – theoretical, organisational and aesthetic. This definition, as well as that of Eyoh, does not refer to popular theatre, but rather to theatre-for-development as it is understood for the purpose of this study.

Finally, Eyoh (1987b:52) looks at the implications of the word **popular** and states that popular theatre is something that emanates from the people, is about the people and is intended for the consumption of the people. Orkin (1992:30) furthers the turmoil created by the term 'popular theatre' when he states that popular theatre *"implies some form of mass-based or majority-situated legitimation or support."* He is doubtful whether such an authentic 'majority' voice may ever be established for South African theatre or

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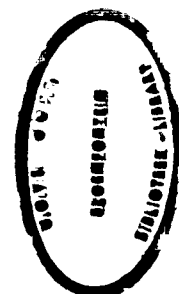
performance (Orkin, 1992:30). Orkin (1992:37) adds that any organic, unified or single consciousness representing mass-based support seemed to be a myth, an ideal goal towards which popular theatre needs to strive, but which it has not necessarily achieved.

Popular theatre includes both elements of educational theatre and of theatre-for-development, folk media, puppetry, dance, mime, drama and many other forms of theatre that are enjoyed by a large percentage of people of a specific area. It is **for** the people, **by** the people.

As the latter half of this dissertation will show, theatre-for-development contains many of the attributes of popular theatre. For the purposes of this study, the following attributes are used to define the concept of theatre-for-development:

- it comes from the people, is about the people and intended for their consumption;
- it could be initiated by a fieldworker or catalyst;
- it mobilises, conscientises, liberates, empowers;
- it is an entertaining form capable of holding the attention of large numbers;
- it is a growing communication movement;
- it uses the oral tradition and local languages;
- it revolves around local problems;
- it utilises and enhances the culture of the people;
- it utilises what people already know and own; and
- it stimulates and necessitates active participation.

At a Zimbabwean workshop, Kidd (1985:182) summarised the **process** of theatre-for-development as follows:

a) *"Building a relationship with members of the community and motivating them to participate;*

b) *working with them to study their situation and identify issues for in-depth analysis;*

c) *learning the indigenous forms of cultural expression of the area, and utilising them for theatre-for-development activity;*

d) *exploring through drama, dance, mime, and song (coupled with discussion) ways of deepening the understanding of the issues and looking for solutions;*

e) *organising a performance as a way of bringing the community together and agreeing on solutions and action;*

f) *discussing with the villagers ways in which this short-term activity could be continued by the villagers on their own (follow up);*

g) *evaluating the whole experience and drawing out the lessons learned."*

It is these processes that create optimism when regarding theatre-for-development as a tool for facilitating and strengthening any development programme anywhere in the world, and specifically in South Africa with its unique and diverse cultural situation. The next section will show how the attributes of theatre-for-development are utilised in many projects throughout the world. It will also indicate how adaptable and diverse theatre-for-development can be as a tool for facilitating development.

## 2.13 THE USE OF THEATRE IN EDUCATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXTS

Theatre is widely used in sub-Saharan Africa as a method for educating people. This is not exclusive to Africa, but is a worldwide phenomenon. In South America, theatre is mainly employed as a political tool in pre- and post-revolutionary circumstances, with the work of Augusto Boal as evidence. In Africa, theatre is also used in pre- and post-revolutionary circumstances, not only as a political tool, but also as a weapon against poverty, marginalisation and the effects of colonialism. South America has been included in this study, because there is a greater balance between work concentrated in urban and in rural areas than, for example, in Asia where most work is done

among urban communities. The similarities between situations and problems in South America and South Africa seem to be more than those of Asia. South America and South Africa both deal with a large, impoverished rural sector. Deciding on which projects to choose for this study was a difficult and arduous task, as the successes and failures of theatre-for-development projects all over the world are numerous and varied in nature. The following projects that were chosen, stimulated the process of developing a suitable model for South Africa. This fact, plus the exposure to the ideas of people participating in recent workshops, and the needs and problems of South Africa in a post-liberation period made the final decision easier.

### 2.13.1     Augusto Boal and the techniques of theatre of the oppressed

Boal is a leading international innovator in people-centred theatre. He can be regarded as the father of the techniques of theatre-for-development. According to Cohen-Cruz and Schechner (1990:26), Boal is also a major innovator of post-Brechtian political theatre and practice. During the 1970s, while working as the artistic director of the Arena Theatre in Brazil, Boal came under attack by the Brazilian government for his theatrical criticism of the oppressive military dictatorship. He was imprisoned, tortured and exiled. Cohen-Cruz and Schechner write that Boal developed the methods of 'theatre of the oppressed' and techniques to involve spectators in the theatre during the early 1970s. He was living in Argentina at the time. This led to various workshops, as well as work in Portugal and finally in France. During 1978-79, Boal established the *Centre du Théâtre de leproma Augusto Boal* in Paris. This centre has since become the core of his activities even though he remains based in Rio de Janeiro. He travels extensively, presenting workshops in Europe, Latin America, and Africa (Cohen-Cruz and Schechner, 1990:27). A workshop held by Boal in South Africa in 1997, was attended with the aim of reaching a deeper understanding of his techniques.

Boal developed six theatre techniques which he calls 'theatre of the oppressed'. These empowerment-through-theatre techniques are: forum theatre, invisible theatre, image theatre, culture theatre, newspaper theatre and legislative theatre. These techniques could be used by participants in the process of theatre-for-development and are action-based experiential learning

tools, based on the view that artistic creativity is inherent in all human beings. These techniques create a safe space where people can rehearse real life situations, and can learn that they are able to and can create 'history'. These techniques will be discussed under the appropriate headings.

Boal feels very strongly that theatre is a tool in the hands of the people which can and should create liberation. He states: "*I want to clarify once and for all that **the theatre of the oppressed techniques are meant to help the oppressed; they are actually their weapons of liberation***" (Boal, 1990a:33).

Boal states that theatre of the oppressed emphasises theatre as a language that must be spoken, not a discourse that must be listened to. It also emphasises theatre as a process that must be developed, rather than a finished product that must be consumed. He feels that theatre of the oppressed goes beyond the ordinary boundaries of theatre because it asserts the oppressed as the subjects rather than the objects of theatrical activity. Theatre, according to Boal, can also advance toward other domains: sport, politics, psychology, philosophy and many other fields (Boal, 1990b:35).

Boal contends that the audience becomes the **active observers** – the 'spect-actors' – with the attention focused on them and not on the actors (Boal, 1990b:35).

This aspect of theatre of the oppressed seems to coincide with the need in South African development projects to involve people and create active participation.

Theatre of the oppressed has two functions: "*1) To help the spectator become a protagonist of the dramatic action so that s/he can 2) apply those actions s/he has practised in the theatre to real life*" (Boal, 1990b:36).

This would imply that theatre could be employed in any situation where people need to be empowered. For example, in a housing project, people could actually rehearse going to the authorities to negotiate for amenities. This rehearsal could empower them to apply and negotiate in real life.

Boal (1990b:37) explains that, during a conventional theatre ritual, the auditorium cannot transform the outcome of the performance. The audience is therefore deactivated and can only contemplate the events occurring onstage. With theatre of the oppressed, however, *"one tries to make the auditorium-stage dialog entirely transitive: the stage may attempt to transform the auditorium, but the auditorium can attempt to change everything"* (Boal, 1990b:38).

### 2.13.1.1    Forum theatre

In his attempts to conscientise the audience, Boal developed forum theatre, where short plays are presented to an audience based on real events happening in the community.

Cohen-Cruz (1990:46) described a workshop with Boal which focused on forum theatre. Participants began with images and stories of their own oppression, after which groups were formed around shared issues/themes. Each person in a group told a personal story dealing with the theme. One person's story was then chosen as the basis of the group's scenario. Other people added to this basic story whatever elements they felt were necessary to make the scene representative of their own feelings. This linking of individuals to the group characterises most of Boal's techniques, and creates a strong sense of community among the participants.

Another aspect of forum theatre is the 'public showing'. A short scene will be presented by workshop actors. The spectators are to identify the protagonist and to look for opportunities to improve the resolution in the protagonist's favour. The scene will be performed again, during which anyone who wants to intervene and take the protagonist's place in order to show a better way of handling the situation, could just shout 'Stop!', and take over the protagonist's role. According to Cohen-Cruz (1990:47), these scenes went well, with much eager participation.

Boal describes forum theatre during an interview with Driskell (1975:75-76) as a form of theatre in which a play of no longer than between ten and twenty minutes is presented. The audience is asked whether they agree with the solution. If they disagree, the actors repeat the scene onstage, and anyone

can replace the protagonist/oppressed, and present a better solution. Unless this actor is replaced, s/he remains onstage. According to Boal, the audience always interrupts, alters the scene, and tries its own solution. In this way, theatre is used as a rehearsal of life.

Malan (1992:46) describes why this method is so effective in community development: *"... the solutions at which the audience have to arrive are based in reality and can bring about real change within the particular community."*


### 2.13.1.2    Invisible theatre

Boal has also developed a theatre technique where actors improvise and rehearse a fake situation and then perform it in a realistic setting without the knowledge of the community. As Malan (1992:48) states, it is *"a fake situation within a real situation."* The aim of invisible theatre is to question the legitimacy of a particular law, albeit governmental or one based in social acceptance. According to Boal, this is precisely the importance of invisible theatre and of other theatre for the oppressed techniques: it questions the difference between concepts of legality and legitimacy (Boal, 1990a:32).

For example, undemocratic and racist attitudes and preconceived ideas could create dramatic conflict in shops, restaurants, banks, and other public places. Not only will this form of theatre create awareness, but it will surely encourage and stimulate the active involvement of the unsuspicious audience. Although the technique requires more training and, in most cases, trained actors, it still liberates and empowers the audience. Actors of invisible theatre should be adept at improvisation and quick adaptation to the 'rehearsed' text, as the audience inevitably takes over the 'play'. This technique must be applied with the utmost care and thorough planning, especially in situations where issues are emotionally laden and could lead to physical violence.

### 2.13.1.3   Image theatre

Kidd (1980:11) describes this technique as follows: *"each participant has a turn in expressing his/her analysis of the problem, through 'sculpting' the bodies of the other participants to project a certain image."* As soon as the participant is finished, the image or codification which was created, is discussed and the 'sculptor' redesigns new images to reflect the ideal situation or the transitional situation. This creates a way through which people can begin to experience and understand the process and consequences of revolutionary action.

### 2.13.1.4   Culture theatre

This theatre aims at making cultures conscious of cultural differences by producing a play from another cultural group. Boal believes that this would provide the opportunity to note differences, but also to come to a real understanding of another culture (Malan, 1992:49).

### 2.13.1.5   Newspaper theatre

Malan (1992:48) describes this technique of Boal as one that refers to dramatic action based on daily news items. Such items are used as the basis of a play, in order to assist people to understand events. This could also include other simple techniques like simple reading, crossed reading, complementary reading, rhythmical reading and parallel action.

### 2.13.1.6   Legislative theatre

At a training workshop presented by Boal in 1997 at Broederstroom, his newest theatre technique, namely legislative theatre was shared with participants. In 1994, Boal and his team of actors used this technique in their preparation for the Worker's Party campaign in the general election where they were subsequently, as a collective, elected as a Member of Parliament of Rio de Janeiro. The team continues to move into all areas, including the deprived

areas of Rio, to forum political and social issues. The legislation process, according to the needs and desires of the people, is set in motion. The inclusion of the grassroots populace in decision-making and legislation is truly democratic, and a meaningful effect of theatre of the oppressed.


### 2.13.1.7 Conclusion

The work of Boal has been included in this study because much of his teaching have been successfully applied in African countries and could thus easily be applied in the South African context. His work also forms the basis of most theatre-for-development thinking and the techniques are used and applied in a range of social situations. These include adult basic education, community empowerment, environmental education, gender issues, literacy training, organisational development, public relations, public health, rural development, school and youth education, social rehabilitation, as well as teacher and facilitator training.


## 2.13.2 The Nixtayolero Theatre Collective: Nicaragua

Nicaragua boasts one of the most spectacular success stories in terms of educational and community-based theatre. In 1980, the first national theatre festival included 39 plays and an audience totalling 13 000. By 1983, the number of plays had grown to 576 and an audience of 139 000 (Kaiser-Lenoir, 1989:122).


### 2.13.2.1 Decentralised and integrated approach

The popular theatre movement in Nicaragua operates mainly in decentralised theatre collectives, of which the best known is the Nixtayolero. This theatre collective is led by Alan Bolt and is situated on the farm, La Praga, north-east of Managua. The theatre collectives of Nicaragua do not limit their development to cultural activities, but also help with community and agricultural development and reforestation in many rural areas (Ruf, 1987:77). Art is seen as a communication tool, and theatre productions must stimulate local organisational skills and the development of a critical conscience (Martin,

1987:60). The group also has a study plan, called the Free University, where important issues are studied: national and international economics, community and agricultural development, organisation, music, composition, design and the history of theatre. Peasants and campesinos from the area come to the farm to learn crop cultivation, and other practical skills, as well as attending performances of the group (Ruf, 1987:82). The groups also act as consultants for various government agencies, by bringing greater understanding and sensitivity towards traditional peasant culture. They also ensure a better integration of government planning and technology through regular workshops. Their work incorporates ideas about traditional land production and grassroots leadership (Kaiser-Lenoir, 1989:129).

## 2.13.2.2    Objectives

Some of the objectives of this movement indicate the holistic support of the collective to the peasant population in the

- development of a critical conscience and creative participation in **all areas on all levels**;

- investigating, understanding, and development of recuperation of their cultural complexity;

- systemisation of useful traditional and non-traditional techniques that can contribute to satisfy the needs of the community in relation to the natural resources; and

- development and understanding of a dramaturgy which is the sum of scenic languages and a popular tradition (Martin, 1987:74).

## 2.13.2.3    Conclusion

The theatre collective in Nicaragua has employed theatre to aid thousands of people literally to become literate. It has produced numerous plays in a short time, involving the population at large. It has also demystified the idea of an 'artist' who is removed or elevated from society, because theatre people have

been involved in rebuilding their society, the planting of trees, education of the rural masses and the creation of a functional and artistically gratifying theatre.

The activities and aims of this theatre collective, as well as its decentralised structural approach to development are represented in the proposed model, because of its relevance to the current situation in South Africa.

## 2.13.3    The Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre: Kenya

The village of Kamiriithu lies about 30 kilometres north-west of Nairobi in the Limuru district (Koren-Deutsch, 1993:33). It is a poor area which has suffered heavily from economic oppression under both colonialism and neo-colonialism. In October 1975, under the leadership of Njeeri wa Aamoni, the people of Kamiriithu built the Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre (KCECC). Their aim was to improve the lives of village inhabitants through education and training. Membership of the centre consisted of small farmers, workers, squatters, the unemployed and a small group of intellectuals living in the area.

### 2.13.3.1    Focus on education and liberation

Their first programme was a literacy course which was successfully completed when 55 peasant workers could read and write after a year. After this, the people of KCECC decided to expand into cultural activities. The villagers asked Ngugi wa Thiong'o to write a play about their village and to incorporate village songs and dances. The theatre production, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, was not entirely scripted and directed by professionals, but became a collective project for the whole community (Koren-Deutsch, 1993:34). Wa Thiong'o (1983:120) wrote: *"Everything was collective, open and public, and it was fascinating to see a unity gradually emerge which virtually rubbed out distinctions of age, sex and nationality."* Koren-Deutsch (1993:34) writes that the play was opened on 2 October 1977, after the whole community

constructed and built a 2 000-seat theatre. The performances were sold out until the government struck out against the play.

According to Kidd (1983b:296), the play exposed the manipulation of religion, the greed and corruption of the ruling classes, and the treachery of colonial collaborators through satire. It also exposed the exploitative practices of multinational corporations. It is therefore not surprising that the government found the play offensive and decided to stop further performances. Although the government's banning of the production, and the detaining order on Wa Thiong'o were severely felt by the centre, its activities multiplied because these were centred around the people and not around individuals (Björkman, 1989:54).

Lakoju (1989:159) described the play as a huge success because it was a process and not based on a product. According to him, the dispirited workers and peasants of Kamiriithu found the songs and dances had abundant meaning. It gave them the chance to sing about their own history, their present realities, and their future aspirations.

The group went on to create a play called *Mother, Sing for Me.* The play was again drafted by Wa Thiong'o, and collectively workshopped by the group. The play not only concentrated on the movement towards liberation/struggle, but also attempted to recreate Kenya's historical past. *"It revived a domestic cultural form and showed that this was more than adequate for contemporary theatre"* (Björkman, 1989:93). Björkman also describes how people made use of their native language while including other languages to make it accessible to other speakers. *"Paradoxically, the multiplicity of languages had become a unifying factor; it proved that language was no barrier to understanding"* (Björkman, 1989:79).

### 2.13.3.2    Conclusion

This project was unique in many aspects. Not only did the people create and perform their own plays, in order to arrive at an understanding of their situation, but they also built and controlled a large theatre building. They created and controlled their own processes in accordance to their own needs

and unique situation. This gave their work continuity and strength, and became a potent example of the principle of strength in unity.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o states (1986:42) that the Kamiriithu theatre project was an "attempt at reconnection with the broken roots of African civilization and its traditions of theatre."

## 2.13.4 The Laedza Batanani project: Botswana

The Laedza Batanani project is based in Botswana, a country experiencing many problems similar to those of South Africa. For example, it is mostly a rural setting with serious droughts, and family structures are disrupted because of migrant male workers who are working in South Africa.

Kidd and Byram (1978b:173) describe the project as a series of festivals held in 1974, which originated in the northern parts of Botswana. Laedza Batanani means "the sun is already up; it's time to come and work together."

### 2.13.4.1 Macro-national government intervention to create self-reliance

The festival started as an experiment run by government extension workers. According to Kidd and Byram (1977:28), it blossomed into a community movement of which the main principles were participation and self-reliance. Some community leaders, with the help of extension workers, wanted to promote self-reliance and active participation in their own development. Their aim was to involve the communities in discussions, in order to develop self-reliance, participation and co-operative action as substitutes for over-dependence on government and excessive individualism. This aim called for a method of bringing people together to discuss their problems and to agree on changes through collective action. They searched for a way to break through indifference towards the *kgotla* (community meeting) and to revive this traditional forum as a major focus for community decision-making and action (Kidd and Byram, 1977:21). The earliest workshops were based on improvisations by village members about daily problems that were performed

around the village fire. "*Every man around the fire in that remote scrubland was simultaneously actor and audience in the 'play' of his life*" (Etherton, 1982:345).

The project began with the focus on testing and developing:

- entertainment media for attracting and keeping audience attention;

- dramatisations of local problems, thus creating a mirror to the community;

- a rural development programme through a consultative process of community analysis; and

- the use of traditional media like dance-drama and praise poetry, the *kgotla* discussion, etc., for community education (Kidd and Byram, 1976:6).

The above led to a search for fresh, alternative methods used in other parts of the world, resulting in the recognition of the potential of **popular theatre**. Theatre representations of local social reality through the use of drama, puppetry, singing and dancing, in local languages and idioms, and involving large, often open-air audiences, were not limited by education or class (Kidd and Byram, 1977:22).

Although drama seemed to be the main tool for presenting the festival themes, other forms of culture such as puppetry, dancing and singing were also used to reinforce relevant issues (Kidd and Byram, 1977:24). It is interesting to note that a videotape was used in the first two festivals for pre-recorded presentations on village problems. It was also used as a playback device for group discussion reports. In 1976, printed support materials were introduced as part of the festival and the follow-up programme. These were in the form of picture-story booklets or comics and were developed to reinforce major messages of the festival. They were distributed during and after the festival. Printed material was also used in local primary schools as supplementary reading material (Kidd and Byram, 1977:25).

The festival was usually planned during two workshops, one in May and the other in June.

- The first workshop involves the community, identifying festival issues and electing a community committee to plan the next festival (Kidd and Byram, 1977:23). More than a hundred community leaders and organisations are invited, including traditional leaders, local politicians, village development committee members, fieldworkers, teachers, and church and women's group leaders. They work in small groups to list problems concerning village development, agricultural production and other forms of employment, family relationships, values, conflicts and consumer issues. The groups exchange their reports and produce a detailed socio-economic report of the area (Kidd and Byram, 1977:23). At the end of the community workshop, every group decides on one issue about which they perform a ten-minute improvisation.

- An actors' workshop is held in June, attended by community members and two or three fieldworkers from each of the extension agencies in the area. After a detailed analysis of the themes/problems chosen for the festival by the community workshop, actors brainstorm those factors that prevent change and those that promote change. The community's existing knowledge, attitudes and practices are described in a second exercise which forms the basis from which the desired changes are identified. Through this analysis, the actors work out a clear set of objectives and problems to be presented as a preliminary step to 'scripting' the drama, puppet play, dance and songs (Kidd and Byram, 1977:24).

### 2.13.4.2    Conclusion

From the above, it is fairly clear that the Laedza Batanani project used some of Boal's techniques. The community workshop and the festival can be seen as a form of forum theatre, with the difference that follow-up discussions were undertaken in the different villages and no immediate intervention was made by the spectators. The success of the festivals is reflected in the attendance figures. Large numbers of people, ranging from 100-150 adults during the day, to 200-400 adults during the evenings indicate the success of these festivals. But the significance of the festival can be measured to some extent by its effect on the community. More severe treatment of cattle thieves and a decline in cattle theft were reported and attendance at village

development meetings improved. Since the 1976 festival, there has been a significant increase in people reporting cases of sexually transmitted diseases in both the villages where performances were held and in some nearby villages. By contrast, the reporting of such diseases had decreased in the remainder of the region (Kidd and Byram, 1977:26,27). Local people involved in the festivals gave recognition to Laedza Batanani, stating that its value as a stimulus for discussion was praiseworthy. It also offered them a chance of discussing issues which otherwise could not be discussed (Kidd and Byram, 1977:26,27).

Kidd and Byram (1977:29) finally comment that the Laedza Batanani project demonstrated that popular theatre can be an important development tool in rural areas where the lack of mass media and low levels of literacy require face-to-face extension work. This project also incorporates the important idea of networking on a national level. National festivals are effective means of stimulating thinking, developing linkages and networks, while maintaining decentralised and grassroots perspectives.

### 2.13.5    Marotholi Travelling Theatre Project: Lesotho

Mda (1993:53-63) writes about the problems of underdevelopment in Lesotho, a small mountainous country. There seems to be a failure of communication systems, poor access and exposure to mass media sources, and 'top-down' planning and development programmes implemented by the government. According to Mda (1993:63), the *kgotla* was used by pre-colonial, traditional societies in Lesotho as a court of law, as well as a gathering place to discuss the affairs of the village. There was also the *pitso*, which was a gathering of the village members during which the leaders addressed the people. This gathering was not a 'top-down' communication system, as the leaders also tried to attain the views of the people in order to make decisions. Mda (1993:64) states that, in pre-colonial Lesotho, the *pitso* was a forum for the discussion of issues in a two-way communication process where everyone participated. The current situation noted by Mda is that the *pitso* is used as a top-down, one-way process. According to Mda, this negative change happened as a result of colonialism, since colonial administrators only provided directives that had to be followed without argument. Today's political leaders

have inherited this autocratic approach and they utilise the *pitso* as the colonialists did in the past.


### 2.13.5.1 Traditional and indigenous communication modes

The Marotholi Travelling Theatre Project started off as a theatre-for-development project in 1982 and functions within the communication environment outlined above. The project had as its aim the involvement of indigenous and traditional modes of communication through the use of theatre as a medium for development communication (Mda, 1993:65). It was initiated by a joint working party consisting of the English Department and the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies of the National University of Lesotho. Their goal was to initiate and support development projects/programmes in the rural areas, especially the Roma Valley near the University.


### 2.13.5.2 Creating employment

In 1984, the project received funding from the Ford Foundation which opened up new possibilities. Between 1982 and 1985, the project produced a number of plays dealing with themes like reforestation, migrant labour, co-operative societies, and the rehabilitation of prisoners. These plays were performed in specific target areas, and some of them were broadcast over Radio Lesotho to reach a wider audience (Mda, 1993:65). The name Marotholi Travelling Theatre (from the word *marotholi-a-pula* which means 'raindrops') was adopted in 1986. It became an established theatre company, but was still based at the University. In 1988, Marotholi became autonomous from the University's theatre-for-development project. Marotholi Travelling Theatre was registered as a non-profit society, based outside the University and comprising students, teachers in rural schools, civil servants, adult educators who worked for agencies other than the University, and community-based groups such as village health workers and women's organisations (Mda, 1993:65).

### 2.13.5.3    Participation

Until 1986, the Marotholi group used the *agitprop* method of theatre. These productions were part of a five-step process: information gathering, information analysis, story improvisation, rehearsal and community performances (Mda, 1993:66). In 1986, the Marotholi group changed from *agitprop* to participatory theatre. The villagers were now the actors. Its work changed to theatre produced by and for the people with the help of a facilitator. Theatre-for-conscientisation, which was also used from 1986, was regarded a *"higher stage of participatory theatre"* (Mda, 1993:66). The main difference between participatory theatre and theatre-for-conscientisation is that, in theatre-for-conscientisation, the spectacle is produced by and for the people without spectators, since those who may initially be spectators may later become actors. Improvisation happens throughout the production, and the direction of the play during a performance is never pre-planned. Catalysts are also used because the performers must acquire the essential skills to mount an effective production (Mda, 1993:66). Mda continues to explain that these methods are similar to the techniques of Boal, namely Forum theatre and simultaneous dramaturgy. He also explains that Marotholi sometimes modified Boal's methods, because it became increasingly important to be able to perform selected themes as indicated by sponsors. In such cases, the scene does not begin with a short scene suggested by a local person. The members of the company themselves improvise and rehearse the scene. The audience is invited to participate right from the start and the spectators are free to comment or come onto the stage to act. Throughout the play, there is discussion on the issues raised in the play. Post-performance discussion, as in the case of *agitprop,* thus becomes unnecessary (Mda, 1993:67).

Marotholi has been travelling throughout Lesotho, performing in villages that are sometimes inaccessible by road and neglected by development agencies. Its plays deal with issues such as community self-reliance, trade unionism among migrant labour, primary health care, rural sanitation and themes required by sponsors (Mda, 1993:670).

## 2.13.5.4    Conclusion

The Marotholi Travelling Theatre Project is a fine example of how people create employment while doing valuable community education and development work. The project has used different methods of theatre-for-development, including educational theatre, *agitprop*, etc., in accordance to the needs and the situation of the communities in which they work. Although the sponsors seem to have a great influence on the work (theme) that is performed, funding organisations can help to alleviate unemployment by creating work for cultural workers while conscientising and educating communities in their own language and in an accessible format. This project has been included in the study to show how sponsors and small business can be involved in theatre-for-development to the benefit of all the parties involved.

## 2.13.6    Workers' plays: South Africa

There have been very few theatre-for-development projects in South Africa so far. This is of concern, as South Africa has experienced the empowering nature of propaganda theatre during the liberation struggle. However, another form of theatre-for-development was successfully used by facilitators working with labour unions.

Workers' plays became popular both with workers and more sophisticated audiences. They became valid indicators of the lives of workers. Sole (1984:69) describes the issues of workers' theatre as those crucial to the experiences and struggles of the black working class. *"Strikes, scabbing, accidents in the workplace, health hazards, hostel conditions, boss-worker relationships, the situation of foremen, overtime, the desirability of factory as against other types of work (such as domestic service), liaison committees, the need for unions, and the difficulties workers have in understanding the bosses' English or Afrikaans are all items which have emerged in these plays"* (Sole, 1984:69).

### 2.13.6.1    Workshop improvisation

One of the most important aspects of workers' theatre is that it is improvised theatre created during workshop sessions. Fleischman (1990:110) argues that workshop theatre is a form of theatre based in the principles of democracy. It is a form available to all people, irrespective of educational or literacy levels, and which includes all people irrespective of race.

Fleischman (1990:89) notes the following characteristics of plays that are workshopped:

- *"It is made by a group of people together as opposed to being written by a single playwright in isolation.*

- *It is made for performance and has more to do with life than with literature. A workshop play cannot be easily published as the text is not easily divorced from the performance. Any published version of a workshop play is only a crystallisation of a process at one particular stage of that process.*

- *It has a structural form which is unique and draws on traditional oral form.*

- *It has a particular performance style, generic to the South African townships, which is non-naturalistic, physical, musical and larger than life.*

- *It combines various performance forms such as music, narrative and dance within the context of a single performance.*

- *It has more to do with the collective subject than with the individual subject of Western drama.*

- *It is an essentially urban form of cultural expression rooted in the urban experience of South Africa, and is overtly political in nature.*

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- *It displays an ironic comic version which is both regenerative in the face of the essential tragedy of the South African situation, and transformative in its ability to estrange power structures through grotesque parody."*

Workshopped theatre includes workers' theatre as a form which has made theatre in South Africa truly **of** the people. Workers' theatre operates within the social formation in many ways. Some of these are:

- *"The popularising of the tradition on which the new structure of feeling is based.*

- *The use of workshop theatre to educate and mobilise the people.*

- *Workshop theatre as popular memory, documenting contemporary history"* (Fleischman, 1990:110).

## 2.13.6.2     *Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebenzi*

One such a workers' play which received much attention was *Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebenzi*. According to Tomaselli (1981:67), *Ilanga* can be defined as committed workers' theatre. The play arose out of the frustrations of a trade union lawyer, Halton Cheadle. He devised a role-playing exercise to facilitate successful communication with 55 black iron foundry workers who had been arrested and assaulted by the police. They were allegedly striking illegally. Tomaselli (1981:68) points out that the events leading to the meeting or strike were performed in court for the magistrate.

Orkin (1991:192) describes how this project started: *"Two members of Junction Avenue, Ari Sitas, who was the son of Greek immigrants and Astrid von Kotze, the daughter of German immigrants, moved to Durban where their experience in the production of Ilanga led to a decision by Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) to workshop what eventually became known as The Dunlop play. The Committee of shop stewards decided to go ahead with the play in order to unite the workers and tell people how things at Dunlop go. They wanted to tell what management is doing to them. They created a play about a worker's life from the moment of his employment at the Dunlop*

*factory to the party twenty-five years later held to honour him. The play explored important moments in the labour movement and the political issues of the time. It premiered in Durban at the Annual General Meeting of MAWU. The play was directly concerned to link with its audience and the audience was encouraged to interrupt and discuss issues which affected them and the performers, as they saw fit. The fact that the performers worked often in their own African languages made their work immediately accessible to their worker audiences and also protected the play. It was not easily accessible to government agents who spoke only English and Afrikaans."*

The workers and activists of *Ilanga* were the real playmakers. Sitas remembers those workers and activists who created *Ilanga*: *"They were non-literate, rather oral – a group of workers who learnt by rote and ritual rather than scripts"* (Von Kotze, 1988:20). Von Kotze describes the final cast of thirteen as ranging in age from about 20 to 55. They were all illiterate, and not well versed in English.

Gordimer (1990:39) writes that the worker/playmakers are in immediate and total interaction with the roles they play in real life, because there is a unity of experience in the actuality of dramatised events. The plays are 'set' on the factory floor, and the plots are collective autobiography. Even though this seems to be a smooth sailing venture for the workers, they did encounter problems.

Von Kotze (1984:94) writes that the problems with making the play were many. It ranged from financial (since workers had been dismissed, they had no income and often could not afford the busfare to come to workshops), to political (due to the illegal strike, workers were endorsed out of the Johannesburg area and sent to their 'homelands'). Other problems were communication because most participants were basically illiterate and this made the use of written 'scripts' impossible. In addition, a range of languages were spoken by the various participants, and the workshop co-ordinator could only speak English.

Fleischman (1990:111) writes that, through their participation in the workshop process, the workers developed a sense of pride and dignity based on the understanding that their story was important and that they were able to tell it effectively. It increased their self-confidence which helped in later worker-

management negotiations. It established a sense of solidarity and a new sense of identity. It also established a sense of unity between the players, and supported their call for the unity of workers on a broader level. It provided a space where suppressed desires, such as the desire to hit a foreman or manager, could be played out vicariously. It created an understanding of their history as an exploited class and their resistance to exploitation.

Another result was that it made people accountable. They had to take responsibility for their own actions and presentations. Von Kotze (1988:93) writes: *"Maybe that's why the actors worked so hard – they knew that they were accountable to the community. All cultural groups should be accountable somewhere."* Another result of performing *Ilanga* was that it involved and created audience participation, which led to worker participation and a sense of unity among the workers.

Von Kotze (1984:94) also notes that active audience participation was inculcated into the play. The play had different endings, depending on suggestions from the audience. Songs also played an important role in constituting the framework of the play and creating a common sense of solidarity.

Von Kotze (1988:32) writes that, at some point during the performance of *Ilanga*, the audience was invited to contribute demands and thus drawn into the dispute. The list of grievances was discussed in a scene between the manager, appointed representatives and the 'boss boy', who functioned as an interpreter.

### 2.13.6.3     Conclusion

The concept of workers' theatre is included in this study as it effectively describes the nature of the production, the context and manner of creation, as well as the results of theatre-for-development.

## 2.13.7    Chikwakwa Theatre: Zambia

The Chikwakwa Theatre refers both to a theatre building in Zambia, and teams of university staff and students who took theatre to the people. They improvised plays with local villagers and performed these plays annually before thousands of people, including school children, and the party and government hierarchy of every province (Etherton, 1973:48). *"Chikwakwa Theatre also gives its name to a function of theatre throughout the country"* (Etherton, 1973:48).

### 2.13.7.1    Rural theatre workshops

Etherton (1972:20) writes that Chikwakwa Theatre presented rural theatre workshops. These theatre workshops differ from the travelling theatre where local people and university students develop productions which are taken around the particular area. Up to 15 000 people saw the performances derived from any workshop. Many people saw their own friends acting. This kind of scheme means that students must leave their ivory tower and work with semi-literate unemployed youths, or a fifty year old government clerk. The Chikwakwa group learned local songs, dances, music, mimes, jokes, and became familiar with the relationships between local people, and they, in turn, learned the necessary organisation of spoken theatre.

### 2.13.7.2    Conclusion

According to Etherton (1982:20), these workshops aim to tell the history of the tribe, to keep the society intact and to celebrate the achievements of the group. These and other aims were also the functions of traditional performing arts in the country. South Africa is rich in various traditional art forms and this example can be used and adapted, if necessary, among traditional South African cultures to the benefit of the people.

## 2.13.8     Theatre-for-development workshop: Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the long civil war took its toll and caused much instability. As in South Africa, Zimbabwe's people's theatre formed part of its liberation struggle. Kidd (1985:181) describes the concept of people's theatre in Zimbabwe as 'participation' and 'dialogue'. Participation and dialogue are also the essence of the *pungwe*, which represented the peasant capacity for organisation. The peasants not only performed in the *pungwe*, they also organised it. It was their initiative, not something externally induced. It was a form of conscientisation, challenging the myths and racist conditioning of the colonial regime, and reinforcing people's confidence. It gave them a critical view of their society. In summary, it was a form of cultural expression and self-reliant entertainment, political education, community-building, conscientisation, and morale-building.

It was thus not surprising that, in August 1983, a three-week theatre-for-development workshop was held in the country. The aim of the workshop was to orientate development workers with regard to theatre-for-development and to consolidate some ideas about this kind of theatre. Nineteen African countries were represented by popular theatre practitioners (Kidd, 1985:179). Kidd (1985:182) described that theatre-for-development in Zimbabwe used the indigenous forms of cultural expression of the ear (e.g. *pungwe*), and utilised them for theatre-for-development activity.

### 2.13.8.1     Raising and addressing relevant issues

Kidd was part of a group which started its work in a village with an exchange of songs between the villagers and the group. Information, songs, dances and mimes learned during this session led to a natural process of role-playing in order to further explore issues. The improvised dramas prepared during this workshop included a mime on women's activities, various plays dealing with water problems, resettlement issues, teenage pregnancy and money squandering. The sketches were performed in another village to an audience of 800 villagers and, judging from the reactions of the villagers, it was a great success. According to Kidd, an important result of this workshop was that the villagers experienced a sustained and participatory learning process, rather

than watching and discussing ready-made plays produced by outsiders (Kidd, 1985:198).

### 2.13.8.2    Conclusion

The success of the workshop as a whole is evident from the theatre programme which was launched in the Murewa district where the workshop took place. This workshop was the start of a theatre-for-development training programme for development and extension workers in Zimbabwe (Kidd, 1985:204).

The South African government, as well as the regional structures would do well to introduce theatre-for-development training for all their development and extension workers. In this regard, the National Training Project and the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology sponsored a small-scale training workshop presented by Boal in 1997 at Broederstroom, with a follow-up workshop in 1998.

### 2.13.9    University Theatre Department: Malawi

Kerr (1987:125,125) writes about the theatre-for-development movement in Malawi which originated in the Liwonde district as a rural-based movement closely associated with the university. It originated during a campaign when intellectual theatre cadres co-operated with villagers and primary health educators from the Liwonde Agricultural Development Division to use theatre as a consciousness-raising tool for establishing village health committees. These performances are close to indigenous performing traditions in that they are held outdoors and in-the-round at the village *bwalo* (community space). There is a high degree of audience participation, not only in formal elements such as songs, but even in the structuring of the play; for example, audiences provide endings for unfinished texts. With such improvised, participatory dramas there is inevitably a strong link between fantasy and reality, but they also serve to 'rehearse' strategies of popular activism. This draws upon indigenous traditions of using the performing arts as a vehicle for licensed protest about specific community abuses.

### 2.13.9.1    Protest and problem-solving

One of the most exciting productions and performances was a sketch, called *Chitsime*, which dealt with the hygiene and water problem in Mwima. It questioned the responsibility for the maintenance of a communal well and dealt with the conflict between the headman and the storekeeper. The first performance took place in the *bwalo*, where continual questions addressed to the audience ensured participation. The lively participation of villagers was also not inhibited by the presence of the headman of the village. The audience articulated their resentment against the particular shopkeeper in the *bwalo*, but the real test came when the villagers decided to present the play at the trading centre. More than 200 people attended this performance, and actively debated the issues. At the end of the performance, the shopkeeper shamefacedly agreed to allow the villagers to repair the well (Kerr, 1988:176,177).

### 2.13.9.2    Conclusion

The work of Malawi's University Theatre Department is another pertinent example where theatre-for-development brought about change in a community, through the villagers' own intervention and initiative, and of how universities and training agencies and organisations can contribute to the development of an integrated model for theatre-for-development projects in South Africa.

## 2.14    CHAPTER SUMMARY

Theatre-for-development in Africa is not seen as an end product in itself. It forms part of a much larger process of education in which all people get a chance to analyse and understand their own situation. It is part of a process that involves people in their own education and development with the aim of improving their quality of life while benefiting them spiritually, economically and politically.

This chapter considered a variety of development paradigms in detail. Following from this, development was defined as a multidimensional, inclusive process

of liberating people's creative energy resulting in their empowerment so that they can find their own voices and become the masters of their own destinies. Community as a concept closely related to development practices was considered, especially within the context of *ubuntu*. Culture, and the difficulties underlying its definition, were also considered.

Theatre for educational and development purposes was defined in terms of its aims and uses, and the reasons for its use in a development context. International examples were provided, especially from developing countries, such as Nicaragua, Argentina, Kenya, and other Southern African countries.

The next chapter will focus on the different dimensions of theatre-for-development. It will include the contexts within which creation takes place, the creative processes involved, the aims and functions, the nature of the creation, and audience involvement. Issues arising from criticism and censorship will be briefly discussed, and the difficulties in finding effective criteria for the measurement of the outcomes of theatre-for-development processes will be pointed out.

# CHAPTER 3

# DIMENSIONS OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described a number of development paradigms and defined key concepts of this study, such as development, empowerment, community and culture. Theatre and theatre-for-development were defined while the aims and uses of this theatre form were discussed. The final part of the chapter described international examples of theatre-for-development projects which had an impact on the formulation of the model that will be presented in Chapter 4.

This chapter describes the current South African context within which theatre-for-development would have to operate, including the socio-political, economic and cultural problems facing the country in a post-liberation era. It focuses on the dimensions of theatre-for-development, such as the context in which theatre-for-development is created and performed, the way in which it is created and performed, its aims and functions, as well as its particular nature. The study also indicates the effects and outcomes of theatre-for-development performances, i.e. audience involvement and criticism. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of possible criteria for the measurement of the outcomes of such an intervention and the difficulties inherent in any such measurement.

## 3.2 CONTEXT IN WHICH CREATION TAKES PLACE

All creative experiences take place in a specific context. The context in itself influences the experience and the creative product. Theatre-for-development is essentially a social phenomenon, dealing with social, political, material and, in many cases, human and cultural issues. As such, it is important to see the specific South African context in which it takes place at the moment as an essential backdrop to its implementation and possible success. Social,

political, economic and cultural issues form the foundation of theatre-for-development and their detailed discussion is aimed at linking the model with the pertinent issues.

### 3.2.1      The current socio-political context

Attempts have been made to reflect the socio-political context in South Africa in the RDP, and the document revolves around problems encountered after liberation. The RDP document states that our history has been a bitter one, dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid, sexism and repressive labour policies. These resulted in poverty stricken and degraded areas which exist side by side with modern urbanised areas and a developed mining, industrial and commercial infrastructure. Income distribution is racially distorted and unequal. Gender discrimination and bias still rule, while rural people are marginalised. The country's socio-political problems can be summarised as a combination of lavish wealth and abject poverty. The RDP defined itself as an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. Its aim was to mobilise people and resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and to build a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future (ANC, 1994:4).

The Government of National Unity faced a mammoth task to establish and implement its RDP. According to the RDP, the government has also set itself the task of meeting basic needs (housing, land, water, etc.), developing human resources (education, literacy, arts and culture, etc.), democratising the state and society, and building the economy (ANC, 1994:6).

There is a great misunderstanding in defining basic needs. Van Zyl (1995:3) identified two different approaches to human needs. The first is a **positive approach** which defines human needs in terms of *"desires or wants for objects or artefacts, for goods and services."* The second approach to human needs is the **normative** or **subjective approach**, which is defined as something which is more complex, indirect and non-material, such as dignity, and other human and emotional needs.

Coetzee (1989:101-102) lists the following requirements for the fulfilment of non-material needs. It is essential to keep these in mind in the planning and

execution of any development programme, as they ensure the development of human well-being:

- opportunities for solidarity and togetherness;
- a sphere suitable for long-term friendship;
- favourable structures for the satisfaction of true (including sexual) love;
- availability of time for leisure, i.e. unplanned time;
- opportunities for experiencing the total reality;
- new challenges;
- a structure capable of accommodating new inputs, i.e. based on reflexivity;
- opportunities for creativity;
- availability of work opportunities, i.e. not only 'jobs';
- possibility of self-realisation;
- possibility of self-inspiration;
- total well-being;
- experiencing joy;
- meaningfulness of life; and
- meaningfulness of individual existence (Coetzee, 1989:101-102).

This list shows human needs underlying the quest to create meaning. According to Coetzee (1989:102), meaninglessness can only be experienced by individuals, a fact which stresses the need for a micro-foundation of development. Development has to come from the **heart** of a community, or rather development has to come from the **art** of a community.

It is interesting to note that Max-Neef distinguishes between needs and satisfiers. For example, food and shelter must not be seen as needs, but rather as satisfiers of the need for subsistence. According to him, fundamental needs are few, classifiable and finite. It is the same in all cultures and all historical periods (Max-Neef, 1989:20).

Max-Neef classifies people's fundamental needs as follows:

- subsistence;
- understanding;

- creation;

- protection;

- participation;

- identity;

- affection;

- idleness; and

- freedom.

There is no recipe for the satisfaction of needs. Satisfying needs would depend on an analysis of a particular situation (Van Zyl, 1995:5). The previous section where theatre-for-development projects were discussed, clearly showed how it could satisfy many of these needs, such as the need for understanding, creating, participating and identity.

### 3.2.1.1 A perspective on South Africa's basic needs: Urban and rural development

Trying to define the problem with regard to basic needs in South Africa is difficult if it is considered from a normative perspective. Fundamental human needs that are not adequately satisfied, lead to poverty (Van Zyl, 1995:5).

During the World Employment Conference in 1976, official support of the basic needs approach was expressed by major international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and others. However, these institutions found it difficult to articulate a basic needs strategy because the basic needs concept culminated in a complex, fully-fledged development philosophy. However, they did come up with a simple 'shopping' list which focuses on certain conditions for survival. According to the ILO, basic needs include two elements: the minimum requirements for private consumption, such as adequate food, shelter, clothing, household equipment and furniture; and, essential services, such as safe water, sanitation, public transport, health and educational facilities (Van Zyl, 1995:11).

The RDP's concept of basic needs seems to concur with the finding of these institutions. Statistics show that in "... *South Africa the poorest 30% of the population receive 3.5% of the total Household income. The wealthiest over 35% ...*" (Roos, 1994:4). The World Bank noted in a report entitled *Reducing Poverty in South Africa* that poverty afflicted less than 2 per cent of whites, but more than 50 per cent of Africans. In rural areas, including the former homelands, two-thirds of all Africans are poor (SAIRR, 1995:285).

Unemployment in South Africa seems to be one of the major factors creating poverties of subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation and identity. According to Van Zyl (1995:11), institutions such as the World Bank, the ILO and UNEP "*... place a high priority on employment generation and the satisfaction of basic human needs.*"

Max-Neef (1989:22) notes that a person going through extended unemployment goes through at least four emotional phases: shock, optimism, pessimism, and fatalism. The last phase is the transition from frustration to stagnation, and from there to a final state of apathy, where the person reaches his/her lowest level of self-esteem. Extended unemployment will totally upset a person's fundamental needs system. "*Due to subsistence problems, the person will feel increasingly unprotected, crises in the family and guilt feelings may destroy affections, lack of participation will give way to feelings of isolation and marginalization, and declining self-esteem may very well generate an identity crisis*" (Max-Neef, 1989:22).

The RDP indicated a number of methods to address unemployment.

**Job creation** must cater particularly for women and for the provision of education and training and the involvement of communities in the process (ANC, 1994:18-19).

Max-Neef (1989:22) contends that the mere creation of jobs by a government would not address the problem of unemployment holistically because unemployment is caused by economic processes. Once it has reached critical proportions, both in quantity and duration, there is no economic treatment capable of solving the problem. It then becomes an issue of

transdisciplinary proportions that still remains to be understood and constructed.

Another method of meeting basic needs includes a land reform programme which has two aspects, namely the **redistribution** of residential and productive land to those who need it but cannot afford it, and **restitution** for those who lost land because of apartheid laws (ANC, 1994:20). It also includes the **provision of adequate housing** and **basic services** in urban townships and rural settlements (ANC, 1994:22).

However, all housing projects would have to be negotiated according to the basic principles of development. Communities should be involved at all levels of decision-making and in the implementation of their projects. Communities should benefit from matters such as employment, training and the awarding of contracts (ANC, 1994:28).

Other basic needs include:

- water and sanitation;
- energy and electrification;
- telecommunications;
- transport;
- environment;
- nutrition;
- health care; and
- social security and social welfare.

Addressing basic needs and creating jobs seem to be a way of satisfying some of the expressed needs in communities. Van Zyl (1995:17,18) criticises the RDP's definition of basic needs, stating that it goes well beyond the conventional five core areas of basic needs, and that the *"needs follow the traditional growth-centered approach of expressing these directly as desires or wants for particular economic goods and services."* This could severely hamper the growth of people, because *"the opportunity to release considerable social energy through the use of multiple-impact processes or synergic satisfiers may well be lost"* (Van Zyl, 1995:18). However, the fact

remains that new ways must be found to create work. Creating jobs could cost excessive amounts of money. Productive activities, on the other hand, add value and create wealth.

Creating jobs could be a community's response to satisfy its own needs. The fact remains that, according to Roos (1994:4), 60 per cent of the population are without basic necessities, such as shelter, food and clothing. Basic necessities could be turned into the engine that drives the creation of work. But it requires a change in perspective: these needs must be seen as **opportunities** instead of a **cost** to the country.

Providing people with the basic necessities, however, is not an end in itself. Max-Neef (1989:27) states that, while a satisfier is in an ultimate sense the way in which a need is expressed, goods are in a strict sense the means by which individuals will empower the satisfiers to meet their needs. However, in today's society the form of production and consumption of goods make goods an end in themselves and the alleged satisfaction of a need impairs its capacity to create potential. This creates the conditions for entrenchment and alienation, lacking any sense at all. Life is placed at the service of artefacts, rather than artefacts at the service of life. Quality of life is overshadowed by the obsession to increase productivity. Public works programmes, like massive housing schemes, without a long-term investment in skills training and the personal development of the worker, could easily run out of fuel. As Max-Neef (1989:23) states, "... *the purpose of the economy is to serve the people, and not the people to serve the economy ...*"

The fact remains that the definition of poverty has always been limiting and restrictive. Poverty is mostly seen as strictly economic when, in fact, any fundamental human need that is not adequately satisfied, reveals a human poverty (Max-Neef, 1989:21). Such poverties could be of subsistence, protection, affection, participation, identity and understanding.

Rahman (1993:74) notes an interesting fact about the **consciousness of the oppressed,** when he transcribes the following dialogue with a poor peasant in India:

- *"Do you know who Lakshmi is and who Swaraswati is?*

Adivasi: *Yes.*

- *Who is Lakshmi?*

Adivasi: *Rice; clothes; hut.*

- *And Swaraswati?*

Adivasi: *Sawkar's knowledge.*

- *If you could have only one of them, what is your preference?*

Adivasi: *Swaraswati.*

- *Why?*

Adivasi: *If everyone has knowledge, then no one can cheat others. Then only can we have true equality."*

This statement underpins one of the most important aspects of development, which is that any initiative to restore material power or meet basic needs cannot successfully be dealt with unless the people it is supposed to help, are empowered, trained or developed at the same time. Any programme which focuses on delivering basic services without putting the people at the centre of development, runs the risk of becoming institutionalised charity: the focus is on handouts rather than on empowerment and self-reliance (Van Zyl, 1995:12). The principles contained in the RDP can only be successfully applied if all the different aspects, including education and training, arts and culture, or the liberation/development of the human being, are part of the development plan.

### 3.2.1.2  A perspective on current problems in training and education: Human resource development

The World Bank declared in 1993 that all development policies in Africa need to be revised. The emphasis of the Bank on basic education, the improvement of efficiency and the need for educational outputs to be more in line with the needs of the economy, tended to prioritise economic considerations. The World Bank also emphasises the promotion of human resource development by providing social and economic services in such a way that they are increasingly accessible to the poor. An example is regional

or national adult literacy programmes that provide vocational and life skills training that continue over a long period of time (Roos, 1994:5).

In-house training and education should not only put education more in line with economic priorities, but should rather endeavour to address the development of the human being as a whole. Max-Neef (1989:53) feels that such development initiatives should take place in local spaces, which are more human in scale and where it is easier to generate initiatives in self-reliance. These places could be potential alternatives to pyramidal structures of power.

The RDP expresses the problems of education and training as characterised by three key features, namely that it is fragmented along racial and ethnic lines, that there is a lack of or unequal access to education and training at all levels, and that there is a lack of democratic control within the education and training system (ANC, 1994:58).

Documents like the *NICE Discussion Document* (June 1994) and the *NEPI Report: Human resources development* (1992) identify the following problem areas related to training:

- limited financial resources;

- limited numbers of vocational education and training trainers and teachers, both in quantitative and qualitative terms;

- low levels of educational attainment among the general population, which place severe constraints on trainability;

- the poverty of vocational education at school and college level;

- the absence of job opportunities for school leavers, whether with a matric or not;

- the current school system that develops 'employees' and not employers, thus a general lack of empowerment;

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- very little communal learning and need initiatives; and

- no accessibility to places of training, and/or centralised training institutions.

Furthermore, Roos (1994:6,7) notes that training by vocational training institutions has a bad reputation in the deprived communities. Training is usually irrelevant, inappropriate, and non-participatory, does not acknowledge the existing knowledge of learners, nor does it ensure employment.

A further problem in South Africa is the high rate of illiteracy. According to the Development Bank of South Africa, the national literacy level in 1994 was 61,4 per cent. According to its statistics, people above the age of thirteen years who have a minimum education level of Standard 5 are defined as literate (SAIRR, 1995:224). About 11,3 million people in South Africa had no education (SAIRR, 1995:218). This implies that most printed initiatives which aim to provide information, educate and reach out to people cannot be successfully used in South Africa. This situation is aggravated by the fact that only 100 000 (i.e. 1 per cent of the illiterate population) was reached by literacy programmes in South Africa (Roos, 1994:4).

Uganda was facing an even bigger problem with illiteracy in 1991. During an interview with Rose Mbowa, head of the Department of Music, Dance and Drama at Makerere University, she elaborates on this fact: *"At the beginning of 1991, the President gave the rate as 50% of the people – 55% women, and 45% men. This section of society cannot be reached through the printed media. I've talked about this [before], mentioning how mime and dance drama can cut across the language problems in our multilingual society"* (Sicherman, 1994:65). This example of the effectiveness of educational theatre or rather theatre-for-development should indeed be recognised by authorities. The principles according to which the RDP (ANC, 1994:60) proposed to address the educational problems, are to:

- develop an integrated system of education and training that provides equal opportunities to all;

- direct education to the full development of the individual and community; and

- strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A new strategy must therefore be based on the principles of democracy, non-racism, non-sexism, equity and redress. Education must promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all South Africans and advance the principles contained in the Bill of Rights (ANC, 1994:60).

Should the government be able to include these principles in all education, training, and development initiatives, it would create significant cultural changes in South African society. A culture of learning, responsibility, accountability, transparency, tolerance, understanding and democracy would need to be fostered.

Theatre-for-development can play a functional role in the process of educating the community and establishing values such as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, understanding, tolerance and friendship, as well as the principles of democracy, non-racism, non-sexism, equity and redress.

Eyoh (1986:19) feels that theatre has the power to bring people together and create contexts for collective reflection and action. It facilitates participation and the expression of popular concerns and analysis, overcomes people's fears and rationalisations and builds confidence and identity. Theatre stimulates discussions and a critical understanding of problems, and it contradicts and structures underlying everyday realities. It clarifies the possibilities and strategies for action and stirs people's emotions. Theatre mobilises people for action.

It is these very aspects of theatre that could assist the current government in establishing a democratic society and state.

## 3.2.1.3    *"The  people  shall  govern":*  Democratisation  and empowerment

According to the RDP (ANC, 1994:119), the apartheid regime has been unrepresentative, undemocratic and highly oppressive. In the past, the state was secretive and militarised and less and less accountable to the constituency it claimed to represent. Every aspect of South African life is deeply marked by minority domination and privilege. The solution is seen in an integrated programme which could unleash all the resources in the country and fundamentally change the way in which policies and programmes are made and implemented (ANC, 1994:7). Above all, the ideal is expressed, and even legislated in some cases, that people must participate in decision-making. According to Van Zyl (1995:16), this certainly reflects a non-authoritarian and non-prescriptive approach to development. However, the real test lies in its practical implementation.

Max-Neef (1989:32) states that the transformation of dependence into autonomy requires deep structural changes in the relationship between the state and civil society. These changes must create and reinforce self-reliance and solve the conflicts and contradictions that may arise.

These ideals could prove to be difficult in the implementation phase. A culture of silence and non-participation has entrenched itself in South African society. This was evident from the manner in which the public participated during the registration period of the 1995 local government elections. Friedman (1995:12) states in the *Business Day* of 2 October 1995 that *"citizens are not nearly as enthusiastic about these elections as they were about the national one."* It would take serious effort to prevent a culture of silence from destroying these ideals.

Theatre can be effectively used in a process to demystify government structures and increase public participation in decision-making. Paulo Freire, an adult education theorist using theatre for education and development purposes, feels that education, and thus also development, should be problem-solving processes which demystify the structures that govern people's lives and the world around them. *"In this process listening is just as important as communicating. It is possible to argue some generalisations*

*which pinpoint the differences between traditional approaches to education and the Freirean approach:*

a) *Whereas the traditional approach shows it as it is accepted, the new approach liberates.*

b) *Whereas the traditional approach shows the world as it is accepted, the new approach shows the world as it can be changed.*

c) *The traditional approach claimed to teach knowledge about the world. The new approach claims to teach the active form of that concept, in leading the participants in the process to know that world"* (Steadman, 1992:41).

It is evident that, using theatre for development and educational purposes, as a basis of initiating development, could ensure democratic and liberating processes.


### 3.2.1.4    The 'road show' to reconstruction and development

Legacies of apartheid can only be addressed through the holistic development of the human being as a social, cultural, economic, spiritual, intellectual and physical creation.

The realities of the South African context compel us to approach civil society holistically. Even though problems are legion, the ultimate challenge is to create a conscientisation process through which people will come to acknowledge all human beings as being equal and having fundamental human rights.

The mistakes that were made and the successes that were achieved in other sub-Saharan countries, as well as in some Asian and South American countries, should be taken into account. Research on sub-Saharan Africa has indicated that audiences use **interpersonal** and **traditional** media sources more often than they use the modern mass media (Pratt and Mannheim, 1988:79). Many scholars and practitioners are looking for a new paradigm which incorporates information about successes and mistakes made in

development projects throughout the world. According to Wang and Dissanayake (1982:7), a new paradigm would emphasise the quality of life, integration of traditional and modern systems of communication, labour-intensive and appropriate technology, self-reliance, user-oriented strategies and popular participation in development planning and implementation.

According to Roos (1994:7), the stronger the links between the government programme and the community, the more effective and sustainable will be the output. Experience has shown a correlation between high participation and an integrated approach that is attuned to community priorities and not related to one issue. This implies that any state-planned development initiative must encourage community participation in accordance to the needs and prior knowledge of the community.

Theatre-for-development seems to be a method of ensuring community participation. Boal (1979:156) said, *"[i]f we can hear and listen, drama in performance is the only form of the written word which is accessible to us all on a communal level. Furthermore, theatre with its inherently communal nature speaks strongly to the existing sense of community which is valued throughout Africa."*

Theatre is a personal, integrated and traditional media source with an inherently communal nature that can improve the quality of life and develop self-reliance and popular participation in development planning and implementation processes. According to Mda (1993:2), theatre has been identified as a medium which could lead towards the realisation of the objectives mentioned above. It has the potential to be a democratic medium, in which the audience may play an active role in programming, and in producing and distributing messages. It is not centralised and is capable of integrating indigenous and popular systems of communication, since all it needs, are human resources. Theatre is capable of being more effective since it uses interpersonal channels that have been found to have more impact than the mediated channels of the electronic and print media. These facts emphasise the strengths of theatre as an integrated, interpersonal, sustainable, collective and people-driven process, to be used for development in South Africa.

Although the government and ruling class should not dictate what is being created in the country, they must be involved in attempts to develop and reconstruct arts and culture and society in general. Steadman (1980:42) states that the single most important lesson to be learned by those who wish to separate art and politics is that in Africa, political nationalism is congruent with cultural nationalism. The theatre should not be separated from the social and political soil by which it is fertilised.

Barber (1987a:33 – 34) states that governments can influence popular arts greatly. According to her, the Tanzanian government is closely involved in sponsoring and developing popular art, while in Nigeria, this task is closely related to the informal sector. She explains that another crucial factor is the political character of the post-colonial regime, as this establishes the degree to which it represses, sponsors or intervenes in the production of popular arts. The model that is proposed, involves both the government in terms of creating and securing a structure, and employing and supporting fieldworkers, and the informal sector in sponsoring and developing the popular art productions and cultural centres, in general. However, the decision remains that of the government and unfortunately governments throughout the world in the past have mostly involved themselves by sponsoring and developing élite or traditional art forms, whereas popular arts are not sponsored. They are usually disregarded by the formal educators and cultural workers and bodies (Barber, 1987a:11). Luckily, popular arts have the tendency to flourish without encouragement or recognition from official cultural bodies and sometimes even in defiance of them (Barber, 1987a:1).

Van Graan (1991:27) states that theatre in the new dispensation could never be removed from its socio-political context or become apolitical. According to him, it is true that the legislative demise of apartheid has diminished the stark, simplistic, visible notions of conventional, bourgeois art. But it is not true that art has been removed from politics, or vice versa. It is also not true that the arts and theatre are no longer sites of ideological, intellectual and moral struggle. All that has happened, is that this struggle has moved to a more complex, subtle, sophisticated and polite level.

According to Coplan (1985:3-4), the government's positive involvement in popular arts and especially in theatre-for-development could be a way of

thanking cultural workers that have indeed committed themselves during the apartheid era to overcome the effects of an unjust social system. Government involvement could also be a way of searching for autonomy in an environment in which African people have little control over anything except a culturally guided sense of collective humanity and individual self. Performance expression does not derive solely from the minds of creative individuals, but emerges as an aspect of social action and resonates with emotion and meaning among members of communities.

## 3.2.2    Informal economic context

South Africa's economy finds itself in the middle of a great crisis. Apartheid laws had a great influence on the economy, which was built on systematically enforced racial division. Rural areas were divided into underdeveloped Bantustans and well-developed, white-owned commercial farming areas. Towns and cities were divided into townships without basic infrastructure and well-resourced suburbs. Segregation in education, health, welfare, transport and employment left deep scars of inequality and economic inefficiency (ANC, 1994:5).

During the past decade, growth stagnated, investments dropped and average real incomes declined. The economy remains dependent upon mineral exports, and the manufacturing sector cannot create jobs, meet the basic needs of the majority or compete on world markets. The decline in investment and capital flight have hampered job creation and overall employment levels (ANC, 1994:76). The agricultural sector and the rural economy are also in crisis (ANC, 1994:77). The RDP indicates the redistribution of wealth as one of its major methods of addressing these problems.

The RDP furthermore indicates that the government will address economic problems by a dramatic land reform programme to transfer land from the inefficient debt-ridden, ecologically damaging and white dominated large farm sector to all those who wish to produce incomes through farming in a more sustainable agricultural system (ANC, 1994:84). An integrated, efficient and equitable urban economy will be created as urban areas account for over 80

per cent of the country's GNP, and accommodate approximately 60 per cent of South Africa's population (ANC, 1994:86). A more equitable system for trade, industry and commerce is envisaged (ANC, 1994:86-87).

Many countries in Africa find themselves in a similar economic position. The deplorable economic situation does not improve the status of arts and culture in the country. Like our African counterparts, cultural workers in South Africa have found it increasingly difficult to find work or sponsorships from the government or business (formal business sector), and have been placed in a position where they have to rely on their own creativity in the informal business sector. The many independent theatre companies at art festivals such as the Grahamstown festival are examples of this fact. It is still very difficult to be economically independent as an artist in South Africa today.

In 1979, Etherton already noted that African drama or the live theatre industry in Africa has no economic independence. It does not have the popularity of the film industry. Theatre patronage is generally not from its consumers, the audience, but from the universities, the broadcasting corporations, and the government directly. All these agencies are concerned to promote national unity and cultural identity. Their sponsorship of culture is keyed into the general rhetoric of cultural nationalism. Money is either made available for traditional performances, or for the development of academic drama, or in a research institute in a faculty of education (Etherton, 1979:73).

Etherton describes the negative economic influences and control on theatre practices in Africa during 1979. According to him, live theatre is not commercially viable in a market economy. It is so dependent on government subsidies that it becomes vulnerable, a fact that jeopardises its growth (Etherton, 1979:79).

Theatre is still not commercially viable in the South Africa of today. It is difficult for many theatre practitioners to become commercially independent, and funding is scarce. The numerous annual festivals provide an upsurge in theatre activities. Sponsorships are only forthcoming because of the advertising value of having a company or organisation's name linked to such a festival. Festivals remain dependent upon audiences for their survival. A number of artists, mainly in the music and cabaret sphere have fared better,

probably as a result of their movement towards satisfying the needs of the general public.

Other forms of theatre are not faring well. For example, workers' theatre would definitely not be funded by the business involved, as the context of the play usually deals with workers' rights. This brings about other problems. For most 'township' theatre concerns to become financially viable, they have to move out of their contexts. Sole (1987:79) feels that theatre taken out of its context breaks the spontaneous relationship with its intended audience. The necessity to have works published or performed in more commercially viable forms in order to survive, is an ongoing problem for all artists. It seems that even theatre productions that have become commercially viable, have the possibility of losing their true intent, purpose and contextuality. *Sarafina 2* is the worst example of theatre losing its true intent and purpose, as well as its link with its context and audience.

Van Graan (1991:28) pointed out that funding of the arts is considered as the last or most expendable priority in South Africa. He predicted that this will be even more true as the country attempts to spend limited resources on redressing the social inequalities of the past. State subsidies for the arts will decrease, international funding is already drying up and big business will spend money on social projects that are in their interest and bring political kudos, with the arts having minimal priority. *"The possibilities then, are that with increasing scarcity of resources, theatre practitioners will be required – even more so than before – to not rock the boat or bite the hand that feeds them. In order to just survive financially, theatre workers will experience pressure to conform to the interests of those who wield economic power."*

This is indeed unfortunate as it will hamper real democracy, liberation and empowerment. Etherton (1979:79) describes the influence of funding on the *Wasan Manoma* project ('plays for farmers') and states that funding for this kind of project may be indirectly from governments, but that it may also come from international agencies. Whatever the source, community development drama fails if it merely becomes part of the social rhetoric of governments. Etherton stresses an important pitfall for all theatre-for-development projects: the funding source usually ends up being the decision-maker of the vision,

aims and goals of the project not to suit the needs of the community it represents, but to suit the funder.

Van Graan (1991:28) agrees that funding is tied up with the notion of 'development' which has come to mean upgrading the physical conditions in which people live and providing them with education and training. He feels that current definitions deny the holistic needs of human beings, i.e. that people have emotional, psychological and spiritual, as well as physical needs. He predicts that, for this reason, the arts will be regarded as irrelevant in education and social development projects and will thus not be funded extensively (1991:28).

It would indeed be a great loss to all development processes in this country if culture and the arts are not incorporated. It is not only an essential part of our cultural history and liberation, but also one of the most financially viable methods of development. Tomaselli (1980:51) noticed in 1980 that theatre – in this case Black committed theatre – is one of the most effective ways of communicating messages that are financially viable. He notices that theatre at grassroots level is technology free, has no need of a stage and is independent of white or petit bourgeois capital. It is cheaper than film or video and less susceptible to the ravages of censorship or restrictive laws.

Unfortunately, theatre has become a commercialised enterprise. Etherton (1982:209) points out that the African artist traditionally lives not just by his talent but even more by involving himself in the ordinary work of gardening, fishing, etc. If his talent brings him money, it does so by the way and not of necessity. This means that 'commercialism', as it is known in artistic circles of the West, is foreign to Africa. The fact that theatre must be commercially viable creates a serious problem for the survival of theatre in South Africa. Some South African artists feel that all theatre performances should lead to a life of glamour and stardom and easy money, like their Hollywood counterparts. Again, *Sarafina 2* is a perfect example of a situation where artists tried to make money from a venture that was initially intended to benefit the community. It is difficult to make people realise that the initial aim of theatre is to be functional, educational, developmental and in service of the community. However, one does get artists who are involved in theatre productions with the aim of serving their community. These are the people

that find it difficult to operate within the present situation and with the lack of facilities.

Qoopane (1992:23) writes about popular theatre productions in Tanzania and states that adult groups face several problems because actors are employed during the day, and have to concentrate on their theatre activities after work. There are no rehearsal spaces, groups have to rent public places, there are no auditoriums and plays are often performed in bars. This lack of facilities and funds also applies in South Africa at the moment. It is, however, the very fact that theatre-for-development can take place without any formal structures, theatres, rehearsal rooms, etc., that makes it the ideal method for facilitating development. It is financially more viable than any other technological method, because it runs mostly on manpower and creative energy. But there is always the risk that theatre productions may never reach the final production stages as a result of many difficulties. Finding and developing suitable facilities are major concerns for any cultural activity.

Orkin (1991:212) agrees with this perspective when he writes about South African theatre of the 'oppressed classes'. According to him, the difficulty of funding actors is coupled with the practical difficulties in travelling to rehearsals and performances. Women are not always mobile and tend to be under-utilised. The absorption of African theatre practitioners into the 'system' (television) contributes further to the drastic reduction of theatre activity in the townships. In the past, sponsorship for African actors and productions remained non-existent, especially compared with the subsidies which the state doled out to the performing arts councils. Larlham (1985:91) writes that funding of township theatre groups is limited to the personal resources of its members. The lack of funds and difficult working conditions inevitably influence the design of settings, costumes, properties and lighting. According to him, 'theatre of the oppressed' or 'township theatre' operates within the informal financial sector. Orkin (1991:212) quotes playwright Maishe Maponya on how he as a playwright has to operate within the informal economic sector, because *"most money that is donated comes from white capitalist concerns with their own interests. For obvious reasons the black community does not have their own capital, and those black businessmen and individuals which are well-to-do just don't concern themselves with theatre."* According to Maponya, economic necessity forces him to write,

direct and often act in his own shows. He is also responsible for funding, publicity and public relations (Orkin, 1991:212).

This was not only the case in South Africa, but also across the continent. Adedeji (1974:26) describes the Yoruba Operatic Theatre Company as a totally independent travelling company, thus not receiving any subsidy from the government. The leader of the company was Hubert Ogunda who mostly travelled with his family to different communities and was totally dependent on the goodwill of the people living in these communities (villages).

Barber (1987a:30) is much more optimistic about art in the informal economic sector when she attempts to define popular arts in terms of its particular productive sphere. *"All commercial popular arts, it would seem, are produced within the African informal sector, and its characteristic procedures leave their mark on every aspect of the product."* According to Barber (1987a:30-31), initial investment in informal sector enterprises is low and training minimal. Popular artists tend to embark on their pursuit with the lowest possible outlay of money and preparation. Informal sector methods produce unregulated, unofficial art, however not of a lesser quality.

Barber (1987a:33) explains that, in West African regions, popular culture and arts are mainly aimed at commercial gain, while art in East African regions is mostly aimed at recreation and social interaction. The model proposed in this study relies on incorporating both financial and social gains for the people involved, because people will be empowered with the necessary skills to earn some money, while others would be able to enjoy the social interaction. Theatre-for-development groups would thus be mostly operating in an informal financial set-up, having to find funding or sponsorships from the local business sector or relevant organisations. The formal sector, in the form of the government, however, should assist people's initiatives by providing the specialised services and the expertise of a fieldworker, training and minimal but adequate funding.

## 3.2.3    Unofficial cultural context

If theatre-for-development is primarily based in the informal sector of the economy, it can almost be taken for granted that it will be unofficial in the cultural context.

Barber (1987a:34) endeavours to demarcate the differences between official (i.e. élite or traditional) art and unofficial (popular) art, when she explains that, in the official canons, the conventions may be inconspicuous but they are nevertheless consistent, stable and publicly recognised. Official arts are institutionalised, with the underlying principle governing their mode of expression the fact that they are publicly legitimate and affirmed. Barber (1987b:106) describes the character of popular arts as the large class of new unofficial art forms which are syncretic, concerned with social change, and associated with the masses. She defines the context in which popular artists (these are also the creators of theatre-for-development) operates, as a context where artists do not have vested interests in any official culture, nor having their area of operations defined by official culture. The popular artists exist **between** official and traditional, rather than **within** them.

In South Africa, theatre and cultural exchange were clearly divided into official and unofficial presentations and products. Although these cultural products influenced each other, apartheid laws prevented real syncretism. Steadman (1992:36,37) described the official cultural expression in South Africa during 1992 as the artificial categorisation of cultural expressions. During the apartheid regime, the cultural expression of the politically dominant group was marketed and imposed upon the general populace. The control of media and resources ensured that the dominant group's cultural identity was affirmed in hegemonic forms of cultural expression. As is normal of hegemonic culture, the dominant group continually adjusted to stimuli from both residual and emergent forms of cultural expression. It absorbs them and redefines them in the interests of the politically dominant group. Hegemonic culture in South Africa during the apartheid years underwent a gradual change of identity as the superficial features of traditional and popular cultural forms were absorbed.

Hauptfleisch (1988:46,47) agrees with Steadman when he describes theatre in South Africa during 1965. He notes that the government banned all racially mixed casts and racially mixed audiences, thus stifling the growth of a hybrid theatre in the country. So effective were those measures that, for the next seven years, even Fugard produced only 'unicultural' plays, which could be performed with whites-only casts, such as *Hello and Goodbye*, *Boesman and Lena* and *People are living there*. In the townships, Gibson Kente, Sam Mhanghwane, Boiky Mohlamme and others were honing **their** theatre, adapting urban performance forms to a new format of popular entertainment which literally created its own audience and its own infrastructures. What Hauptfleisch is describing, is theatre operating unofficially and creating an individual informal infrastructure.

Malan (1988b:34,35) describes the creation of informal, independent theatre as the *"dynamic voice of the people of South Africa (since 1960)."* According to Malan (1988b:34,35), the performing arts councils were subsidised by the state, but were not the only organisations to present theatre in South Africa since 1960. There was a dynamic network of theatre throughout the country, involving people from all walks of life, that changed the face of theatre in South Africa. With immediacy and relevancy, it became the voice of many people who were denied the right to express themselves. Theatre moved from formalised structures to halls, street and alternative venues and was presented by informal theatre groups and independent companies. This new development was a revolt against the monopoly of the regional councils and the financial powers over theatre.

Orkin (1991:212) corroborates Malan's view, when he describes these unofficial, informal performances as plays and short scenes prepared in the township that were performed in the 1980s during political rallies. They contributed to cultural spectacle and rhetoric. Theatre moved into political sites of contestation and countered the state's own dramatisation of its power by using the army and police in townships to arrest and silence them. Political meetings and trade union activity, the drama of political funerals, all these may be seen as a challenge to the state's attempt to silence theatre within township life.

It is the purpose of the following sections to indicate how the government could utilise and strengthen this informal, unofficial culture (already well-known in South Africa) to the benefit of all South Africans on a more consistent basis, while maintaining the flexibility of its inherent unofficial nature. However, the historical implications of apartheid in terms of cultural development in South Africa need to be taken into account, as these will remain part of and play a part in social life in the country for the near future. In this regard, issues such as acculturation, syncretism, ethno-nationalism, and current cultural problems will be addressed below.

## 3.2.4　Historical legacies and cultural development

Before 1994, the cultural development of South African society was manipulated by a political ideology known as apartheid, or separate development. This had serious repercussions for the people of the country and their development in general.

### 3.2.4.1　Acculturation and syncretism inhibited

African culture, traditions and rituals became influenced the moment Westerners set foot on the soil of Africa and came into contact with African 'tribes'. It is interesting to note that it was the Westerners who created the concept of 'tribalism'. This definition ultimately limited and separated people, and cultural phenomena were neatly labelled and packaged according to preconceived and stereotyped notions of the ability of specific 'tribes'.

It is accepted that tribes, both in colonial and post-colonial periods, did not exist in any observable form: *"there is no such objectively determinable groupings in which linguistic, cultural, political and economic boundaries coincide neatly. This, it has now been realised, applied even in the pre-colonial period"* (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:72). This indicates that Westerners even influenced African culture just by seeking definitions for social structures.

'Tribalism' is referred to as a phenomenon derived from colonialism and one that is part of an ideology that **divides** people into 'tribes'. To them, it refers in contemporary times to a process of mobilisation where people are combined in terms of group loyalties where competitive and rapidly changing conditions require such a grouping (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:72).

Research has found that Westerners needed a term with which to describe people whom they saw as 'primitive', 'traditional', 'savage' or 'backward'. They feel that the word 'tribal' could be used as a synonym for 'less developed', 'underdeveloped', or 'developing', but acknowledge that the term might include some additional nuances (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:70).

Afrikaner politicians during the apartheid period, used terms such as 'race', 'tribes', 'cultures' and 'population groups' in their fight against interaction, a synthesis of cultures and in the creation of social 'apartness'.

'Race', for example, is used to refer to or categorise people according to **physical** characteristics, so that the wide range of human diversity can be ordered. It is therefore essentially a social and political classification, rather than a biological one (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:58).

Be this as it may, Western cultural influences became more evident when Westerners brought religion, missionaries and mission stations to Africa. 'Savages' were brought into contact with 'salvation' and their social structures, religious and cultural practices were severely disrupted. For Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989:221) colonialism was seldom seen as an obstacle to development. Indeed, Western countries felt that it was their God-given responsibility to take civilisation, Christianity and economic development to the colonies dependent on them. This task was seen as the so-called 'white-man's burden'.

Qoopane (1992:2) describes the cultural effect of colonisation by two different colonial powers in two different periods in Tanzania. The Germans – the first colonisers – called it Tanganyika, after which the British took over the reign. The colonists influenced the indigenous culture which included traditional performances adversely. The colonisers believed, incorrectly, that the people

did not have any culture or that their culture was inferior, and not a source of pride.

The assimilation of cultures during colonisation was different in accordance to the different 'mother' country's cultural and political ideology. For example, in Portuguese and Spanish colonies, a syncretism of cultures, or assimilation of cultures was quickly established, while countries such as England, Germany and the Netherlands promoted 'apartness' of cultures, because of their belief in the superiority of the colonising Western culture.

Larlham (1981a:59) acknowledges the syncretism of Western and African culture when he reflects on modern-day religious festivals of the Nazareth Baptist Church: *"In structuring his church, Shembe interpreted the scriptures to accommodate the existing social and cultural life of his people. As a result, many features of traditional culture are interwoven with essentially Western Christian practice, initially borrowed from mission churches."*

According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, syncretism is the *"attempt to unify or reconcile differing schools of thought, sects. etc. ..."* The word synthesis is a *"(c)ombination, composition, putting together ..."* (Sykes, 1979:1173).

Western influence and dominance spread as settlements sprang up. Africa was colonised and Western countries governed the land and the indigenous people. Although Western culture became influenced during the colonial period and a synthesis of cultures occurred, the dominance and material power of Western people created a situation where African cultures influenced Western culture to a lesser degree. There was thus little syncretism, or little attempt to unify or reconcile different cultures without dominance. It seems as if this process could be defined as acculturation, which *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines as *"adapt to, adopt, a different culture ..."* (Sykes, 1979:8).

Kerr, however, describes the influence of the colonialists on African cultural performance in Malawi as giving rise to syncretism by combining different performing art styles, traditions of organisation and culture. In terms of 'dance mimes', Beni, Mganda, and Malipenga, adapted Western military uniforms

and marching steps to fit indigenous choreography. The cross-cultural organisational skills necessary for the functioning of these dance clubs provided rural Malawian societies with the confidence to meet colonialism on its own terms which, according to these artists, was an essential element in the process of raising consciousness that preceded the formal struggle for independence (Kerr, 1987:116). Like many other African countries, people in South Africa also used cultural practices as tools for meeting 'colonialism on its own terms'.

The impact of ethno-nationalism on the syncretism of South African culture is clearly defined by many writers, in both academic and fictional terms, but the discovery and mining of natural resources in South Africa caused a considerable influx of Western settlers into the interior and urbanisation of both Western and African people occurred. It was in these urban areas that a more syncretic culture was established, because it became a necessity to the people sharing the same urban area.

Urbanisation, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary, means to "... make urban; remove rural character..." (Sykes, 1979:1280). Coplan (1985:231) points out that urbanisation should not be equated with Westernisation, acculturation, or other changes associated with contact between different cultures that do not possess the same degree of power. In South Africa, other events, such as the arrival of missionaries, colonial conquest and white settlement, also brought about fundamental changes in rural areas. When those who were affected by these changes became urbanised, the patterns of change were not only modified by an urban experience, but exerted considerable influence over the forms in which urban social relations and cultural expression were realised.

Urbanisation therefore had its own unique influence on South African culture. One of the most important dynamics of social relations in an urban setting, is the existence of increased choices. The availability of choices meant that indigenous people had a variety of situations to choose from that encouraged greater flexibility. "The weighing of alternatives and conflicting values by individuals according to the principle of situational selection brought form out of formlessness and aided Africans' adaptation" (Coplan, 1985:232).

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The definition about what is urban and what is not differs greatly: "... broadly speaking, urbanisation is at lower rates in the lower-income countries than in the middle-income countries, and is highest in the developed nations" (Hulme and Turner, 1990:23).

In the play Sophiatown, Jakes, a black journalist for Drum magazine, describes the syncretism of cultures before the apartheid era: "These native reserves that Verwoerd wants, what have they got to do with Sophiatown? Here we listen to Bach and Beethoven. We listen to great American Jazz. We read great Russian novels. We are a brand-new generation ..." (Junction Avenue Theatre Company, 1988:53). This was a generation which was in the process of creating a syncretic culture.

This new generation was also the one that had to contend with Afrikaner political power which propagated an 'apartheid of cultures' and created an inflexible, exclusive 'culture'.

### 3.2.4.2      Ethno-nationalism despite major social changes

According to Joyce (1989:22), 'apartheid' is alternatively known in South Africa as 'separate development'. It literally means 'apartness' and was the cornerstone of National Party domestic policy since its landslide victory in the elections of 1948 until the elections of 1994 when the Government of National Unity took over the political reigns in the country. Apartheid was based on division along racial lines across a broad political and social spectrum. This division was applied in national and local government, education, health care and housing, among others. So-called 'petty' apartheid was rigidly applied in sports and entertainment circles and in the use of public amenities. Since the 1980s, this kind of division was gradually removed or less stringently applied. The other form of division fragmented the country into a variety of 'self-governing' and 'independent' states, and provinces.

It seemed that the creators of apartheid had a very limited definition of culture, and the resulting pigeon-holed society prevented the syncretism of · cultures. As Rutherford points out, white South Africans limited themselves

to their own culture, with little outlook on a larger whole. Dialogue with the past became impossible, as any possibility of revision and renewal was excluded from their view. Society was polarised to such an extent that fertile interaction between the two races did not exist. This attitude negated the fact that identity – its definition and redefinition – is part of an infinite movement, and that the crucial dialogue with the past and future is only possible in circumstances where people are prepared to participate in a wider community. True fulfilment can only be attained when a vision of essential unity exists among historical diversity (Gray, 1982:162).

Apartheid laws served to develop and maintain artificial boundaries by which any syncretism of cultures was stifled. Government laws, social and political pressure could not withhold the natural synthesis of cultures and people: *"A study of legislation which categorises and divides the South African population confirms that the South Africans cannot be easily pigeonholed into 'population groups', 'races' or 'cultures'. The population, as it has always done, moves, interacts, and intermarries, and therefore changes and denies rigid classification schemes"* (Boonzaaier and Sharp, 1988:108).

Tomaselli explains that apartheid created a culture which could only be enjoyed by a privileged few intellectuals. Culture became the possession of the élite, something that was attained only through refinement of the senses and intellectual development. It was thus literally removed from the people or the community it was supposed to serve and became a commodity. Theatre like many other forms of cultural expression, was " *... now measured in terms of its entertainment value and box office returns. Performance per se has been replaced by the performance of the box office, an inevitable consequence when 'art' is penetrated by capital and transformed into a commodity"* (Tomaselli, 1981:64). It was not a surprise that élitist theatre became highly sponsored and government subsidised, in order to keep it 'alive'. Cultural expressions had lost touch with the 'community' they had to serve, and had become consumer commodities.

Tomaselli continues that the theatre of the dominant class had become *"thee-tah"* because artists were bereft of ideas; theatre had become esoteric rather than 'life', and escapist rather than confrontational. In a society which is driven by ever increasing consumerism, theatre has lost contact with its

roots and has become a commodity that has traded its integrity for profit. The educational character that the ancient Greeks held dear, has been traded for sensationalism and audiences have to digest the results of their social system in the interest of big business. It is all done in the name of 'refining the senses', 'developing intellectually' and 'advancing culture' (Tomaselli, 1981:64). State-subsidised theatre, like all other subsidised art forms produced in South Africa until the 1980s, did become élitist.

Hauptfleisch and Steadman (1984:14) describe the context of Afrikaans theatre during the 1980s. They point out that Afrikaans writers of this period became introvertedly concerned with the problems of the individual rather than those of society. One of the reasons for this shift in focus obviously lies in the fact that they had to create plays for the subsidised theatre, a form of theatre which they describe as 'circumspect' and 'conservative'. According to them, the *"dominant thematic and stylistic features of the Western tradition of drama are based on universals. The same features in alternative South African theatre are socially and economically based, evolving out of the experiences of the new contexts"* (Hauptfleisch and Steadman, 1984:170).

During the same period, Workshop '71, on the other hand, attempted to link the experience of proletarian and African society by making use of popular workshop techniques to capture a South African aesthetic of township and rural populations (Sitas, 1986:93).

It was thus also during this time that African theatre became an authentic expression of working class needs. For African artists in South Africa, using theatre as a medium through which to conscientise and change people's ideologies already started during the 1970s. Coplan (1985:210) writes about the very Western, very American production *King Kong* and how the members of the cast were shocked when London critics asked them why they were not involved in something of their own. Many African theatre artists started to focus seriously on 'developing along their own lines', especially in their quest to beat the segregationists culturally at their own game. A struggle ensued to regain control of African performing arts in urban communities, by promoting self-awareness, co-operation, unity, and the positive self-image of 'Black Consciousness'.

The Black Consciousness movement of the 1970s endeavoured to undermine the dictates of conventional literature which, according to them, stifled creativity and the development of new genres. Mutloatse (1980:5) felt that *"we will have to donder conventional literature, old fashioned critic and reader alike. We are going to pee, spit and shit on literary conventions before we are through; we are going to kick and pull and push and drag literature into the forms we prefer ... We'll write our poems in narrative form; we'll write our journalistic pieces in poetry form; we'll dramatise our poetic experiences; we'll poeticise our historical dramas. We'll do all these things at the same time."*

The 'struggle' was a difficult one, in which the state had overall control, especially over the radio and broadcasting stations. All ideologies were kept from being broadcasted and *"... state-controlled radio serve to perpetuate myths about the essentially rural roots of Africa ..."* (Steadman, 1985a:81).

During the 1980s, culture in South Africa became an established tool used in the struggle against apartheid, communicating political and ideological messages. The reason why this occurred, is self-evident. For most of the country's population, political action in its conventional sense was illegal and dangerous. The press and radio were controlled by the white establishment, who also monopolised publishing. Publications were prone to severe  · censorship, and because of cost implications, film was obviously beyond the reach of the political artist. However, theatre had many advantages: it was cheap, mobile, simple to present and difficult to supervise, censor or outlaw. It was the one medium available to the people for purposes of conscientisation, education, unification and mobilisation. It was also available to everyone, regardless of whether they belonged to the 'cadres' or the 'rank and file' (Kavanagh, 1979:36).

South Africa entered a political phase which could be described as theatrical. Ritual poetry performance was used to enact scenes at political meetings, rallies and funerals. However, performances were of necessity clandestine and 'underground' and not enough is known about such events to make reliable generalisations. It remained largely marginalised, transitory, and, beyond the moment of its happening, mainly uncharted activities (Orkin, 1992:36).

Parris-Bailey explains the relationship between art (his drama *Zandile*) and politics in South Africa during an interview with Kagan-Moore (1990:121): *"So the act of telling that story is in itself political. That's the first thing, and the other thing is, and I heard this from Gcina, when you open your door and write about what you see in South Africa, then it becomes political because that's what the environment is."* Theatre in the 1990s, as one of the many products of culture, could continue to be utilised in the struggle to reconstruct and develop society.

### 3.2.4.3    Current cultural problems

Sachs (1990:19) made the following statement about culture at an ANC in-house seminar: *"We all know where South Africa is, but we do not yet know what it is. Ours is the privileged generation that will make that discovery, if the apertures in our eyes are wide enough. The problem is if we have sufficient cultural imagination to grasp the rich texture of the free and united South Africa that we have done so much to bring about."*

Colonialism and apartheid suppressed the culture of the majority of the population. Resources and facilities were not available to the majority to enable them to develop their own cultural expression. The high rate of illiteracy, the lack of an effective education system, and extreme poverty compounded cultural deprivation. The state, special interest groups and wealthy South Africans promoted the kind of culture that accommodated apartheid ideology and needs, and showed a clear bias towards Eurocentric high art (ANC, 1994:59).

Reconstructing South Africans' cultural identity will be very difficult. The restrictions and interference which occurred during the apartheid era, still influence our society and thus also the cultural products created in South Africa at present. Many South Africans' perception of culture is restrictive, prescriptive and exclusive. It is important for this study to find a definition which includes the multitude of activities not always seen as cultural activities, by most racially-oriented South Africans.

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The RDP describes arts and culture as phenomena which *"embrace custom, tradition, belief, religion, language, crafts, and all the art forms like music, dance, the visual arts, film, theatre, written and oral literature. Arts and culture permeate all aspects of society and are integral parts of social and economic life, as well as business and industry based upon the arts"* (ANC, 1994:69).

Steadman (1991:1) described the negative perception of the performing arts councils as one of the cultural problems in South Africa. Theatre workers and the broader community saw them as élitist organisations that catered for the interests of the official languages, groups that were clearly in the minority. The councils' language policies reflected their apartheid ideology, as did the existence of Afrikaans and English drama companies. Efforts to change these companies were no more than cosmetic and the use of a couple of black artists were suspiciously seen as tokenism.

The struggle to reconstruct and develop our cultural life, according to the RDP, indicates the government's involvement in the following:

- *"... affirm and promote the rich and diverse expression of South African culture ...*

- *... promote the development of a unifying national culture, representing the aspirations of all South Africa's people ...*

- *... ensure that resources and facilities for both the production and the appreciation of arts and culture are made available and accessible to all ...*

- *... conserve, promote and revitalise our national cultural heritage so it is accessible to all communities ...*

- ***... link culture firmly to areas of national priority such as health, housing, tourism etc., to ensure that culture is entrenched as a fundamental component of development ...***

- *... cooperate with educational bodies and the media in eradicating illiteracy, and in promoting a reading and learning culture ...*

*Ultimately government is responsible for the provision of cultural amenities for each community. As an immediate measure, established arts centres should be subsidised by the government. In the longer term, the Ministry of Arts and Culture should work with local and regional government and community structures to form community art centres throughout the country"* (ANC, 1994:69&70; emphasis added).

The government has identified the above as aims and ways of developing and reconstructing culture and arts in South Africa. The questions that are being asked at the moment are, will social engineering and cultural dominance again be part of our cultural development, or will South Africans have a chance to develop a unique and natural intercultural heritage that will be without state control?

Van Graan (1991:29) points out that economics, politics, traditions and structures which are inherently conservative, are powerful determinants within the development of theatre. However, the issue is whether these determinants will continue to be allowed to destroy theatre and stifle its most important functions of criticism, challenge, education, debate, emotional and psychological healing, intellectual stimulation, entertainment and the facilitating of new insights.

People living in South Africa at present should re-learn interculturalism, or rather unlearn those things that prevent them from returning to the 'intercultural'. It is a human characteristic to absorb from other cultures and borrowing has always been part of culture and its expression. The rapid adoption of and adaptation to Western technology by people outside the West is an appropriate example of ancient patterns of acculturation. What is borrowed gets transformed into indigenous material, while the borrowing reforms indigenous culture at the same time. Even the most traditional human cultures consist of constantly changing patterns, incorporating new things, and actively seeking those not yet part of them. Syncretism and the creation of new cultural expressions are inherently part of human activity.

The government will have to show its commitment to these cultural growth patterns in the near future, through providing funding and infrastructure for cultural, educational and developmental projects. Development can never be successfully implemented without taking the culture of the people into account. As the Director-general of UNESCO said in 1988: *"Whenever a country has set itself the target of economic growth without reference to its cultural environment, grave economic and cultural imbalances have resulted and its creative potential has been seriously weakened. Genuine development must be based on the best possible use of human resources and material wealth of the community. Thus in the final analysis the priorities, motivations and objectives of development must be found in culture. But in the past this has been conspicuously ignored"* (Mayor, 1988:5-6).

Furthermore, in the spirit of an African renaissance, the restructuring of all areas of the political and social life of the people of this country, including education, as well as a total rejection of apartheid in all its ramifications in practice, could result in a climate conducive to a renaissance of the arts in South Africa (Larlham, 1992:48). A renaissance of theatre arts could also lead to the restructuring of a truly new South African society.

In this renewal, a policy of educational reconstruction and social development should consider the uses of performing arts in education throughout the world in promoting literacy, hygiene and health, conservation, political awareness and various aspects of personal and social liberation. The popular performing arts have proven its effectiveness in social development programmes, and in altering community life and, as such, offer enormous potential for educators (Steadman, 1992:44). Using theatre for development purposes in South Africa could indeed assist any structure or organisation, albeit the government, community forum, non-government organisations, in bringing about profound social change.

## 3.3    MANNER OF CREATION OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

All people need to be creative, it is only the manner and nature of creation that vary. According to Boal (1990a:31), artistic creation is inherent to all human beings. He believes that if a person is able to sing or perform, all people can do the same. Boal believes that this truth is often scary to those who believe that they are superior because they are 'artists'. He feels that 'real' artists are not afraid of facing the truth and do not hesitate to share their art, techniques, methods and knowledge with their spectators. The real magician is not afraid of showing his tricks. It is precisely because of people's inherent capacity to create and their need to create that theatre-for-development is potentially a viable way of empowering people and facilitating their development.

Scheub (1975:5,6) agrees and tells the story about a Xhosa woman who often works in the fields all day, spends hours preparing food and constructing the walls of her new home or polishing the floors. She is the single most important influence in the lives of her young children, and generally oversees the work that is done in and about her home. This same woman is also sensitive and highly talented as an artist. The Xhosa farm woman is capable of creating an imaginative work which is original and colourful, her stage is the centre of her rondavel-type home and her audience the immediate members of the family or intimate friends. With nothing except her own body and voice, she transforms a plot into a complex performance, incorporating tension and balance, mime, music and vocal dramatics. She combines imagination, intellectual insight, and a quest for originality. She transmutes ancient core images into a vigorous work of art. These performers are not 'professional' artists, but they are nevertheless artists with an impeccable commitment to the production of high quality work.

The overriding principle here is that ordinary people can create art (performances) in ordinary, everyday settings about ordinary, everyday problems in order to find solutions and create definition in their changing environment.

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Kerr (1981:147) writes that African artists form an integral part of their communities. Their art is therefore community-oriented and their role in the community is usually collective and anonymous in character. This seems to have changed in recent years according to De Graft (1976:17), who notes that the traditional artist tends to see himself as an instrument of folk will and a vehicle of folk expression. He has no greater claim to authorship than the folk he served. But most of the 'modern' African dramatists are fundamentally individualists with a fierce pride in their individual efforts, their uniqueness, their artistic integrity, and their achievements. This individualism is not always a matter of deliberate personal choice, but is mostly forced upon them by the very milieu in which they operate. De Graft's statement may be true, but African communities in South Africa, although in some instances individually driven, are mostly driven and influenced on a collective basis.

## 3.3.1 Collective

It is a historical fact that most popular theatre performances in South Africa have been created collectively since the earliest years of the liberation movement. Etherton (1982:55) writes that to understand black theatre in Soweto during the 1980s, it is necessary to understand the process of how **actuality** (that which happens) becomes **drama** in a performance. This process is not one which occurs every time a new play is devised. It is not the conscious techniques of an individual dramatist, although it may seem to have become the preferred method of creation at present. Instead, each drama is a corporate and social act reflecting a collective experience. Steadman (1990b:20) describes protest plays of the 1970s as those which took the theme of apartheid and packaged it through collaborative processes which gave birth to theatrical forms uniquely South African. This resulted from the workshop method that was both politically and creatively empowering to its participants.

Von Kotze (1984:93-94) describes the creation of *Ilanga*, *"Three members of the Junction Avenue Theatre Company joined workers who were currently involved in dismissal disputes in the dense industrial areas of the East Rand outside Johannesburg. They met nightly for three months and produced Ilanga Lizophumela Abasebenzi (The sun rises for the workers)."* This clearly

indicates the intervention and assistance of outside facilitators, while maintaining a collective approach to the creation of the play. Tomaselli (1981:68) writes about *Ilanga*, indicating that the performers were the same people who were arrested, tried and convicted. Their original audiences were drawn from workers of the same class who had all experienced similar industrial conflicts.

Another South African example of collective creation of a theatre production, comes from Oliphant (1992:23) who explains a variant of collective improvised theatre production. He describes the method used by Shingwenyana while writing and producing a workers' play in the evenings after work. Shingwenyana's mode of production differs from the workshop method with its oral, improvisational and collectivist ethos which has come to characterise workers' theatre. This prototypical form of workers' theatre is based on devising a play drawing on labour-related issues through a process of collective discussion and improvisation. In contradiction, Shingwenyana composes his work in the relative privacy of his home. According to Oliphant, a purist perspective on collectivism is likely to disapprove of this. But if one keeps in mind that Shingwenyana mainly works with a community-based youth group, it is clear that he has the necessary writing skills to make him less dependent on the oral workshop method which is indispensable for workers with minimal or no writing and reading skills. Shingwenyana's script submitted to *Staffrider* was hand-written. This form of playmaking, of course, depends on actors with reading skills. It relies on the actors memorising the script in their free time and concentrating on the performance of their roles during rehearsal. This is the typical form of production used by community theatre groups who have to work on plays during the little time available after working hours. Oliphant believes that, in the case of Shingwenyana and his group, this method was preferred in the absence of an organised workers' theatre movement. It is difficult to agree or disagree with Oliphant's definition of collaborative playmaking, but it is important to notice that collaborative playmaking must include the ideas of more than one person. It is a message from a group or community, the voice of the people.

This manner of creation is unlike Western theatre practices which were also used during this period. The individual artist/writer seems to have more in common with the theatre 'market' than with his individual audience

members. Lakoju (1989:159) describes the Western artist's work as being mediated by all the agencies of capital – the publishers, editors, producers, directors, technicians, booksellers, advertising or publicity agencies, etc. – before it reaches his consumers. Kerr (1988:174) agrees that with Western theatre, a mode of production evolved where the author's script became the dominant creative input. This script is interpreted by a whole production team which, with its specialisation and craft restrictions, corresponds to the hierarchical structure of capitalist industry. The dominating influence is therefore individualism. Kerr (1988:173) gives an overview of the major differences between African and Western theatre when he states: *"There are two major elements of Euro-American drama which have largely been negated by popular African theatre. These are individual authorship, and the separation of the audience from the performers."* In opposition to the individual manner of creation is the collective manner of creation as found in popular African theatre. Edibiri (1983:140) feels that African playwrights rely more on improvisation than on texts in producing plays. This is done primarily for the 'delight and instruction' of the masses.

The collective creation process is and was used throughout Africa in many theatre and theatre-for-development projects. Kerr (1988:173) describes popular African theatre as drama created by peasants and workers or by intellectual cadres in close association with the people. The manner of creation is usually through collective improvisation, in order to clarify or articulate people's issues and viewpoints. In 1976, Kidd and Byram described Laedza Batanani, the first attempt at using theatre for education and development in Botswana, as highly successful. They felt that community members articulated their problems and situations themselves and then continued to suggest possible solutions. It became clear that the actors responded to the audience and therefore the presentations included topical references of every village (Kidd and Byram, 1976:7) The Laedza Batanani project originated from the *kgotla*. Kidd and Byram (1976:6) felt that the *kgotla* was a most popular, well-attended activity and a well-developed art form in Botswana. They describe it as *"the most significant **collective** experience for rural adults"* which formed the basis of their theatre project. Laedza Batanani became a communally organised effort, which included an annual festival and a mobile tour. Work is shared among the actors in order to manage this operation and make it successful. According to Kidd and Byram (1977:25),

performance is only one aspect of a mobile tour. There are many other jobs which support the once-a-day performance, like transporting the team and equipment; consulting with headmen and village leaders; arranging accommodation and cooking; collecting water and firewood; 'loud-hailing'; putting up the drama and puppet stage, and many more. Creating the play is not the only collective activity, but creating the performance, thus everything that is involved in setting up the performance, is also collective in nature.

Kerr (1988:175) describes the Malawi theatrical experience as including forms of theatre that are collectively created and improvised. Use was made of dance, mime, song and structured stereotyping to mediate some of the contradictions arising from modern life. Kerr continues that one reason why the play process has taken off so quickly, is that there is no residue of preconceptions about Northern or Western drama to interfere with the creation of a new theatre mode. This cultural innovation bears some resemblance to an indigenous tradition of African performing arts, but is also capable of mediating some of the most critical issues that confront peasant communities today. He believes that the villagers are beginning to participate in and contribute to a wider movement away from individualism and towards an aesthetic of collective performance (Kerr, 1988:179). Kerr also attributes the success of the Chichewa plays to the collective style, because it is the collective nature of the creation and performance which gives these plays a direct, morally coercive power rarely found in Western theatre. The village court tradition uses *manyazi* (shame) as an incentive to urge individuals to respond to the collective will. The popular theatre's use of *manyazi* (for example, in *Chitsime*, persuading the real trader to allow the villagers to refurbish the well at Mwima trading centre) is one which gives the popular will a chance to counteract some of the power exercised by influential individuals from the community (Kerr, 1988:179).

Another example from Africa is the very successful Kamiriithu project in Kenya where the community built a 2 000-seat theatre which compared favourably with the National Theatre in Nairobi. It was praised as the true national theatre of Kenya, because it is a theatre built by the people, it is accessible to the people, dealing with their issues and speaking to them in their language and idiom (Kidd, 1983b:298). Creating a play for this theatre building also involved the whole community, a truly collective effort, and "*it*

*was hoped, might prove a source of employment and a means of raising*
*income for the Centre's programme"* (Kidd, 1983b:295).

Fleischman (1990:103) notes that a collective method of creating a production is essentially democratic. He points out that the collective method of creation makes it a political act. The authoritarian vision of the single voice or the individual writer, is eliminated as the performance is created through consensus and joint decision-making. The vision is a communal one and the responsibility for what is said, lies with the whole group. This process is more clear in non-professional productions, like the play *The Long March* created by the Samcor workers. They spent hours painstakingly recalling the events leading up to the strike that was the subject of the play. This was not only due to thoroughness, but also a political necessity. Not only were they accountable for their own collective vision as a group, but they were ultimately accountable to the community which they represented. Fleischman (1990:103) continues to explain why the interference of outsiders often leads to less authentic representation. He feels that, in some workshop productions, professional actors are employed to participate, sometimes just because they will suit a particular part. The commitment of such participants to the communal vision is not always clear. Another complication in workshop productions is that the use of a professional director/workshop leader often leads to a process which is more pronounced, more directive. This product thus becomes, in conventional theatre terms, more coherent, more unitary, but clearly not totally representative of a vision achieved through consensus.

Qoopane (1992:1) states that the collective process of playmaking provides a collective basis and stimulus for critical appraisal and discussion of problems in their wider socio-economic context and the prevailing political situation. Kidd and Byram (1978a:39) agree with this when they state that, by using drama, the group is involved not only in studying the code, but in creating it. This process itself involves an element of analysis. As a collective activity, it helps in producing group solidarity and the potential for collective thinking and action.

### 3.3.2    Improvisation

Improvised theatre productions are by no means a new concept. Hauptfleisch and Steadman (1984:167) describe how alternative theatre in South Africa has been created since 1976. They state that new theatrical works began to focus upon alternative techniques. Groups of actors worked from improvisation and began to 'workshop' scripts from performance. Mshengu (1976:44) writes that improvisation is likely to play a greater part in the theatre of Africa than in other parts of the world. It is especially important in South Africa where texts are few, because the previous government virtually controlled what was printed. People who produce scripts rarely produce more than skeletons that are fleshed out by a director or by actors through improvisation. Even before the introduction of the so-called workshop theatre genre, the traditional Xhosa *ntsomi* was a traditional performing art which was collectively improvised. Scheub (1975:3) describes this art form as a performing art which has, as its dynamic mainspring, a core cliché (a song, chant, or saying) which is developed, expanded, detailed, and dramatised during a performance. The audience is itself composed of performers because everyone in a Xhosa society is a potential performer.

In Botswana, popular theatre or theatre-for-development operates on the principle that anyone can learn to play a role, improvise dialogue, or handle a puppet. Extensive rehearsals and memorised lines would discourage participation. Therefore, the performances are based on improvisation, enthusiasm, and a plot line which is worked out by the actors themselves (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:39). The Laedza Batanani festival in Botswana included a programme where the actors from local communities designed the performances during a workshop and after consultation with the local communities. The actors first work on the sequence of events and then each actor improvises his own lines. This approach is effective because the actors are familiar with the issues and the situations they are presenting. It becomes easy to develop dialogue, gestures, and action in response to each other and the audience rather than having to remember a fixed script. This creates spontaneity and local colour and makes it possible for others in the team to replace actors who are indisposed (Kidd and Byram, 1977:24).

Theatre-for-development plays are not always spontaneously created through improvisation by community groups. Plays are sometimes also created because of outside intervention and facilitation. Steadman (1990a:311-312) describes two 'community theatre' projects, in which the initiative came not from the communities themselves, but from cultural agents who were educated social workers and theatre practitioners and who entered the communities as outsiders. These cultural agents attempted to use the experiences of community members in order to educate them. Sole agrees with these statements, when he says that cultural agents often seem to play an important part in transforming the workers' experiences into aesthetically grounded theatre. The role of the lawyer in *Ilanga* is an example of this, as is the role of members of the Junction Avenue Theatre Company in workshopping both *Ilanga* and the *Dunlop Play* (Junction Avenue Theatre Company, 1988:79). Orkin (1992:36) refers to the workers' theatre movement in Natal, saying that it resulted from the intervention of non-working class agents with academic backgrounds.

Kerr (1988:179) describes theatre in Malawi and states that the way such plays transform the Western notion of 'text' is implicit in participatory techniques. The whole creative process is one which encourages collectivity rather than individualism. The catalyst group may occasionally use some writing to clarify the scenario, but the dialogue itself is created through improvisation in a collective way. Obviously, not everybody on stage and in the audience gives an equal creative input. The actors playing the major roles, have a strong influence not only on the dialogue, but also on shaping the form and trajectory of the play. The total effect cannot be attributed to any individual, only to the collective creativity of actors and audience.

Horn (1984:46) describes a theatre-in-community-development project in Lesotho where seventeen university students visited the village of HaLibopuoa and helped the villagers identify a list of problems. According to him, the students set about devising a basic plot line which would isolate the problem of water sanitation and which would animate the health risk to which the villagers were subjected. The plot was broken down into scenes and the skeletal scenario was gradually filled in through improvisation. Once a scene was more or less set, the next scene was rehearsed and any changes necessary in earlier scenes were noted.

Because of the improvisational nature of theatre-for-development plays, these plays often change according to the situation or audience. Kerr (1988:179), describing a new indigenous collective theatre performance in Malawi, writes that if a play is repeated, no performance is ever the same. The audience, time, mood and sometimes venue are different and the plays do not conform to the notion of a sacrosanct script, served by copyright laws, textual analysis, and literary criticism. The script is disposable because it is only one stage in a much wider process of group learning and cultural interaction.

Creating performances through improvisation does not alienate the actors from the content of their media, they are involved in the creative process of analysing their society and the nature of their oppression. They then express this analysis through their art (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:36). This collective, improvisational process of creating plays makes it well-suited for any development situation, where a careful analysis of the society and the nature of its problems are needed.

Kerr (1981:151) describes induced didactic theatre as the plays which are created communally through improvisation, employ local languages and incorporate indigenous cultural forms such as songs, dances, and proverbs. This description of induced didactic theatre could very well suit that of theatre-for-development, and if theatre-for-development contains the same qualities, it also contains the same dangers. Kerr continues to list the dangers of induced didactic theatre as the possibility of too much government involvement and stimulating such high expectations in the audience which could never be fully met. According to Kerr (1981:152), it is the improvisational character of such plays that *"can sometimes offset these dangers by allowing actors to vary their performances to accord with the individual audience."* It is important to note that the improvisational character of theatre-for-development has many benefits, but that it can also lead to bureaucratic didactic plays, should government become involved too much. Improvisational artists of theatre-for-development plays should also be made aware of the danger that they can create high expectations that are unreasonable in the minds of their audience and thus their community.

In the following section, the aims and functions of theatre-for-development will be considered.

## 3.4 AIMS AND FUNCTIONS OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

Theatre has always had a variety of functions and aims. Some of these aims are its entertainment and educational value, because theatre is primarily a vehicle of communication. Sometimes theatre gives a historical perspective because it is a slice of life and has the ability to mirror life. Theatre is mostly community-oriented and thus serves the community in bringing about change, filling social and political gaps or forming social and political gaps. Theatre is a constellation of social, political and economic relationships with numerous purposes. Schipper (1982:20) writes: *"Dramatic expression can serve to order and to control society, to ensure the survival of the species. It can also modify and influence society."* If theatre is able to do all of these, it is only logical that theatre-for-development, as an unexplored and under-utilised form of development, can bring about significant change in South Africa.

Steadman (1992:44) agrees with the idea that theatre-for-development has been insufficiently explored. According to him, the uses of drama in promoting literacy, hygiene and health, conservation, political awareness and various aspects of personal and social liberation are well-documented in many other countries, but the potential of drama to address these areas has not yet been sufficiently explored in South Africa. Drama and performing arts in general have mostly been viewed as leisure-time activities. The potential contribution of the popular performing arts to the social development of community life with the intention of influencing it, offers enormous possibilities for educators. Performing arts offer insights into cultural alternatives and the quest for cultural liberation. Popular performing arts also offer concrete ways in which this can occur.

Kidd (1985:210) lists the functions of theatre-for-development from projects in Zimbabwe as **mobilisation** in support of national reconstruction, consultation or two-way **communication**, community **discussion** and **decision-making**, **conscientisation** or consciousness-raising and **revitalisation** of villagers' performance culture and their sense of community. The aims and functions of theatre-for-development, in opposition to Western aesthetic theatre functions, will be discussed below.

### 3.4.1    Functionality

Eyoh (1987a:57) feels that traditional African theatre has always served a social function. However, many traditional African performances, considered as pagan, were unfortunately suppressed by Christian missionaries and colonialists, but African art is beginning to reaffirm its functionality once again. Schipper (1982:155-156) states that it should have become obvious that theatre in Africa has in general been rather distant from the idea of *l'art pour l'art* (art for the sake of art). This is also true of modern African theatre in spite of strong Western influences. Eyoh (1987b:49) stresses the role of theatre as a tool for facilitating community education. Kerr (1988:183) writes that, throughout the developing world, aesthetic conventions are being overthrown. Audiences and performers are transforming the codes which govern the relationship between them. This is happening when workers and peasants ally themselves with some committed intellectuals in an attempt to find a cultural weapon for articulating collective grievances.

Etherton describes how the aim of many artistic experiences in the West is more directed towards creating aesthetic pleasure, while in most developing countries this tends to be more functional. He writes: *"In the West perhaps the role of the artist as an aesthetist is the prime factor in his survival. But in the Third World it is a matter of whether there is enough real justification for his continued existence. The little capital that is available to governments should be directed towards more tangible results other than mere aesthetic thirst and quests"* (Etherton, 1982:209).

He continues to explain why modern African theatre is becoming more and more functional. Quite apart from developments stemming from colonial educational experiments, cultural policies are currently seen in terms of economic development. Torn between external aid funding and ideologies derived from post-colonial politics, the African theatre is cornered into justifying its existence before its own world (Etherton, 1982:209).

Prinsloo (1988:273) agrees with Etherton when he explains that the Westernisation of artistic expression, deliberately encouraged by missionaries, resulted in a radical alienation of art from life. The extent to which indigenous art was smothered, is nothing less than aesthetic

imperialism. For centuries, Western characteristics such as formalism, literacy, abstraction and denseness were held up as norms. In other words, to be included in the list of trend-setting works of art worthy of emulation, it must succumb to the norms of the art form. The works, artistic media and genres that were presented as models to all population groups were almost exclusively Western and white-oriented.

Hauptfleisch (1988:47) describes a new kind of theatre which he calls 'community theatre' or 'workers' theatre' which emerged during the 1980s. According to him, this type of theatre was pure *"people's theatre"* as described by Boal and heavily influenced by Paolo Freire. Hauptfleisch refers to *Ilanga* which was developed by a group of workers with the aim to resolve a dispute and to sensitise workers to the issues involved, by involving them in the creative process (Hauptfleisch, 1988:47). The functional purpose of this project is evident to all, because it was a process of restoring and sensitising. Adedeji (1973:46) feels that, by informing and exposing certain deviant behaviours in society in an entertaining way, the dramatist is indirectly using his art to regulate the norms of society and his art thus becomes functional.

Kavanagh (1981:xxix) feels that, in South Africa, the concept of a socially integrated artist and the social and even utilitarian functions of art have been inherited from the traditional African aesthetic. According to him, the communal and oral nature of art was retained. However, this does not take away the fact that government-sponsored art in South Africa was alienated from real life experiences for many years.

Kidd and Byram (1978c:83) write that the performing arts in Botswana have a functional aim because the performance is not the total experience. The performance is merely the initial catalyst for a programme of education and action. Culture is used in a deliberately functional sense, not as an end in itself, but as a medium of education. Steadman (1992:33) feels that when work is done on the basis of a perception which advocates theatre as a functional discourse in social development, the attention should be focused upon the processes of theatre. The new tradition is based on a view of theatre not as product, but as process.

## 3.4.2    Analysis and criticism

Two of the aims of theatre-for-development are to analyse and criticise. Schipper (1982:51) notes that, however diverse the oldest forms of theatre in Africa may be, they almost always are concerned with the need of man to ensure his existence in the midst of dangers. This need always exists. Even Western man has a need for security. Modern theatre also attempts to hold a mirror to people in which they can examine their world.

Ebong (1980:86) writes about popular theatre, and thus theatre-for-development, noting that it addresses itself to the more immediate and more practical issues and experiences of the day. It emphasises the individual and the collective awareness through self-analysis and self-criticism. Eyoh (1987b:49) observes that theatre-for-development serves a catalytic function, intended to stimulate critical analysis, or organisation and action, thus to help people develop a critical awareness of their situation and a commitment to collective action (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:37). Kidd (1985:201) describes the analysing function of theatre-for-development as he experienced it in Zimbabwe during community discussion and decision-making sessions. The discussion of community problems and possible solutions, and the implementation of solutions are the starting points for self-reliant community action.

A suitable example of this is, once more, the workers' play *Ilanga*, which dealt with much more than giving workers some acting skills. Performing was more than manifesting acting skills. People had to bring their daily life experience to the stage. They were faced with what it means to be an African migrant worker. These workers had to analyse their situation, and through their analysis and self-criticism find a clear view of their situation and even a solution to their problems.

Eyoh (1985:17) also notices this function of theatre-for-development when he quotes the chief councillor of a village in Cameroon, who said, *"[i]t was worthwhile for me to have gone through this experience before I die. Never has the village been offered an opportunity for detailed self-analysis and been provided with so much entertainment."*

Kidd (1983b:301) writes about popular theatre in Kenya, with specific reference to the Kamiriithu project. He feels that it is theatre **by** the people and that it has emerged organically from the masses. The peasants and workers were involved in analysing their reality and acting out their own understanding of their situation, instead of responding passively to the thinking and analysis of others.

It is only after intensive critical analysis of a given situation that people can be mobilised into action and development can take place.


### 3.4.3    Mobilisation and conscientisation

Theatre-for-development should mobilise and conscientise, otherwise it would not contribute to development and would lose the very reason for its existence. According to Eyoh (1985:18), theatre-for-development is a mobilising agent and is therefore a tool to conscientise people and assist them in generating their own development projects, as well as participating fully in national development efforts. South African theatre history is interspersed with theatre productions with the aim of mobilising and conscientising. Examples of where theatre was used to mobilise, include the intense Afrikaner nationalism between 1920-1972 (Hauptfleisch, 1988:43), Dhlomo's epic historical dramas (Orkin, 1991:43), the didactic thrust of Black Consciousness, township and workers' theatre during the liberation period (Orkin, 1991:177), even dating as far back as the didactic missionary plays of biblical teachings during the colonisation period (Orkin 1991:7). Popular theatre artist and adult educator from Zambia, Dickson Mwansa, believes that local people have the ability to solve their own problems. He feels that the community animateur only helps to push up the process of conscientisation after which the people should be in a position to work without him. *"The poor should be able to work together and confront all forms of oppressive phenomena – physical, social or economical"* (Crehan, 1987:30-31).

Kidd (1985:201) writes about the functions of theatre-for-development as a result of his experiences in Zimbabwe as starting off with a single-minded and narrow focus on theatre as conscientisation and community problem-solving. However, as the process developed, they adopted a more eclectic and

broad-based approach of using the plays and playmaking as *"mobilization in support of national reconstruction: giving people information and motivating people so they could participate effectively in national campaigns such as literacy and resettlement."*

Kidd (1985:210) notes that theatre-for-development in Zimbabwe educates and raises the consciousness of the people through questioning some contradictions from the colonial regime and some of the new problems. Barber (1987a:7) agrees with this statement when she describes popular art in Africa as art which promotes the cause of the people by opening their eyes to their situation in society. It conscientises them and therefore prepares and mobilises them to take radical and progressive action.

Kidd (1983b:302) also states that theatre should never be seen as the only mobilising agent of development when he writes about the Kamiriithu project in Kenya where drama is part of a broader community effort, a struggle by the peasants and workers to transform Kamiriithu. Here, drama is not the primary mobilising agent for community action, nor the main source of learning. It is 'drama-within-a-process' – one of a number of interconnected activities which conscientise and mobilise. Fleischmann (1990:111) writes about the workers' theatre movement (with specific reference to *Ilanga*) which used workshop theatre to educate and mobilise the people. The use of theatre to mobilise workers was only a part of the bigger process of establishing worker rights and the trade union movement. Sole (1984:68) writes that *Ilanga "arose initially out of the re-enactment by striking workers of their arrest and subsequent assault, to assist their lawyer to take comprehensive statements on what exactly had happened."* This play was subsequently performed in court as evidence of the event.

Kidd and Byram (1977:26) felt that the Laedza Batanani festivals of 1974 and 1975 overemphasised the performance rather than giving attention to the task or process of getting people to decide what to do and to start doing something. According to them, Laedza Batanani operated more as a social ritual with people confirming views on morality rather than becoming a catalyst for real social change. In 1976, a follow-up programme was organised which built on the interest created by the festival. The role of providing detailed information was assigned to the follow-up programme. The fieldworkers were

trained to give talks, demonstrations and individual advice on festival topics such as sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition, and vegetable gardening. Fieldworkers also distributed free seeds to interested farmers and picture-story handouts on relevant themes. The follow-up programme, according to Kidd and Byram, made a huge difference in getting people to do something, in other words to **mobilise** them. But again, the performance itself was only part of a bigger process of development.

Kerr (1988:180) writes about his theatre-for-development experiences in Malawi, noticing that the plays have given villagers the courage to articulate grievances and to debate issues with far less inhibition than allowed by the authoritarian nature of rural politics in Malawi.

Theatre-for-development has the aim to mobilise and conscientise as part of a process of development which encourages people's self-reliance despite their inhibiting circumstances, thus creating real social change.

### 3.4.4 Inclusivity

Art is functional when it is not an end in itself, but when it becomes a medium of social transformation. But art can only transform society if it is **accepted** by society or when art **includes** society.

Barber (1987a:21) describes the art of the élite. She feels that the élite is sometimes a category only marginally more homogeneous than the people. This group may be so internally incoherent and so weakly bounded that élite art is not the expression of the whole of the élite. She also feels that the élite's strategies of entrenchment have always included cultural **exclusiveness**, because it implies the mastery and deployment of whole systems of expression to which the majority of the population have only **partial** *access* and sometimes none at all. Tomaselli (1981:64) feels that the Western theatre in South Africa was accessible mainly to the privileged strata of society because it was unlikely that the working class was able to afford the admission prices let alone be able to identify with what happens on the stage. According to Tomaselli, this type of theatre has something to do with 'refining the senses', with 'intellectual development', and with 'cultural

advancement'. Tomaselli clearly depicts South African Western theatre as snobbish, esoteric and superannuated, rather than inclusive and functional.

Theatre-for-development is mostly referred to as **popular** *theatre*, because it speaks to the common man in his own language and idiom about things that are relevant to him. Kidd and Byram (1978a:37-38) feel that it is 'popular' because it attempts to involve the whole community, not just a small élite which is determined by class or education. It uses local languages and a participatory style and attempts to reflect the audience's own situation from its perspective. These attributes makes it the audience's theatre rather than an imposition. Barber (1987a:43) lists many qualities of popular theatre which make it more accessible to the people, namely that the vocabulary is direct, fresh, naive, vivid, crude, unsophisticated and full of life. Above all, the vocabulary is accessible to a wide range of people. This kind of accessibility seems to her an art in itself. Many popular forms seem to achieve an aesthetic of immediate impact. Kidd and Byram (1978b:172) note that popular theatre is not high art occasionally toured around the boondocks, thus bringing culture to the deprived masses, but it is people's theatre speaking to the common man in his language and idiom with direct relevance and usefulness for his reality. In order to fulfil the conditions of inclusivity, this form of theatre makes use of:

- local social reality as its subject matter;
- local languages and idioms;
- an open-air performance situation; and
- local people as performers.

Sole (1987:77) notes that in workers' theatre, a strong didactic and mimetic quality is present. When it is played before worker audiences, attempts are made to include the audience in the play through singing of union songs, and actors talking to and sitting among the audience. In the case of the Dunlop play, the audience was invited to submit their demands to a labour dispute taking place on the stage on some occasions (Von Kotze, 1984:104). The actors preoccupy themselves with putting forward situations with which the audience can identify, and then interpreting the structures of oppression and exploitation for the audience.

Leshoai (1971:14) notes that the theatre movement in East Africa and Zambia is primarily focused in the schools and universities with the aim to involve all sectors of society in the nationbuilding effort. This statement stresses the importance of active involvement and inclusivity for this effort to succeed. Kidd and Byram (1978b:170) note that the performing arts, like drama, dance, and music, have been used in many developing countries to reach vast, mainly illiterate audiences for purposes of community education and development. It promotes new government development schemes, and arouses a sense of national identity. Kidd and Byram describe the attendance figures of the Laedza Batanani festival in Botswana as an example of the real success and popularity. Such festivals are attended by between 100-150 people during the day and 200-400 in the evenings. These figures indicate the success of theatre as a tool for development and compares favourably with attendance figures at community meetings (20-30 adults) and at farmers' days (50-80 adults). Participation is not only a goal in itself, but becomes part of a process. Local people attend the festival in large numbers and take an active part in the small group discussions, as 'extras' in the drama and in the community presentation of traditional dancing and singing. They also provide logistical support for the actors (provision of firewood, water, accommodation) at the pre-festival community workshop and for the Laedza Batanani organising committee (Kidd and Byram, 1977:26,27).

Kidd (1985:179-204) writes about theatre-for-development in Zimbabwe, noting that this process included almost all parties involved in development through consultation or two-way communication. He notes the importance of developing a dialogue between government cadres, party officials, and the peasants to provide an opportunity for each to express his/her views, to learn the others' perceptions and priorities, to get feedback on government policies, and for peasants to have a say in development programmes. Including all parties in the process of development is very important for communication. Theatre-for-development therefore uses a number of processes to create inclusivity, such as the local language and idiom, people as performers, audience participation, local open-air localities, and a variety of performance art genres. These ensure a participatory style and inclusivity.

### 3.4.5    Educational

Since the beginning of time, theatre has been associated with education. Tomaselli (1980:55) noted that in ancient Greece, theatre was regarded as a form of education. It was a means through which man could explore his environment, social and religious life and intellectual progress. Theatre was the medium through which the artists were able to study society and communicate their findings to other people. According to Tomaselli, it appears that Africans are also using theatre to explore and communicate.

Kerr (1981:146) believes that theatre in Africa has **always** been didactic. He states that the didactic element is so pervasive that several educators believe that the performing arts in many rural parts of precolonial Africa fulfilled educational functions such as social control, intellectual, sexual and moral socialisation of the young, instruction in practical skills, and perpetuation of culturally self-validating myths. The Kamiriithu project in Kenya made direct use of theatre to facilitate and consolidate adult literacy, as well as to create an alternative source of self-realisation and entertainment. Drama suited their purpose. Drama would keep the new literates involved and the script, which would focus on their lives and history, would be an excellent text for further reading (Kidd, 1983b:295). Correia (1978:9) felt that the literacy classes progressed through the use of role-playing and simulation which raised pertinent issues. The learners became proficient and wanted to present a full play, to spread the discussion of issues and to increase the participation of others in the community.

Theatre-for-development's didactic function could be seen literally as used by the Kamiriithu project, or in a broader fashion where theatre is used to make people aware of their situation. However, theatre-for-development is not simply meant to convey information. It is a catalyst for community education and action. It is didactic only in so far as it is part of a two-way communication process. Qaobula, a member of the shop stewards' committee working on *Ilanga*, said that *"[t]he idea was to unite the workers and at the same time tell people how things at Dunlop go, what management is doing to us"* (Von Kotze, 1988:21). In other words, the aim was to communicate and educate their people. The Laedza Batanani festival, for example, addressed problematic issues of local communities, such as cattle theft,

unemployment, inflation, the effects of migrant labour on family and community life, traditional and modern conflicts, school leavers, and health-related issues (Kidd and Byram, 1977:20). To educate is to communicate. Morake (1980:12) writes that, in a country like Botswana, with widely scattered rural communities and limited educational facilities, non-formal education such as theatre-for-development becomes the key channel of communication between the government and the majority of the people. Theatre-for-development is the ideal vehicle through which different parties can communicate and educate themselves.

But education and communication must lead to an end-product. Theatre-for-development also brings rural populations to play the lead role in defining and directing the development process of the area (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:35). The next function of theatre-for-development, namely to empower the participants, is discussed below.

### 3.4.6    Empowerment and a sense of community

Development is only successful in so far as empowerment takes place with the specific aim of creating self-reliance through personal growth and social development. To empower people is to enable them to articulate and assert, by words and deeds, their urges and thoughts about social development (Rahman, 1993:205-206). According to Rahman, what distinguishes man from other species is his ability to be creative. The development of creative abilities and their fulfilment in economic, social and cultural spheres could be the most basic element of human development (Rahman, 1993:207). Theatre-for-development stimulates people's creative abilities and thus empowers them to fulfil their social, economic and cultural needs. Kidd and Byram (1978b:173-174) note that the theatre process involved in the Laedza Batanani project in Botswana is a process of development which Paulo Freire calls education for critical consciousness. Freire feels that this process leads to decisive action, to a deepening sense of self-respect and a feeling that one can gain greater control over one's life. One is thus empowered. Whereas the notion of empowerment usually refers to the personal growth of individuals, theatre-for-development also encourages social development.

Kidd (1985:201) writes about theatre-for-development in Zimbabwe, describing villagers' performance culture. He notes that their sense of community was revitalised during the process. He felt that theatre-for-development was providing the necessary stimulus and new skills for villagers' own self-reliant cultural activity. It became a focus for the strengthening of community identity.

The strengthening of group identity was also one of the results of the *Dunlop Play*. Malan (1989:6) writes that workers' theatre, such as the *Dunlop Play*, not only empowered the participants but also developed a strong sense of community. When the participants were asked what the most important aspect of this process was, most replied that they got to know each other for the first time. They learnt where their fellow workers came from, what they did at the factory, how they did it, and about their families. It seems that a strong sense of belonging, of community, grew out of this theatre experience.

The functions and aims of theatre-for-development are numerous. From the previous section, it is clear that this form of theatre is functional, educational, analytical and critical, and can mobilise and conscientise, empower and include its participants, and finally generate a strong sense of community.

In the following section, the fresh, innovative and modern nature of theatre-for-development will be discussed. Its open, flexible and inclusive nature, already alluded to, the contents and themes, its social relevance, its methodology or technology, time and place constraints, its multilingual nature and stereotypical characterisation, its collective and plurimedial style, its primarily oral nature and the fact that it is based in indigenous performance forms, will be touched upon.


## 3.5 NATURE OF THE CREATION

All creative efforts claim to have a specific style and a particular nature. Theatre-for-development, although difficult to define, is also clearly demarcated because of its opposition to the nature of 'aesthetic' theatre and its expressed aim to bring about change and progress.

## 3.5.1     Open, flexible, changeable, inclusive

Theatre-for-development is different in nature from other theatre forms, especially theatre which could be termed as 'aesthetic theatre'. While focusing on the differences between various theatre forms, definite similarities are recognised between theatre-for-development and popular theatre. An attempt will be made to show how theatre-for-development differs in nature from aesthetic theatre, which is mostly seen as closed, set and exclusive.

According to Barber (1987a:12), popular arts and especially theatre-for-development are essentially new. Because it can virtually slip in between established artistic institutions and aesthetic canons, it is permeated with the vocabulary of novelty. It smacks of innovation, freshness, inventiveness, modernity, topicality and change. Barber (1987a:5) continues to describe popular arts as *"a category that seems to be characterized, above all, by its inclusiveness and its apparently infinite elasticity."*

Luther and Maponya (1984:23) comment on African theatre, stating that they have found African theatre very refreshing because of its openness. There is little inhibition about mixing or swapping styles when it is appropriate. They note that a play can move from high stylisation to pure naturalism in the space of minutes. Malanda (1983:13) agrees when he states that it tends to absorb elements from Western forms, while also drawing on local or regional traditions. It continually renews itself by using traditional myths, stories, songs, masks and costumes, and absorbs many other influences. Steadman (1981:8) notes that black theatre in South Africa is very flexible because the cast can switch roles at a moment's notice, use a stage manager as an impromptu actor, can cut, adapt, reverse and restructure according to circumstances. Substantially the play remains the same, but the text of the play embraces many potential performances. Tomaselli (1980:51-52) agrees with Steadman when he writes that, in black committed theatre, the text is rarely recorded, but is nurtured in the mind of its creator and is constantly updated and modified in terms of its lived relationship between people and their physical and social environments.

Von Kotze (1988:23) writes that *Ilanga* was continually changed. *"At all stages of workshopping and improvising scenes any conversations and noises were recorded on tape and then transcribed. Transcribed scenes were then written out, edited and handed out to cast members to serve as a basis for further improvisation during the final stages of making the play."* She (1988:34) notes that *Ilanga* did not emerge as it had been rehearsed, but additions and alterations always cropped up to suit the occasion. As in the case of most workers' plays, *Ilanga* retained a good deal of improvisations during the performances. However, Sole (1984:71) notes that, although workers' plays are flexible and changeable, it would be a mistake to perceive these plays as unproblematic and a completely spontaneous expression of working class culture. He continues to note that *Ilanga* was collectively workshopped with the help of cultural agents which transformed it into an aesthetically pleasing theatre production.

Kidd and Byram (1976:7) write about the Laedza Batanani theatre project in Botswana. They started the sessions in English and worked out a detailed script. Later they found that a detailed script was unnecessary because it was sufficient for actors to agree on a sequence of events, characterisation, and related issues. They developed their own dialogue spontaneously. It was agreed that the language in which the actual performances are presented, should be used from the beginning, rather than relying on English too much in the plotting and rehearsal sessions. According to Kidd and Byram, improvisation needs to be handled carefully so that the major development messages are not lost.

Hauptfleisch and Steadman (1984:169) write that, even though traditions evolve from **dominant** values and meanings, **alternatives** to those values and meanings will inevitably arise. Alternative artists see tradition as having been constituted in the interests of dominant values. Their art is therefore oppositional and attempts to demystify accepted forms and themes and to create new forms and themes in the new context. Coplan (1985:237) agrees with Hauptfleisch when he states that urban African performers have been at the centre of the processes of cultural communication and reinterpretation. They have created original combinations through reinventing old forms in new contexts, and transforming performance materials to reflect social forms and objectify new meanings.

Barber (1987a:36) feels that the freedom of popular arts from the constraints of the official traditions is their position in the unofficial sphere. They are the cultural brokers between the foreign and the indigenous, making popular arts labile. They are dynamic, ever-changing, playful and with undefined forms. This opposes official art which is finished, completed, didactic and utilitarian.

## 3.5.2 Contents/theme/image versus form/convention/ structure

The contents, themes and structure of popular theatre and of theatre-for-development, differ from aesthetic theatre. It is because of these differences that valid descriptions of the nature of theatre-for-development can be created.

Barber (1987a:54) contends that, in popular arts, contents are usually preferred to form, which implies that the performance is not always perfectly presented. The contents and shared themes of the performance, however, are usually enough to communicate effectively. In other words, the content or message of the theatre experience is more important than the way it looks. Steadman (1980:43) writes about black theatre in South Africa, stating that "... form nearly always follows subject matter – rather than dictating it ... the form is secondary." Manaka writes that these plays make the viewer or reader realise that a work of art is like a dance born by the beat of a drum. It is not beauty which is born by the fantasy of illusions and dreams. It is a conscious act of creation in response to reality. It is evidence against racism (Manaka, 1984a:38). This also refers to theatre-for-development where people use theatre to reflect and understand their specific problems. The problem or theme is the most important, not the way it is professionally styled or presented. It is what is **inside** that matters, not what is on the outside.

Mwansa (1981:102) feels that, unlike other forms of performing arts, the contents of popular theatre reflect the problems and solutions of the community. Reflecting the concerns of the community or society was also the aim of the Kamiriithu community literacy programme where the script had to reflect the people's experiences, concerns, aspirations, grievances, problems and contradictions using words and expressions familiar to the people.

Steadman (1980:44) contends that black theatre works within new forms and conventions, where the **image** seems to be a central focus. The image is a central idea sensuously manifested and is very important to black theatre. According to Steadman, the juxtaposition of images is often the central dynamic in black theatre. Steadman (roneod:13) also writes about the importance of image in African theatre as opposed to the literariness of Western theatre. He feels that the text can merely hope to give an **indication** of performance potential. The text can never hope to replace the theatricalism contained within the script. The root of this theatricalism is the image. Because they are working in new forms and conventions, unrestricted by the notion of literariness, people resort time and again to the image as a central theatrical device. This image usually also reflects the problem or theme of the play.

### 3.5.3    Local social relevance

Accprding to Tomaselli (1981:66), the contents of working class theatre are endemic to the specific social formation. It is there waiting to be discovered, given form and communicated to a participating audience who are themselves part of that content. Von Kotze (1988:13) agrees with Tomaselli when she writes that the performers bring their own histories of working-class oppression. They do not preach about things which they have not experienced. They speak openly about their fears, anguish, hopes and victories.

People in the townships have always been interested in theatre-for-development plays. Manaka (1980:29) writes that township people are very interested in this kind of consciousness-raising drama because it is directly related to the local context and situation. It is because of its local social relevance that theatre-for-development can be regarded as a successful tool for development.

### 3.5.4    Methodology    and    technology:    Time    and    place constraints

The 'methodology' of theatre-for-development is the body of methods used in the activity of playmaking, while the 'technology' would imply the practical things implemented to create a play, like decor, lighting, etc.

The methods of playmaking which are at the heart of theatre-for-development have already been discussed, namely collectively improvised or workshopped creations. These reflect the nature of theatre-for-development to such an extent that it is necessary to note them once more. However, these methods also include the use of technology in the process of creation. These methods of playmaking are always influenced by the time and place constraints of the physical and social environment.

Sitas (1986:94-95) notes that, during the workshop period of *Ilanga*, it was noted that the workers found it difficult to plan the setting of the play because they wanted to create a realistic stage. *"During the preparation of Ilanga it was suggested to build a gigantic moulding machine to occupy the centre of the stage. After a few experiments with experienced metal designers and sculptors the idea was dropped because it was unfeasible."* Taylor (1981:22) feels that technology can become an obstacle to audience participation and can thus exclude people from the theatre. He feels that many people can act, sing or dance. But few people know how to operate a lighting or loudspeaker system. At an Asian folk dance festival in Chattisgarhi, India, a group of educated Indians were criticised by visiting theatre groups and accused of undermining the essence of popular theatre by using coloured slides to portray peasants' misery to the peasants in the countryside. It seems that the technology used for theatre-for-development is limited because of a lack of skills and equipment, but that it is precisely because of this lack of technology that theatre-for-development is effective and successful. It is limited to the essentials of theatre, namely acting, singing, and dancing, and does not alienate and intimidate its audience by using sophisticated technology.

Time and place constraints for theatre-for-development are very much the same as the constraints of black theatre in townships during the apartheid era. These constraints have remained the same in today's townships and

rural areas throughout South Africa. South African township theatre before 1976 is described as performances which were largely mobile, 'one-night stand' operations. There were no theatres in the townships, and until 1975 entertainers made use of local municipally-owned halls, church halls and Christian and community centres (Kavanagh, 1981:xv).

Larlham (1985:91) writes that most township halls have no lighting systems and stages were often only equipped with curtains, if these were available at all. The hall was level, with the result that people sitting at the back had to strain their necks to see. Some halls were also located in dingy and dangerous areas which discouraged attendance.

Workers' theatre has the same constraints with regard to time and place, in that these plays are usually performed without any formal theatre set-up. Tomaselli (1981:69) writes about *Ilanga* that there were no actual theatres in the townships. Community halls and cinemas, ill-equipped for theatrical performance, were used to present plays. It is generally accepted that a play such as *Ilanga* loses its relevance once it is removed from the environment it was created for. Transplanting such performances into a more conventional theatre setting results in the suppressing of spontaneous components of the play by factors such as architecture and technology. The audience remains apart from the actors and the action on stage remains separated from everyday life and experiences. Von Kotze (1988:11,12) states that the players were dressed in overalls and 'takkies' in *Ilanga*. They brought a few small items with them, which they put on the floor. Their story was told simply through their bodies and voices. At one stage, one of the actors put on a ping-pong ball nose, started using English and thus became the white manager.

Schipper (1982:76) notes the differences and influence of Western theatre on traditional African theatre. According to her, the important difference is that there are more plays written and published in Western languages. Western influence has also had the result that the presentation has become more concentrated. In the villages, a performance will often last the whole night. City people are no longer accustomed to such leisurely ways, because they have found another rhythm of life which is more concentrated.

Time constraints are usually placed on contemporary theatre performances as part of the Western canonised performance style. Sitas (1986:100) found that the differences in time constraints in workers' theatre presented themselves during the making of the play. The older workers insisted that time must take its course. They insisted that they take more than an hour to recount one event with all its correct nuances. They insisted on being in control of time which caused the play to take on an epic quality in its unfolding layers. The customary theatre audience found these time sequences concerning. The influence of cinematic speed has had a devastating impact on theatre, bringing with it a dread about any production running for more than one and a half hours. Sitas (1986:101) continues that this lack of performance 'time discipline' is part and parcel of the undefined status that theatre enjoys as part of a popular culture. For the workers/performers, the only constraints that exist are always social. The performance cannot exceed past their last means of transportation to and from home or it cannot take so much time over union meetings.

Kidd (1985:196) notes that theatre-for-development in Zimbabwe also has very little time constraints. According to him, the morning started when they picked up forty villagers from Muchinjike and sang and danced on the bus all the way to the new village, Madamombe. Eight hundred people pitched up for the day-long *pungwe* of songs, plays, dances, as well as Jerusarema performances. The *pungwe* continued for five hours, play after play, song after song, with no flagging of interest on the part of the crowd, showing once again that theatre was already alive in the villages, that people had the interest, enthusiasm, and basic skills. All that was needed, according to Kidd, was encouragement, stimulation, and support.

However, Mwansa (1981:102) disagrees and feels that, in Zambia, popular theatre plays should be short – not lasting more than 30 minutes and songs not more than two minutes. He feels that it is advisable to start with songs because they easily attract people, even those who do not want to come to the performing area.

The over-riding principle here would be flexibility. Any time and place constraints can easily be overcome and adjusted, according to the needs,

interests and support of the community with which theatre-for-development communicates at a given time and place.


### 3.5.5 Multilingualism

The importance of a multilingual approach to any form of communication is essential in South Africa where cultural and language diversity is immense.

Hauptfleisch (1988:48-49) notes a number of trends in South African theatre during the 1980s, namely a shift from popular entertainment to protest which makes social comments, and a noticeable move towards multicultural and multilingual plays. Language becomes both medium of communication and symbol. Larlham (1985:63) writes about theatre plays in South Africa where the artists have made use of a multilingual approach, stating that idiomatic expressions, jokes and references in Zulu, Sotho or Xhosa and occasionally Afrikaans, Tsotsitaal and Fanakalo are assimilated into predominantly English dialogue. According to him, multilingualism is used for dramatic effect, as well as for clarity of meaning. Orkin (1991:176) writes about the emerging syncretism in South African theatre noting the widespread use of Tsotsitaal and urban dialects of Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa and English of the townships. Coplan (1985:213,214) writes that most 'black' dramatists in South Africa during that period used English as lingua franca even though huge sections of the dialogue will be presented in an African language during the performance. English, however, held political and cultural benefits for both the audiences and the creators of plays, because it is an international medium and local African languages during that time were seen as promoting the apartheid policies of separate development. This legacy of apartheid should be dealt with speedily by African playwrights and poets because theatre should and must use the language of the people if it wants to claim to reach them. Morake (1980:13) feels that, if popular theatre is to reach the most needy and least privileged sections of the community, it must use ordinary speech in the mother tongue of the people. Otherwise, the audience will not fully understand and will quickly become bored. According to him, language is more than words. A people's language holds its history, its poetry, and its values. Language expresses more than ideas or intellectual concepts.

Etherton (1982:96,97) notes that African dramatists use a variety of languages in their plays because they are linguistically versatile. According to him, playwrights and directors do indeed have a real choice of language for their dramas. This has positive implications for workshopped plays and can have negative implications for playwriting as multilingual plays are more difficult to record on paper and often partly inaccessible for those for whom the study of written plays are important.

The second play done in 1981 by the Kamiriithu Centre was called *Mother ululate (sing) for me*. The play dealt with repressive labour conditions and is set in the 1920s and 1930s. According to Björkman (1989:79), the language of the play conveys social and cultural solidarity. The common people have complete command and use of their native language. The play also included various languages although it was mainly in Gikuyu. He points out that the multiplicity of languages enhanced understanding (Björkman, 1989:21).

Dall (1980:18) writes that Zambian theatre for non-formal education uses local languages, and has no problem with illiteracy because the drama is spoken not written. It dramatises local problems in a simple form so that the community can identify with these problems. It also promotes a spirit of positive co-operation and self-criticism. According to Dall, the resultant potential for change is much greater than anything produced by conventional forms of extension education and communication. Etherton (1973:48) writes that the plays of the Chikwakwa theatre in Zambia are rehearsed in English (except the songs), but that the performances are in the language that suits the majority of the audience. According to him, people in the group who cannot speak the particular local language perform either in English or in a pidgin English with a higher mimetic quality.

Kerr (1987:123) shows that the use of local languages in Malawian theatre is emerging. According to him, the impetus behind this came from what is usually called the theatre-for-development movement. Theatre practitioners and development agencies in Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, Sierra Leone and Nigeria during the late 1970s became interested in promoting a popular participatory theatre in which intellectuals and peasants created African-language plays through improvisation. Influenced by this movement, the University Travelling Theatre held a theatre-for-development workshop in 1981

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at Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre and created several plays about health, literacy, and agricultural problems in a mixture of the Malawian languages Chichewa and Chitumbuka. Kerr (1988:176) also notes that, during a developmental theatre campaign called the PHC, they used the national language Chichewa in conjunction with a dominant language, ChiYao, as both were widely spoken and universally understood. Kamlongera (1982:207-221) stresses the importance of using the vernacular when doing theatre-for-development work in Malawi. He states that the question of language was very important in this exercise, because by reverting to vernacular languages, the workshop team came down from their 'university' pedestals and joined the masses on their own ground. The actors could go about their business without too much concern about 'second language' competence.

In South Africa, theatre practitioners have also used a multilingual approach when dealing with socially relevant themes. According to Malan (1989:8), none of us speak an absolutely pure form of our mother tongue. Neither does the theatre. It is no longer strange to hear a mixture of Zulu, Xhosa, Tsotsitaal, Afrikaans and English. Theatre also has a language of its own, because it does not only speak through words, but also through image, movement, sound, colour and silence. The combination of these aspects conveys meaning and as long as the audience can understand and relate to it, it has something to say. Making use of a multilingual approach in plays ensures accessibility.

### 3.5.6    Stereotypical characterisation

Another way of making plays more accessible to an audience is the use of stock characters. The Laedza Batanani festival dramas make use of characters such as a miner, village drunkard, cattle thief, and juvenile delinquent. The character names are also chosen to reflect their reputation. For example, the miner 'Tjidji' means literally 'one who eats' – 'one who wastes his money'; 'Tamagada' is associated with a love for beer; and 'Tjebakadzi' is the Kalanga word for 'playboy'. In soap-opera fashion, most of these characters appear at the festivals each year and the audience build a strong identification with them (Kidd and Byram, 1977:24). According to Kidd and Byram, the main vehicle for presenting the festival issues is drama, but it is reinforced by a

mixture of puppetry, dancing, and singing which are developed by small groups.

Malan (1988b:28) writes about 'black' theatre during the fifties in South Africa and its use of a fixed formula. Not only did these plays use English as medium, but they also included song, dance and dramatisation. According to Malan, these plays generally included stock characters: a policeman, often somewhat stupid and brutal; a submissive priest; a comic teacher; a 'streetwise tsotsi'; a witchdoctor or soothsayer, who was sometimes a crook; a shebeen 'queen' and a township gossip. According to Kerr (1981:149), this syncretic theatre form made use of stock characters to provide the models whereby the audience could make sense of new social formations and fit them into some kind of moral framework.

## 3.5.7    Collective and plurimedial style

Sitas (1986:103) states that theatre is a plurimedial event utilising not only words and interaction, but decor, songs, music, visuals, dance, etc.

This collective style incorporates the collective manner in which theatre-for-development is created, as well as various techniques and genres into a plurimedial production (i.e. singing, dancing, storytelling, puppetry, etc.). Horn (1984:46) writes about the aim of plurimedial productions in Lesotho's theatre-for-development projects. Scenes were augmented with relevant songs, dances and humour to ensure that the performance would be amusing, memorable and instructive. Creating this balance became a major concern of the team, as overly didactic plays would bore and antagonise its audience, while more superficial musicals, such as those of Kente, would sacrifice content for sensational spectacle. The team's goal was to integrate songs and dances thematically into the play's argument, to present comedy that clarified the central contradictions of the characters' positions and contexts. Coplan (1985:211) explains why the works of Kente were so popular in the townships: Kente created *"the synthesis of narrative, mime, movement, vocal dramatics, music and dance found in traditional oral literary performance into a township melodrama using urban experience and cultural resources."*

Masilela (1989:18) describes village theatre near Hammanskraal before Christmas as the ordinary person's 'liberation theatre'. Village theatre throughout Africa is based on a combination of music, dance, and spectacle. According to him, this collective form has offered an ideal platform for the development of relevant urban theatre forms.

The Laedza Batanani festival includes a road tour to the major villages in the Bokalaka, where special techniques are used for outdoor performances. Words are kept to a minimum and the narrative is repeated to accommodate people who come late. Exaggerated action and audience involvement are used to retain people's interest. For example, in 1974 a court scene was used to ensure audience participation, in line with the popularity of tribal court cases as public events in Botswana. Interrogation skills and the ability to debate the merits of a case are highly developed. At the end of the play, the actors move into the audience and invite them to form groups and discuss the problems presented in the performance. The groups analyse the problem in an attempt to find a solution, and then report back to the whole audience (Kidd and Byram, 1977:25).

The second play by the Kamiriithu Centre in Kenya, *Mother ululate (sing) for me*, was strengthened by the fact that it relied on song, mime, dance and fragments of traditional oral literature for the effective communication of its messages. Björkman (1989:77) describes these songs as *"a nation-wide unifying force during the rehearsals. Kenyans from different ethnic groups sang each other's songs and a sense of togetherness was created."*

In Qoopane's (1992:23) study of theatre in Tanzania, he explains that 'theatre' refers to a combination of songs, dances, story telling, masquerade, drama, acrobatics and poetry-ngonjera.

Kidd and Byram (1978c:85) write about the Laedza Batanani project in Botswana, and point out that songs are used as summaries of the message of the drama and to stimulate audience participation. They are also used for making difficult statements more accessible to the audience. The performers find various ways to deepen the understanding of the issues involved, as well as of their solutions. This plurimedial technique also stimulates audience involvement and creates mood.

## 3.5.8    Oral

Schipper (1982:10) attempts to indicate the difference between oral literature and theatre when she writes, *"[i]t is unrealistic to make a clear division between oral literature and theatre. Oral literature is always theatre, because the way in which the subject matter is performed is an essential aspect of the art."* It is perhaps because of its oral quality that *"drama has featured prominently in the cultural life of preliterate African society"* (Edibiri, 1983:139). Fleischman (1990:112) provides an indication of the aims and purposes of the oral tradition in precolonial Africa. Oral societies documented their histories through cultural artefacts. In traditional societies, songs and poems reported on wars, famines, disasters, droughts, and pestilences. The reigns of chiefs were described and rivals and enemies were insulted. Names, places, and events were committed to memory, and statistics and other remembrances were connected to stories about human activities.

This oral culture was operating in Southern Africa before the settler communities, churches and mission schools introduced formal and literary theatre. This Westernised tradition was soon accepted by the educated African middle class and adapted to the requirements of a local cultural liberal community in an urban area (Fleischman, 1990:95). When Western theatre practices derived from Greek theatre and the Poetics of Aristotle is considered, it is clear, both on a formal and content level, that these practices were systems of coercion and control. During the Middle Ages, two forms of theatre existed. The **formal literary form** consisted of, among others, the morality play that was practiced as part of the church service and served a coercive function on behalf of the church. The **informal oral form** consisted of a variety of festivals or carnivals held during the year, with opportunities for common people to perform in spectacles. The basic aesthetic function of these events was transformation: *"turning the world and its rigid social structure upside down."* Performances were not literary in any sense and were presented in the streets and at fairgrounds. These events addressed the non-literate masses (Fleischman, 1990:93-95).

It is the communal and participatory component of oral literature in Africa that makes it so beneficial to theatre-for-development projects. Oral artists have

traditionally been part of their social environment and therefore reflected their lives and values systems.

Sole (1983:41) holds a less than romantic view of oral literature in Africa. A great deal of romanticising about oral literature is dangerous, even though it has a strong communal and participatory component, is often anonymous, and the oral artist is generally less removed from his or her social surroundings than European critics are used to. African oral literature reflects the life and values of communities, but this does not necessarily imply participation by all the members of the community. The generalisation that oral literature is a spontaneously natural or communal product appears not to hold true in many instances. It may be less individualistic and more participatory, but varying degrees of specialised training, monopoly and patronage are often present (Sole, 1983:42).

Fleischman (1990:92) points to the discrepancies between oral and written cultures and their effect on any educational activity. He sees it rather as a continuum that consists of primary orality on the one end and high literacy on the other, with most people fitting somewhere in between the two. In this regard, the majority of Africans in South Africa are probably closer to the oral pole than to the literate pole, which is in part a result of the deficiencies of the 'Bantu' education system of the past. People who are more orally inclined have lifestyles in which action and attitudes depend significantly more on the effective use of words, and therefore on human interaction. Those who are more literate, are often more focused on the non-verbal, largely visual input from the objective world of things. An orally inclined lifestyle produces more communal and externalised personalities. Literate society, on the other hand, produces more introspective personalities. Writing and reading are mainly individual activities in which the psyche is more dependent on itself. The importance of the oral culture (of which theatre-for-development forms a part) in African countries is stressed by Fleischman particularly with regard to the planning of any educational or development project.

Schipper (1982:130) notes that the distinction between literary and popular theatre is becoming increasingly pronounced. On the one hand, plays are published that have never been performed, while some popular theatre 'texts' cannot be offered for publication. It is evident that publishers would

not be interested in a popular play rendered in different languages that are only understood by native speakers in the area where the play originated as its publication would not be profitable. The multiple use of languages provides an extra dimension to the play which would mostly – even exclusively – only be appreciated by the audience for which it is created.

## 3.5.9 Indigenous performance forms

Kidd (1985:200) describes theatre-for-development in Zimbabwe and the adaptation of the *pungwe* structure and indigenous theatre forms. In the past, theatre used for development purposes in Africa has underestimated indigenous performance forms and the local organisation of cultural activity. Through the utilisation of the villagers' patterns of cultural organisation, their confidence was reinforced and continuity was ensured. By linking theatre-for-development with villages' traditional performance modes, a new form of activity was created and served as a catalyst for development. According to Kidd, the *pungwe* developed from the needs of the liberation struggle and is a highly participatory form of communal cultural gathering that allows for spontaneous individual or group contributions of songs, dances, and sketches. Everyone is encouraged to join in the songs and dances (Kidd, 1985:180-181).

It is also true that old African performance forms were mainly based on narrative, similar to popular theatre in urban areas in South Africa. It is structured as a series of scenes that portrays a fragment of the life of the hero or heroine (Mshengu, 1976:41). Mda (1983:13) concurs and traces this form of theatre back to pre-colonial traditions of storytelling and religious ritual. He refers specifically to the Sesotho *tsomo* or Xhosa *ntsomi* as tales told by the fireside, with the storyteller creating the dramatic effect through voice tones, gestures and song. Sitas (1986:101) writes about modern workers' theatre in South Africa and also identifies its roots in storytelling traditions.

## 3.6     CONTEXT    IN    WHICH    THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE

Unlike most Western theatre productions that are presented in conventional theatre buildings, theatre-for-development can be performed in informal, unconventional and localised settings.

### 3.6.1     Localised

Theatre-for-development plays are rarely performed in a conventional theatre space. Theatre-for-development is relevant to a specific social milieu and it is because of this fact that these 'plays' can and should be performed in a local setting. Theatre-for-development plays lose their relevance when they are removed from their context or local setting and performed in a conventional theatre space.

Von Kotze writes about the localised nature of workers' plays in South Africa with specific reference to *Ilanga*. The performance venue was a huge factory that was divided into offices and a large empty space. The performance space consisted of a trestle table, with rows of chairs and benches (Von Kotze, 1988:10). Sole (1987:77) writes that workers' plays in South Africa are mostly performed to fellow workers in venues such as union halls, hostels, schools and churches. However, he also notes that they are sometimes performed in other contexts, such as university auditoriums and theatres, mostly for academic purposes.

Tomaselli (1981:65) observes specific differences between Western drama and workers' plays with regard to performance space. In its design, the theatre building normally separates the audience from the actors, thereby emphasising the difference between art and life. More popular forms of theatre attempt to bridge this distinction and demystify the performance/aesthetic space so that the audience can become involved and participate in the action. Von Kotze (1988:105) classifies such plays as educational as they were performed at large workers' gatherings such as May Day celebrations or workshops organised by various unions for purposes of

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transmitting information. They have also become part of seminars and meetings of worker leaders, shop stewards and people on the shopfloor.

The Laedza Batanani festival also realised the importance of performing to audiences in their local social setting. They therefore toured with a team of 'actor-animators' to the major villages, where the *kgotla* (village meeting place) was transformed into an open-air theatre with a backdrop stretched between two poles, and a portable puppet stage was erected. A vehicle went around the area with a loudspeaker to announce the performances (Kidd and Byram, 1977:25).


## 3.6.2    Unconventional and informal

Using an informal and 'unconventional' space for performances has been part of the African performance culture for as long as can be remembered. Scheub (1975:5) explains that in the traditional Xhosa *ntsomi*, an artist would sit in the middle of her home or in a shady spot in the kraal, surrounded by an audience of mostly women and children. The improvised nature of the stage seems to be typical of traditional and contemporary African theatre. However, Malanda (1983:14), points out that urbanisation has had an effect on the material conditions in which shows are produced and reach their audiences, although theatre is still presented on improvised stages, such as in bars, schools, and on trestles.

Using unconventional spaces for theatre productions has also been part of the South African township theatre scene for a significant time. Steadman (1992:43) writes that there *"is clearly a difference between the informal spaces used by oppressed cultural activists to proclaim their resistance against oppression, and the formal institutionalised venues used by artists concerned to express their alliance with the struggle of oppressed people."* During the apartheid era, many African actors and directors brought the messages of liberation to the people without being hampered by the police because they could improvise performance venues. Mthoba (Manaka, 1980:28) recounts some of these practices: *"... because we knew we were going to have problems in presenting it, we decided to move in backyards, just inviting people and performing free of charge. This became the struggle*

*to make our theatre popular. We were going right out to places like Nylstroom, places where people had probably never seen drama before. And we would just ask people to vacate the grounds. Football grounds, and start doing our thing."*

Steadman (1991:2) notes that the conventional venues used by the performing arts councils until that time were viewed as élitist. For the effective implementation of an artistic policy that would be relevant to the needs of all South Africans, the performing arts councils would have to equip township halls, reach out to disadvantaged communities, and demonstrate a genuine concern for the needs and aspirations of South Africans. Equivalent in status to a national theatre, the State Theatre in Pretoria epitomises the whole infrastructure of 'official' performing arts. Some see it as a mausoleum dedicated to high culture, where tones are hushed in reverence to the imported, fragile culture presented there. Instead of an active and vibrant community arts centre, *"it is seen as a tombstone marking the death of the South African culture which has been truncated at various stages in its history by apartheid legislation."*

Kente produced township plays during the 1960s and 1970s that were mobile and could be adapted to a variety of theatre venues at short notice. Many times these 'theatre venues' consisted of township halls with standing-room only for audiences (Orkin, 1991:121). Von Kotze (1988:61-62) particularly points out the mobility of workers' presentations. For the *Spar Play*, the stage was in the middle of a sports field, and consisted of two trucks, reversed against each other. The long narrow platform did not leave much room for movement. The backdrop was a combination of union banners. She also comments on the simplicity of the staging which resulted in an extremely mobile presentation that could be performed anywhere and anytime without much preparation. Setting up and moving out occur equally swiftly. Every aspect of a workers' play is geared to the rapid and effective transmission of the message (Von Kotze, 1988:14).

Zambian popular theatre productions do not require an elaborate stage either, and are either performed in front of an audience or completely surrounded by it (Mwansa, 1981:102). The Chikwakwa theatre is an open-air theatre in the bush built of mud, thatch and eucalyptus poles. Etherton (1973:47) writes

that the *"design of the stage and auditorium has resisted symmetrical planning on either side of a centre-stage line, and is instead organic and flexible."* He criticises the building of huge, inaccessible theatres in Africa by pointing out that their building has been challenged by committed playwrights. Their perceptions are that the provision of elaborate facilities and plush buildings is not the mark of excellence, but that plays are far more important than stages and that theatre cannot survive without audiences but can do without auditoria. For some, the provision of such opulent theatre buildings inevitably **excludes** the vast majority of the population from participation (Etherton, 1979:71).

Kerr (1988:177) describes the *bwalo* (open space used for village court cases and community dances/music) as the most common context in which theatre-for-development takes place in Malawi. The *bwalo* is an integral part of the community and anyone can attend. Rough benches or mats are used for domestic purposes or for such functions as dances, court cases, and public meetings. No use is made of special scenery or lighting during performances. The trees, village houses, and maize gardens are the backdrop to the action. Real life is not something 'out there', but inherently part of the theatrical experience (Kerr, 1988:178). The same applies for the Laedza Batanani theatre project in Botswana where the venue for this annual event is the *kgotla* – the village meeting place (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:42). Theatre-for-development performances in Lesotho were also mostly outdoor experiences. Horn (1984:47) explains that the setting for a performance was selected during the theatre team's first visit to a village. Scenes from nature surrounded a performance while areas were cleared to enable the actors to undertake their task. In one case, *"[t]he grassy slope offered a naturally raked audience precinct, with unobstructed sight-lines and reasonably adequate acoustics, despite the fact that it was all sited on the spine of a sizeable mountain with breezes tending to blow sound out into the valley."*

Performances in Africa are recognised by their unconventional and informal nature both in form and context. The informal and unconventional, localised venues in which performances take place, reinforce the feeling of participation by the audience which is crucial to the successful completion of any production. Theatre-for-development can take place anywhere, at any time as long as there is an audience.

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## 3.7    AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT

By definition, no theatrical event can take place without an audience. Audience reaction, participation and criticism form integral parts of theatre, both in theory and in practice.

### 3.7.1    Active involvement versus passive appreciation

African theatre has always involved its audiences actively during the performances. Schipper (1982:15) calls it *"a total theatre where music, dancing and mime take an important place next to the spoken word."* Kerr (1988:176) writes about the oral narratives and spirit-possession dances used by Malawians for mental and physical therapy, noting the high level of audience participation and collective creativity.

According to Malan (1988b:2-3), African audiences have always been actively involved in communal performances. This tradition was disturbed when conscious attempts were made by missionaries to westernise existing African art forms. African scholars were introduced to the Western literary drama as an ideal model. Western drama characteristics, such as form, written textuality, abstraction and denseness became important criteria in the evaluation of artistic expression. Theatre physically shifted to the formal stage and became alienated from the audience who used to participate actively in the performance. This alienation from the archetype of performance was the result of Western aesthetic imperialism.

Traditional African theatre still includes its audience actively in performances, as Shore (1969:8) states: *"Traditional theatre may be narrative as well as dramatic, and never treats the audience as a passive entity, but rather as a collection of active responsive, and participating human beings ... it demands relevance to the concerns of society, and ... attempts to effect some kind of change in the life of man, magical or otherwise."*

Taylor (1981:21) feels that popular theatre must have active audience involvement to be truly popular. Both the message and the medium must

invite participation, and it has to involve two-way communication, with opportunity for the audience to direct the actors or to act themselves. The actors have to listen to their audience.

Von Kotze (1988:34) notes the lively participation of audiences attending productions of Ilanga. This took place throughout the performance with some of the responses taken up by the players and eventually becoming part of the play. For example, when the audience 'boo-ed' the impimpi, he threatened to report them. Sole (1984:69) shows how attempts were made to include the audience in Ilanga through union songs, and actors talking to and sitting among the audience. The emphasis is on presenting situations with which the audience can identify, as well as an interpretation of the structures of oppression and exploitation in situations that are relevant to the audience. Malan (1988b:box 37) writes that Ilanga relied heavily on audience participation and implied that actors and audience alike shared the same field of reference. Such a play could not easily be performed later with the same measure of success. The importance of sharing the same field of reference between the performer and the audience is also stressed by Scheub (1975:15) in her description of the performance of the Xhosa ntsomi. "The performer does not explicitly interpret the narrative plot; that interpretation is embodied in the total performance. It is released in the cross-flow of imaginations, as the artist seeks to control and direct the imaginative capabilities of the audience. It is therefore important that the audience as well as the performer have a repertory of core-clichés and images, for both must concentrate their efforts on the many other aspects of the production."

Including clichés or references that are shared and understood by the audience is a technique aimed at involving an audience. Theatre workers also apply a number of other techniques to improve audience involvement. Kidd and Byram (1978c:85) list the special techniques that were applied for outdoor performances of the Laedza Batanani project in Botswana:

- minimal words are used;

- the narrative is repeated constantly to enable people who come late to have access to the performance;

- bold action is used to capture and retain the audience's attention; and

- where possible, the audience itself is involved in the action.

According to Kerr (1988:177), questioning was another technique used in Malawi to involve the audience. Questions are directed to the audience in order to make the play accessible to audience participation, a technique which proved to be hugely successful. The audience responded to questions and comments with approval, disapproval and sometimes even presented a fairly complex analysis of the issues concerned.

Kerr (1988:179) notes that open-ended scenarios are usually used *"with set-piece speeches or dilemmas allowing for audience intervention, the plays are always transformed according to the collective will of the audience."* This is another technique of involving the audience in the performance.

Kamlongera (1982:207-221) explains important techniques used in Malawi to involve the audience in theatre-for-development projects. Actors sat with the audience and acted in the round in an attempt to minimise the audience's feeling of being victimised. The technique of directing questions to the audience is an important part of theatre-for-development in Africa, without which it will easily be reduced to everyday 'alien' fun without any educational effect.

As was previously indicated, the choice of performance space also improves audience participation. Kidd and Byram (1976:6) describes theatre-for-development practices in Botswana. Held during *kgotla* meetings, these are not merely a collective experience but a powerful vehicle for audience participation. The audience become real participants in a *kgotla* trial, with the actors merging with the audience to form an organic theatrical unit.


### 3.7.2    Affective reaction versus cognitive reaction

Barber (1987a:10) writes that popular *art "has only one layer; [it] stimulates the emotions rather than the intellect."* She further contends that élite art

stimulates cognitive processes, analyses character and becomes part of the search for normative, social and psychological truths. Theatre-for-development can be truly successful if it is able to stimulate both the cognitive and the affective.

Byram and Kidd (1978:87) recognised the fact that drama in general stimulates analytical, emotional and spiritual responses. It is an organic and integrated medium in which issues become alive because participants no longer discuss the future in academic terms. They are part of the situation and respond to its pressures and problems in an imaginative and creative way. Based upon immediacy, such a theatre form develops spontaneously from the audience's participation and its emotional response. It is an almost unconscious process where the audience becomes involved without necessarily realising it (Kidd and Byram, 1978a:51). Kidd and Byram (1978a:36) also criticise one-way educational (propaganda) theatre, where audience *"members are passive recipients of government messages; they take no part in delivering and shaping the issues, in developing the creative event, and rarely in responding to the performance."* Kidd called this type of theatre the 'top-down' model which excluded villagers from the key stages of the process (Kidd, 1985:180). However, Kamlongera (1982:220,221) notes that dialectical, propaganda theatre can be successful if evaluation or feedback sessions are included. These break the illusion that *"villagers [a]re mere vessels to be filled with knowledge."*

In many cases of African theatre, the division between the performers and audience is mostly discarded, so that audiences become totally (effectively and cognitively) involved in the action 'onstage'.

Kerr (1988:178) writes about popular theatre in Malawi where the division between audience and performer is almost completely absent. There is no formal 'theatre' building that is cut off from the real world and serves as *a "dream-palace for the creation of illusions."* The immediacy of the theatrical event kept its relation to the real world uppermost in the minds of the audience (Kerr, 1988:178). During one performance, for example, an actor rebuked the audience when they were distracted by the arrival of a lorry. In another example of active involvement by the audience, they spontaneously reported for 'treatment' from the actor playing the doctor. More important still,

whenever a debate over moral or ideological issues ensued, the audience actively joined and urged the actors on towards the collective choice.

Sitas (1986:102) remarks that workers' theatre in South Africa involves both cognitive and emotional responses from the audience. The cognitive responses involve the lessons of the play and the issues which the audience should consider. These usually relate to awareness by the audience that they should not confuse the play with reality and that it should function as part of the development of an understanding of oppression in South Africa.

It is the fact that plays can move people emotionally that makes it a powerful tool for development. Barber (1987b:107) writes that, *"[a]ll performance art is concerned with establishing intimate responsive contact with the audience."* Hollyer and Luther (1985:28) show the differences between 'town' and 'township' plays in South Africa. They feel that, while the plays performed in towns are educating audiences, they do not necessarily induce them to action. In contrast, this is almost a natural reaction from township audiences. This could easily be interpreted as a racist observation, which is not applicable in general. It is rather the manner of presentation and the active audience involvement which can move an audience into action, even so-called 'town' audiences. Fugard, for example, said that he respects the audience's privacy and that even though he wants to talk to them, he does not want to assault them (Gray, 1982:109). This is quite the opposite aim of most African playmakers. During an open-air performance by some villagers in Malawi, the active and lively participation and frankness of the audience induced the owner of the well *to "shamefacedly agree[d] to allow the villagers to work on refurbishing his well, a task which was accomplished a few days later"* (Kerr, 1988:177).

Theatre-for-development will not be truly successful if it cannot emotionally and cognitively charge the audience into positive action.

## 3.8    CRITICISM AND CENSORSHIP

South Africa, in particular, has a destructive history with regard to censorship and criticism of theatre productions. Hauptfleisch and Steadman (1984:170) write that *"because of the nature of the political and social structure in the last few decades, the dominant culture has been that of 'whites'. This dominant culture has enshrined the values of Western traditions in literature, art and theatre, and universalized these as standards of judgement. New forms of theatre have been assessed by the yardstick thus evolved. The emergence of alternative theatre caused a reassessment of these standards. Critical perspectives previously based on universals are now seen as partial perspectives."* During the apartheid era, criticism was mainly based on the canonised principles and criteria of élitist productions, while popular theatre – mostly propaganda theatre as practised in the townships – was harshly censored. Many artists, like Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, were afraid of censorship and refused to commit their scripts until it was performed to acclaim abroad (Orkin, 1991:151). Most anti-apartheid plays were unscripted because of the fear of censorship, and improvised plays became the carriers of contemporary history, because all other forms of electronic media were controlled by the state and severely restricted by the emergency regulations of the time (Fleischman, 1990:112).

Although these plays had honourable aims and were essential to the struggle of its audiences, it brought about many problems with regard to criticism. Steinberg (1991:22) writes that during the era of anti-apartheid performances, it was inappropriate to criticise them, in the light of harsh conditions, vigilant censors, and the death and detention of theatre workers. Progressive drama critics more often than not encouraged anti-apartheid drama unequivocally. Steadman (1984b:87) points out that *"[a]s a result of the same tyranny of received habits in criticism and education, our own cultural history has been established in terms of Eurocentric values and therefore excludes from consideration those cultural forms which do not adequately fulfill those prescribed values. Thus it becomes possible to avoid confrontation with new works by hiding behind the critical preconceptions and socialised attitudes regarding what theatre should do."* It is evident from both these authors that these plays had some 'unfair advantages', because they could not be

criticised, and were seen as untouchable, because they represented the 'true, uncensored voice' of the people. Banning (1989:95) warns that there is a danger that the silence resulting from the states of emergency could create a situation where the few works that were created during that time, are seen to be more representative than would have been the case if stringent censorship were not applied.

Problems concerning criticism, however, were not limited to South Africa, but were felt throughout Africa by academics and artists of the trade. Clear definitions for different art forms were lacking, the flexible nature of new art forms, their improvisational character, the vibrancy of performance itself, the total lack of written scripts and many other complications made criticism nearly impossible. Criticising theatre in Africa on its formal structural features and in isolation from a community, as was previously the case, was insufficient.

Sole (1983:55) notes that there were no absolute divisions between so-called African and Western critical standards. But it is also true that many African critics realised that Western critical tools could not accommodate the specifics of African literature and culture. These included

- the spontaneous way in which art is socially produced and received in African societies;

- the important heritage and presence of oral literature;

- the significant interaction between oral and written forms;

- the linkage between a great deal of early African writing with polemics, journalism and didactic literature; and

- the huge problems in using definitions of European genres for African forms that do not comply to such definitions (Sole, 1983:53).

The irony is that traditional African art forms were not without their own methods of critical evaluation when Western critical tools were being imposed

on African art forms. Barber (1987a:35) writes that, in traditional African cultures, the audiences and other artists also practised critical evaluation. It seemed that some art forms had definite and sophisticated terminology for criticism. However, the implication is not that élite art is rigidly conservative. Most modern élite art consciously supports originality and individuality. Both élite and traditional art forms produce their effects through the use of a body of conventions that is recognised and supported by public opinion. This flexible attitude towards new ideas is imperative in criticising modern popular arts in Africa, because of the flexible and syncretic nature of the art forms themselves.

## 3.8.1    Conventional canonised criticism

Barber (1987b:107) contends that modern popular art is in essence syncretic. Their conventions are shared by both their creators and their audiences even though these are mostly flexible and largely undefined by any official canon of criticism, and are therefore exceptionally difficult to establish. Barber (1987a:12) also points out that a formally articulated body of aesthetic canons by which to measure popular arts is largely absent. However, an aesthetic does exist according to which certain works are recognised as 'popular', even though it is difficult to categorise, because it is an aesthetic of change, variety, novelty and flexibility.

According to Prinsloo, the emphasis of modern criticism has shifted to the contextual aspects of the production and the recipient of the message. Radical changes in theoretical approaches to the arts have led to criticism of the dominant aesthetic principles. The emphasis is now on the recipient of the message; with the perceptions of readers, listeners and viewers evaluated as phenomena in their own right. Contextual aspects also receive a far greater focus, such as production, the integration between the arts and the community and socio-political influences. A more open climate in and around the arts resulted, and the process of canonisation could be approached from a fresh point of view. Furthermore, well-established evaluation criteria were also subjected to criticism. The way has been paved for a new generation of artists who want to produce socially relevant art (Prinsloo, 1988:275).

## 3.8.2     Contextual criticism of the production

Steadman (1981:3) suggests a solution to the dilemma of insufficient canonised critical structures. *"Instead of trying to accommodate individual works for the theatre within the existing frameworks defined by attitudes such as [canonised criticism] the goal of scholarship should be to explain the generation of these works as unique and individual creations with specific socio-historical co-ordinates, each with a certain relation to the cultural formations which gave them birth."* Steadman (1980:43) also feels that *"[f]ailure to place the artefact under consideration within its contextual determinants, leaves the criticism open to attack."*

Barber (1987a:5) supports Steadman and points out that the concept 'popular arts' in itself, indicates two closely allied dimensions: the sociological popular and the aesthetic arts. Aesthetic criticism should be thoroughly integrated with criteria of the social science, as these two dimensions meet in the material and ideational production of the arts. The questions that should be raised are 'by whom', 'by what constraints', 'in whose interests', and 'in accordance with which conventions' these arts are produced.

Tomaselli (1980:56) feels strongly that theatre art cannot be analysed based on contents alone, but should take the context in which it was created into account. *"Committed theatre, as indeed all theatre, is the product of a specific set of social relations and the externalization of conflicts generated within a particular socio-historical matrix. To analyse it on the basis of text alone, even if one does exist, will constrain the study to a metaphorical mode, sterilizing it of relevant social, economic and political determinants."*

## 3.8.3     Recipient of the message

No amount of analysis or criticism that occurs on the academic periphery of actual theatre performances can determine the success or failure of a production. Even though such analysis and criticism can have an influence, it is, in the final instance, the recipient of the message – the audience – that determines the outcome of a theatre project.

### 3.8.3.1    Process orientation versus outcome orientation

'Development' as a concept implies change, movement, adaptation and therefore, by nature, signifies a process. Theatre-for-development performances have as their aim the bringing about of change and development, and as such, the outcome of the 'exchange' is important. But the outcome of any development initiative can only claim to be successful if the production is process-oriented. For example, whereas many playwrights will write a play with the aim of getting it produced, published and successfully acclaimed (outcome orientation), theatre-for-development plays are seen to be process-based. The nature of the process utilised to create a play is mostly indicative of the successful outcome of the project. Should the producers or facilitators of the improvised plays not be fully aware of the process, the outcome of the play will be unsuccessful. Kamlongera (1982:221) writes about a Malawian theatre-for-development project and points out that the effectiveness of the performances was based in the themes and content of the plays, discussions at the end of each performance, as well as on the attitude of the team, in other words, the complete process of arriving at a particular performance.

In theatre-for-development, success is not measured by the contents of the production, publication and criticism themselves, but by the outcome of the whole process of playmaking, performance and follow-up actions.

### 3.8.3.2    Performance orientation versus literary orientation

Theatre-for-development performances usually have no script, and should a script be available, it would differ from the performance in most cases. Mshengu (1976:44) points to the impossibility to judge most plays in South Africa by their so-called scripts, where the experience onstage has very little relation to what the playwright commits to paper. Steadman (1981:2) agrees that many African performances cannot be evaluated according to literary criteria or aesthetic form as they are often not presented in the playwright's or even actors' mother tongue, but multilingual, and not aimed at a publishing market but at a cosmopolitan popular audience.

Steadman (1980:43) furthers his argument by pointing out that the so-called 'new' theatre consists of a performance rather than a text. The playwright is rather the 'chief maker' than a writer. Plays are presentations of images of reality rather than imitations. To expect isolated literary qualities implies a total misunderstanding of the nature of this phenomenon. It is precisely this image of reality rather than the imitation of reality, that makes theatre-for-development plays successful and difficult to criticise according to canonised critical standards.

### 3.8.3.3    Immediate evaluation by the recipients

Because of the intimate relationship between audience and performers, especially in theatre-for-development performances where the actors and audience know each other, the audience responds immediately to the action and the actors' performance. According to Scheub (1975:13), the *ntsomi* storytelling tradition evokes such an immediate response that, if the performer is unsuccessful, the audience interrupts her performance with cries of *Phela*! (End!) which traditionally brings the performance to an end. Schipper (1982:11,12) also agrees that in oral African literature the spectators function as immediate critics either favourably or unfavourably.

Kerr (1988:179) describes the role of criticism in theatre-for-development projects in Malawi and limits it to that which is orally expressed immediately after the performance, whether by the whole audience or by small groups in discussions. These evaluations cover aesthetic, technical, and ideological aspects of the process, so that the evaluation leads to community action rather than being limited to the aesthetic of a play.

### 3.8.3.4    Democratic collective as part of the process of appraisal

An interesting aspect of the whole spectrum of evaluation and criticism is the democratic collective. Shingwenyana, a South African playwright, describes how he submits his scripts to his group (Tsakane Youth Group) for evaluation, criticism and approval, thus ensuring *"the process of democratic collectivism*

*in respect of the acceptability of the play for production and performance to its target audience"* (Oliphant, 1992:23).

By including a number of people in the playmaking process, a built-in appraisal and evaluation system is created. Theatre-for-development plays are usually improvised by a whole group of community members who are familiar with the preferences, dislikes, problems and needs of their own community. This democratic collective process improves the chances of presenting a performance that will meet with the approval of the audience.

## 3.9    EFFECTIVE CRITERIA FOR MEASURING OUTCOMES OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

Finding effective criteria to measure the outcome of any development project is a difficult and specialised field. Because theatre-for-development concerns itself with the conscientisation of people, their psychological attitudes and emotions, as well as their day to day material life, it is difficult to restrict measurement of outcomes to validated statistics as so many donors require. The question remains, however, how to measure the effects of an initiative in a situation where people are holistically the subjects of the process.

Criteria which are usually used for any development project should be adapted to suit the specific needs of theatre-for-development projects. Such criteria must measure the effectiveness of theatre-for-development as a medium of development.

Kidd and Byram (1978c:86) note some of the positive results of evaluation studies of the Laedza Batanani project. These results give some indication of the criteria which could be used to measure the outcomes of theatre-for-development initiatives:

- attracting large numbers of people;
- spectators realising the relevance and the value of performance;
- stimulus for discussion;
- stimulated active participation;

- responsible for some changes;

- help develop teamwork; and

- help provide a model for co-operative programming.

The above serves as an indication of what such criteria could include, but, it is not the aim of this study to identify or formulate definitive criteria for the measurement of theatre-for-development projects' successes. It constitutes an important area which will have to be subjected to scrutiny and research.

## 3.10    CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the dimensions of theatre-for-development were discussed in opposition to aesthetic theatre practices. The influence of the current South African socio-political, economic and cultural context in which theatre-for-development is created and performed, as well as the specific historical legacies were considered. The specific nature of theatre-for-development as a common phenomenon in other developing countries was defined and described. The aims and functions, nature of the creation, the milieu in which it is performed, audience involvement, criticism and censorship of specific theatre-for-development projects were discussed and highlighted. Finally, the need for research into criteria for measuring the outcomes of theatre-for-development initiatives was identified.

In Chapter 4, a model for the implementation of theatre-for-development will be provided. It consists of a consideration of the places where physical and spiritual development should occur. It looks at the role of community-based structures and organisations, as well as that of district-based fieldworkers in the process of development. A methodological model for the use of theatre-for-development techniques is provided and the problems which play a part in the implementation of such a model are identified and described.

# CHAPTER 4

# SUGGESTED MODEL FOR THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

## 4.1    INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided a theoretical background to development paradigms and principles. These form the foundation on which the model presented in this chapter, is based. The alternative development paradigm was mostly utilised, including the ideas for Julius Nyerere's self-reliance and basic needs approach, eco-development (in the hope that communities will manage their own development in relation to their environment), and Manfred Max-Neef's human scale development paradigm. In the latter case, the principles which were considered, include organic linkages, satisfaction of fundamental human needs and participatory democracy of people-centred micro-organisations to improve and sustain the community.

The flexibility, integrative and adaptable nature of culture and its products, of which theatre-for-development forms part, lends itself towards the facilitation of development according to these principles.

Chapter 2 furthermore described culture, theatre and theatre-for-development and provided examples of how it is implemented in other developing countries. Insights gained from the study of these examples were also incorporated into the model.

Chapter 3 described the different aspects and dimensions of theatre-for-development. It showed how theatre-for-development is created in a specific socio-political, economic and cultural context and how these contexts have an impact on this kind of theatre. Apart from contextual dimensions, other aspects have also been incorporated into the model for theatre-for-development. These include the following:

- it is mostly performed in localised, unconventional and informal settings;

- it is usually collectively created through improvisational processes;

- it includes functional, analytical, mobilising, inclusive, educational and empowering aims;

- it actively involves the audience/community on affective and cognitive levels;

- it aims at dealing immediately and collectively with criticism and censorship; and

- although it has clear and measurable outcomes, the primary focus is on the process as the most important outcome.

For the purposes of accessibility, the following model is provided.

## INTEGRATED MODEL OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT
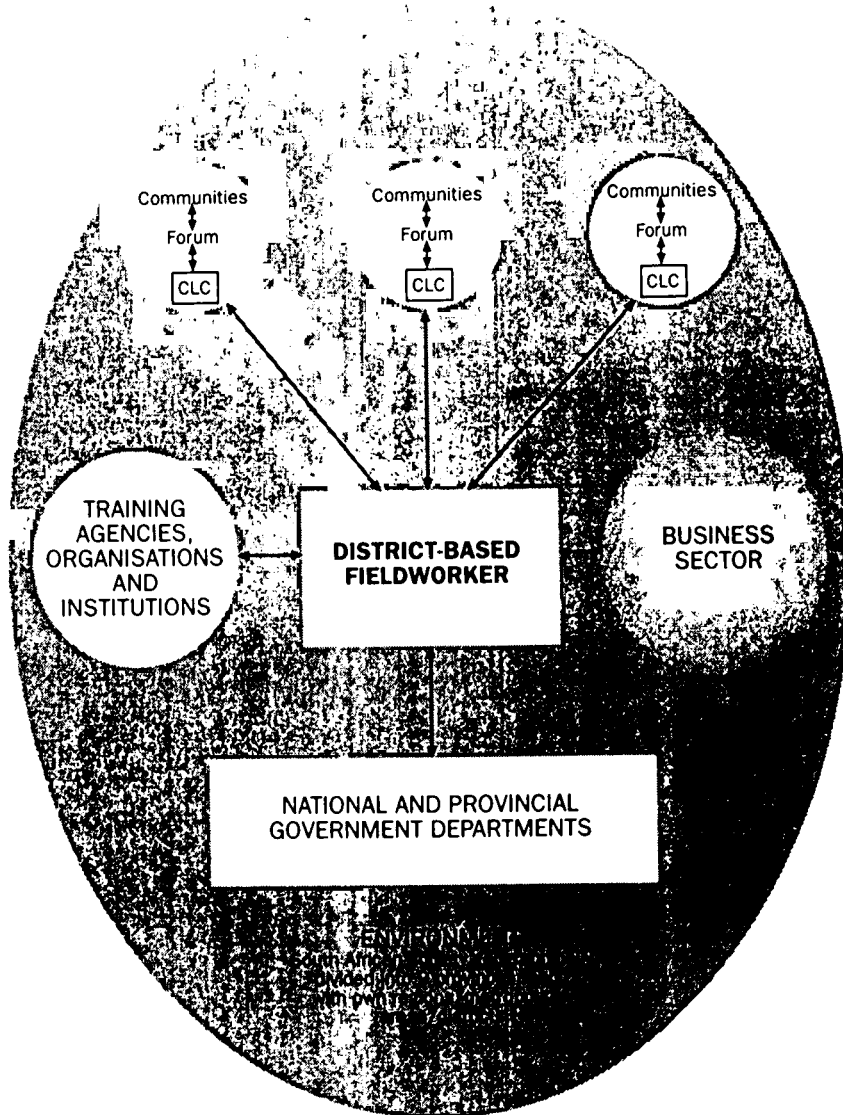


## 4.2 BACKGROUND TO SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The ideas expressed in this model also stem from extensive involvement in development and cultural processes during the past ten years. It is therefore a combination of ideas from the experiences of, among others, numerous workshops and the study of a variety of documents during this time. This involvement includes:

- the establishment of the National Arts Policy Plenary (NAPP) in the Free State and nationally;

- the National Arts Coalition (NAC) which was subsequently formed;

- development projects in the Free State, with specific reference to the Modulaqhoa Environmental Project in Botshabelo, the Kopanang Pre-school project functioning throughout the Free State and based in Mangaung in Bloemfontein;

- the ANC Department of Arts and Culture in Bloemfontein; and

- the working committee for the Minister of Education in the Free State on the reconstruction of Arts and Culture in the region.

The use of terms, such as 'community learning centres', 'district-based fieldworkers', etc., should not be seen as definitive. These concepts and their functions should be investigated, in order to arrive at a concept/model that is acceptable to all.

## 4. 3    PLACES OF DEVELOPMENT

Development can take place anywhere. The ideal situation would be for the government to support the establishment of community learning centres (CLCs) or 'life-long learning centres' (LLCs). Until now, such centres have been established with the help of non-government organisations (NGOs) which, since the 1994 elections, have found it difficult to secure funding, and their activities have thus diminished. Foreign funding is currently channelled to the government and its attempts at reconstruction and development, with very little result. Many cultural centres which have previously been funded by foreign sponsors, have found it difficult to survive.

Finding terminology or a name to describe these centres is not the aim of this study. They will therefore be referred to as community learning centres (CLCs) where life-long learning can take place. The organisation itself, the

management, principles and aims of these centres, however, will be discussed below.

It seems that the most acceptable idea is that CLCs are managed by the people themselves, who in all probability could organise themselves into a community-based organisation (CBO) or community forum. Community-based management could encourage capacity-building and empower the community.

Forums would therefore be able to make their own decisions and relieve their own needs through drawing up proposals to a funding body (albeit the government, business concerns or foreign sponsors) for projects and resources needed at their centre. This would empower people at grassroots level.

CLCs could also be established in co-operation with the relevant government departments, such as Agriculture, Health, Tourism and Education, in order to create a multifunctional, multidisciplinary centre which improves self-sufficiency.

CLCs should be able to provide the community in which they operate with basic training, such as reading and writing skills, welding, food gardening, etc. Specialised training could be received at other institutions, while basic training takes place at the centre itself. CLCs should have (funding) access to training taking place at universities, technikons, technical colleges, training centres, satellites and centres of education departments, and community colleges. Trainers, teachers and lecturers from these training institutions could also train community members at the CLC. This would supply learners with the means to study in a field where they are experiencing a need.

The prerequisites for a CLC that have been elicited from various workshops, are:

- utilisation of existing structures;
- availability of capable trainers to provide basic training locally;
- availability of equipment;
- managed by a community-based organisation;
- independence;

- provision of income-generating opportunities for trainees; and

- access to financial resources to enable specialised training.

To establish and attain the ideal structure for development, it is of the utmost importance that it should be decentralised in the form of one or more CLCs in a town and surrounding districts. The roleplayers can all be reached down to grassroots level. The Theatre Community in Nicaragua is a very good example where people have organised themselves into an organisation that takes care of its own training and development in local areas by utilising existing venues.

Theatre-for-development projects at such a centre could also play a major role to provide channels for basic training, provide information, alleviate social frustration, develop creative skills and social stability. These are all prerequisites to develop a healthy society.

With these centres, the opportunity could be granted for informal face-to-face interaction in a relaxed atmosphere for the smaller neighbourhood units. It must be emphasised that the welfare (basic needs) of the people should not only be catered for, but also the promotion of leadership, the alleviation of boredom, and the improvement of morale in general.

These centres could fulfil a healing function in South Africa. It could provide an opportunity for life enrichment and more efficient participation and integration, as well as opportunities for the employed and unemployed. This holistic pattern could restore the confidence and self-esteem of individuals and communities. These centres can become a cornerstone for community development in South Africa.

The proposed centres could address the following needs:

- All people in urban, peri-urban and rural areas must be reached and should benefit from it.

- Communal and school facilities, thus existing structures, could be used effectively so that all may benefit from them. Integrated programmes could be adapted and used in facilities which are already available, for example, literacy programmes in school buildings.

- A more thorough process of 'cross-pollination' between the privileged and the underprivileged could be embarked upon. For example, effective utilisation of facilities and equipment by everybody could be achieved, especially in view of the huge discrepancies between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' of the past.

- Each CLC should function with the aim of addressing the needs of its community. This should be done through making use of available local resources (human and other). For example, tuition can be given to the people by experts from the community in a given field. Such trainers could be paid for their services through fundraising efforts and grants.

It is of the utmost importance that activities are decentralised. One or more CLCs in a town and surrounding districts could ensure that all the roleplayers are reached down to grassroots level.

The character of these cultural centres should be determined by the community itself. Their development depends on the availability of sufficient support from the private sector, as well as from the state. The departments of Education and Culture should assist the initial process by providing funding to centres, but it will ultimately be the responsibility of each community forum to raise its own funds, to organise, to manage and be accountable for the funds.

## 4.4    DISTRICT-BASED FIELDWORKERS

The idea of a fieldworker or extension worker is to have a person responsible for the activities taking place at a CLC. Government departments have already employed a number of district-based extension workers in various fields, such as health, agriculture, etc., to assist communities in their quest for development. The ideal situation for development in South Africa would be for the various departments of theatre studies at universities and technikons, as well as organisations such as the National Community Theatre for Education and Development Network (NACTED), the Tsosang Theatre Education Development Association (TTEDA), the South African Association of Drama and

Youth Theatre (SAADYT), the National Training Project (NTP) and the Performing Arts Workers' Equity (PAWE) to provide theatre-for-development training for district-based fieldworkers. A fieldworker should be responsible for three to four CLCs in his/her district or area. It is important that the fieldworker builds a sound relationship with the community members of the centre. District-based fieldworkers facilitate development processes and, in turn, will report on the activities of the various centres to the government departments concerned.

The current socio-political and economic realities force development initiatives to focus almost exclusively on the provision of very basic needs for the majority of South Africa's population. However, a balance will have to be restored between providing 'bread-and-butter' and creating those cultural expressions, objects and artefacts that enhance human life and eventually create employment opportunities and self-sustaining income. In this regard, the Performing Arts Councils would have to start playing a role in their respective regions by employing and utilising district-based fieldworkers to facilitate the growth of arts and culture in South Africa.

To summarise, a system is needed through which district-based fieldworkers in each district:

- encourage, train and service development activities with specific reference to theatre-for-development and community theatre at a multifunctional, multidisciplinary CLC;

- work through and with the forum of each centre, including cultural forums, to ensure community participation;

- assist organisations to raise funds for development programmes and to manage it accountably;

- assist local trainers;

- ensure an integrated and holistic approach;

- serve the whole community, irrespective of culture, religion or gender;

- link up with tourism in order to create financially viable centres and thus create jobs;

- link communities with outside opportunities (NGOs, arts councils, individuals, etc.) and with accredited training institutions; and

- link and support all development initiatives with an holistic approach through the use of theatre-for-development.

The fieldworkers could use any of the ideas or the model of theatre-for-development which is proposed in this study, to facilitate development. The proposed methodology described below also incorporates the ideas expressed in the consideration of the dimensions of theatre-for-development contained in the previous chapter.

## 4.5    PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

The following methodology can easily be adapted for application with adults or children of any gender, race or culture in a community. It is a theatre form based on development and education through communal creation processes which can play a significant role in teaching adults and children about practical methods and ways through which to create awareness. The main guiding principle is the empowerment of ordinary people. People will be in a position where they can become the masters of their own destinies, where they can identify their own problems and find their own solutions, without being patronised. The possibilities are legion, because it can be adapted to any situation or problem. Theatre-for-development only needs creative and dedicated people to put it to work, in the process of reconstructing society.

## STEPS IN IMPLEMENTING THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   INFORMATION GATHERING      │
│ Problem identification through│
│ discussion (group/individual) and│
│         observation          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    SITUATION ANALYSIS        │
│     Community meeting,        │
│  discussion of situation and │
│          problems            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│       PLAYMAKING             │
│ Theatre group improvise a play│
│      about a problem         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      PERFORMANCE             │
│ Play performance by the people│
│       for the people         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  DISCUSSION/PROBLEM-         │
│        SOLVING               │
│ Problem-solving discussion between│
│ all roleplayers (small groups/whole│
│          group)              │
│    Plenary (if necessary)    │
│     Programme of action      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│       EVALUATION             │
│  Fieldwork and theatre group │
│         evaluation           │
│ Continual community evaluation│
│   and report back session    │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    FOLLOW-UP ACTION          │
│   Ensuring implementation    │
│ Providing networking opportunities│
│ Additional information and support│
└─────────────────────────────┘
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## STEP 1:     IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM/SITUATION

The identification of problems should take place within the community. Fieldworkers could stay for a period of time with the community and through meetings with community leaders and community members, as well as individual conversations and discussions, try and identify problems and needs.

Mwansa (1981:99) states that the person taking the initiative, should make contact with both the local people, as well as technical people which would include government employees, rural extension workers, community development workers, nurses, teachers, etc. Such individual meetings should lead to a group meeting. Pairs could also be formed who could interview community members.

Mwansa (1981:99) continues by giving a few pointers with regard to interviewing:

- *"Interviews should be informal.*

- *Interview people wherever they are e.g. wells, clinics, drinking places.*

- *Interview a cross section of the community e.g. males, females, children, leaders, followers etc."*

Mda (1993:68) gives a short summary of a few methods of information gathering which were investigated at Kumba in Cameroon during a workshop to search for effective methods in the practice of theatre-for-development:

- *"The **flooding method**, whereby a whole group would flood the village, meeting the villagers wherever they were and holding informal discussions with them;*

- *the **homestead technique**, which involved living with a family and trying to pick up as much information as possible through discussion and observation;*

- *the **interview method**, through which formal interviews would be held with designated people in the villages;*

- *the **performance method**, which involved improvisation through which both participants and villagers would obtain a deeper understanding of issues, with improvisation changing as understanding grew;*

- *The **official eye technique**, which simply meant obtaining information from official sources;*

- *the **hierarchical method**, whereby the participants talked with the village chief and councillors."*

Mda (1993:68) continues that the Marotholi Travelling Theatre experimented with two methods, namely the public meeting and the flooding method, which they have found to be more effective because, *"of the strong element of discontinuous discourse in it, rather than the continuous discourse of a public meeting."*

## STEP 2:    ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM/SITUATION

After the discussion period, a community meeting should be held during which the **origin of the problem,** as well as the **consequences of the problem** are discussed. Groups interested in producing a play about the problems are identified.

Mwansa (1981:100) feels that the purpose of problem analysis is to find and understand the root problems. Problem analysis should be a deep educational experience to all the participants. Mwansa gives a list of steps to follow:

1. *"Tabulate all problems from the different interviewing pairs.*

2. *Indicate the frequency of occurrence by ticking (✓) every time the same problem is mentioned.*

3. *Take most common problems and group them into: -*
a) *Problems which can be solved by government alone*
b) *Problems which can be solved by the community.*
c) *Problems which can be solved with assistance of government and other agencies.*

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*4. Choose one problem you feel most pressing or critical. Analyse it further. Ask yourselves again, why it is a problem and why it has not been solved and what could be done to solve it. You will find that some problems are due to lack of co-operation, poor leadership etc.*

*Remember: Problem analysis constitutes a very important part of group research and should not be rushed."*

## STEP 3: PLAYMAKING

This step involves the improvisation or rehearsing of a play that is based in the origin and consequences of the problem.

During this phase, the fieldworkers work with the theatre group/groups on improvising and producing the play.

Steps which can be followed are:

- Be sure that the group members know each other and are familiar with each other. Should there be conflicting views of the problem in the group, it will be wise to separate them to illustrate their different points of view.

- Identify clear aims for the improvisation as the improvisation continues.

- Decide on the actions/story.

- Decide on the place, time, characters (keep the time, place and characters relevant and immediate to the community in which you operate. Should the issue be too sensitive, it would be wise to change names, time and place).

- Divide the story into scenes:

    Scene 1 – Current situation and problem

    Scene 2 – Consequences of problem

Scene 3 – Origin of problem

Scene 4 – Solution (OPTIONAL)

- Identify clear aims for each scene.

  Scene 1 – The first aim is to present the current situation and problem.

  Scene 2 – The second aim is to show the consequences of the problem.

  Scene 3 – The third aim is to show the origin of the problem.

  Scene 4 – The fourth aim is to show a solution to the problem (OPTIONAL).

Mwansa (1981:102) notes the importance of an ending when he states: *"You should also think about the ending: should it end in conflict or suspense or should it offer solutions. Unlike other forms of performing arts the contents of popular theatre reflect the problems and solutions found out in relation with the community."*

- Play-act the first scene, keeping the aim of the scene in mind.

- Rehearse and change the first scene until everybody is satisfied with the performance.

- Continue to improvise and rehearse the other scenes in the same manner.

The above described one method, but various other play techniques, like invisible theatre and forum theatre can also be rehearsed in the same manner, as long as the fieldworker has a clear understanding of the techniques. Forum theatre, for example, must have intervention points built into the story line, and must have an unsatisfactory ending. The fieldworker must have 'jokering' skills (facilitation) when dealing with the audience during a performance.

## STEP 4: PERFORMANCE

During this step, the improvised play, dealing with the problem, is presented to the whole community by the theatre group at a community gathering. This group has previously been identified and has indicated its willingness to participate and improvise a play about the community's problem/s. The group consists of community members, theatre **for** the people **by** the people, which strongly links up with Boal's ideas of forum theatre. It is also important that the presentation of the play is done in a local setting with which the community is familiar as a gathering place.

Marketing such a performance occurs usually by word of mouth, but various other methods such as a parade, posters and the use of loudspeakers, are equally successful. Audience participation is clearly encouraged, and community singing before the start of the play demystifies the aesthetic space and encourages participation.

The fieldworker ususally facilitates this performance and must ensure and encourage participation from the audience by raising questions and talking to the audience (informally). .

## STEP 5: DISCUSSION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

Discussion about the contents of the play and possible solutions to the problems should take place immediately after the play. Problem-solving is more effective when the audience discusses possible solutions to the problem immediately after the performance. The fieldworkers and theatre group members may have included a possible solution and this could be discussed with the community. The facilitator can lead the questions, or breakaway groups can be formed by the audience with report-back after deliberation.

Mwansa (1981) suggests that the entire audience should be split into smaller groups of ten to fifteen persons at the end of the performance. Group sizes will depend on the number of resource persons who can conduct a discussion. Each group should have a chairperson and a secretary. The

chairperson should not dominate the discussion and should facilitate people's participation in the discussion. Care should be taken not to relinquish this leadership position to the most vocal members of the group. The following tasks should be undertaken in the small group discussions:

- comment on the performance;

- extract the messages derived from the performance;

- judge the messages in terms of their accuracy; and

- if the problems that were presented in the performance were adequately explored, decide what course of action could be adopted to solve them.

After the small group discussions are completed, the audience should return for a final discussion, during which the following steps should be completed:

- Each secretary should report the answers to the questions and any suggested solutions that the group decided on.

- At the end of the secretaries' reports, comments should be invited from the audience. Comments should be limited to the group reports and the performances.

- Consensus about solutions to the problems that were raised, should be reached. This will involve the evaluation of the suggested solutions.

- The group should commit itself to a programme of action and decide what they will do, and when.

- Comments in the form of a general summary should be provided by two or three of the group leaders (Mwansa, 1981:102,103).

Another option is to go back in rehearsal and improvise a problem-solving 'play' which can be presented at a later stage to the community. The best

option would be for problem-solving scenes to be improvised immediately onstage while the audience makes suggestions. The group has to feel secure about this form of improvisation. However, community members can also be asked to come and assist the group during these improvisations. In Boal's forum theatre productions, the audience is asked to intervene on behalf of the suppressed/protagonist of the play and to 'try out' different solutions. It is suggested, however, that if a development issue is dealt with, a meeting should be held after a forum performance where decisions and plans can be made for future action. This ensures that community members are not only conscientised, but that they leave with a practical plan of action.

**Questions that can be asked of the audience during discussion:**

- Is the play a clear reflection of the situation? Motivate your answer.

- Are there any other factors that should be taken into consideration? What are they?

- Do you think the characters are making a fuss about nothing? Motivate your answer.

- What can the characters in the play do to alleviate the situation? Do you agree to the solution of the characters? Motivate your answer.

- Will they ever find a solution?

## STEP 6: EVALUATION

Participants involved during the initial phases of the project – fieldworkers and members of the theatre group – should evaluate the exercise during and after its completion. Evaluation should also be done by the community and through their participation. Mwansa provides the following list of aspects that could be taken into account during the evaluation phase:

- the number of people who attended the performance;

- remarks made by people – they may have requested more information that was not readily available, but could have been obtained from other sources;

- the nature of the discussions, for example, constructive problem-solving, destructive (dampening spirit), leading no-where, just rationalising; and

- general comments about the exercise and suggestions for its improvement (Mwansa, 1981:103,104).

Continuous evaluation of the process throughout its seven steps would be of significant value. Community involvement is essential and the outcomes of evaluation reports should also be made available to the community. Report back sessions with the community are essential and ensure community empowerment and involvement. Such activities are also part of the follow-up action.

The process of evaluation in theatre-for-development is a complicated and intensive issue. Basic evaluation can be done effectively, but it is always difficult to judge how interventions have changed the lives, hearts and minds of people. Theatre-for-development is and always will be a spiritual and emotional experience because it deals with people in an intimate way. During two recent theatre-for-development workshops, a psychologist was continually present and participated in the process by being responsible for the evaluation before, during and after the workshops. This might be an excessive measure in ordinary development situations, but clearly shows the complexity of the issue of evaluation.

## STEP 7:    FOLLOW-UP ACTION

During this phase, the fieldworker would continue to visit the CLC in order to ensure that the solutions and problem-solving actions are implemented as decided during the previous phase. Possible problems which were not

anticipated during the previous phases, might arise and the fieldworker must be in a position to assist the community in addressing these. It is also during this phase that networking and linking are of importance. The community is thus provided with more information and opportunities which might enhance and stimulate further initiatives.

## 4.6 PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING SUCH A MODEL

It is difficult for any development initiative, including theatre-for-development, to move across cultural boundaries, while recognising the needs of self-defined groups, because the **geographical** and **linguistic boundaries** created during the apartheid era are still prevalent.

Orkin (1992:39) states that much of the contestatory drama and drama criticism that have appeared in South Africa, and certainly those which have subsequently been published, are predominantly in English. Although Mphahlele has argued that English has been appropriated by the oppressed classes as a tool of liberation, Njabulo Ndebele warns that it must still be treated with caution. Orkin stresses the important fact that, in present-day South Africa, English is still only used by a minority of the South African people as a first language.

However, of the many vehicles available to facilitate development, theatre-for-development is best suited to accommodate these geographical and linguistic boundaries, because it works on the principle that the communities/people involved, create their own play about their problems, in their own language and in accordance to their own cultural practices.

Theatre as a tool to facilitate development is largely **unknown**. Development agencies should be informed about the possibilities of theatre-for-development and extension/development workers should be trained in its techniques. People in the development and educational field are reluctant to use an unknown technique and, unfortunately, have **preconceived ideas** about art and theatre. This is a severe obstacle, and any initiative should emphasise that theatre-for-development is part of popular education which is

one of the most recent growth areas in the field of education and development.

**Transport**, or rather its unavailability, is one of the major problems facing education and development in South Africa. South Africa's communities are scattered across the country. It is a fact that those communities that are the most deprived, are the ones furthest away from the urban areas. Mbowa remarks that theatre-for-development projects could easily be replicated, except that it is often hampered by the lack of facilities and resources. In the case of the drama department at Makerere University in Uganda, she comments that they *"don't have transport. When I return to Uganda, I want to propose funding for a van and petrol. That is the most effective method. Of course, the granting agency then follows you around"* (Sicherman, 1994:64). But despite the transport problem and its financial implications, theatre-for-development is still a viable and effective alternative to modern mass media-oriented development ideas.

A problem which Mbowa touched upon is the influence of **funding organisations** on the process of development. Development initiatives are easily hi-jacked by funding organisations who have their **own agendas**, which do not always take the needs of the community into account. Furthermore, aid agencies and organisations have become wary of development organisations and NGOs that do not adhere to the principles of **good governance** and promise results that are never realised. Good and effective communication before and during proposal negotiations and the effective and timely implementation of project agreements can alleviate this problem.

One of the problems facing the establishment of theatre-for-development in South Africa is the lack of **trained people** in development and theatre. Mbowa points out that they continually need more resource people and facilitators and, even though they train their students in all the different theatre forms, they *"put the most emphasis on theatre for development. It's important that they get to know other forms – for purposes of comparison, and in case they want to go into the conventional theatre – but what is more useful now is theatre for development"* (Sicherman, 1994:65). Because theatre has been used mostly for aesthetic reasons, very few students of theatre have a knowledge of development principles, while development workers have only

recently been introduced to theatre-for-development as a facilitating tool for development through training workshops run by the National Training Project, NACTED and TTEDA. This lack of resource people and facilitators is aggravated by a lack of facilities and funding. However, this could be rectified by universities, technikons and colleges recognising the importance of theatre-for-development and including it in their courses. Theatre-for-development initiatives have already been incorporated in a number of African universities for some time, for example, Makerere University in Uganda.

Another problem is promoting **community participation**. It would seem that the only way of achieving this is to involve local government and community structures in the performance. Mbowa talks about this problem and the solution they found for it in Uganda. *"When Mr Wadulo goes with this troupe, they perform one of the plays and at the end take up brooms to clear the trenches. But in most cases the people just sit back and watch the performers doing it. So I suggested that he go to the local Resistance Council and speak to the chairman, to the mobilizer – each council has a chairman and a mobilizer – and involve them in the play so that they are the people who arise at the end, take the brooms, and invite the people to join them. Otherwise the performers become the City Council cleaners themselves. He told me that he did it, and it worked"* (Sicherman, 1994:66).

During the interview, Mbowa also noted another problem which could very easily be found in the South African situation. Communities can become **dependent** on facilitators or theatre groups. It is important for people to realise that they must take charge of their own situation and that they are the only ones who can change their lives. She finally states: *"It's important in community-based theatre to leave the tool with the people"* (Sicherman, 1994:67).

Theatre for educational or development purposes in Africa has taken theatre to the people, but has sometimes failed because it was a once-off event that did not create any *"organizational capacity for collective action"* (Eyoh, 1986:20). Creating an **infrastructure** that can provide support, without creating dependency, could solve this problem and utilise the cultural strengths of the people themselves. Keeping such an infrastructure functional, costs money,

and the lack of funds always emerges as one of the major problems in development.

It is the goal of the RDP to "... *set South Africa firmly on the road to eliminating hunger, providing access to safe water and sanitation for all, ensuring the availability of affordable and sustainable energy sources, eliminating illiteracy, raising the quality of education and training for children and adults, protecting the environment, and improving our health services and making them accessible to all"* (ANC, 1994:14). Putting their money where their mouths are, will show the country's people that the government is serious about development. It is thus the responsibility of the government to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and **financial assistance** are provided to enable people to develop and empower themselves.

The RDP, however, does not present a clear plan of action for implementing these carefully constructed views and ideals. Through effectively incorporating this model in development projects, it would be possible to implement any development and reconstruction plan in South Africa.


## 4.7    CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 formulated a model for theatre-for-development and suggested a methodology for the use and implementation of theatre-for-development techniques. The model is based on the principles of the alternative development paradigm as discussed in Chapter 2 and deals with the places of development, and the functions and abilities of district-based fieldworkers. The method of implementing theatre-for-development as a tool to facilitate development involves the following steps: information gathering, situation analysis, playmaking, performance, discussion and problem-solving, evaluation and follow-up action. Some difficulties and problems which might arise during the implementation of this model are identified and suggestions are made for ways to overcome these obstacles.

The last chapter will conclude this dissertation with a brief summary of the findings of the literature survey, as well as of the model. Some conclusions will be drawn and selected areas for further research will be indicated.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUDING REMARKS

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the proposed model for theatre-for-development was presented. The model is based on four different aspects: the places of development, the role of district-based fieldworkers, a seven-step methodology, and the problems experienced during the course of implementation. The model is derived from the study of a variety of development paradigms, international examples, an understanding of relevant concepts that form part of the model and its implementation, as well as the different dimensions of theatre-for-development.

In this concluding chapter, a summary will be provided of the findings of the study of the development paradigms, concepts, examples, the dimensions of theatre-for-development, and the model. Conclusions drawn from the findings of the research will be provided, as well as areas that justify further research.

## 5.2    SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research for this dissertation was undertaken against the backdrop of prevailing conditions in South Africa. References were made to the socio-political and economic context of post-apartheid South Africa. The study set out to establish reasons why theatre-for-development is not used in the South African context and to formulate an integrated model for its use that is derived from successful international examples and methodologies.

### 5.2.1    Definitions, theoretical contexts and international examples

In this section, a background to development was provided in the form of an investigation of different development paradigms. These included the

modernisation paradigm, the effects of Marxism and neo-Marxism, as well as alternative methods for development. These were identified as neo-populism, the basic needs approach, eco-development and human scale development.

A definition of the concept 'development' was provided and the principles and concerns of development were pointed out.

The linkage between the concept 'community' and the African philosophy of *ubuntu* was made. This included the concerns of the African population in the country with a growing westernisation and an increased focus on individualism.

A conceptual framework for the notion of 'culture' was provided and specific reference was made to the relationships between culture, ritual and tradition in anticipation of the use that theatre-for-development makes of these aspects in the lives of developing communities.

Theatre was placed in the context of both traditional forms and Western aesthetic forms. The aims and uses of theatre were pointed out and reasons were provided for its use in both an educational and development context.

The background and history of theatre-for-development were provided and an attempt was made to define it as a new form of theatre with a specific place in the overall theatre genre.

The use of theatre for education and development was elaborated on by referring to the work of Augusto Boal. For the purposes of this dissertation, his concept of 'theatre of the oppressed' is of particular importance, and the different forms were identified: forum, invisible, image, culture, newspaper and legislative theatre were touched upon.

Following this, a number of examples were provided of the use of theatre in educational and development contexts in countries of the developing world. These countries included Nicaragua, Kenya, Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Specific characteristics of these theatre initiatives were identified that directly contributed to the formulation of the proposed model.

## 5.2.2    Dimensions of theatre-for-development

Theatre-for-development is seen as a multidimensional phenomenon. The research focused particularly on a number of dimensions that are relevant to this kind of theatre.

The context in which creation takes place was considered in terms of the current socio-political context in South Africa, with specific reference to basic needs; current problems in training and education, particularly human resource development; democratisation and empowerment; and attempts at reconstruction and development. Furthermore, the informal economic and the unofficial cultural contexts were also considered. The historical legacies of the past and their impact on cultural development were seen in terms of the inhibition of acculturation and syncretism, the development of ethno-nationalism despite major social changes, and the manifestation of current cultural difficulties and problems.

The collective and improvisational manner in which theatre-for-development is created, was pointed out, with explanations of how these processes function in practice.

The aims and functions of theatre-for-development were identified as functionality; analysis and criticism; mobilisation and conscientisation; inclusivity; educational; empowerment; and the creation of a sense of community.

In similar vein, the characteristics of performances that are created as part of theatre-for-development processes were provided. These include open, flexible, changeable and inclusive. Contents/theme/image were juxtaposed against form/convention/ structure. The local relevance of such performances was touched upon, as were time and place constraints. Furthermore, reference was made to theatre-for-development's multilingualism, the stereotypical characterisation that is often employed in performances, the collective and plurimedial style that is applied, as well as the use of oral and indigenous performance forms.

The localised, unconventional and informal context within which theatre-for-development takes place, was explained as one of its strengths.

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Audience involvement was typified as a crucial aspect of theatre-for-development, and active involvement was contrasted to passive appreciation, and affective reaction to cognitive reaction.

The effects of criticism and censorship were considered with specific reference to conventional canonised criticism and contextual criticism. In this regard, the recipient of the message was focused on by juxtaposing process against outcome orientation, and performance against literary orientation. The immediacy with which recipients evaluate the performance and the democratic collective as part of the process of appraisal were also touched upon.

In conclusion, the dimensions of theatre-for-development were also considered in the light of the necessity to formulate effective criteria to measure the outcomes of theatre-for-development. No attempt was made to formulate such criteria, but the value of their availability was underlined.

### 5.2.3    Model for theatre-for-development

The dissertation aimed at providing a practical model for the use of theatre-for-development that would address the salient issues confronting South Africa at present. In this regard, the places where development occurs, were referred to, particularly with reference to the role of community-based organisations, provincial and national government structures, funding bodies, and the whole range of training and educational institutions.

The contribution of district-based fieldworkers as facilitators for development projects and practitioners of theatre-for-development was underlined.

A seven-step methodology for the application of theatre-for-development techniques was proposed. These steps include the identification of the problem/situation; the analysis of the problem/situation; playmaking; performance; discussion and problem-solving; evaluation; and follow-up action. The methodology is practical and could act as a quick guide for fieldworkers undertaking development projects in communities.

The potential problems in the implementation of such a model were identified as geographical and linguistic boundaries, fear of the unknown, preconceived ideas

about theatre and development, practical difficulties such as the lack of transport, the influence of funding organisations and problems with good governance, the lack of trained people to apply the model, the promotion of community participation, dependency on facilitators, the lack of infrastructure, and problems with official financial assistance.


## 5.3      CONCLUSIONS

Theatre-for-development techniques have been used successfully worldwide, especially in developing countries after socio-political upheaval and as part of the process of establishing a democratic society.

It is a powerful tool in the hands of the people and can conscientise, empower, educate, liberate, mobilise and generate a strong sense of community.

The model proposed in this dissertation, if implemented correctly, will not foster communities' dependency on any fieldworker, because communities are empowered to identify, analyse and find solutions to their own unique problems. They are also put in a position where they can develop and formulate their own action plans to implement change and development. This eliminates the potential (negative) power of the fieldworker.

Although a small and new initiative in South Africa, there is already enough expertise to train development workers in using theatre-for-development for facilitation. Organisations such as TTEDA and NACTED provide training and could easily become involved in a larger effort to train people and current students of theatre and development.

The model suggests the formation of a sustainable infrastructure which should be managed and sustained by the community, while utilising existing structures such as government departments for additional support.

The model can be used in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction through the use of theatre-for-development techniques to facilitate development while encouraging participation, breaking down apathy and the 'culture of silence'.

This model can address any issue which the community identifies as a problem. Theatre is about conflict, and it is therefore impossible to find an issue that cannot be dealt with through this process. Issues that have already been addressed by means of theatre-for-development have included health, gender, race, agriculture and the environment, employment, education, and basic needs such as food, shelter, water, sanitation, energy, transport and security.

Problems cannot necessarily be prevented, and internal power struggles often arise in development initiatives. Although these cannot be prevented, they can be addressed and reconciled through the use of theatre-for-development techniques. The proposed model is not state-controlled, but seats the power and control within the community.

Government departments, the business sector, and funding bodies are authoritarian and often controlling by nature. Finding support and funding for a model which is based in fluid forms and is flexible in nature is therefore difficult. Although funding and support are provided to development initiatives by business and government, these are also clearly steered and managed under the auspices of continual report-backs and proof of outcomes.

Business and government also prefer not to use tools for development which imply liberation from oppression, because it implies a tendency towards the 'left'. Art is not seen as something which perpetuates the stable order, but rather as a catalyst which creates social change. These preconceived ideas tend to inhibit funding and support. Sponsors therefore tend to support 'middle of the road' tools which proclaim to create development. People are by nature afraid of the unknown and theatre-for-development initiatives find that funding and support are difficult to procure.

The positive financial implications in the implementation of this model are evident. It does not carry the burden of expensive technology and can serve to address problems holistically, which avoids a duplication of services.

Theatre-for-development is inherently accessible as it is created by communities for their own consumption. In this regard, it must be stressed that mass media communication and training methods are much more costly and ineffective in communities where literacy and access to electricity and technology are limited.

Mass media intervention and education methods are also more costly because of geographic and linguistic boundaries which must be taken into account in the South African situation.

The current basic needs approach that prevails in development circles and the problems facing the people in South Africa, have convinced development agencies, the government and the majority of the people that art and cultural needs are peripheral, not basic enough, and of no value. However, it seems to be rather a question of appropriate, relevant and accessible art forms than one of value. In this regard, theatre-for-development can play an important role as part of an evolution of expressive forms which will eventually lead to 'art' that is more refined.

It is important that people broaden their narrow vision of development and find ways of implementing development actions holistically. This model provides a practical, functional and economic way of implementing development initiatives in an holistic manner. It also implies and suggests effective networking which is a crucial factor to successful outcomes.

## 5.4    AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A number of issues that warrant further investigation can be identified from the research that was undertaken for this dissertation. These issues include:

There is a need for research into effective criteria to measure the outcomes of theatre-for-development. It remains difficult to judge the outcome of an intervention which aims to have an effect on the 'hearts and minds' of the people. The variety of dimensions that are influenced by theatre-for-development contribute to the problems in finding criteria. However, as development implies an outcome, the thorough and effective evaluation of such theatre-for-development projects could contribute to the continuous improvement of the model.

Further research into the establishment of community learning centres would make a valid contribution to the field of development and theatre-for-development. In this regard, the focus could be on the process, methodology and problems in establishing, managing and sustaining such a centre.

A study of the practical implementation, as well as experimentation with theatre-for-development techniques has not yet been done in South Africa. This could further refine the model and provide valuable insights for training institutions that are or intend to become involved in providing such training.

Research into the linkages between funding organisations as possible contributors to the establishment of community learning centres and the utilisation of district-based fieldworkers could contribute to further this endeavour.

The impact of implementing holistic development models – in this instance, theatre-for-development – on African (traditional) value systems and communities is a field which warrants analysis. As theatre-for-development focuses strongly on the inner life of people, while not neglecting their physical and material life, the effects of interventions would have to take such value systems into account. This cannot be achieved without the necessary analysis and insight.

## 5.5 AFTERTHOUGHTS

During the process of gathering information for this dissertation and recording the findings on paper, much has changed in the country. The special ministry that was responsible for the Reconstruction and Development Programme was closed and the departments that took responsibility for its implementation in regional and national structures no longer exist. Indications are that 'development' and liberation seem to have damaged the sense of *ubuntu* which was inherent in African communities. The work of the performing arts councils has deteriorated without any new initiatives or structures being established. The arts, like religion or any kind of spiritual need, seem to take the back seat. The highest buildings of our modern society indicate the religion of the day as the economy, and happiness is mostly equated with the attainment of goods. The huge grants and sponsorships spilled into sports and their development, reflect a world that prefer the physical to the spiritual.

During the writing of this study, so many things happened in the country, which influenced the lives of individuals and communities alike. It would be dishonest and presumptuous to state that this dissertation presents a solution to the country's problems. In fact, this study has only raised the awareness of the problems and difficulties facing our country and its people. However insufficient

our tools, knowledge and best intentions are to address the overall dilemma facing development in this country, every small effort will make a difference to the lives of ordinary people.

Like a true believer in the disconsolate and disadvantaged people around us, I remain confident that theatre-for-development is a valuable and effective tool for development that originates in the spirit and creative energy of the people themselves. It is a wonderful, empowering, liberating and healing method of creating peace and development. It is a tool which can connect us to ourselves, our own capabilities and our soul.

> *He looked at his own Soul*
> *with a telescope. What seemed*
> *All irregular, he saw and*
> *shewed to be beautiful*
> *Constellations: and he added*
> *to the Consciousness hidden*
> *worlds within worlds.*

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# ABSTRACT

The research for this dissertation was undertaken against the backdrop of prevailing conditions in South Africa. References were made to the socio-political and economic context of post-apartheid South Africa. The study set out to establish reasons why theatre-for-development is not used in the South African context and to formulate an integrated model for its use that is derived from successful international examples and methodologies.

The background to development was provided by referring to different development paradigms: the modernisation paradigm, Marxism and neo-Marxism, and neo-populism, the basic needs approach, eco-development and human scale development as alternative methods for development.

A definition of the concept 'development' was provided and the principles and concerns of development were pointed out. A conceptual framework of 'culture' was provided with specific reference to the relationships between culture, ritual and tradition. The aims and uses of theatre were pointed out and reasons were provided for its use in educational and development contexts.

The history of theatre-for-development was provided and the use of theatre for education and development was elaborated on by referring to the work of Augusto Boal. His concept of 'theatre of the oppressed' is of importance, and includes forum, invisible, image, culture, newspaper and legislative theatre.

Examples were provided of the use of theatre in educational and development contexts in countries of the developing world. Specific characteristics of these theatre initiatives were identified that directly contributed to the formulation of the proposed model.

Theatre-for-development was seen as a multidimensional phenomenon. The context in which creation takes place was considered in terms of the current socio-political context in South Africa, referring to basic needs; current problems in training and education; and attempts at reconstruction and development. The informal economic and the unofficial cultural contexts were considered. The

historical legacies of the past and their impact on cultural development were pointed out.

The collective and improvisational manner in which theatre-for-development is created and the functioning of its processes in practice were explained.

The aims and functions of theatre-for-development were identified as functionality; analysis and criticism; mobilisation and conscientisation; inclusivity; educational; empowerment; and the creation of a sense of community. The characteristics of performances that are created as part of theatre-for-development processes were provided. Reference was made to theatre-for-development's multilingualism, the stereotypical characterisation that is often employed in performances, the collective and plurimedial style that is applied, as well as the use of oral and indigenous performance forms.

The localised, unconventional and informal context within which theatre-for-development takes place, was explained as one of its strengths.

Audience involvement was typified as an aspect of theatre-for-development, and active involvement was contrasted to passive appreciation, and affective reaction to cognitive reaction.

The effects of criticism and censorship were considered with specific reference to conventional canonised criticism and contextual criticism. In this regard, the recipient of the message was focused on by juxtaposing process against outcome orientation, and performance against literary orientation. The immediacy with which recipients evaluate the performance and the democratic collective as part of the process of appraisal were also touched upon. The dimensions of theatre-for-development were also considered in the light of the necessity to formulate effective criteria to measure the outcomes of theatre-for-development.

The dissertation provided a practical model for the use of theatre-for-development by focusing on the places where development occurs, and the contribution of district-based fieldworkers as facilitators for development projects and practitioners of theatre-for-development. A methodology for the application of theatre-for-development techniques was proposed and potential problems in the implementation of such a model were identified.

Concluding remarks included a summary of the research findings, conclusions drawn from the information contained in the dissertation, as well as the identification of areas for future research.

# OPSOMMING

Die navorsing vir hierdie verhandeling is gedoen teen die agtergrond van die heersende omstandighede in Suid-Afrika. Verwysings is gemaak na die sosio-politiese en ekonomiese kontekste in post-apartheid Suid-Afrika. Die studie was daarop gemik om redes te vind waarom teater-vir-ontwikkeling nie in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks aangewend word nie en om 'n geïntegreerde model vir die gebruik van hierdie teatervorm daar te stel wat van suksevolle internasionale voorbeelde en metodologieë afgelei is.

Die agtergrond tot ontwikkeling is verskaf deur verwysings na verskillende ontwikkelingsparadigmas: die moderniseringsparadigma, Marxisme en neo-Marxisme, en neo-populisme, wat die basiese behoefte-benadering, eko-ontwikkeling en menslike skaalontwikkeling as alternatiewe metodes vir ontwikkeling insluit.

Die konsep 'ontwikkeling' is gedefinieer en die beginsels en fokuspunte van ontwikkeling is aangedui. 'n Konseptuele raamwerk is vir kultuur verskaf met spesifieke verwysing na die verhouding tussen kultuur, ritueel en tradisie. Die doelwitte en gebruike van teater is verduidelik en redes vir die gebruik daarvan in opvoedkundige en ontwikkelingskontekste is verskaf.

Die geskiedenis van teater-vir-ontwikkeling is kortliks beskryf en die gebruik van teater vir opvoeding en ontwikkeling is aan die hand van die werk van Augusto Boal geskets. Sy konsep van teater vir die onderdruktes is hier van belang wat forum-, onsigbare-, beeld-, kultuur-, koerant- en wetgewende teater insluit. Die aard van hierdie teatervorme is verduidelik.

Voorbeelde van die gebruik van teater in opvoedkundige en ontwikkelingskontekste in ontwikkelende lande van die wêreld is gegee. Spesifieke karaktereienskappe van hierdie teaterinisiatiewe is geïdentifiseer wat direk bygedra het tot die formulering van die voorgestelde model.

Teater-vir-ontwikkeling word gesien as 'n multidimensionele verskynsel. Die omgewing waarin skepping plaasvind, is ondersoek met verwysing na die huidige sosio-politiese konteks in Suid-Afrika ten opsigte van basies behoeftes; probleme

met opleiding en opvoeding; en pogings tot rekonstruksie en ontwikkeling. Die informele ekonomiese en die nie-amptelike kulturele kontekste is in ag geneem. Die historiese erfenisse van die verlede en hulle impak op kultuurontwikkeling is aangedui.

Die kollektiewe en improviserende wyse waarop teater-vir-ontwikkeling geskep word en die funksionering van sy prosesse in die praktyk is ook ondersoek.

Die doelwitte en funksies van teater-vir-ontwikkeling is aangedui as funksionaliteit; analise en kritiek; mobilisering en bewusmaking; inklusiwiteit; opvoedkundig; bemagtiging; en die skep van 'n gemeenskapgevoel. Die kenmerke van opvoerings wat as deel van teater-vir-ontwikkelingsprosesse geskep word is ook uitgewys. In dié verband is verwys na multitaligheid, die stereotipiese karakterisering wat dikwels aangewend word, die kollektiewe styl en gebruik van meervoudige media, asook die gebruik van mondelingse en inheemse teatervorme.

Die gelokaliseerde, onkonvensionele en informele konteks waarin teater-vir-ontwikkeling plaasvind is as een van die verskynsel se sterk eienskappe aangedui.

Gehoorbetrokkenheid is getipeer as 'n aspek van teater-vir-ontwikkeling, en aktiewe betrokkenheid is teenoor passiewe waardering gestel, terwyl affektiewe reaksie teenoor kognitiewe reaksie gestel is.

Die uitwerking van kritiek en sensorskap is ondersoek met spesifieke verwysing na konvensionele gekanoniseerde kritiek en kontekstuele kritiek. In hierdie verband is daar gefokus op die ontvanger van die boodskap deur proses teen gevolg te kontrasteer en 'n opvoeringsgerigtheid teenoor 'n literêre gerigtheid. Die onmiddellike evaluering van die opvoering deur die ontvangers en die demokratiese kollektief as deel van die proses van beoordeling is aangedui. Die dimensies van teater-vir-ontwikkeling is ook ondersoek in die lig van die noodsaaklikheid om effektiewe kriteria vir die meting van die gevolge van hierdie teatervorm te formuleer.

Die verhandeling het 'n praktiese model vir die gebruik van teater-vir-ontwikkeling voorgestel deur te fokus op die plekke waar ontwikkeling plaasvind, die bydrae van distriksveldwerkers as fasiliteerders van ontwikkelingsprojekte en teater-vir-

ontwikkelingspraktisyns. 'n Metodologie vir die toepassing van teater-vir-ontwikkelingstegnieke is voorgestel en potensiële probleme met die toepassing van so 'n model is geïdentifiseer.

Gevolgtrekkings het 'n opsomming van die navorsingsbevindings, gevolgtrekkings gebaseer op die inligting in die verhandeling, en die identifisering van onderwerpe vir verdere navorsing ingesluit.